

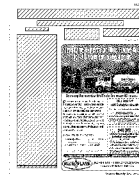
Weight-Wise Cooking Tips: Simple Swaps & Strategies That Slim

By Susan Burke March

It's certainly possible to eat healthfully without spending a lot of time shopping, preparing, and cooking. With just a little preparation and forethought, you can enjoy nutritious food and never 'diet' again. Using just a few simple strategies, you can enjoy favorite recipes with less fat, sugar and calories...without sacrificing flavor. It's easier than you might think.

From cooking methods to the type of pans you use, here are some ideas that will foster a weight-wise culinary experience.

- **Prepare to Succeed:** Plan your meals in advance, eat a healthy snack, and then go shopping to better avoid "impulse" purchases. You'll have the healthy options you need at hand when you're hungry and actually start to cook.
- **The Recipe Rule:** Keep it simple! Avoid recipes with too many steps...and ingredients. A simple grilled, broiled or baked dish without too many components and processes, a fresh vegetable and a starch is your best bet.
- **Think Lean:** Buy the leanest cuts of meat and trim all visible fat before cooking. Ground meat should be at least 95 percent lean. Try ground turkey burgers for a change, or replace at least one-third of your ground beef with ground turkey breast. Be sure to buy ground turkey breast, as the alternative variety contains skin and dark meat, making it higher in fat and calories.
- **Stick to Non-Stick:** Stock up on nonstick pans for baking, grilling, and sautéing, and even for soup. Nonstick pans allow you to avoid using oil in favor of healthier options like cooking spray, wine, water, or fruit juice.
- **Mission-Critical Method:** Bake, broil, grill, poach your proteins. Rather than basting with butter or margarine, cut the saturated and trans fat by basting with flavorful vegetable broth, white wine, or orange juice. Avoid recipes with heavy sauces and gravies to keep your menus low fat.
- **Crumbs Count.** Instead of commercial breadcrumbs, usually full of oil and trans fat, substitute a low sugar crunchy breakfast cereal such as Grape Nuts or organic wheat flakes (avoid cereals with more than 4-6 grams of sugar per serving).
- **Sweeten Naturally:** It's easy to reduce the amount of fat and sugar in your recipes. For example, replace half the oil with applesauce or fruit puree for an equally moist muffin or cake; use one-third less sugar in cakes or cookies and use dried unsweetened fruit such as raisins or diced dates to add natural sweetness to cereal. Experiment with sucralose (Splenda) for baking: Try some of the excellent sugar-free syrups and low-calorie pudding mixes.
- **Dairy Dos:** Whole milk contains 1 gram of saturated fat per ounce. Switch a 1 1 dairy consumption to non-fat or 1%, including milk, cheese and yogurt. Nonfat evaporated milk has a



creamy consistency and works well as a lower calorie but pleasing condensed milk substitute in sauces, pies, ice cream, and, of course, in tea and coffee. Low-fat buttermilk makes a good substitute for whole milk in many recipes. In all recipes, substitute two egg whites for one whole egg and cut the fat, cholesterol, and calories.

- **Just Desserts.** Keep it sweet, but smartly reduce calories and fat in decadent desserts like cheesecake by substituting low-fat ricotta cheese for whole-milk. When a recipe calls for sour cream, try lower fat Greek-style, creamy plain yogurt instead.
- **Double up.** Double the recipe ingredients and freeze half in a convenient, microwave-safe container. This is a great idea for working people. Most offices and cafeterias have microwave ovens for you to reheat your lunch...enjoy your own convenient and healthy frozen entrée! 🍷

Registered and licensed dietitian Susan Burke March, MS, CDE, is the author of "Making Weight Control Second Nature: Living Thin Naturally" — a book intended to liberate serial "dieters" and make living healthfully and weight-wise intuitive and instinctual over the long term. March also serves as the Resident Nutrition Expert for www.HealthyWage.com, which empowers healthy living through incentives, social support, goal-setting and technology. She may be reached online at www.SusanBurkeMarch.com.

