

THE LOW-COST COOKBOOK

delicious & minimal equipment recipes



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Preface

The goal of this book is to feature recipes that require minimal equipment and incorporate ingredients commonly found in food banks.

It is my hope that members of the community can use this book as a guide to cook more, learn new nutrition information and eat a more healthful diet all while keeping budget and equipment in mind.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to everyone that provided feedback and gave me this amazing learning experience. It was a long work in progress but I am so happy to see this book come to fruition.

Thank you to:

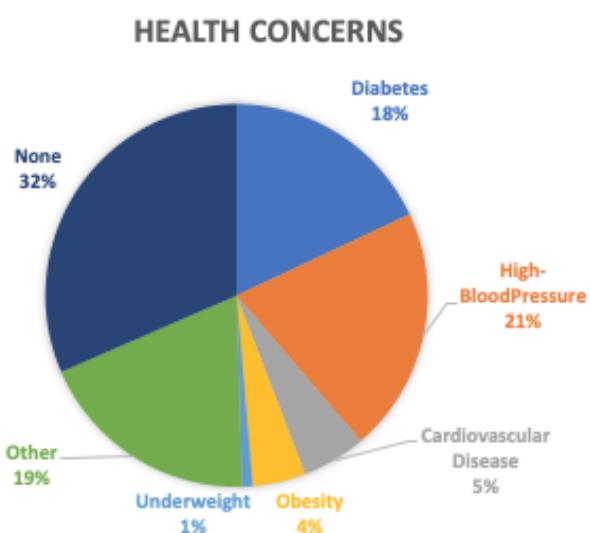
Registered Dietitian, Phoebe Lee
Brescia's Dietetic student, Madeline

Erlich

Yonge Street Mission Food Bank for giving me the opportunity to volunteer in the community and learn so much!

Research

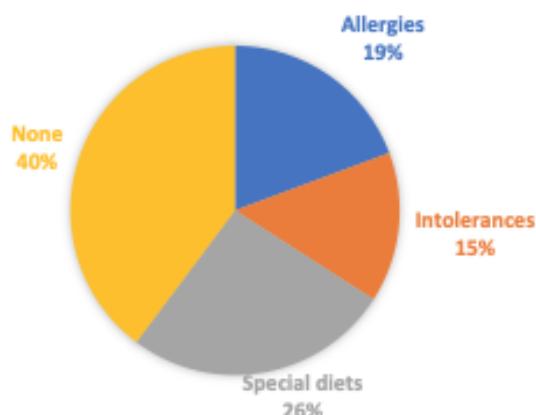
This primary data was retrieved from the community members of the Yonge Street Mission Food Bank. Surveys were verbally administered to members who were willing to participate.



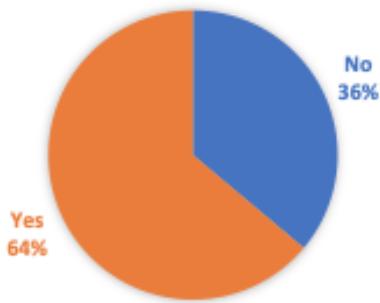
The most prevalent health concerns among food bank respondents in descending order was high-blood pressure, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Majority of respondents did not have any dietary concerns.

DIETARY CONCERN



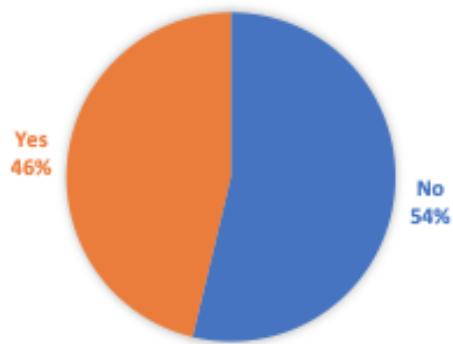
WOULD YOU LIKE TO IMPROVE YOUR NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE?



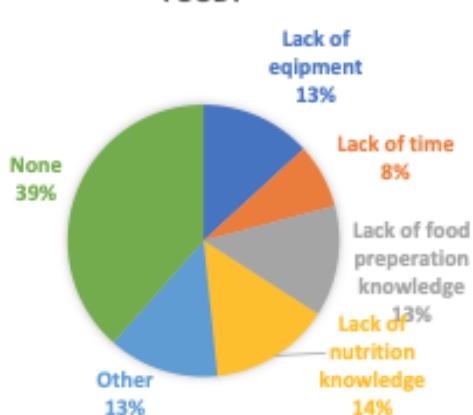
Over half of respondents wanted to improve their nutrition knowledge. The most common answer was 'general health improvements' compared to 'chronic disease' and 'weight management'.

Almost half of respondents ate alone. Majority ate with their children or partner.

DO YOU EAT ALONE?



WHAT BARRIERS DO YOU FACE WHEN PREPARING FOOD?



About 60% of respondents faced barriers when preparing food. Lack of nutrition knowledge, lack of preparation knowledge and lack of equipment were among the highest barriers.



PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES



Yields
20 cookies



Prep Time
5 minutes



Bake Time
8-10 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 egg
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar

Instructions

1. Set the oven to 350 degrees F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper or grease well.
2. In a bowl, whisk the egg, and then add sugar and peanut butter until well combined.
3. Roughly scoop out 1 tablespoon of the mixture and roll into balls. Evenly spread out onto the baking sheet.
4. Using the back of a fork, press down on the balls to make a criss-cross pattern.
5. Bake in the oven for 8-10 minutes. Do not over bake. Cookies will come out soft but will harden once cooled.

Did you know that peanuts are not a nut but a legume! (in the same family as peas and lentils).

There are some peanut butter brands that have sugars and oils added to them while others do not. In the grand scheme of things, there isn't much of a nutritional difference but if you're curious read the ingredients list.

If you want to try fresh peanut butter, check out stores like Bulk Barn where you can grind raw peanuts yourself or scoop out however much you want from the bins. To reduce single-use plastic, try bringing your own reusable glass container if you can.



STUFFED PEPPERS



Serves
4



Prep Time
20 minutes



Cook Time
40 minutes

Ingredients

4 medium bell peppers, halved (seeds
and ribs removed)

Salt and pepper

3 tablespoons any oil

1 pound ground beef

4 medium yellow onions, finely chopped

6 garlic cloves, minced or 2 tablespoons
garlic powder

2 tablespoon chilli powder

½ tsp ground cumin

One 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes

One 15.5 ounce black beans, drained

2 tablespoon any acid (lemon juice, lime
juice, vinegar)

1.5 cups cooked rice (1/2 cup uncooked)
Any cheese (optional)

Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 400 degrees F. Place the peppers cut-side up on a non-stick baking sheet or line with parchment paper. Drizzle peppers with 2 tablespoon of oil, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake for 12-15 minutes.
2. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil in a pot over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, chilli powder, and cumin into the pot. Stir to combine, then cook until the flavours meld together (5-8 minutes).
3. Add in the ground beef, salt and pepper. Stir using a wooden spoon and cook until meat turns brown (5 to 8 minutes). Add the canned tomatoes, beans and acid of choice. Bring to a boil, then lower heat and simmer for a few minutes giving everything a good mix.
4. Add cooked rice to the pot and gently combine.
5. Fill peppers with mix, cover with foil and return to the heated oven to bake for 20-25 minutes. Top with cheese if desired.
6. If you don't have an oven but instead a stove top or burner, make a small hole at the top of each pepper, fill them with the meat and rice mix then place in a pot. Add enough water to cover the peppers. Bring to a boil and then lower heat. Cook for 20-30 minutes or until peppers are tender.

Don't eat meat? You can easily omit the beef and double the beans in this recipe for a plant-based meal. It is recommended that we choose plant-based protein sources more often. Believe it or not, 1/2 a cup of black beans contains an astonishing 9 g of fibre and 8 g of protein!

This meal will likely produce leftovers that you can repurpose into another meal. Add the rice and chilli mix over a bed of vegetables or turn it into a hearty soup. Cook once, eat twice is what I like to say.



ONE PAN

Chicken Veg Bake



Serves
2-3



Prep Time
10 minutes



Cook Time
1 hour

Ingredients

2 chicken thighs
2 zucchinis
1 large sweet potato (or any potato)

2 tbsp Italian seasoning or any herbs and spices
2 tbsp any oil

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Chop the potato and zucchinis into cubes, roughly around the same size. In a baking dish, place the chicken thighs and add the chopped vegetables.
3. Sprinkle in herbs or spices, oil and give everything a good rub.
4. Bake in the oven for about an hour or until chicken is cooked. For properly cooked chicken, cut into the flesh and if the juices run clear then the chicken is fully cooked.
5. Serve as is or with a side of rice or more vegetables.

Keep your kitchen stocked with your favourite herbs and spices. This is a great way to reduce salt consumption while never compromising on flavour. Bake this one pan meal in the oven and forget about it....until the hour is up.

Sodium is an essential nutrient naturally found in many foods, however excess is found in ultra-processed food. Our bodies need a small amount to be healthy, but too much can lead to high blood pressure which can result in an increased risk for stroke and heart disease. It is recommended that most Canadians consume 1500 milligrams per day and not exceed 2300 mg per day, which is the equivalent of just over one teaspoon of salt.



LENTIL

BOLOGNESE



Serves
4



Prep Time
5 minutes



Cook Time
25 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp any oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp Italian seasoning or any herbs and spices
- One 540 mL can lentils, rinsed and drained
- One 796 mL can diced tomatoes
- 2 cups any fresh or frozen vegetables
- Choice of pasta

Instructions

1. Heat pot with 2 tbsp of oil. To see if your oil is hot enough, test with a small piece of onion and if it sizzles you are ready to add the rest of the garlic and onion.
2. Cook for 3-5 minutes or until the garlic turns slightly brown.
3. Add in the herbs or spices. Stir until everything is well combined.
4. Add in the lentils, diced tomatoes and vegetables.
5. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 10 minutes.
6. Serve on pasta



You may or may not have heard about greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). In simpler terms, these are gases that are released and trap heat into the atmosphere. This increases the Earth's temperature and as a result causes global warming.

Eating plant-based meat alternatives like lentils is a great way to reduce GHG emissions because the livestock sector is a significant emitter of carbon dioxide (a GHG).



CHOCOLATE

MUG CAKE



Serves
1



Prep Time
3 minutes



Cook Time
2 minutes

Ingredients

3 tbsp of butter, melted or any oil

1 egg

3 tbsp milk

4 tbsp plain flour

3 tbsp sugar

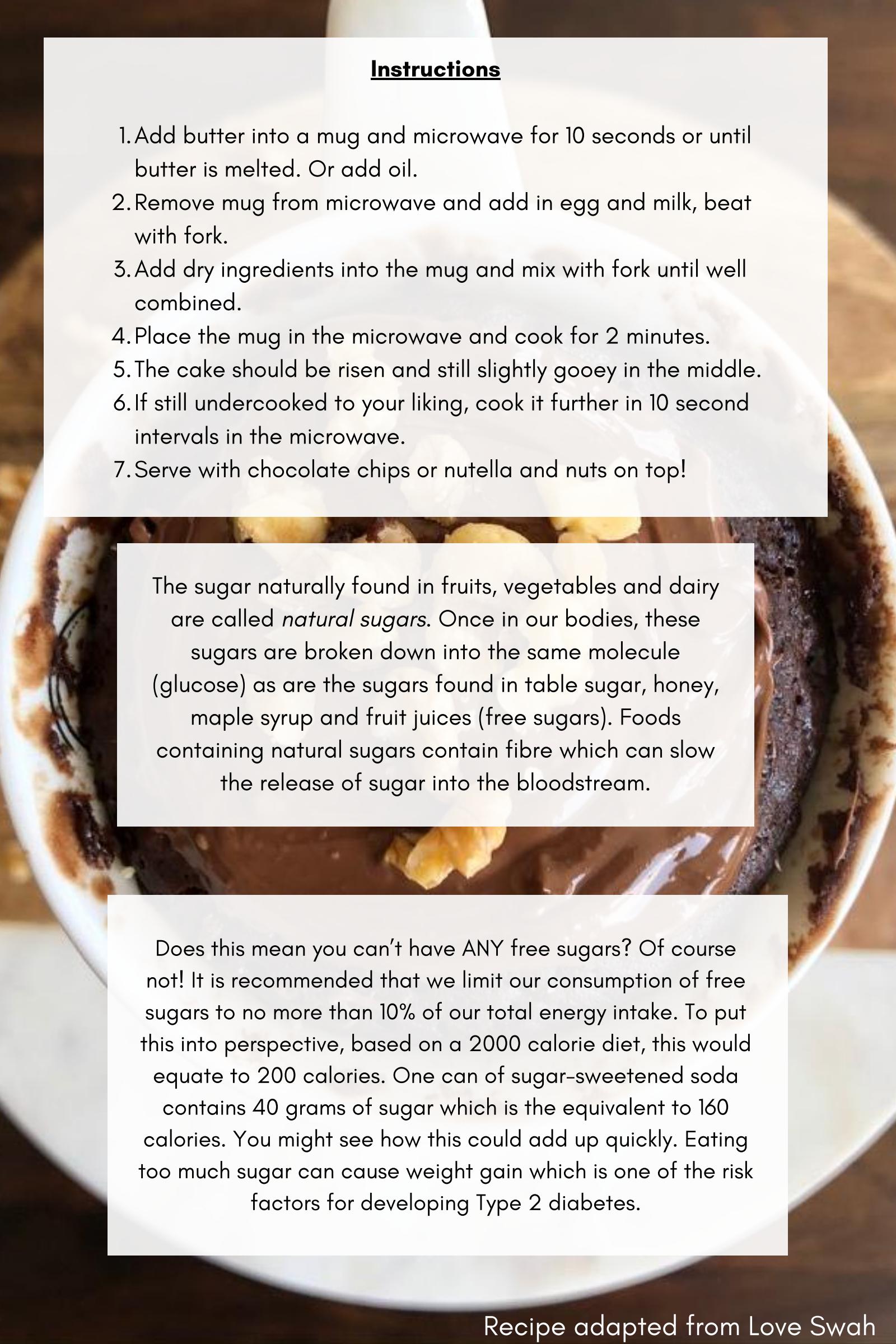
3 tbsp cocoa powder

½ tsp baking powder

Pinch of salt

Instructions

1. Add butter into a mug and microwave for 10 seconds or until butter is melted. Or add oil.
2. Remove mug from microwave and add in egg and milk, beat with fork.
3. Add dry ingredients into the mug and mix with fork until well combined.
4. Place the mug in the microwave and cook for 2 minutes.
5. The cake should be risen and still slightly gooey in the middle.
6. If still undercooked to your liking, cook it further in 10 second intervals in the microwave.
7. Serve with chocolate chips or nutella and nuts on top!



The sugar naturally found in fruits, vegetables and dairy are called *natural sugars*. Once in our bodies, these sugars are broken down into the same molecule (glucose) as are the sugars found in table sugar, honey, maple syrup and fruit juices (free sugars). Foods containing natural sugars contain fibre which can slow the release of sugar into the bloodstream.

Does this mean you can't have ANY free sugars? Of course not! It is recommended that we limit our consumption of free sugars to no more than 10% of our total energy intake. To put this into perspective, based on a 2000 calorie diet, this would equate to 200 calories. One can of sugar-sweetened soda contains 40 grams of sugar which is the equivalent to 160 calories. You might see how this could add up quickly. Eating too much sugar can cause weight gain which is one of the risk factors for developing Type 2 diabetes.



MINI EGG

Muffins



Serves
1



Prep Time
5-7 minutes



Cook Time
15-20 minutes

Ingredients

6 eggs

1 tbsp Italian seasoning or any herbs and spices

Pinch of salt and pepper

6 tbsp peas or any vegetable (fresh or frozen)

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup broccoli florets or any vegetable (fresh or frozen)

2 spring onions, thinly chopped or chopped onions

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup any cheese (optional)

Instructions

1. Prepare the egg mix by combining 6 eggs, herbs or spices, pinch of salt and pepper
2. Oil your muffin pan and layer in peas, broccoli florets, and onions or other vegetables.
3. Pour egg mix, filling each cup halfway. Then, top with cheese if you like.
4. Bake at 350 degrees F for 15-20 minutes or until edges brown.

Enjoy these egg muffins for a protein-rich snack or breakfast on-the-go! They're also a great way to add in more vegetables into your day.

Frozen produce is typically as and in some cases more nutritious than fresh. Frozen produce is usually cheaper and lasts much longer than fresh. Plus, you don't need to worry about wasting peels or stalks.

Fruits and vegetables are important sources of vitamins, minerals, fibre and antioxidants and they are often inadequately consumed so choose sources that work best for you and your budget.



LOADED

sweet potato



Serves
2



Prep Time
20 minutes



Cook Time
50-60 minutes

1 Sweet Potato

Black Bean Filling

1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
1 tbsp any oil
1 white onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped or 1
teaspoon garlic powder
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp cumin, chilli powder, black pepper
and salt
2 tbsp any acid (lemon juice, lime juice,
vinegar)

Lemon Tahini Sauce

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup tahini
1 tbsp water
3 tablespoons lemon juice (bottled
or fresh)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup parsley, finely chopped
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt
1 garlic clove, finely chopped or 1
teaspoon garlic powder

Instructions

1. Set oven to 350 degrees F and poke holes in potato with a fork. Bake for ~50 minutes or until you can easily pierce with a knife.
2. In a heated pan, add oil, onion, garlic, cumin, chilli powder, salt, pepper and beans. Cook until everything is well combined. Then add in choice of acid. Give one final stir and set aside.
3. In a small bowl, add tahini, lemon juice, water, salt, garlic and mix. Then, add parsley and stir until everything is well combined.
4. To assemble, cut sweet potato lengthwise and score the flesh in a criss cross pattern using a knife. With a fork, gently mash the flesh to fluff it up. Layer in beans and then add tahini lemon sauce.
5. Sprinkle more cumin, chilli powder, salt, pepper and top with some heat such as jalapeños or chopped hot chilli peppers if you like.

Never heard of tahini? It's rich, nutty, creamy, and savoury all made from just one ingredient- ground sesame seeds. Make this a pantry staple and use it to elevate your next meal.

Mix tahini and lemon juice with a splash of water to enjoy a luxurious drizzle on salad or pair with some raw vegetables for a creamy dip. If you're looking for a sweet treat, stuff some dates with tahini for the perfect snack pairing.



THE TUNA

s a n d w i c h



Serves
1



Prep Time
10 minutes



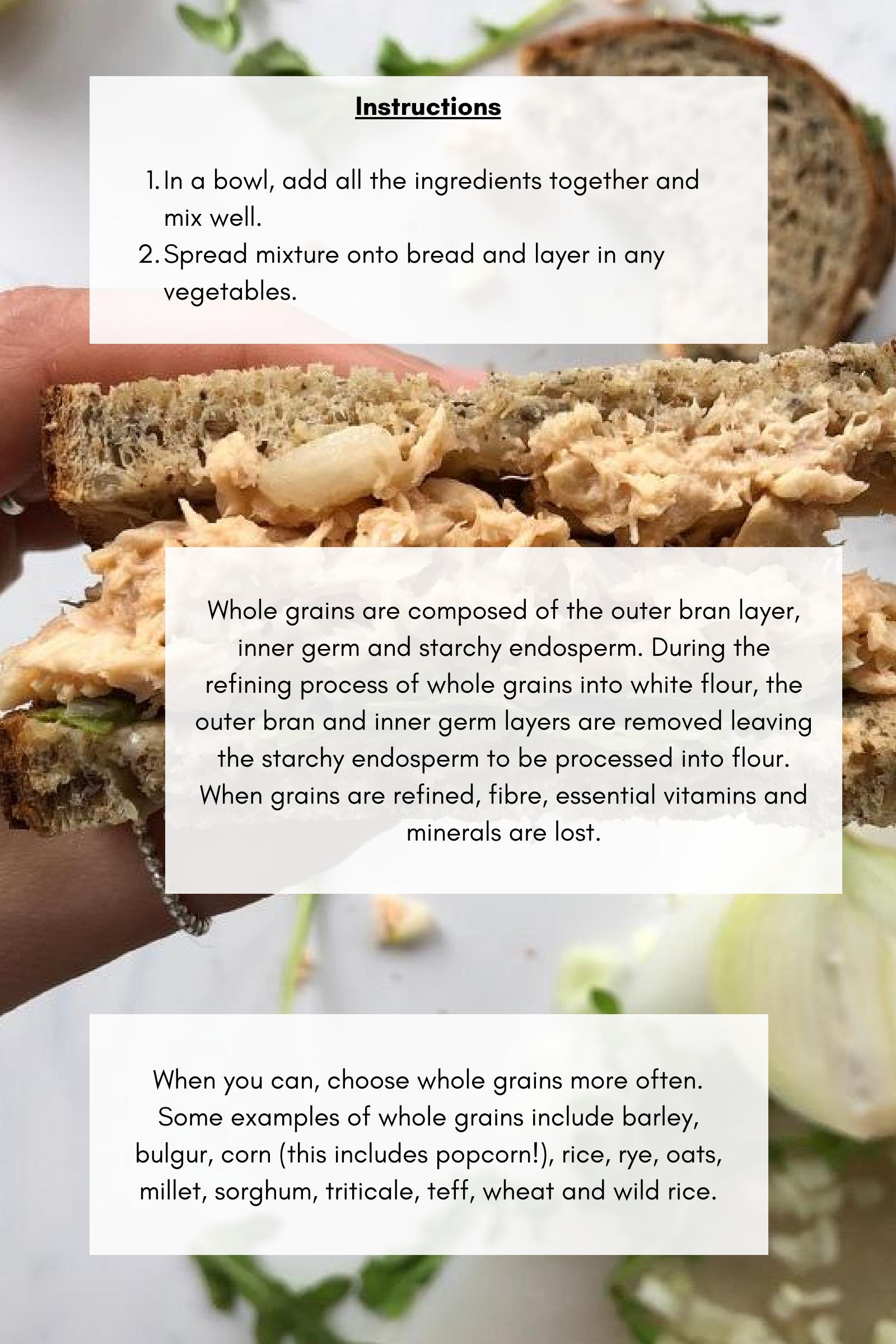
Cook Time
0 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp mayo
- 1-2 tsp hot sauce
- 3 tbsp or half a small onion, finely chopped
- 1 can tuna, drained well
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoon any acid (lemon juice, lime juice, vinegar)
- Any vegetable

Instructions

1. In a bowl, add all the ingredients together and mix well.
2. Spread mixture onto bread and layer in any vegetables.



Whole grains are composed of the outer bran layer, inner germ and starchy endosperm. During the refining process of whole grains into white flour, the outer bran and inner germ layers are removed leaving the starchy endosperm to be processed into flour. When grains are refined, fibre, essential vitamins and minerals are lost.

When you can, choose whole grains more often. Some examples of whole grains include barley, bulgur, corn (this includes popcorn!), rice, rye, oats, millet, sorghum, triticale, teff, wheat and wild rice.



LENTIL s o u p



Serves
5-6



Prep Time
5-7 minutes



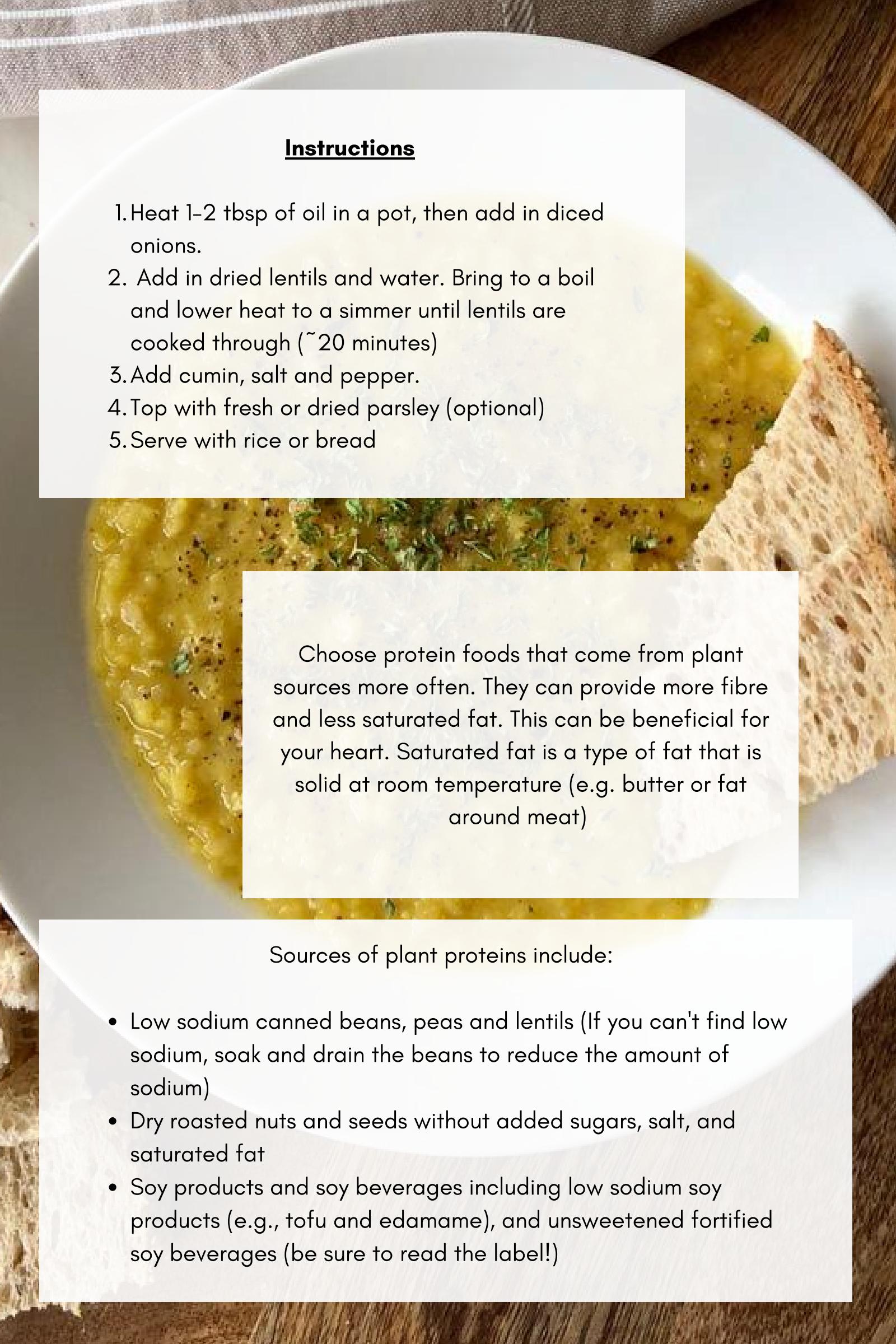
Cook Time
20 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp any oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 cups red lentils, dried
- 4 cups water
- 1 tsp cumin
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Heat 1-2 tbsp of oil in a pot, then add in diced onions.
2. Add in dried lentils and water. Bring to a boil and lower heat to a simmer until lentils are cooked through (~20 minutes)
3. Add cumin, salt and pepper.
4. Top with fresh or dried parsley (optional)
5. Serve with rice or bread



Choose protein foods that come from plant sources more often. They can provide more fibre and less saturated fat. This can be beneficial for your heart. Saturated fat is a type of fat that is solid at room temperature (e.g. butter or fat around meat)

Sources of plant proteins include:

- Low sodium canned beans, peas and lentils (If you can't find low sodium, soak and drain the beans to reduce the amount of sodium)
- Dry roasted nuts and seeds without added sugars, salt, and saturated fat
- Soy products and soy beverages including low sodium soy products (e.g., tofu and edamame), and unsweetened fortified soy beverages (be sure to read the label!)



SESAME-SOY

Tofu



Serves
5-6



Prep Time
5-7 minutes



Cook Time
20 minutes

Ingredients:

14 ounce package firm tofu, drained and rinsed

1 tbsp grated ginger or 1/4 tsp ginger powder

1 tbsp soy sauce

2 tbsp water

1 tsp brown sugar

2 tbsp any oil

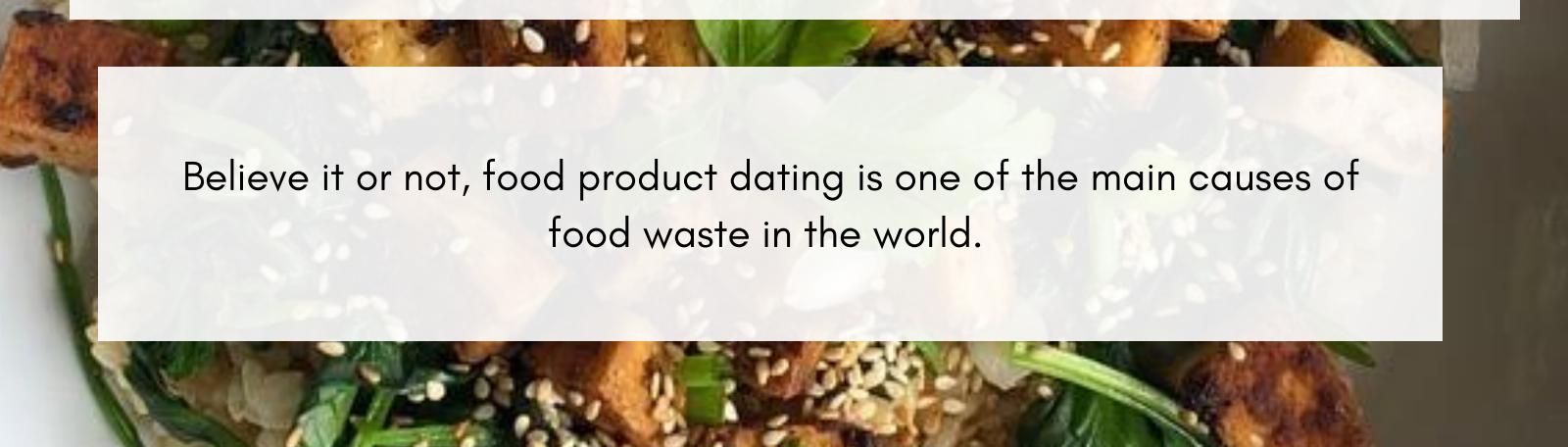
Toasted sesame seeds, to garnish (optional)

Sliced green onions, to garnish (optional)

Serve with rice and any vegetables

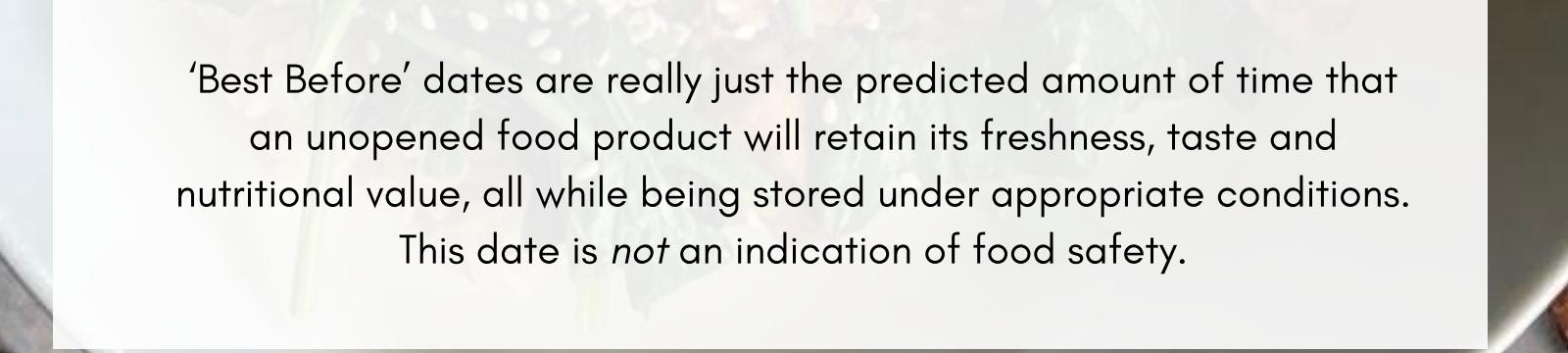
Instructions

1. To remove the excess water from the tofu, wrap with a clean cloth and add a heavy weight on top (cans or textbooks). Then, chop the tofu into cubes.
2. In a small bowl, mix together the ginger, soy sauce, water, and brown sugar. Set aside.
3. Heat 2 tbsp of oil in a pan on high heat. Once hot, add the tofu and fry for 2-3 minutes on each side.
4. Lower the heat, add the mixture to the pan and simmer for about 1 minute.
5. Garnish with toasted sesame seeds and green onions. Serve with rice and vegetables.

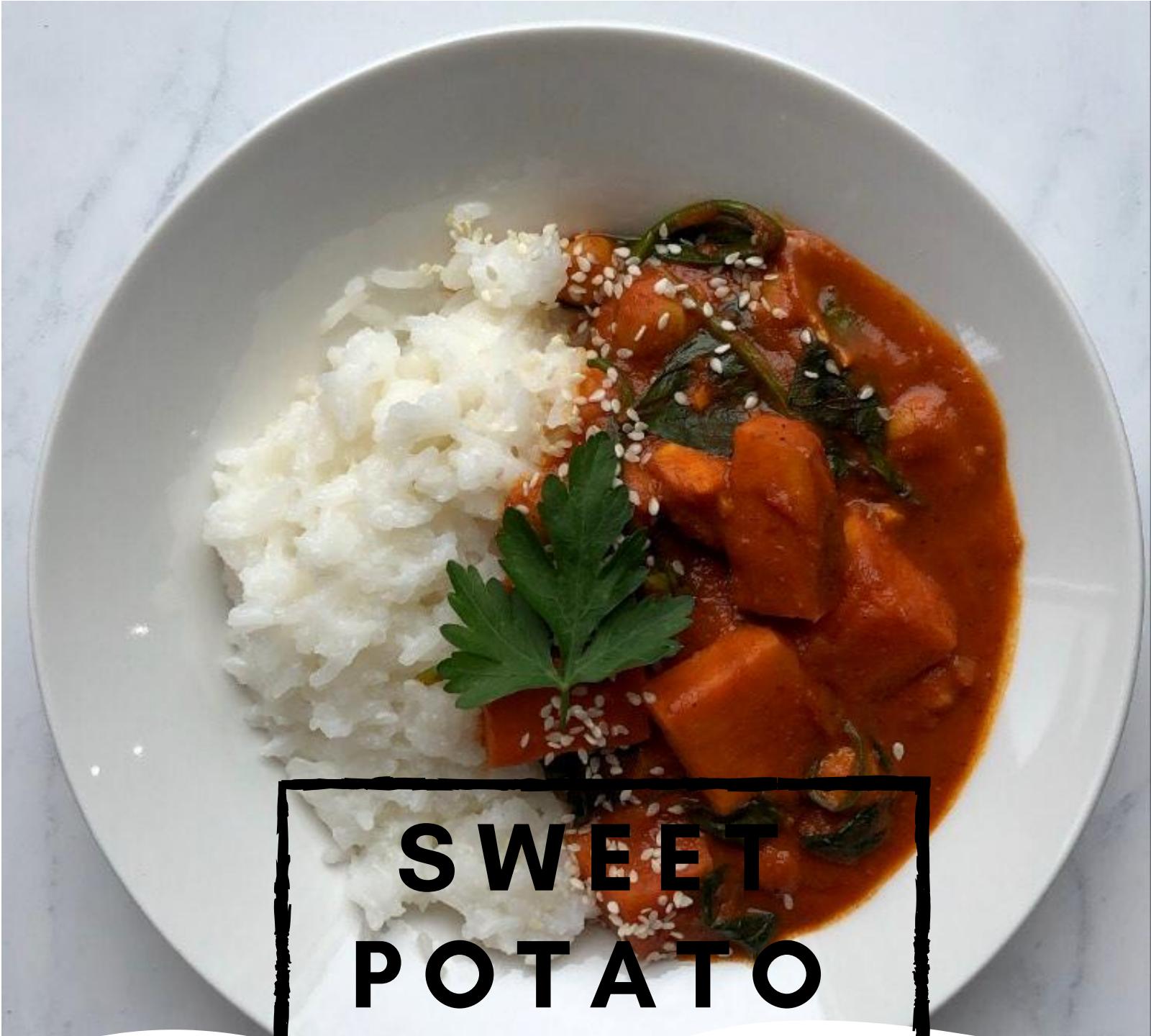


Believe it or not, food product dating is one of the main causes of food waste in the world.

'Best Before' dates are really just the predicted amount of time that an unopened food product will retain its freshness, taste and nutritional value, all while being stored under appropriate conditions. This date is *not* an indication of food safety.



On the flip side, the 'Expiration' date is applicable to only a handful of items indicated with the letters EXP and the date (YYMMDD). The products that shouldn't be consumed after the EXP date include formulated liquid diets (for oral or tube feeding), formulated foods used to replace meals, nutritional supplements and baby formula.



SWEET POTATO

curry



Serves
5-6



Prep Time
10 minutes



Cook Time
25 minutes

Ingredients

3 tbsp any oil
3 garlic cloves finely chopped or ½ tsp garlic powder
4 tsp grated fresh ginger or ¼ tsp ginger powder
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tbsp curry powder or curry paste
2 tsp ground cinnamon

1 medium onion, chopped
1 medium-large sweet potato, chopped (about 3 cups)
One 398mL can chickpeas
One 400mL can coconut milk
One 398 mL can diced tomatoes
2 cups any vegetables
Salt to taste

Instructions

1. Heat oil in pot and then add garlic, cumin, ginger, curry, cinnamon and onions. Stir and cook until onion is tender.
2. Add coconut milk, chickpeas, diced tomatoes, and sweet potato. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer until sweet potato is tender (~25 minutes).
3. Remove from heat and stir in spinach until wilted.
4. Add salt to taste.
5. Serve with whole grain of choice



If you grew your own tomatoes and lettuce wouldn't it be a shame to see all your time, love and labour go to waste? The same goes for the tomatoes and lettuce you buy from the supermarket. When you toss away your leftovers or that 4-day old wilted bunch of spinach, not only are you wasting the food itself but all the resources that went into growing, shipping and preparing that food. Not to mention your money!

47% of food wasted in Canada occurs at home which means you can help prevent food waste and save money.

Food that is past its peak is perfectly fine to eat as long as there are no signs of decay such as mold. This Sweet Potato Chickpea Curry uses wilted spinach along with a beautifully bruised sweet potato and is just as delicious and flavourful as its fresher variety.

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