

Ho Ho Ho, Merry Paleo Christmas!

It's December, and even though most of us haven't burned off all the calories from Thanksgiving dinner yet, I have been thinking about the next big Feast!

I love food. LOVE food. I think about different combinations of tastes and textures all the time. I try to make sure our meals are colorful, presented well, and above all, delish....even if its just a regular old Thursday night.

If you are reading this, you may have been drawn in by the lure of new recipes that fit the Paleo Eating plan, which means you already know what the Paleo diet is...but for those of you who have no clue, here are the basics:

Eat wholesome, contemporary foods from the food groups our hunter-gatherer ancestors would have thrived on during the Paleolithic era. These foods include fresh meats (preferably grass-produced or free-ranging beef, pork, lamb, poultry, and game meat, if you can get it), fish, seafood, fresh fruits, vegetables, seeds, nuts, and healthful oils (olive, coconut, avocado, macadamia, walnut and flaxseed).

On the No-No list: dairy products, cereal grains, legumes, refined sugars and processed foods. Clearly, wine and beer would never have been available to our ancestors either.

That said, I know that most people would rather have food just show up on their plate and with the exclusion of pasta, bread, potatoes and heaping bowls of sugary cereal you might feel like there's nothing left. I get it. But that's a different conversation!

If you are trying to follow a Paleo diet you KNOW it takes a little more planning and a few extra trips to the market each week to make eating Paleo a reality. So, what if HALF the work was already done for you? What if you had a simple menu with delicious and easy choices for each meal and you just chose the dish, printed the recipe, and put food planning out of your mind?

Now you can!

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Western Omelette

Ingredients

4 eggs
1 tsp coconut oil
½ yellow onion, diced
1 bell pepper, diced
1 medium tomato, diced
1 cup spinach
¼ lb ham, cooked and diced
sea salt and fresh ground black pepper to taste
Fresh salsa to add on top (optional)

Instructions

1. Wash and chop vegetables. Set aside.
2. Crack eggs into small bowl and beat well. Set aside.
3. Heat non-stick skillet over medium heat. When hot, add coconut oil to pan.
4. Pour half of the beaten eggs into the skillet and coat the bottom of the pan. When the egg has partially set, scrape the edges and tip the pan so that the uncooked egg at the top can spread to the hot cooking surface of the skillet.
5. Immediately after, add half of the vegetables and ham to one half of the omelet and continue to cook until the egg is almost fully set.
6. Using a spatula, fold the empty half over top of the ham and veggies. Cook for 2 minutes longer, then serve topped with salsa.
7. Repeat the process with the remaining ingredients to make the second omelet.

Paleo Oatmeal

- From Primal Blueprint Cookbook

¼ cup walnuts (really any nuts will work, though)
¼ cup pecans
2 Tbs ground flax seed
½-1 tsp ground cinnamon
dash of freshly ground nutmeg
¼ tsp ground ginger
1 Tbs almond butter
1 banana, mashed
3 eggs
¼ cup unsweetened almond milk (add more if desired)
2 tsp pumpkin seeds
1 handful of fresh berries (optional)

Instructions

1. Add walnuts, pecans, flax seed and spices to a food processor and pulse mixture to a coarse grain (make sure to stop before it is ground into a powder). Set aside.
2. Whisk together eggs and almond milk until the consistency thickens and becomes a loose custard.
3. Thoroughly blend the mashed banana and almond butter together and add it to the custard, mixing well.
4. Stir in the course nut mixture.
5. In a medium saucepan, warm the mixture on the stove until the “no-oatmeal” reaches the desired consistency and the whisked eggs look firm as though cooked; this should only take about 5 minutes. Stir frequently.
6. Sprinkle pumpkin seeds and berries on top. Add more almond milk if desired.

Chorizo Butternut Squash Hash

Prep time: 5 mins

Cook time: 10 mins

Total time: 15 mins

Serves: 1-2

Ingredients

1 small butternut squash, peeled and diced small (208 grams)

½ yellow onion, finely diced

½ pound chorizo

salt and pepper, to taste

5 eggs

Instructions

1. Place a cast iron skillet or pan over medium heat. Add butternut squash and onion.
2. After cooking the butternut squash on all sides for about 5-8 minutes or until squash is soft, add chorizo. Break up chorizo into small pieces and cook until completely cooked through. Add a bit of salt and pepper.
3. Use a spoon to press in 5 little crevices. Crack eggs into the crevices. Place a lid over the pan and cook until eggs are cooked to over easy (or to preference), about 3-4 minutes.

Roasted Red Pepper Walnut Dip

Adapted from Everyday Paleo

Ingredients

1 cup walnuts
6 oz. roasted red peppers (about half a jar)
2 Tbsp. olive oil (you can also use coconut milk--you might need more to get the right consistency)
1 Tbsp. chives
1 clove garlic
salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Add walnuts to food processor. Pulse nuts into fine crumbs.
2. Add remaining ingredients and pulse until creamy and dip-able. Add more oil or coconut milk to reach desired consistency.
3. Serve with sliced bell pepper, carrots, cucumber, etc.

Heart of Palm Hummus (or Faux-mmus)

Makes about 1.5 cups

Ingredients

1 14 oz. can heart of palm, drained
3 Tbsp. tahini
2-4 Tbsp. olive oil
1 large clove garlic
1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
salt and pepper

Instructions

1. Put all ingredients in a food processor. Blend until desired consistency is reached. Add more olive oil if hummus seems to thick. Serve with carrots, sliced cucumber, or pork rinds.

Paleo Spiced Nuts

From Elana's Pantry

Ingredients

⅔ cup almonds
⅔ cup pecans
⅔ cup walnuts
1 teaspoon chili powder
½ teaspoon cumin
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
½ teaspoon celtic sea salt
1 tablespoon olive oil

Instructions

1. Place nuts in a large cast-iron skillet over medium heat
2. Toast until lightly browned
3. While nuts are toasting, prepare spice mixture
4. Combine chili, cumin, black pepper and salt in a small bowl
5. Coat nuts with olive oil, then coat with spice mixture
6. Serve

Spaghetti Squash Crusted Quiche

Prep time: 30 mins

Cook time: 30 mins

Total time: 1 hour

Serves: 4-6

Ingredients

1 medium spaghetti squash (2 pounds), cut in half lengthwise

$\frac{3}{4}$ pound pork breakfast sausage

6 eggs, whisked

$\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon dried parsley

$\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon dried basil

salt and pepper, to taste

handful of sliced mushrooms (I used shiitake mushrooms)

coconut oil, to grease pie plate

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Place spaghetti squash cut side down on a baking sheet. Bake squash for 20-25 minutes or until you can press on the outside of the squash and it gives a bit.
3. Once spaghetti squash is done cooking, remove from oven, scoop out the seeds and excess strings and let cool while you finish the rest of the quiche. Once spaghetti squash is cooled, use a fork to remove the threads.
4. Turn oven down to 350 degrees.
5. Place breakfast sausage in a medium pan over medium heat. Break up and cook until there is no pink left. Remove from heat and drain any excess fat, if needed.
6. Whisk together eggs, parsley, basil, salt and pepper in a bowl.
7. Pull out a pie plate and grease thoroughly with coconut oil. Add all the spaghetti squash threads to the pie plate and press down into the plate and up onto the sides. Try to make it even throughout.
8. Pour the eggs into the plate, then add the crumbled sausage, on top with sliced mushrooms. Sprinkle with a bit more salt on top.
9. Place in oven to bake for 30-35 minutes at 350 degrees or until eggs are cooked through in the middle.
10. Let rest before cutting into it.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner is served!

Spinach and Salmon Salad with Arugula Pesto

From Everyday Paleo

Arugula Pesto

2 cups packed fresh arugula
1 clove garlic
¼ cup walnuts
½ cup olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. In a food processor, blend the arugula, garlic and walnuts until finely chopped. With the machine running, gradually add the olive oil, processing until well blended. Transfer pesto to bowl and stir in salt and pepper to taste. Pesto can be made a couple days in advance, just cover and refrigerate!

Salad

3 cups spinach
2 cups micro greens
1 cup shredded cabbage
1 carrot shredded
1 cup chopped green beans
½ cup pepitas

Instructions

1. For green beans: steam until al dente and then run them under cold water until cool. Chop into bite size pieces
2. Combine all ingredients in a bowl, Add 4 Tbsp of pesto and toss greens until well combined. Place in refrigerator or set aside while you prepare fish.
Salmon

2 Salmon Filets

Salt and Pepper
2 Tbsp Arugula Pesto

Instructions

1. Salt and pepper both sides of salmon filets and lay on baking sheet. Top each filet with 1 Tbsp of arugula pesto and spread over the top. Cook the fish under a broiler for approximately 5 minutes (depending on how thick filet is) or until fish is flaking and opaque.

This salad pairs really well with the Sweet Potato Casserole...

Sweet Potato Casserole

Makes around 12 servings

Ingredients

4 large sweet potatoes
½ cup canned coconut milk
1 Tbsp. coconut oil
1-2 Tbsp. maple syrup
1 tsp cinnamon
½ tsp nutmeg
juice of half an orange
Pecan topping
¾ cup chopped raw pecans
1 tsp cinnamon
1 Tbsp maple syrup
1 tsp melted coconut oil

Instructions

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and preheat oven to 350 degrees F. While water comes to a boil, peel and dice sweet potatoes into large chunks.
2. Add sweet potato chunks to water. Boil until fork tender--about 10 minutes.
3. Drain potatoes, then dump them back in the large pot with all the other ingredients. Using a hand mixer, blend until potatoes reach desired consistency and flavor. (You may like to add a little more coconut milk, spices, or syrup based on your taste.)
4. In a small bowl, combine all topping ingredients until pecans are well coated.
5. Dump sweet potatoes into an oven safe dish and top with pecans.
6. Bake in preheated oven until topping is browned--about 15 minutes. Serve warm.

Italian Rib Eye with Sun Dried Tomato Topping

This recipe sounds much more complicated than it actually is and I must say it's pretty darn scrumptious...

Italian Rib Eye

4 big rib eye steaks
1 ½ cups olive oil
the juice from 1 meyer lemon
1 tbsp basil
1 tbsp oregano
ground black pepper to taste
sea salt to taste

Instructions

1. Mix all marinade ingredients together in a large mixing bowl. Add steaks and mix together with your hands to make sure all the steaks are well coated. Leave in the fridge for at least 45 minutes but the best would be for a day. Broil or grill for 7-10 minutes per side depending on thickness for a nice medium rare steak. For rare cook for 4-6 minutes each side.
Sun Dried Tomato Topping
2. In a food processor throw in 1 jar of sun dried tomatoes and ½ a jar of garlic stuffed green olives. Pulse until roughly chopped and serve on top of steaks.
Try serving the steak with baked winter squash and steamed collard greens or swiss chard. Enjoy!

Scrumptious Slow Cooker Chicken

Ingredients

2½ lbs boneless, skinless chicken thighs
3 parsnips
3 carrots
4 celery stalks
1 red onion
10-12 whole garlic cloves
¼ cup coconut oil
1 cup chicken broth
1 tablespoon dried thyme
1 tablespoon rubbed sage
Sea salt and black pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Cut the parsnips, carrots, celery, and onion into large chunks making sure that the carrots and parsnips are cut roughly the same size for even cooking. Place the chicken in the crockpot and sprinkle with sea salt and black pepper. On top of the chicken layer the onions and whole garlic cloves followed by the parsnips, carrots, and celery. In a glass measuring cup mix together the chicken broth, coconut oil, thyme and sage (it helps to melt the coconut oil first in the microwave). Pour this mixture evenly over the chicken and veggies and cook on high for 5 hours or low for 7.

Enjoy!!

Coconut Curry

From Well Fed

Makes about 3-4 servings.

Ingredients:

- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground cloves
- ½ tsp ground cardamom
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ¼ tsp chili powder
- ¼ tsp turmeric
- ¼ tsp ground ginger
- 1 large red onion, chopped
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 jalapeno peppers, minced
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 3 tablespoons fresh basil leaves, torn
- 1lb. protein: ground beef, cubed beef/lamb/chicken

Instructions

1. Combine spices in a small bowl and set aside.
2. Saute meat/chicken until it's nicely browned and cooked through. Feel free to add a little EVOO if you're feeling like you need some healthy oils. Salt and pepper is nice, too.
3. Take the meat out of the pan, and throw in the onion, garlic, and jalapeno. Stir fry until tender and onions are translucent. Don't burn the garlic! *(I often come dangerously close to burning the garlic because I like the stove on HIGH.)*
4. Add the meat back into the pan and add the spices. Stir fry until fragrant; about a minute.
5. Add the coconut milk and basil leaves. Simmer until the meat is cooked through and the sauce thickens a bit.

Notes

Serve over steamed green beans, zucchini, chopped spinach, chopped cauliflower, spaghetti squash, or curry fried rice. (I like to mix chopped spinach with finely diced cauliflower; delicious and so healthy it's ridiculous.)

Also really nice with sliced fresh tomatoes and sliced cucumbers on the side. Bonus points if you squeeze lemon juice over them and top with chopped fresh parsley.

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