

# COOKING FOR ONE

EASY - COOK SMALL BOWL RECIPES

BY JOSIE HAMILTON

EAT WELL, EAT SKINNY, EAT CHEAP AND EAT HEALTHY



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# Introduction



***“Everything in moderation.”***

— *old proverb that has stood the test of time, for a reason*

We all know how to eat healthy. We know that too many carbs are bad, sugar is evil, “good” fats trump “bad” fats, and vegetables will save the world (as long as they are organic, local and non-GMO, of course). But *knowing* how to eat healthy and *eating* healthy are two different things, especially for busy singles on a budget. How many times have you found yourself scarfing a slice of pizza over the sink or scarfing down a pastry in the car on your way to a meeting because you just don’t have time to eat well *all the time*?

That was my own life for so many years. Raised by a mother who studied nutrition and grew her own vegetables, and a stepfather who was professional chef, I simply knew better. But, somehow, I had never learned how to cook for myself, and it always seemed to be a waste of time to prepare elaborate meals if I had no one to share them with. It wasn’t until I hit my thirties and became a stay-at-home freelance writer that I learned how to cook for myself. I simply could not subsist on take-out for another day.

So I found my local farmers market, bought a few simple kitchen tools and dove in. My goals: 1) to eat healthy and nurture myself with nutrition, 2) to eat delicious things, every day, three times a day, and 3) not to spend a ton of time or money doing it. My experiments were a success, and now I am happy to share them with you.

## **The peril of being a busy single is that you often don't get to prioritize healthy, delicious eating like you should.**

Enter *Cooking For One: Easy-cook Small Bowl Recipes*. Using the healthy recipes-for-one in this book, you can eat well, eat skinny, eat cheap and eat healthy without spending a lot of time or money on cooking just for one, and without wasting food. This book is for food lovers who want to eat a range of yummy, good-for-you dishes without doing a lot of cooking or cleaning or fussing over food, and who want to keep an eye on their weight without following a ridiculous and complicated diet.

The truth is, eating small amounts of good food is the most reasonable, sensible way to maintain healthy weight. This book will introduce you to the time-tested and age-old philosophy known as *portion control*. Without weighing your food, without obsessing about calorie-count, without cutting out the things you love the most, you can start to eat just the right amount of food for you, at every meal. Armed with your small bowl, you'll stop eating when you're satisfied - rather than stuffing yourself senseless.

Cooking for one can be easy and fun. With the healthy recipes in this book, you won't have to buy a lot of expensive, obscure condiments or seek out ingredients you've never heard of. On the other hand, if you have access to a farmers market or CSA box, you'll find that this book gives you instructions to put your local purchases to good use.

Grab a small bowl, and let's get started.

# Tips On Small Bowl Eating



Anytime you see this icon next to a recipe, it means that the recipe requires zero cooking—only assembly.

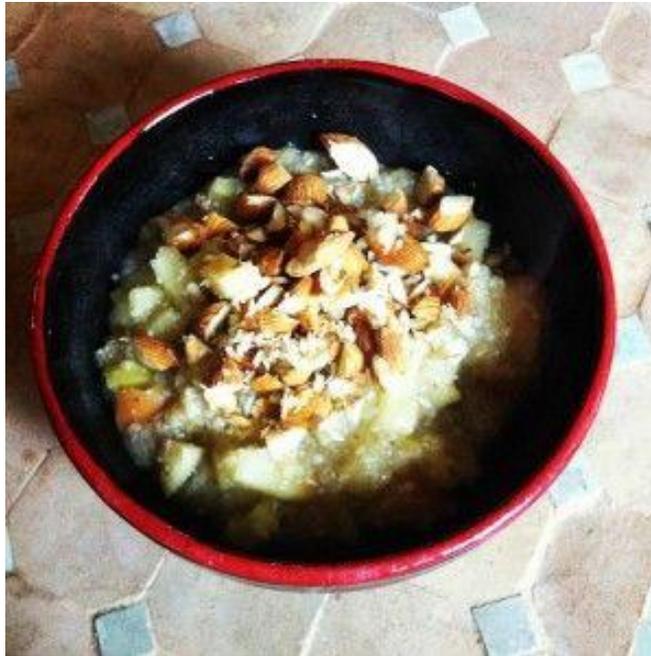
- Find a bowl that you really love. I made myself a bowl in a pottery class - but you don't have to master pottery in order to find *your* perfect bowl. Look for one that fits snugly into your hand - not too big, not too small. In other words, the Goldilocks principle.
- On my website ([www.smallbowleating.com](http://www.smallbowleating.com)) I offer a list of must-have kitchen implements that I highly recommend investing in. The first and most important one is a sharp chef's knife. This is an investment you will never regret. It makes chopping vegetables into a zen exercise instead of a dangerous chore.
- You can always double the recipes when cooking for two! In fact, some of the recipes in this book work great for couples because the ingredients come in pairs or more, like the *Dressed Up Store-bought Tamales* and "*Butter Trapper*" *Baked Acorn Squash*.
- Do not be afraid to experiment! Many recipes do work just as well with alternate ingredients. Try different spices, local and the seasonal produce, and specialty cheeses.
- I find it helpful to toss my salad in a larger bowl before transferring it to my small bowl for eating. The small bowl is great for portion size, but it can be difficult to coat the entire salad with dressing without making a mess. Go ahead and dirty another bowl! It'll rinse quickly.

For a free ebook on "Tips On Small Bowl Eating" please visit [smallbowleating.com](http://smallbowleating.com)

## **TIP: Cooking Rice**

Rice is a universally popular starch that is relatively easy to cook, but to cook it perfectly takes exquisite skill. A friend who is half Filipino and half Hispanic (and 100% amazing cook) gave me a great rice-cooking tip: once the water comes to a boil, cover the saucepan with a cloth kitchen towel pulled taut over the top of the pan, then fit the lid over the cloth to hold it snugly in place. The cloth absorbs the condensation on the lid, which prevents moisture from raining back into the pot and making the rice mushy.

# Surprisingly Tasty Morning Rice Breakfast Cereal



Cream of rice cereal is a comfort food breakfast staple that many of us remember from childhood. Guess what? It's really just rice, ground up and dressed up with some breakfast-ish accessories. You can use left-over rice from dinner the night before, or cook up some white or brown rice first thing in the morning. I am partial to Jasmine rice, but any type of rice will do.

**Time to prepare:** 20-50 minutes to prepare the rice (depending on type), 10 minutes to make the cereal

## Ingredients:

- 1 cup cooked rice, any kind
- 1/4 cup milk, cream, nut milk or juice from an orange
- Smattering of nuts, chopped finely (I like hazelnuts or raw almonds)
- Fresh or dried fruit (whatever is in season is always best, if nothing is in season, you'd be surprised how delicious and *useful* prunes are)
- Big dash or two of allspice, cinnamon or nutmeg
- Small dash of salt
- Dollop of maple syrup or honey

## **How to Prepare:**

1. Using an immersion blender, potato masher or the back of a fork, mash up the rice until it's mushy but not totally smooth.
2. Add the milk or juice, and heat over low heat for about 5-10 minutes.
3. While the cereal is warming up, chop up the fruit and add it.
4. Toast the nuts lightly and add them at the very end with the maple syrup or honey.

## **TIP: Slicing Vegetables**

The one absolute must-have kitchen item that I fully insist upon is a sharp chef's knife. A bad knife makes cutting vegetables a dangerous chore. A good knife turns cutting vegetables into a sublime experience in zen repetition. If you spend money on one thing, make it a good knife. And sharpen it regularly - either with a simple at-home knife sharpener or by bringing it to your local farmers market or a specialty market for sharpening.

# Cheezy Potato Onion Egg Breakfast Bowl



My best days always start with a dense-high-protein breakfast that sets me up for energy and endurance. They say that your biggest meal of the day should be breakfast, and I wholeheartedly support this notion.

**Time to prepare:** 25 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- Few small red, purple or white potatoes
- 1 small red onion (or half a medium onion)
- Dash of extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- 1/4 cup of water
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Sprinkle of green herbs such as oregano, thyme, marjoram or tarragon
- 1 egg
- Pat of butter
- 1-2 oz. cheddar or jack cheese
- Dash of salt and pepper

## **How to Prepare:**

1. Chop the potatoes and onions into thin, bite-sized slices. The thinner you chop, the faster they cook; you don't have to be OCD about it.
2. Heat the EVOO in a skillet until dropping the onions in makes them sizzle. Stir and cook the onions for about 5 minutes.
3. Add the potatoes and garlic.
4. Add the water, cover, and cook for about 5 more minutes.
5. Uncover, add the herbs, and cook until the potatoes are soft (probably only a few more minutes).
6. In an omelet pan or second skillet, melt the butter.
7. Crack the egg and cook for a few minutes on each side.
8. Put the potato/onion mixture into your small bowl first, then cheese, then egg.
9. Season with salt and pepper.

## **TIP: Buying Mozzarella**

There is a world of difference between cheap, shrink-wrapped mozzarella you would buy at Safeway and real Buffalo mozzarella - made from the milk of the Italian Water Buffalo. Weird? Maybe. But it's delicious. Whether you want to be ambitious and seek out authentic Buffalo mozzarella, or simply go for good old cow's milk mozzarella, don't skimp. Look in the specialty cheese section of your local market. Good mozzarella is packed in water to keep it moist and fresh. It comes in small balls (Bocconcini) and larger ones. Both work great in this salad.

# Year-round Savory Caprese Salad



Authentic Italian Caprese salad, or *Insalata Caprese* if you're pretentious, is simply Buffalo mozzarella, tomatoes and fresh basil. Depending on where you live and what time of year it is, fresh basil isn't always easy to find. If you can grab a bunch, great; otherwise, some variations are included below. This is a nice light lunch that packs a protein punch.

**Time to prepare:** 10 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- About 1/4 of a small bowl-full of high-quality mozzarella, sliced into bite-size pieces
- 1 ripe tomato, sliced into chunks
- 1 avocado, sliced into chunks

- Handful of fresh basil - in lieu of basil, experiment with other fresh herbs such as thyme or dill, or take it in the greens direction with arugula or baby spinach

### **Dressing Ingredients:**

- Few spoonful of extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- Few spoonful of balsamic vinegar or the juice of a lemon
- Dash of salt and pepper

### **How to Prepare:**

1. Throw the cheese, tomato and avocado into your small bowl.
2. Chop the herbs into strips, or, if using greens, smallish pieces.
3. Toss it all in your small bowl.
4. On the side, whisk together the EVOO, vinegar or lemon juice, salt and pepper. Add it to your small bowl and mix it up.

### **NOTE:**

Tomatoes and avocados do best when kept at room temperature. If your tomatoes live in the fridge, think about letting them warm up on the counter for a while before you construct this salad.

## **TIP: Dissecting Avocado**

Cut all the way around the avocado lengthwise with a paring knife (a small, sharp knife that's not serrated). Gently twist the avocado into two halves. The pit will stay stuck in one of the halves (or, if you're lucky, pop right out.) Whack the pit with the knife blade so it "sticks." Then twist the knife gently to release the pit from the avocado. Make slices through the avocado meat all around. Then scoop it out gently with a spoon.

# Panzanella Salad (What To Do with Stale Bread)



As a single person, it can be tough to get through a loaf of bread on your own. Good news: stale bread is the best part of Panzanella salad. If you don't happen to have stale bread lying around, you can fake it by toasting some non-stale bread.

**Time to prepare:** 10 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- 2 pieces stale bread, cubed into roughly 1-inch croutons
- Handful of cherry tomatoes

- 1 small cucumber (I prefer “European” cucumbers which have a less-tough skin that you can eat)
- Handful of olives of any persuasion, pitted and halved or sliced
- Handful of parsley or dill, chopped

### **Dressing Ingredients:**

- Few splashes of extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- Few splashes of balsamic vinegar
- Spoonful of Dijon mustard
- Dash of salt

### **How to Prepare:**

1. Toss the bread, tomatoes, cucumber, olives and parsley or dill.
2. On the side, whisk together the EVOO, vinegar, mustard and salt.
3. Toss both into your small bowl.

### **NOTE:**

The tomatoes complement the bread nicely, but in lieu of (or in addition to) cucumbers, feel free to experiment with other salad vegetables such as red or green bell peppers or even a nice crisp apple. Avocados make a nice addition to this salad (and any salad, really).

# Light Zesty Asian Citrus Salad



This is a great light lunch salad that won't weigh you down for the afternoon but contains plenty of vitamins and water-based vegetables. If you need protein at every meal - like I do - top it with a half a can of tuna, a handful of tofu cubes or a small lean grilled chicken breast.

**Time to prepare:** 10 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- 1/2 a small-bowl-full of arugula
- 1 seedless orange or tangerine, sliced into bite-size pieces
- 1/2 a fennel bulb, sliced thin
- 2 sticks of celery, sliced

**Dressing Ingredients:**

- The juice of another orange
- Few splashes of sesame oil
- Few splashes of cider vinegar
- Bit of fresh or dried tarragon (optional)
- Dash of salt
- Dash of pepper

**How to Prepare:**

1. Combine the arugula and the chopped orange, fennel and celery in your small bowl.
2. On the side, whisk together the sesame oil, cider vinegar, tarragon, salt and pepper.
3. Toss the salad and the dressing together.

## **TIP: Buying Watermelon**

It can be daunting to buy watermelon when you are single. Traditional watermelons are gigantic, but these days you can find the small round watermelons in many stores, and often they are seedless - a bonus! I sometimes cheat and buy pre-cubed watermelon from my local Whole Foods, then quarter the cups for this salad. I like my watermelon in tiny manageable chunks.

# Minty Party-in-Your-Bowl Salad



Sometimes a girl needs a lettuce-free salad. This one is summery and delicious. Water-based foods like watermelon and fennel are great for hydration and health. Feta and Kalamata olives are good for the soul. The key here is to buy high quality ingredients.

**Time to prepare:** 10 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- Enough watermelon chunks to fill up 3/4 of your small bowl
- 1/2 a fennel bulb, sliced thinly and in half
- Sprig of mint leaves, chopped finely

- About a 1-inch-square piece of feta cheese, chopped into small squares of crumbled (a little feta cheese goes a long way)
- Few pitted Kalamata olives, chopped

### **Dressing Ingredients:**

- Splash of white vinegar
- Splash of Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)
- Juice of half a lime
- Salt and pepper to taste

### **How to Prepare:**

1. Combine the watermelon, fennel, mint leaves, feta and olives in a bowl and toss.
2. In a separate bowl, mix the vinegar, EVOO, lime juice, salt and pepper.
3. Add the dressing to the salad and toss.
4. Transfer to your small bowl, admire, and eat.

## **TIP: Buying Arugula**

You can buy a baby arugula prewashed in a plastic container at Whole Foods and other high-end markets. Although the larger amount may seem daunting to the single person, but it can be eaten throughout the week in salads like this.

# Summer Lovin' Rocket Salad



In America we tend to call it “arugula,” which is the Italian alternative for the English-named Rocket. It’s a delicious green, whatever you want to call it. Rich in Vitamin C and Potassium, it is your typical overachiever “dark leafy green” that they are always telling you to eat, but with lots of flavor and pizzazz. Combined with summer corn, cherry tomatoes and grounding chickpeas, this is a very satisfying lunch salad for those with discriminating palates.

**Time to prepare:** 10 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- 3/4 of a small bowl-full of baby arugula
- The corn of 1 cob, cut raw off the cob with a serrated knife

- 1/3 of a can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- Few cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- Splash of Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)
- Splash of balsamic vinegar
- Teaspoon of Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper to taste

**How to Prepare:**

1. Combine the arugula, corn, chickpeas and cherry tomatoes in a bowl.
2. In a separate bowl, combine and whisk together dressing ingredients.
3. Toss the dressing into the salad, transfer to your small bowl, and eat.

## **TIP: Cooking Bacon**

You can cook bacon a variety of ways, and if you have a way you are familiar with, by all means stick to it. I prefer to cook bacon in a cast iron skillet in the oven. It makes less of a greasy mess and keeps the air smelling fresher in the kitchen. Once the bacon is quite crispy, I remove it from the oven and lie it out on a plate covered with cut up recycled paper bags. This saves paper towels, and paper bags soak up the grease nicely.

# Antioxidant-filled Autumn Salad (with Joy-filled Bacon)



Kale is so good for you. So good, in fact, in my opinion (and experience) it's okay to top it with a little fresh bacon from time to time. Bacon gives you the protein (and joy!) to get through the rest of the day, and kale is chock full of antioxidants and vitamins. If you prefer to keep it vegetarian, then just leave off the bacon, or use a Faking Bacon. (That is a thing.) The dressing gives this salad a refreshing tang that is grounded by bits o' bacon.

**Time to prepare:** 20 minutes

## **Salad Ingredients:**

- Healthy handful of kale, chopped into small strips
- 1 ripe pear, chopped into small strips
- 1/2 a red bell pepper, chopped into small strips
- Small half-a-handful of a high quality feta or goat cheese
- 3 or 4 strips of bacon

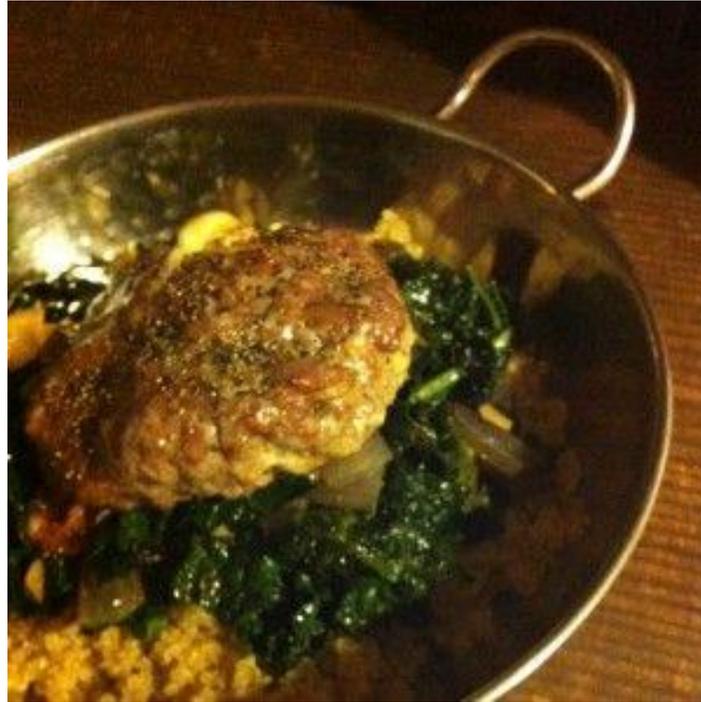
## **Dressing Ingredients:**

- 1/4 cup of cider vinegar (any vinegar will do in a pinch)
- Few spoonful of fresh orange or lemon juice
- 1/4 cup of extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- Salt and pepper

## **How to Prepare:**

1. Place bacon strips on a cookie sheet or in a cast iron skillet, and bake at 420° until fairly well crisped.
2. In the meantime, prep the kale, pear and pepper and toss together.
3. Throw in the feta or goat cheese.
4. Whisk together dressing ingredients and toss the salad.
5. Remove bacon from oven, let drain, cool on a paper towel.
6. Chop the bacon into tiny bits and sprinkle on salad.

# Naked Burger Grains'n'Greens (That Beat a Bun Any Day)



There is an old saying: “When the burger is good, who needs a bun?” Okay, while this is not an old saying, it should be. Good quality organic ground beef is relatively inexpensive and can be found at Whole Foods and other specialty stores. And psst - here’s a secret - they sell individual burger patties already made up and seasoned in a host of flavors. I throw these in a cast iron skillet and call it “cooking.” When accompanied by whole grains and greens, this is a fairly lean, very satisfying meal for one. And yes, you can eat it out of a bowl. Quinoa is an excellent choice of grain to complement a burger. You can also go with rice, barley, faro (“fancy European barley”) or wheat berries. For the sake of simplicity, this recipe will give directions for cooking quinoa.

**Time to prepare:** 20 minutes — a little more if you make your own burger patty

**Ingredients:**

- 1 burger patty (about a quarter pound)
- Fresh, hearty greens such as kale, chard or arugula. Roll the greens into tubes and then slice them carefully into long, thin strips.
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1/2 red onion
- Few splashes of extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- 1 cup water
- Few garlic cloves, finely minced
- Salt and pepper

### **How to Prepare:**

1. Preheat the oven to 420°.
2. Rinse the quinoa. Add it to a small saucepan with the water. Bring to a boil, then cover with a tight-fitting lid and lower the heat as much as possible. Simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, sear the burger in a cast iron skillet for a few minutes on each side. Once it's brown on both sides, stick the skillet in the oven to finish cooking. If you like your burger rare, it will only take a minute in the oven. A well-done burger will take about 10 minutes. Check it often until you have the hang of the right amount of time for *your* burger.
4. Heat up the olive oil in a skillet on the stovetop over high heat. When the oil is hot, add the onions, stir and lower the heat to medium-low. Let the onions cook slowly for about ten minutes, stirring often.
5. When the onions are soft and slightly brown, push them to the outside of the skillet and add the greens.
6. Add the garlic and cook for a few minutes, stirring often. Greens are done when wilted but still bright green.
7. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

### **NOTE:**

Cook twice the amount of quinoa and you'll have some left over for breakfast cereal tomorrow morning (you can substitute quinoa for rice in the first recipe in this book). *Psssst*, did you know that quinoa has the most protein of any grain? Coupled with the burger, this is a delicious high-protein meal in a small bowl.

# Queso Fun!dido (The MexiCali Meal in a Bowl)



I like to make about 4 servings of this Mexi-fantastic cheese, bean and chorizo casserole in single-size cassoulet dishes, then freeze 3 of them for later (this recipe serves one). I'm not going to lie to you; this is not a low-cal meal. But it's perfect for chilly wintery days when you're craving protein-rich calories that will warm you from the inside out.

**Time to prepare:** 45 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- 1/2 oz. chorizo (spicy Spanish sausage), casing removed and finely chopped
- 1/3 of a can of refried pinto beans, drained
- 1/2 oz. of Manchego or Jack cheese, shredded
- 1/2 a small onion, finely chopped
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 a red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1/2 a small Serrano chili, seeded and minced

- Splash of vegetable oil
- Few tablespoons of water
- Handful of tortilla chips

### **How to Prepare:**

1. Heat the vegetable oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add chorizo, cook and stir until it starts to look crispy.
2. Remove the chorizo to drain on a few pieces of paper towel, but leave the oil in the pan for the vegetables.
3. Add the onion, garlic and Serrano pepper, and cook for about 5 to 7 minutes, until soft and golden.
4. Add the water and simmer, uncovered, until the water evaporates.
5. Stir in the refried beans and simmer for 3 to 5 more minutes, until the mixture is bubbling.
6. Remove from heat, stir in chorizo, and stir in cheese until it melts.
7. Transfer to a cast iron skillet or baking dish and place under the broiler for a few minutes to brown the top.
8. Serve with tortillas.

# Dressed Up Store-bought Tamales (One Package = 4 Meals in a Week)



Tamales are one of those staple food items that go with just about anything. I often eat them:

- with grilled onion and ground beef
- doused with sautéed veggies
- with shredded leftover chicken
- drowned in marinara sauce
- with a fried egg on top (great breakfast!)

This recipe keeps it loosely Mexican. Heating up store-bought tamales might seem like cheating, but it's a great meal in a pinch, and it tastes fresh-made. Tamales only last a few days once you buy them, so plan ahead. You will find them in the refrigerated section of Whole Foods and other progressive groceries, in Hispanic food stores, and often at farmers markets. Tamales are basically corn masa pressed with other ingredients such as cheese, beans and peppers. They come wrapped in a corn husk, but for this recipe, you will throw out the husk before cooking. Tamales usually come in packs of four, so you get four meals in one package.

**Time to prepare:** 15 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- 1 store-bought tamale, any flavor
- Splash of canola oil (or vegetable oil)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  can of pinto beans
- 1 avocado, sliced out of its shell
- $\frac{1}{2}$  a tomato, chopped
- Handful of sharp cheddar or Jack cheese
- Salt, to taste
- Optional: cumin powder and/or oregano

## **How to Prepare:**

1. Heat the oil in a skillet over high heat.
2. Take the tamale out of its husk, chop it into bite-size pieces, and add to the skillet, lowering heat to about medium.
3. Drain the pinto beans and add to the skillet. Stir.
4. Add the tomatoes. Stir.
5. Add the salt and optional spices. Stir.
6. Add the cheese and let it melt on top for a few minutes while the flavors come together. All in all, the tamales should cook for about ten minutes.
7. Add the avocado and slide it all into your small bowl.

## **TIP: Chopping Collard Greens**

Roll each broad collard green leaf into a long, compact tube. Then make fine slices along the length of the tube, cutting across each leaf.

# Southern Collard Greens with Bacon and Butter (All the Comfort, Way Less Fat)



I'm fond of "healthy" bacon dishes, and sometimes I like to get brazen and add butter too. Don't worry, the collard greens preserve the "good for you" factor. This dish is bona fide Southern comfort food, and it's very simple and easy to prepare. It's really a side dish, but can serve as a meal thanks to the bacon.

**Time to prepare:** 20 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- Head of collard greens (looks like way too much for your small bowl, but cooks down substantially)
- Thick pat of butter
- 3 or 4 strips of bacon (you can substitute turkey or vegetarian bacon)
- Salt and pepper to taste

## **How to Prepare:**

1. Place bacon strips on a cookie sheet or in a cast iron skillet, and bake at 420° until fairly well crisped. Remove bacon from oven and let it drain and cool on a few pieces of paper towel.
2. Wash and chop the collard greens (see previous page).
3. Heat the butter in a skillet over medium heat until it is melted.
4. Add the collard greens and turn to low heat. Cover. Cook for about ten minutes, until collards are very wilted.
5. Chop the bacon into small bits and toss everything together in your small bowl, seasoning with salt and pepper.

## **TIP: Washing Greens**

I buy organic greens whenever possible, which means they need to be washed well. Here's how I do it:

- Chop off the stems and cut the greens in half so they are more wieldy
- Soak them in a lettuce spinner full of water doused with vinegar or Grapefruit Seed Extract for 30 to 60 minutes.
- Rinse the greens well with lots of water.
- Spin the water out.

# Rainbow Chard Sausage Fest with Parm



A totally satisfying, savory and protein-focused meal in a bowl that will make you forget all about carbs. Chard is the perfect crunchy complement to a nice spiced sausage. Any type of sausage will do, but try a turkey sausage for a little something different and more heart-healthy. Buy good quality sausage from your local butcher or the deli of your local Whole Foods or natural foods mart - not pre-packaged pre-processed sausage. It's worth the slightly higher cost, and it's better for you.

**Time to prepare:** 30 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- 1 head of rainbow chard, rinsed and sliced fine
- 1/2 a red bell pepper, chopped
- 1/2 a red onion, chopped
- About 4 oz. of pork, turkey or chicken sausage, sliced
- 1/4 cup of grated or shaved parmesan cheese
- Splash of white vinegar
- Splash of Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)
- Splash of tamari or Bragg Liquid Aminos

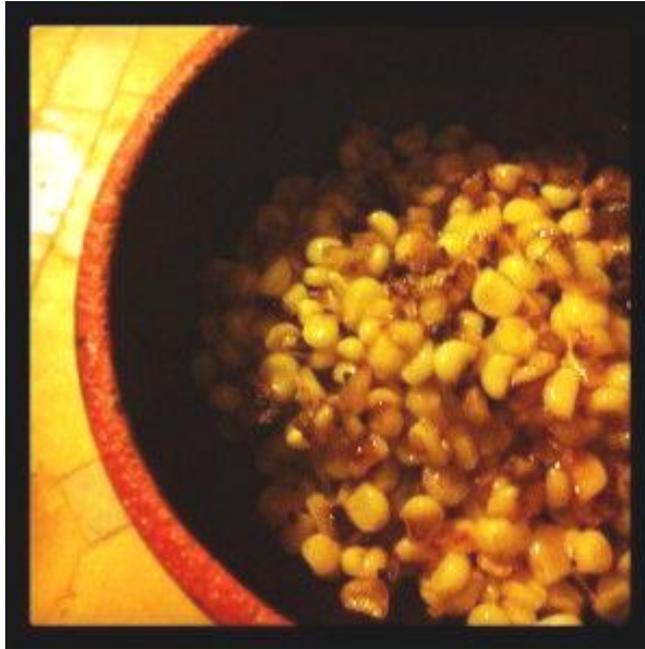
## **How to Prepare:**

1. Heat up the EVOO in a skillet.
2. Toss in the onion and sauté, stirring frequently, for a few minutes, until the onion is clear and soft.
3. Toss in the red peppers and tamari or Liquid Aminos and stir.
4. Push the onions and peppers to the outer edges of the skillet and toss in the sausage. Cook it on medium for a few minutes, stir or flip the sausage, and cook for another few minutes.
5. Push the sausage to the outer edges of the skillet and add the chard. Cover and cook for a few more minutes.
6. Uncover, stir everything together, and add the parmesan on top. Without stirring, let the cheese melt for a few minutes.

## **TIP: How To Buy Corn**

I grew up in New England, where summer corn is an annual tradition. Now I live in California, where corn is available virtually year-round. However, I generally stick to eating corn in the late summer and early fall, when it is traditionally harvested. Corn that hasn't been shucked is the best, and when picking out ears of corn, it is a good idea to peel back the husk a bit to make sure that the corn is not rotty.

# Crunchy! Spicy! Zesty! Corn-off-the-Cob



When I was a kid, I used to spend the summers on Cape Cod with my grandma, and for special evenings we'd get lobster and sweet summer corn. Most New Englanders like to eat their corn on the cob, but I always had a soft spot for my grandma's sweet way of cutting my corn off the cob for me. I've had a fondness for corn-off-the-cob ever since. During corn season, this is a great way to spice up your sweet corn and give it even more zing with the juice of a tangerine.

**Time to prepare:** 20 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- 2 ears of fresh corn
- Juice of 1/2 a small tangerine
- Juice of 1/2 a lime
- Splash of tamari
- Splash of maple syrup
- Splash of Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Small jalapeño, seeded and minced

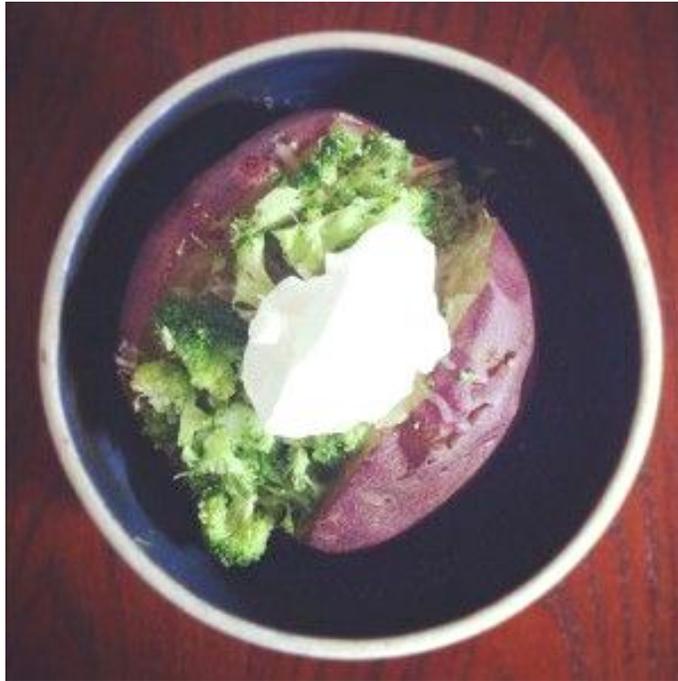
## **How to Prepare:**

1. Shuck the corn and cut the kernels carefully off the cob with a serrated knife into a bowl to catch them as they scatter.
2. Heat the EVOO in a cast iron skillet until it is hot, then add garlic and jalapeño, lower the heat to medium, and stir constantly for about 30 seconds.
3. Add the corn, stir.
4. Add the tangerine and lime juices, tamari and maple syrup and cook for about 2 minutes.
5. If there is still liquid in the pan after 2 minutes, pour off the excess and turn the heat up to brown the corn for about a minute on each side.

## **TIP: Sweet Potatoes Versus Yams**

Although it's easy to confuse sweet potatoes and yams - they look alike and frankly don't taste all that different to the novice - they are in fact very different vegetables that aren't even closely related. Sweet potatoes pack a much higher punch in the nutrient department. A store you trust will have them correctly labeled. Reach for the sweet potatoes!

# The Protein + Iron-rich Powerhouse Sweet Potato You Can Eat as a Meal



A tasty twist on the boring old baked potato, sweet potato is tres good for you\* and quite delicious too.

**Time to prepare:** an hour of passive sweet potato cook time, plus about ten minutes of “real work”

## **Ingredients:**

- 1 medium-size sweet potato
- Few splashes of extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- Handful of broccoli florets
- 1/4 cup of your favorite cheese — cheddar, parmesan or chevre are ideal, but most cheeses will work
- Scoop of Greek yogurt
- Salt and pepper to taste

## **How to Prepare:**

1. Preheat oven to 400°F and cook the sweet potato for about 40 to 60 minutes. Cook time depends on size of potato. Sweet potato is done when a fork inserts very easily and potato breaks apart. Skin should be crisp, and you may notice the potato's natural sugars leaking out the bottom.
2. While sweet potato is cooking, rinse broccoli and chop very fine. Steam it for just a few minutes by placing in a small strainer over boiling water. Do not overcook.
3. Combine all ingredients in your small bowl and eat.

*\* According to [foodreference.com](http://www.foodreference.com), sweet potato ranks #1 in nutrition, with its high fiber content, complex carbohydrate makeup, and mix of protein, vitamins A and C, iron and calcium ([www.foodreference.com](http://www.foodreference.com))*

# Quickie Herby Tomato Risotto For One



While it may seem decadent to prepare a classic Italian dish in such a modest amount, it is actually quite easy and quick. However, you can certainly double or triple the recipe and save the leftovers for your next meal. This recipe makes enough for one small bowl, so do your easy math to make more. You can use whatever fresh herbs are in season where you live: oregano, rosemary, thyme, marjoram or tarragon. Or buy a “mixed herb” package in the produce aisle at your grocery.

**Time to prepare:** 50 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- 1/2 cup arborio rice
- 1 1/2 cups water or chicken or veggie broth
- 2 Roma tomatoes, chopped fine
- 2 small shallots, chopped
- Tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- Tablespoon of dry white wine (optional and only if you happen to have it around)
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 2 T of chopped fresh herbs of your choice

- Zest and juice of a  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; a small lemon
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste

### **How to Prepare:**

1. Bring salted water or broth to a simmer in a saucepan, then turn off heat and cover to keep warm.
2. In a skillet, heat the EVOO over medium heat.
3. Add garlic, shallot, salt and pepper and sauté until tender and fragrant, stirring frequently.
4. Add the rice and stir for one minute.
5. Add the white wine and stir until evaporated.
6. Slowly add the water or broth, about 1/4 at a time, continuously stirring and letting the liquid evaporate each time before adding more. This should take about half an hour, all told. You do not have to stand there and stir the entire time, but definitely stir quite frequently. You're going for a creamy texture. You may not use all of the liquid, depending on how fast the rice cooks.
7. Add the tomatoes toward the end of the cooking process. At the same time, add the chopped herbs.
8. Stir in the cheese and the lemon zest and juice.
9. Transfer to your small bowl and eat with satisfaction!

## **TIP: Breadcrumbs**

I like panko breadcrumbs, which come in a canister that I keep in the freezer. You can also make your own breadcrumbs out of stale bread, but panko breadcrumbs seem to have just the right consistency for meatballs, without adding any extraneous flavor.

# Wickedly Tasty & Versatile Meatballs



Meatballs are basically ground beef that is rolled into balls, with some filler material to hold them together - I use eggs and cheese. Throw in some panko breadcrumbs, chopped up parsley and dill, salt and pepper... and you have yourself meatballs! I make a cast iron skillet-full Sunday night and throw a few in my soups and other dishes all week long. They add a punch of protein to any healthy dish and are quite delicious.

**Time to prepare:** 45 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- 1 lb. ground beef, the leaner the better
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup of bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup of shredded parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup of dill, chopped
- 1/2 cup of parsley, chopped
- Dash of salt and pepper
- Splash of Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)

## **How to Prepare:**

1. Preheat oven to 375°.
2. Coat a cast iron skillet or baking dish with the olive oil.
3. In a large bowl, mix together all the other ingredients, working together well with your clean fingers.
4. With your hands, roll the mixture into small balls (roughly the size of a golf ball). Place the meatballs in the skillet, closely together so they touch. If you end up with extra space, that's ok. The important thing is that the meatballs are all touching.
5. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Meatballs should have a nice brown finish, but it is a good idea to cut one open to see if it is cooked all the way through.

## **TIP: Choosing Marinara Sauce**

I prefer to buy a less-seasoned marinara sauce (aka tomato sauce) and flavor it myself with fresh or dried herbs or cooked onion or garlic. While there are some very high-quality varieties of marinara sauce in jars in the canned good aisle, nothing beats a fresh marinara sauce, often available in the refrigerated section of your specialty food market.

If you have never had spaghetti squash, get ready for your world to be rocked. A great alternative to carbs like pasta and potatoes, spaghetti squash is a satisfying complement to marinara sauce and meatballs. Light and delicious, and a perfect fit for your small bowl.

# Carb-free “No Pasta Spaghetti” Squash with Meatballs



**Time to prepare:** an hour of passive squash cook time, plus assembly

## Ingredients:

- 1 small spaghetti squash
- Few splashes of extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- Bit of dried thyme, oregano or any other herb you love
- 1/2 cup of marinara sauce
- 1/4 cup of parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup of sunflower seeds (optional)
- About 4-5 small meatballs (homemade or store-bought)
- Salt and pepper to taste

## How to Prepare:

1. Preheat oven to 375°, cut the squash in half, scoop out the seeds with a spoon, and rub the insides of the squash with olive oil and herbs.
2. Bake for about an hour. Squash is done when a fork inserts easily and it feels soft. Let it cool slightly, then scoop the “meat” out of the squash into your small bowl. (*See note below*)

3. When you take the squash out of the oven to cool, heat the marinara sauce on the stovetop and add the meatballs to warm them up.
4. Toast the sunflower seeds lightly.
5. Assemble everything in your small bowl, add the parmesan, and then season with salt and pepper to taste.

**NOTE:**

One whole squash yields two small bowl meals. You can cook both halves up front and reheat the second half later when you are ready for your second meal.

## **TIP: Cutting Squash**

Squash is one of my favorite foods and the primary reason I love autumn. Cutting a squash, however, is one of my least favorite activities. When cutting a hard squash, one tactic I sometimes use is to gently saw “perforation” into the hard squash rind with a serrated knife, then switch to a very sharp chef’s knife to continue cutting more deeply.

# Asian Kabocha Squash with Italian Cheese and Sunny Seeds



Kabocha squash is one of my favorites. Available at most fancy grocery stores, it looks like acorn squash but has an edible peel that gives it a great fulfilling texture. It's really a meal in itself, but paired with the salty tang of tamari, sunflower seeds and parmesan cheese, you'll feel fulfilled, warm and healthy after this winter treat. Like the other squash recipes, this one makes at least two small bowl meals and the excess can be refrigerated and eaten cold or warmed up for your next meal.

**Time to prepare:** an hour of passive squash cook time, plus assembly

## Ingredients:

- 1 small kabocha squash
- Few splashes of extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- Few splashes of high quality tamari (soy sauce)
- Modest amount of grated or shaved parmesan
- Handful of sunflower seeds

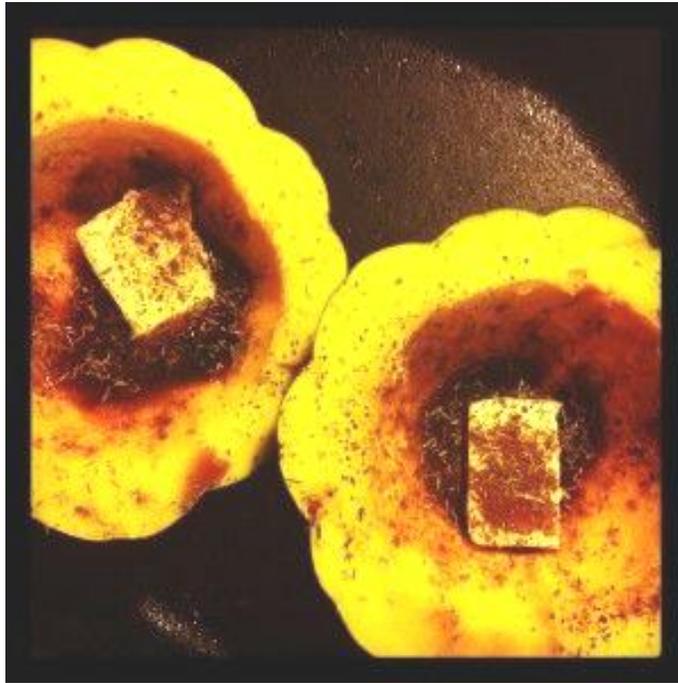
## How to Prepare:

1. Preheat oven to 350° and cut squash into quarters, each quarter resembling a canoe.
2. Brush olive oil and tamari liberally onto the squash “meat.”
3. Bake for about an hour. Squash is done when a fork inserts easily.
4. Toward the end of the baking, sprinkle parmesan onto the squash.
5. Toast the sunflower seeds separately and add them once the squash is out of the oven.

## **TIP: Winter Squashes**

“Winter” squashes includes butternut, buttercup, spaghetti, kabocha, pumpkin and acorn. Unlike their summer cousins, they are very durable and stay fresh for quite a while. I like to imagine my Puritan ancestors stockpiling them in the fall for comfort and nutrition throughout the winter. Acorn is one of my favorites. A small, round squash with a dark green skin that is often streaked with orange flashes, it is one of the easier winter squashes to slice in half and it is easy to prepare. Sometimes I even eat it as a dessert, with maple syrup as a sweetener. Squash “meat” is also pretty sweet on its own.

# “Butter Trapper” Baked Acorn Squash



Acorn squash is one of my favorite small bowl meals, especially during the darker months when I crave comforting, warm foods that don't take a lot of effort. It's easy to slice an acorn squash in half, and once you scoop out the seeds, you have a perfect bowl in which to melt butter and spices and a little bit of cheese. Grounding goodness. Bonus: one squash makes two meals.

**Time to prepare:** an hour of passive squash cook time, plus assembly

## **Ingredients:**

- 1 medium acorn squash
- Two generous pats of butter
- Bit of thyme
- Bit of allspice or cinnamon
- Sprinkle of parmesan cheese
- Dollop of sour cream
- Salt and pepper to taste

## **How to Prepare:**

1. Preheat oven to 400°F, cut the squash in half, scoop out the seeds with a spoon, and lay open-side-up in a baking pan or cast iron skillet.
2. Place a pat of butter in each half, and then sprinkle liberally with spices.
3. Bake for about an hour. Squash is done when a fork inserts easily and it feels soft. Toward the very end of the bake time, sprinkle parmesan on the squash so that it melts in.
4. Remove from oven and slide one squash half into your small bowl.
5. Add a dollop of sour cream, and salt and pepper.
6. Refrigerate the other half for later!

## **TIP: Brussel Sprouts**

Smaller, tighter Brussels sprouts are usually more flavorful, and I prefer the smaller size because, when cut in half, these buds are the perfect size for a bite. They should be bright green and, preferably, also organic. Any grocery store worth half a salt will have them in the fall and winter. Always buy Brussels sprouts fresh; if you can get them straight from the farmer, even better! Experiment with cook time to perfect the texture you like the best, but as a starting point, I encourage you not to cook them too long. They should still be bright green and pretty firm when you eat them. Overcooked Brussels sprouts get mushy and bland - like most vegetables do when overcooked.

# The Best Damned Brussels Sprouts You've Never Had Yet



Brussels sprouts get a bad rap. They look like puny little cabbages (and are, technically, from the same family - *Brassica oleracea*, if you must know). They are famously snubbed by children worldwide. But Brussels sprouts are a truly delicious, hearty winter vegetable that barely requires a protein to serve as a filling meal. They are also chock full of dietary fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. I practically live on them during the winter, and they last for a while in the fridge before cooking, so they are a practical choice when you're grocery shopping for the week ahead.

**Time to prepare:** 20 to 30 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- Generous handful of small Brussels sprouts
- 3 or 4 shallots, chopped
- Few splashes of extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- Dash of sea salt

- The juice of  $\frac{1}{2}$  an orange
- Handful of hazelnuts or pecans, chopped
- Black pepper to taste

### **How to Prepare:**

1. Wash the Brussels sprouts well, trim off any loose outer leaves and cut the stem off each sprout, then chop it in half neatly (from stem to top, revealing a cross-section).
2. Heat the EVOO in a skillet until it pops, add chopped shallots and stir frequently over medium-high heat for a few minutes, until shallots are soft and translucent.
3. Add the Brussels sprouts, stir, and add orange juice.
4. Cover with a tight-fitting lid and cook for about 5 minutes.
5. Uncover and continue to cook to desired finish.
6. Meanwhile, toast the nuts.
7. Add everything to your small bowl and season with pepper.

## **TIP: Tofu Selection**

There are two tricks to making delicious tofu dishes:

- Buy quality tofu - I usually look for a boutique local brand that uses organic, non-GMO soybeans.
- Tofu picks up the flavor of whatever you soak and cook it in, so it is really all about the marinade.

# Simple + Zesty Citrus Tofu and Greens



I'm not a vegetarian, but I can be a little bit of a hippie sometimes, and I can appreciate a light, healthy tofu meal. This inexpensive tofu dish is easy to prepare, satisfying to eat, full of nutrition, and makes for great leftovers. If you don't have one or two of the ingredients in the marinade, don't fret. You can experiment with leaving them out, or try something similar. For instance, if you do not have any rice vinegar, another type of vinegar will suffice. It will change the flavor of the marinade slightly, but that's the nice thing about tofu: it's forgiving. Think of it like your most boring, loyal friend who is willing to do anything you want to do, anytime.

**Time to prepare:** 20-30 minutes (not including tofu marinating time)

## **Ingredients:**

- 4 oz. of high quality tofu, cut neatly into small squares
- Generous handful of fresh, hearty greens such as kale, chard or arugula
- 1/2 an orange, cut neatly into small bites
- Small handful of cashews, chopped course
- Splash of vegetable oil
- 1 scallion, chopped fine

## **Marinade Ingredients:**

- The other  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the orange, juiced
- Splash of tamari
- Splash of sesame oil
- Splash of honey
- Splash of rice vinegar
- Splash of sake or dry white wine or sherry
- Small piece of fresh ginger

## **How to Prepare:**

1. Blend together all of the dressing ingredients, and grate the ginger into the liquid with a micro plane\* or fine grater so that the juice from the ginger mixes in along with the grated ginger itself.
2. Pour the marinade over the tofu, cover, and let sit at room temperature for at least an hour, and up to overnight. (You can prepare the tofu a day ahead.)
3. In a skillet or wok, heat the vegetable oil over high heat until it crackles. Add the tofu and cook, stirring frequently, for a few minutes. Reserve leftover marinade for the next step.
4. Add the chopped greens and a little bit of the tofu marinade, then cover, turn the heat down, and let the greens and tofu cook together for 4 to 6 minutes, until the greens are wilted but not overcooked. Depending on the type of greens you use, this might happen quicker, so keep an eye on it.
5. Meanwhile, toast the cashews lightly.
6. Combine the tofu, greens, cashews and orange slices in your small bowl, and top with chopped scallion.

*\* I'm not a huge fan of specialty kitchen gadgets with a narrow range of utility, but a micro plane is one thing I could not live without. It's essentially a handheld grater with a very fine "tooth." It grates things like cheese, fresh ginger and carrots into very, very fine shreds.*

## **TIP: Picking Out Fruit**

When it comes to baking fruit, the riper the better. That means it should be soft and squishy to the touch. Bruises are fine when cooked. I personally prefer the tangier yellow peaches over the sweeter white ones.

# Better-Than-Crisp Peach Dessert Without the Sugary Junk



Greek yogurt is one of my staple proteins and a favorite way to flavor and add quality to small bowl meals. It's good for you, and it's delicious. I favor the plain whole milk variety, but the low-fat and zero fat options aren't that bad. Baked fruit with a dollop of Greek yogurt is naturally sweet and incredibly delicious. This recipe features peaches, but try it with apples, pears, Asian pears or even berries.

**Time to prepare:** a half hour because of bake time

## **Ingredients:**

- 1 large ripe peach, sliced in half with pit and stem removed
- Pat of butter
- Dash of spices: allspice, cinnamon, clove
- Handful of hazelnuts (almonds work too)
- Dollop of Greek yogurt

## **How to Prepare:**

1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. Place peach halves, face up, in a cast iron skillet or baking pan and put a half a pat of butter in each.
3. Sprinkle liberally with your choice of spices.
4. Cook the peach for about 10-15 minutes. It's done when it gets real mushy and collapses.
5. While peach is cooking, carefully toast the chopped nuts, either in the broiler, in a toaster oven, or on the stovetop in a dry skillet.

## **NOTE:**

Don't get distracted while toasting nuts. They go from zero to burnt in a flash!

## **TIP: Applesauce Accoutrements**

Applesauce is not just a dessert - although it's a nutritious and naturally-sweet one. I eat applesauce for breakfast with a dollop of Greek yogurt or cottage cheese, or even for a light lunch. If you're finding that small bowl eating is leaving you hungry at first, applesauce can be a great filler snack between small bowl meals. Make a batch; it keeps in the fridge for a week or two.

# Quick and Tasty Applesauce



Applesauce is one of those items that we assume is born in a jar. You might be surprised at how very easy it is to cook applesauce from scratch, and it's a great way to deal with an excess of apples in the fall! Apples are so good for you. High in potassium and fiber, they are a great water-based food for stimulating your digestive system from "end to end." This recipe makes about 4 small bowl servings of applesauce. Of course, you can double or even triple it if you really love the stuff.

**Time to prepare:** 45 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

- 10 ripe apples, any variety (experiment!)
- 1/4 cup of water
- Dash of salt
- Dash of dessert spices such as allspice, cinnamon, nutmeg or clove
- Few tablespoons of maple syrup or brown sugar

## **How to Prepare:**

1. Peel and slice the apples roughly into quarters. Note that you can also leave the peels on for a slightly stronger flavor and color. (Make sure to wash the apples well in this case, and choose organic if possible.)
2. Put the apples in a big stockpot and add the water. Bring the water to a boil, then turn the heat down and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Toward the end of the cook time, add the salt, spices and sweetener.
4. When the apples are quite mushy, remove from heat and use a potato masher or immersion blender to liquefy. The former will make chunkier applesauce; the latter will make smoother applesauce. Stop frequently to taste!

## **TIP: How To Get The Seeds Out Of A Pomegranate Without Going Insane**

I love this trick. Slice the pomegranate in half, fill a large bowl with water, submerge each half in the water, and with your hands underwater, break the pomegranate apart as you gently work the seeds out of the pulp. They will pop out easily, and the seeds will sink as the empty pulp rises to the top. Doing this underwater prevents the bright red pomegranate juice from spraying and staining your clothes and kitchen, and it's easy to skim the pulp off the surface of the water and throw it away. Then, simply strain out the seeds.

# Persian Pomegranate Parfait



A great dessert that's pretty healthy and can even pass for breakfast when you are feeling decadent. I suggest that you make a bulk amount of the pomegranate-cranberry sauce for repeated servings. It will last for a few weeks in the fridge, and once you taste this goodness you will want to come back for seconds. For this reason, and to make the amounts easier to figure, this recipe makes several servings. By the way, I call it "Persian" because pomegranates hail from Iran; with maple syrup and cranberries, it has a distinct Yankee flavor.

**Time to prepare:** 30 minutes, including pomegranate de-seeding time

## Ingredients:

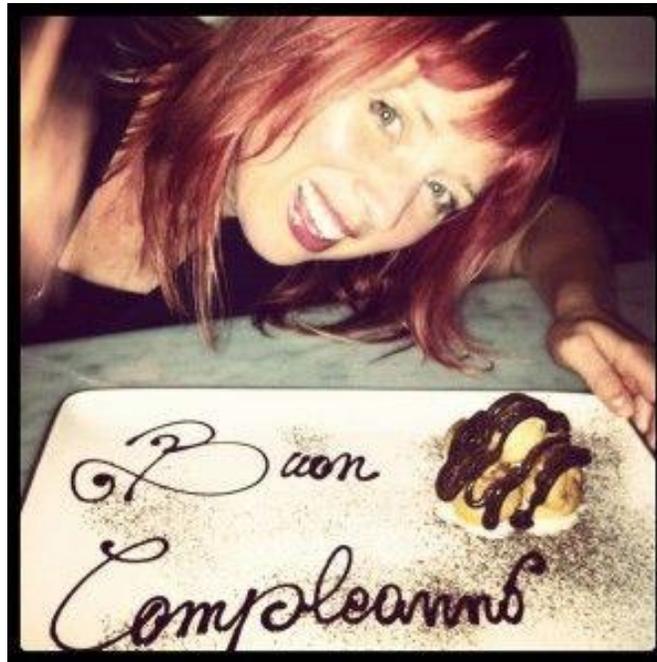
- The seeds of 1 pomegranate (see previous page for tips)
- Bag of *fresh* cranberries
- The juice of 1 orange
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- Dash of cinnamon
- Dash of cardamom
- Serving of cottage cheese or Greek yogurt

## **How to Prepare:**

1. In a heavy saucepan, combine all of the ingredients except the cottage cheese or yogurt and bring to a boil.
2. Turn the heat down to low and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes, until the cranberries just start to break down.
3. Taste for sweetness. Depending on your preference, you may need to add more maple syrup.
4. Let cool slightly, then top the cottage cheese or Greek yogurt with the cranberry pomegranate sauce in your small bowl.

Incidentally, this cranberry sauce also makes an intriguing alternative to the Thanksgiving traditional!

## About Josie Hamilton



Josie Hamilton is an expert at being single. She knows firsthand the conundrum of being a foodie who is too lazy to cook elaborate meals for one. An autodidact, it was through necessity that she learned how to shop for and cook simple, easy, inexpensive, delicious meals for herself. The daughter of “restaurant people,” she was raised on good food cooked from scratch by parents who really knew what they were doing in the kitchen. And because she was spoiled by her parents’ culinary talents, she has never been able to settle for less.

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