

Start your day the right way with fresh whole-grain quick breads

Exciting things are happening to American food trends. Breakfast is being rediscovered. Fresh fruit and vegetable consumption is up. Poultry sales are booming. Wholegrain cereals are in demand as are low-fat dairy products. Variety breads fill bakery shelves. All of this indicates a shift toward healthier eating. As a smart shopper, you can obtain a lot of healthy eating at the supermarket checkout.

Eating healthy starts with selecting foods from the Basic Four food groups. These groups include fruits and vegetables... meat, fish and poultry... milk and dairy... breads, grains and cereals. Choose a variety of foods from each group daily. Each food group contains foods that cost a lot and foods that cost a little, so careful menu planning can mean lower grocery bills.

Reconstituted non-fat dry milk, for example, supplies the same important vitamins and minerals as fresh fluid milk for just pennies a serving. Eggs, beans, legumes and peanut butter provide protein but cost far less than a T-bone steak. Fresh fruits and vegetables that are "in season" are always a good buy. Cereals you cook yourself cost less than ready-to-eat varieties, while regular rice costs less than instant rice and flavored rice mixes.

In addition to eating a variety of foods each day, it's also a good idea to choose foods that are: 1) low in fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sugar and sodium; and 2) good sources of complex carbohydrates and dietary fiber. The latter includes any food from the fruit and vegetable group and most foods from the breads, grains and cereals group.

Wholegrain cereal products are nutritional powerhouses. Oats, for example, supply seven B-complex vitamins, vitamin E and nine minerals. They are higher in protein than any other grain, low in sodium and cholesterol free. Because wholegrain cereals contain all three parts of the natural grain — germ, endosperm and bran — they also are excellent and inexpensive sources of dietary fiber.

Adding fiber to menus isn't difficult. Why? Because cereal grains and other fiber-rich foods are so versatile. Easy and appealing ways to add fiber to your diet include:

- Serve raw fruits and vegetables with their peels, or use unpeeled vegetables in soups, stews, casseroles and salads.
- Substitute brown rice for white rice and serve oat and barley pilafs in place of pasta and potatoes.
- Sprinkle wholegrain cereals on fruit, yogurt, soups, salads and casseroles.
- Substitute wholegrain flours for a portion of the white flour in breads, rolls, biscuits, pancakes, waffles, coffee cakes and cookies.
- Incorporate rolled oats and wheat germ into fruit desserts like cobblers and crisps.

Use rolled oats or oat bran as a coating for poultry and fish or as an extender for ground meats.

Add beans to soups, stews, casseroles and salads or serve as accompaniments.

Substitute toasted oats for bread crumbs. One of the easiest and most delicious ways to add fiber to meals is serving wholegrain breads. And, wholegrain breads you make yourself can cost as much as 50 percent less than bakery breads.

There's also something satisfying about baking bread from scratch.

With quick breads, even the busiest cook can find time for baking. Wholegrain Apple Muffins go from kitchen to breakfast table in less than 30 minutes. They feature the wholesome flavor and hearty texture of oats. Fresh chopped unpeeled apple adds a natural sweetness as well as additional dietary fiber. Because these nutritious muffins freeze beautifully, you can bake an extra batch to keep on hand for on-the-run-breakfasts, lunchboxes and after-school snacks. When tightly wrapped, muffins and other baked goods can be stored in the freezer for three months.

WHOLEGRAIN APPLE MUFFINS
 1/4 cups quick or old-fashioned oats (uncooked)
 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
 1/4 cup finely chopped apple
 1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
 1 tsp. baking powder
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
 1 egg
 1 cup milk
 1 egg
 1/4 cup vegetable oil
 1 tsp. granulated sugar
 1/4 tsp. cinnamon

Heat oven to 425°. Grease 12 medium muffin cups or line with paper baking cups. Combine oats, flour, apple, brown sugar, baking powder, salt and 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon. Add milk, egg and oil; mix just until dry ingredients are moistened. Fill prepared muffin cups 3/4 full. Mix together granulated sugar and 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon; sprinkle about 1/2 tsp. over each muffin. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from pan; cool on wire cooling rack. Makes 1 dozen muffins.

While not as quick as muffins, batter yeast breads are easier to prepare than their more traditional cousins. No kneading or shaping is required, and few utensils make clean-up a breeze. Serve fiber-rich Oat Batter Bread warm from the oven, sliced and toasted for breakfast, or use as the start

for satisfying sandwiches.

OAT BATTER BREAD
 1 pkg. active dry yeast
 1 1/4 cups warm water (110° to 115°)
 1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
 3 tsp. margarine, melted
 1 tsp. salt
 1 cup quick or old-fashioned oats (uncooked)
 1 egg
 2 1/2 to 3 cups all-purpose flour

Dissolve yeast in 1/4 cup of the warm water.

Combine remaining 1/4 cup water, sugar, margarine and salt. Stir in dissolved yeast, oats and egg. Add 1 cup flour; beat until smooth. Stir in enough remaining flour to make a stiff batter. Cover; let rise in warm place about 1 1/2 hours or until double in size.

Grease 8 x 4-inch loaf pan. Stir down batter; spoon into prepared pan. Let rise, uncovered, in warm place about 30 minutes or until top of batter is almost to top edge of pan. Heat oven to 375°. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until dark golden brown. Remove from pan; cool at least 1 hour before slicing. Makes 1 loaf.

No-hurt dessert

Nutrition can be a part of every course in a meal, even dessert. A banana smoothly can satisfy a dessert lover while still providing good nutrition at the end of a meal.

BANANA SMOOTHIE
 1 ripe banana
 1 cup milk
 3 scoops vanilla ice cream
 1 tsp lemon juice

Combine ingredients in blender container. Cover and run on high until well blended. Pour into tall glasses. Sprinkle with nutmeg, if desired. 2 servings (8 ozs each)

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• Substitute brown rice for white rice and serve oat and barley pilafs in place of pasta and potatoes.

• Sprinkle wholegrain cereals on fruit, yogurt, soups, salads and casseroles.

• Substitute wholegrain flours for a portion of the white flour in breads, rolls, biscuits, pancakes, waffles, coffee cakes and cookies.

• Incorporate rolled oats and wheat germ into fruit desserts like cobblers and crisps.

• Use rolled oats or oat bran as a coating for poultry and fish or as an extender for ground meats.

• Add beans to soups, stews, casseroles and salads or serve as accompaniments.

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Wines complement food

Good wines should complement meals. If you choose to serve more than one wine, always serve white before reds (except dessert wines) and younger vintages before older ones. If you are unsure of what wine will go particularly well with hard-to-match dishes like turkey or port chops, "amoose" your uncertainty, serve two different wines and let each guest decide what he or she prefers.



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Men shoppers also like to buy convenient food

More likely than not, the man weighing the bananas in the produce section doesn't work there. Today, men do 40 percent of the shopping, and at least that number prepares all or some of the groceries they buy. What do they cook? Everything from spaghetti carbonara to apple pie — on the weekends. But, during the week, quick meals are big. And, quick meals also are easy-on-the-budget. To meet both these requirements, men often plan suppers around steaming bowls of homemade soup. While lobster bisque and old-fashioned vegetable soup like Mom used to make are out, other equally satisfying soups put few demands on time or money. Smart shoppers rely on convenience food products which can be kept on-hand or frozen in the freezer. Though a bit more costly, some convenience foods are well worth the extra pennies because they are real time-savers. Dry soup mixes, instant bouillon and canned broth, for example, can replace homemade stocks which demand hours of simmering.