



Nutrition Nibbles

Cuddle Up With Comfort Foods

During the cold winter months, there is something appealing about snuggling up with a favorite meal from your past. Comfort foods, or those simple familiar foods that remind you of something pleasant from the past, can be a common way to soothe your emotions and soul. Typically high in fat, comfort foods are not always as comfortable to the waistline or your health. Americans rate chocolate cake, meatloaf, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, fried chicken, chicken noodle soup, pizza, peanut butter, ice cream, and potato chips as some of their top favorite comfort foods.

Because no one can make your favorite comfort food quite like your mom or grandma, why don't you consider "cleaning" them up a bit so you can eat your comfort cake and enjoy it too? Read on for some simple ways to savor slightly healthier versions of your favorites.

- **Chocolate Cake:** Try using an egg substitute like egg beaters, fat free or 1% milk, and substituting applesauce for half the oil in your recipe to lighten up this tasty treat.

- **Meatloaf:** Health up your meatloaf by using lean ground turkey (no skin please) or chicken in place of beef. Sneak in some finely chopped vegetables for a little extra fiber and flavor.
- **Mac 'n' Cheese:** Switch to whole wheat elbow macaroni, throw in some pureed butternut squash, and use 1% milk in place of whole milk and you have a healthier but still creamy and delicious version of your favorite. Try this recipe: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/ellie-krieger/macaroni-and-4-cheeses-recipe2/index.html>
- **Mashed Potatoes:** Don't shed the peel when making your potatoes--it adds some heart healthy fiber to your dish. Substitute chicken stock or fat free buttermilk for heavy cream and decrease the amount of butter you use or try olive oil instead. For a slight twist, use sweet potatoes in place of white potatoes for an extra nutrient punch.
- **Fried Chicken:** Crush corn flakes and whole grain

College Corner:

There's An App for That
The iPhone and the iPod Touch continue to gain in popularity, especially on college campuses, and bring a great deal of profit and publicity to Apple. Both are innovative ways to smartly multi-task or just kill some time. Who hasn't heard their catch-phrase "There's an app for that"? Speaking of apps, I am impressed by the number of high quality, free to low cost, health and nutrition-related apps available. Here are a few of my favorite FREE applications:

- **Lose It!** This app calculates your daily calorie budget based on your weight goals. It allows you to track your food intake, exercise, and weigh-ins. You even have the option to track other nutrients besides calories. Quite convenient!
- **Restaurant Nutrition:** Tap in to check out the nutrient info from your favorite fast food joints. Use the facts to make a better choice.
- **Starbucks:** With a Starbucks within a 5-mile radius of every college

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Comfort Foods continued...

crackers for your “fried” crust. Dip your chicken in a mix of egg whites and low fat plain yogurt and then into your topping. Pop your chicken into the oven for that “oven fried” wholesome goodness. Here’s a recipe with some good reviews: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/ellie-krieger/oven-fried-chicken-recipe/index.html>

- **Chicken Noodle Soup:** This comfort food is actually quite good for you. To make it even better, try whole grain noodles and packing it full of veggies for some extra fiber and vitamins.
- **Pizza:** This fun food requires no proper eating utensils. To lighten it up, switch to whole wheat pizza dough, use part-skim mozzarella cheese, load on the vegetables, and add a little fruit (think pineapple or pears). If you must have meat, try lean Canadian bacon or ham. Here’s a whole handful of fun pizza recipes: http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes_menus/collections/healthy_pizza_recipes

- **Peanut Butter:** When it comes to any kind of nut butter, peanut butter included, go ala “natural.” Make sure your comfort contains only peanuts and salt. Skip out on the high fructose corn syrup, partially hydrogenated oil, and palm oil that many name brands and low fat versions contain.
- **Ice Cream:** Go with a slow or double-churned light ice cream and keep your serving to 1/2 cup. Other alternatives include single serving desserts (such as Skinny Cow bars or sandwiches), whole fruit no sugar added sorbet, and fudgsicles.
- **Potato Chips:** The trick here is to purchase or pre-portion single servings. Look for baked and low sodium versions of your all-time favorite chips.

I hope you find these suggestions helpful the next time you decide to cuddle up with your favorite comfort food.

College Corner continued...

campus, use this app to check out how healthy (or not) your favorite study break beverage and snack is (or isn’t).

- **iRelax Melodies:** Create a relaxing study environment by dialing up soothing background sounds that will lull you into the zone. Generate a favorite combination that you can easily dial into and check out the timer and alarm feature.
 - **Epicurious and AllRecipes:** Both of these apps assist you in finding new recipes to try. They even provide recipe reviews. Epicurious includes photos of each recipe and allows you to create a shopping list while AllRecipes provides a recipe nutrition label.
 - **Virtual Trainer:** If you are looking for the best way to work out your biceps, check out this app. You can select the muscle group you’d like to strengthen, choose from a list of exercises, and check out online videos to see how it’s done.
- Enjoy your apps!

Favorite Food

Lots of people are curious about what dietitians eat when they are “off-duty.” In honor of the month of love, I’m making sure to get my “vitamin Ch” or chocolate! When my sweet tooth calls, nothing beats savoring a small square of high quality dark chocolate. Rich in

antioxidants, called flavonoids, dark chocolate may help lower blood pressure, lower “bad” LDL cholesterol, while slightly raising “good” HDL cholesterol. Before you go on a chocolate binge though, higher flavonoid contents are found in whole grains and fruits and veggies.