

cooking by the numbers

Cut 8,101 (or more!) calories from home-cooked meals—on Turkey Day and every day

By Sari Botton Photographs by Todd Huffman

he way nutritionists go on about restaurant diet

crimes, you'd think the entrance to Bennigan's would be blocked off by yellow police tape. But, breadbasket assaults aside, the riskiest place for your waistline is actually your own kitchen. That's where you make daily decisions that affect your weight: choosing between skim milk and whole, reaching for butter or olive oil, stocking up on Oreos or Triscuits. "Cutting calories when cooking at home is the first step to creating healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime," says Lisa

R. Young, R.D., author of *The Portion Teller Plan*. The following easy tips will help you crack down on fat and calories—and serve and protect your figure.

OIL BE DAMNED

It's healthier than butter, but it's still fat. Here's how to skip the slick stuff or make a little go a long way.

Make it a spritzer Oil in a spray can or mister (we like the Misto Gourmet Olive Oil Sprayer, \$10, chefsresource.com) lets you fry foods with a fraction of the calories you'd get from a pour spout. A spritz works great on pasta and roasted vegetables, too.

● CALORIES CUT

112

Cook twice For crispy chicken or fish without all the fat of frying, use your oven, says dietician and nutritionist Molly Morgan. Coat a pan with a tablespoon of flavorless canola oil and fry the meat for 10 minutes per side. Blot up extra grease with paper towels, then transfer to the oven and bake on low heat (200 to 250 degrees) for 15 to 20 minutes.

● CALORIES CUT

2,767

Bring on the broth "Stir-fry your vegetables in a wok with a half-cup of broth," says Sal Scognamillo, co-owner and chef at Patsy's Italian Restaurant in New York City. "Chicken, beef, or vegetable stock give broccoli, zucchini, peppers, and carrots great flavor, and really cut down on the fat." At 41 calories per half-cup (most oils have nearly 1,000 calories per half-cup), broth can save the caloric equivalent of three whole avocados.

● CALORIES CUT

959

Hit the sauce When baking, replace oil with sweetened applesauce (97 calories per half-cup) or canned pumpkin (42 calories per half-cup). "It lowers fat and calories, while keeping your cakes and muffins moist," Young says. To add more berry flavor to berry muffins, try blackberry-flavored applesauce (we like Santa Cruz Organic Apple Blackberry Sauce, \$4.50, available in grocery stores).

● CALORIES CUT

922

GREAT IMPOSTORS

"Accept no substitutes" doesn't apply to healthy cooking. These flavorful imitations show why sometimes it's better to fake it.

Hamburger helper Who would have thought beef could be the lighter choice? It's true: Just make sure you stick with the skinny kind. A 4-ounce serving of 95 percent lean ground beef contains only 155 calories—that's even less than turkey (168 calories), and beats ground pork (297 calories for the same amount).

● CALORIES CUT

132

Carb unload Steamed, shredded cauliflower is a great starchy-tasting stand-in for potatoes and rice. "I put the cauliflower through the shredding blade of my food processor and season it with whatever goes with the rest of the meal, like soup stock, or curry powder and chopped pistachios," says Dana Carpender, author of eight books, including *500*





THE LOW(ER)-CALORIE THANKSGIVING

IT'S THE MOST gut-busting day of the year, so, yeah, you're bound to overdo it—especially if Aunt Gertrude, your holiday host, favors real butter and cream. Instead of fighting the desire to eat like your 12-year-old self, stick to this game plan: Skip the ho-hum fillers like nuts and bread and pile up your plate—only once—with big but still reasonable portions of all this truly delicious stuff.

WINE

(5 oz glass), 120 calories
If the family drives you to drink, choose a white, which usually has slightly fewer calories than red.

TURKEY

(about 3 oz, or the size of a deck of cards), 107 calories
Go for breast over thigh; dark meat is higher in saturated fat and calories.

GRAVY

(1–2 tablespoons), 8–16 calories
Use a soup spoon instead of the spout of that 1950 gravy boat to serve yourself; you'll use less.

STUFFING

(½ cup), 177 calories
If you have the option, choose regular-bread stuffing over cornbread.

CRANBERRY SAUCE

(1 slice canned), 86 calories
A slice should be half an inch—about the thickness of your cell phone.

SWEET POTATO

(1 whole, baked, skin on), 103 calories
Do your best to pass if the sweet potatoes are candied or in casseroles, which can pack as much as 300 calories per cup.

APPLESAUCE

(½ cup sweetened), 97 calories
Just because it has a fruit in its name doesn't mean it's a free-for-all.

PUMPKIN PIE

(1 slice), 316 calories
As far as dessert goes, it's a far better choice than pecan. Pass on the whipped topping, though.

TOTAL:

1,022

No, you can't eat the gourds.

Low-Carb Recipes. "It tastes great, and not only is it low in carbs, it's low in calories, too." One cup of cauliflower weighs in at just 29 calories, compared with 205 for a cup of white rice.

● CALORIES CUT

176

Hasta la pasta Noodle lovers: You can do more than just switch to whole-grain varieties—you can also swap your angel hair or linguini for a low-cal lookalike. Young recommends spaghetti squash, scooped right out of its shell. "Boiled and tossed with marinara and parmesan, it's as if you're having pasta without all the calories," Carpender says.

● CALORIES CUT

179

Use your noodle

Adventurous eaters should try shirataki noodles, made from tofu and yam flour. They taste sweeter and the texture is squishier than regular pasta, but at a measly 40 calories per 8 ounces (pasta packs 221), they're worth getting used to. (We like House Foods' version, housefoods.com, or pick them up at health food stores, Asian markets, and some supermarkets for about \$2 per two-portion bag.)

● CALORIES CUT

181

Coat with care If you like the satisfying crunch of breaded chicken or fish, swap your usual breadcrumbs (460 calories per cup) for cornflakes (101 calories). Crush them and make them stick to your protein by dunking those fillets in water instead of beaten eggs or milk; you'll save about 289 more calories.

● CALORIES CUT

648

Think cottage industry

Yes, cottage cheese, with a

taste inversely proportional to how good it is for you, is a food only a nutritionist could love. But hear us out: Your tongue won't be able to tell a lick of difference if you use low-fat cottage as a stand-in for whole-milk ricotta in lasagna. Your thighs will

some to omelets, stir-fries, hummus, and salads.

○ CALORIES CUT

189

Pucker up "Drinking anything with fresh lemon in it can stop you from being

packaged snacks, says Carpender. The pre-portioning makes you less likely to go overboard. That means three Hershey's Kisses (77 calories) instead of a full-size milk-chocolate Dove bar (200 calories), and a Skinny Cow Low Fat Fudge Bar (100

than call for greasy takeout," Carpender says. Doesn't homemade chicken and broccoli stir-fry sound more appetizing than a bag of SunChips anyway?

○ CALORIES CUT

412

IT'S GOOD TO BE YOU™

Women's Health

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FLAVOR SAVERS

Cutting calories doesn't have to mean cutting flavor. And some foods have nearly miraculous properties that can help you stay trim.

Live in cin Like cinnamon? You may like it even more when you know that, according to a study by the USDA's Human Nutrition Research Center, it can lower blood sugar. "That can curb your appetite," says Marlo Mittler, a nutritionist in Great Neck, New York. Sprinkle the spice on your oatmeal, and you might not want a second bowl. Not a fan? Try cinnamon extract (\$11 for 100 500 mg tablets, vitaminshoppe.com).

○ CALORIES CUT

150

Heat things up Capsaicin, the chemical in chilies that gives them their tongue-flaming heat, can help curb appetite, according to a Canadian study. Subjects who ate appetizers containing red pepper before lunch consumed an average of 189 fewer calories at their next meal and snack combined. Make it your new favorite condiment and add

GET STEAMED

YOU KNOW STEAMING is the healthiest way to cook, but chances are, you don't have the time or the tools. Now you don't need either. Seal fresh or frozen veggies, fish, or meat in Ziploc's new **Zip n' Steam Microwave Steam Cooking bags**, nuke the packet, and you have a healthy meal in minutes—minus the grease. Tip: Put the bag on a plate to catch leaks.



○ CALORIES CUT

119

THINK THIN

Sometimes getting slender requires tricking yourself into doing the right thing. These tips put the brakes on bingeing.

Rearrange your refrigerator It sounds way too simple to work, but it does: Moving healthy foods out of the crisper drawer and onto the most visible shelves, and pushing the fattening stuff out of sight can help you trick yourself into eating healthfully. You'll be more likely to reach for a cup of berries (84 calories) to satisfy your sugar jones instead of that leftover cheesecake (257) under foil way in the back.

○ CALORIES CUT

173

Stay single Whenever possible, buy individually

Ban bulk to lose bulk

"Costco is great for toilet paper," says Young, the *Portion Teller* author. "But you don't want to buy jumbo bags of snack foods." Can't say no to a good bargain? Divvy up your emergency stash of BBQ chips into one-ounce servings and store them in resealable plastic bags or Tupperware. Polishing off half of even a puny 7-ounce bag costs you about 500 calories.

○ CALORIES CUT

361

Cook ahead The single-serving rule doesn't apply only to naughty snacks. Cook your favorite healthy meals and store them in individual portions in the fridge or freezer. "When you come home from work tired, you can pull that food out and microwave it, rather

coffee mugs, which hold about 50 percent less than typical bowls, for your Raisin Bran and soup. "Both foods are easy to eat in too much volume if you use a regular bowl," Mittler says.

○ CALORIES CUT

115

Mix it up Studies have shown that "the more varieties of food on our plates, the more we eat," Young says. Use that principle to your advantage by stocking just one kind of cookie but keeping half a dozen different snack-friendly fruits and veggies on hand. You'll get so sick of Oreos that a banana—or an orange, or an apple, or a bunch of grapes, or a handful of baby carrots—will look delicious.

○ CALORIES CUT

55

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