

Light Bites

Smart, satisfying snacks to feed your cravings

BY CAITLIN C. GROGAN
 RECIPES BY JENNIFER ISERLOH
 PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK FERRI

IF YOU ALWAYS REACH for your bag of chopped raw veggies when cravings call, this story is not for you. For the rest of us—who stagger like zombies to the vending machine or 7-11 to get our fix—it’s time to change snack habits. You know that the wrong kind of nosh can pile on pounds, but you might not know it undermines your appetite for nutritious meals, warns Lisa R. Young, R.D., adjunct professor at New York University’s School of Nutrition, Public Health, and Food Studies.

All that’s required to make your snacking healthier is a little preparation. We’ve taken the most common food cravings—for sugar, salt, fat, and starch—and asked our nutrition experts for an easy recipe and a good-for-you store-bought option for each. With satisfied taste buds and a well-nourished bod, you’ll be able to focus on the things that really matter—like enjoying your life.



YOUR MANTRA

“I Can’t Beat My Sweet Tooth”

THERE’S A REASON WOMEN CRAVE SWEETS. Cookies and candy give us a rush of endorphins—the same brain chemicals behind a runner’s high—says Marcia Pelchat, Ph.D., professor of physiological psychology at the University of Pennsylvania and a researcher at the Monell Smell and Taste Institute. But too many sugary foods, which are usually loaded with calories and lacking in nutritional value, can also contribute to heart disease, cancer, and osteoporosis, according to the Washington, D.C.-based nutrition watchdog group Center for Science in the Public Interest.

Not so our easy, low-fat, lightly sweetened banana cream pie. Not only is it 50 percent lower in fat and calories than its sugary counterpart, it’s also

“Salt First, Taste Later”

THE PROBLEM WITH YOUR SALT habit isn't just the empty calories in chips, pretzels, and popcorn. It's that it can drastically increase your blood pressure—and put you at risk for related problems like stroke and heart attack—if you are one of the 26 percent of Americans sensitive to sodium. Unfortunately, you won't know if you're one of them until it's too late. To be on the safe side, health experts say we should limit our daily salt intake to 1 teaspoon a day—or about 24 large tortilla chips.



loaded with heart-healthy potassium, vitamin C, and fiber, which helps you feel fuller longer. Finally, a snack that is sweet and substantial.

HOMEMADE SUGAR FIX

banana cream pie

SERVES 4

- 2** large bananas, sliced

- 1** c low-fat or nonfat sour cream

- 2** Tbsp brown sugar

- 1** Tbsp reduced-fat non-trans margarine

- 1** tsp lemon zest

- 4** low-fat graham crackers, crumbled

- Nonfat cooking spray

1. In a large shallow dish or pie pan combine sour cream, 1 tablespoon brown sugar, and lemon zest. Set
2. Coat a large nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Heat the margarine over medium-high heat. When it starts to sizzle, add bananas and sprinkle with brown sugar.
3. Cook 3–4 minutes total until both sides are lightly browned. Spoon bananas onto sour cream and sprinkle with graham cracker crumbs. Serve immediately.

PER SERVING

CALORIES 200 | FAT 10 G | SAT FAT 5 G | SODIUM 75 MG |
CARBOHYDRATES 28 G | FIBER 2 G | PROTEIN 3 G |
SUGARS 16 G | CHOLESTEROL 25 MG

▶ STORE-BOUGHT SOLUTION

Jell-O Fat-Free Pudding Snacks

RESIST the temptation to temper your sweet tooth with sugar substitutes. “They may even increase your appetite for sweets,” Young says. Grab these rich, fat-free pudding snacks, for 100 calories a pop, instead.

JELL-O FAT-FREE PUDDING SNACK

Calories 100 | oz 3.4



HOMEMADE SALT FIX

roasted garbanzo beans

Sp '07
SERVES 4

- 2** 15 oz cans of garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed

- 1** Tbsp olive oil

- 1** tsp sweet chili powder

- 1/2** tsp garlic powder

- 1/8** tsp freshly ground black pepper

- 1/4** tsp sea salt

1. Preheat oven to 400° F. Place garbanzo beans in a large zipper bag with spices and olive oil. Shake well to coat. Spread out on baking sheet. Bake 25–30 minutes until beans become firm and spices are fragrant. Allow to cool slightly.

PER SERVING CALORIES 230 | FAT 5 G |
SAT FAT 0.5 G | SODIUM 850 MG | CARBOHYDRATES 37 G |
FIBER 7 G | PROTEIN 8 G | SUGARS 0 G

▶ STORE-BOUGHT SOLUTION

Lay's Lightly Salted Potato Chips

INSTEAD of grabbing another bag of salty bad boys, try reduced-sodium chips. These have less than 50 percent the sodium of their regular counterpart, and less saturated fat.

LAY'S LIGHTLY SALTED POTATO CHIPS

Calories 150 | oz 1

