

BEST BODY™

cookbook & menu plan



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YOU'RE
AWAY
FROM YOUR
BEST BODY



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5 vegetable and fruit servings
or more daily

4 cook-at-home meals
weekly+

3 "Strategic Splurges"
per week

2 meals from 1
(double recipes)

1 hour of pre-prep and
planning time weekly







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“Abs are made
in the kitchen”
—UNKNOWN

Your Best Body

We are not just about giving you delicious recipes, menus and cooking tips, though *we will!* Our goal is to equip you with meals tasting so good that you feel confident you'll be able to reach and maintain Your Best Body. If your current pursuit is that of delicious, wholesome recipes, but you don't see yourself making lifestyle changes to reach Your Best Body anytime soon, we appreciate you being realistic. As dietitians, we know your personal readiness is key. We hope to inspire and motivate you to choose what is Best for *your* Body as you turn these pages and serve our favorite recipes in your home. We will be setting you up for success whether your goal is to lose weight over the next 52 days, to simplify your evenings with set menu plans, or to be satisfied with the flavor that well-prepared, healthful food offers.

If you are looking for an extreme diet fix, a detox that has you dragging for a number of days, or a meal plan that is only realistic to maintain for a month, this is not it. However, if you are looking for fabulous recipes for any time and any physique, a menu plan that does the nutrition calculations for you, increased confidence in the kitchen, and flavorful foods that will help you to reach Your Best Body, then you have the perfect success tool in hand! This book is the fulfillment of countless requests for daily recipes and menu-planning guidance to go along with the daily challenges of the ***Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal*** that I (Sohailla) wrote not long ago.

Kim and I believe in balance and moderation as well as the joy of cooking and eating, provided the latter is not at the expense of one's health. Being Your Best is not *just* about a bikini-ready body (though that certainly is a realistic ambition for the next 52 days). Being Your Best is about feeling comfortable in your own skin *and* last year's wardrobe; it's about being in control when it comes

to food, and being fueled well enough to live energetically (not to mention to ward off headaches, fatigue, and the many medical complications related to food choices).

With more than 30 years of experience as dietitians between us, we are not fazed by fads or inspired by extremes. Our intention is for those who enjoy our recipes to reach and maintain their Best Bodies for a lifetime. That said, we are fine with serving meat at mealtime, as long as it doesn't take up half your plate; we are not scared of carbs at meals (gasp!), as long as they don't load half your plate, and we are not worried about you having a pat of butter, as long as it doesn't end up coating half your plate. You see where I am going with this: over time, what you put on half of your plate affects the whole of your life. Both balance and moderation are critical to a consistently healthy lifestyle.

We are going to be focusing on what matters *most* and keeps you consistently at Your Best Body (not just for your class reunion weekend). I have had clients ask me if bananas are making them fat, meanwhile they eat out every day for lunch...bananas are not likely the issue. They ask me about what to sprinkle in their water to make it yummy, meanwhile they hardly take in enough water to rehydrate because they don't bother to perspire (aka move) much...their water flavor is not likely their problem. They ask me for healthy menus like the ones we provide here, but oftentimes their meals are not the problem either. Typically it's the weekend "well-deserved splurges" or what they've allowed to jump in the grocery cart that accosts them between meals when they've gotten too hungry, or late-night treats when the long hours of the day have worn down their will. While we are doing our part to give you the recipes and tools you need to be Your Best, it is equally important that you make choices outside of your mealtimes that support your Best-Body efforts in the kitchen.

For many, reaching Your Best Body destination requires weight loss. Weight lost during this Countdown will not be water weight or muscle weight—just the fluffy, jiggy, over-your-waistband kind of stuff that you want gone. It would be wrong of me to encourage weight loss strategies that have you reaching Your Best Body goal weight by way of dehydration, diarrhea, and muscle atrophy. I know that you want the numbers to drop fast, but I don't want my 52-day Countdown *winner*s to be dehydrated, mushy-muscle “losers”.

Excerpt from the *Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal*, page 9

So, trust the process, and when you need encouragement to stay strong, take a moment to read the clips throughout this book, as well as the Success Stories of the others who have gone before you (bestbodyin52.com). Keep in mind that the discoveries these “Best Body Superstars” made about what needed to change in order to be successful required the use of the Success Journal, and often more than one 52-day round.



Fitness Pro meets Foodie

We had a blast writing this book together (honestly, no fights)! We combine two totally different RDN backgrounds to bring a balanced approach to you. I (Sohailla) work with active clients seeking to manage their weight, and train facilitators around the country to utilize the Best Body Countdown program I created with groups in their gyms and worksites. Cooking for my active family is a joy, but not part of my work directly. As a fitness pro, I love being in the gym as much as the kitchen. I thought I was a bit of a foodie until I met Kim and realized how many different textures of salt a true foodie has on hand, for example.

Kim works elbow-deep in food, developing and tweaking recipes and then cleans up the kitchen to go on camera for her weekly televised culinary nutrition segment, *Eating Well with Kim*. As a recipe developer, she can often be found in the kitchen or the grocery store. Fitness for her is a joy, but is not part of her work directly. As you might imagine, we learned a lot from each other while putting together this cookbook and look forward to hearing about what you learn over these next 52 days as well.



Share
something you
learn on the
Best Body in 52
Facebook page!

For Kim, a jog is nice, but for me, a jog with 30-second sprint intervals mixed in is far more invigorating. For me, a roast with fresh garlic and cracked pepper is nice, but for Kim, that same roast marinated, seared, and seasoned with hearty herbs is far more enjoyable. We had your vitality *and* your taste buds in mind while putting together these recipes and guidelines to help you to be Your Best, not to mention your budget and your busy schedule. Kim and I are real-life multitasking moms who love good food and the vivacity it provides, so we will only ask of you what we are willing and able to do ourselves.



Kim in her home kitchen

The Best Body Countdown recipes are strategically ordered to be paired with the challenges laid out in my ***Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal*** over 52 days. As your biggest fans along Your Best Body journey, Kim and I have thought through every detail on your behalf, providing recipes, menus and guidance so you can check off the Countdown challenges in your Success Journal with confidence. However, if you are not participating in the 52-day Countdown at this time, you can certainly still learn from the many practical health-promoting tips we offer.



Sohailla on the bridge she jogs over regularly

RECIPE AND MENU PLAN OVERVIEW

Our recipes will meet your nutrition needs without discounting the importance of flavor or convenience. They are fairly simple and take an average of 30 minutes to prepare. Some evenings, you may just choose one of the recipes off the menu, and for others, you may want



“Everyday I felt like I was
meeting with my own personal
nutritionist. I felt empowered
with each new day.”

— ALI, 38

to invite company for a phenomenal spread. We encourage you to use this cookbook and menu plan to make the next 52 days Your Best!

The next several pages outline everything you'll need to get both

you and your kitchen set up for success to start the Best Body Countdown, a 52-day lifestyle-change journey with the result being you at Your Best Body! By the end of the Countdown, you'll have a pantry and medical profile that look as different from 52 days ago as you do in your jeans. So, if your goal is to make a change in you, and not just your recipe box, you'll want to keep a copy of the **Success Journal** on hand. If not, the recipes are just as delicious!

In this cookbook and menu plan, you will get a weekly dinner menu for the first six weeks of the Countdown. Over the final two weeks, you'll wrap up by developing a two-week menu of your favorite Best Body recipes to continue until the completion of the Countdown, setting yourself up for Best-Body success that goes far beyond 52 days.

To help you keep the essentials in mind that will direct you on the path to Your Best Body, you'll want to commit the following **Cookbook Countdown 5-4-3-2-1** to memory.

Though we have provided daily dinner recipes each week for you, we don't expect you to cook every night of the week. However, we do suggest that you prepare at least four of your evening meals at home per week, building them around produce as the priority, and doubling recipes, so you'll have plenty for healthy "Lunch Leftovers" and dinners throughout the week.

We have your meals covered, but we would be remiss if we didn't address what

"happens" between meals and on special occasions. Splurges are certainly part of a full life, but if they are not strategic, mindful splurges, they will throw you off course, deterring you from your Best-Body goals. At the start of each week, we suggest you determine three weekly "Strategic Splurges" that

Take a moment to test yourself: how close are you to stating the **Cookbook Countdown 5-4-3-2-1** from memory?

5 vegetable and fruit servings or more daily

4 cook-at-home meals weekly+

3 "Strategic Splurges" per week

2 meals from 1 (double recipes)

1 hour of pre-prep and planning time weekly

52 DAYS

won't sabotage your goals. Lastly, we will teach you how to make the most of one hour of pre-prep and planning time weekly so that you don't find the pizza delivery guy at your door on the days that follow. Each of these five concepts will be reiterated over the next 52 days until they are second nature to you.

So, are you ready to make your kitchen the central hub of Your Best-Body success? You'll need to understand the upcoming terms and utilize the suggested tools and tips that follow in order to get the most out of this book... resist the temptation to skip straight to the recipes: you'll be enjoying them bite by delicious bite soon enough!

“Motivation is a fire from within.”

—STEPHEN COVEY

Terms, Tools and Tips

Terms

My definition of *clean eating* for the Best Body Countdown:

- › You don't have to clean the grease-based lip gloss off your lips between bites (think lo mein).
- › You do have to clean out your fridge if you go out of town because most of the food is perishable.
- › You don't have to clean your pizza, that is, you don't have to use your napkin to sop up the fat that puddles on the top (ewww).
- › No need to clean salt granules off your table or worry about how much sodium is in everything because so few of your foods are packaged, canned, or cured that the small

amount of sodium you are getting from the real food you are eating is no big deal. (Hint: if it has a flavoring packet or is pre-seasoned, it is likely very high in sodium).

- › It won't be as tough to clean your frying pan because the lean meats you are using won't leave a saturated mess in the pan.
- › Your body "takes out the trash" every day because your daily fiber-filled foods, your 64+ ounces of real water, and your exercise are cleaning things out (need I be more specific?).
- › You don't have to take medications to clean the buildup out of your arteries because your food sources containing soluble fiber prevent your digestive system from absorbing cholesterol.

menu key:



Lunch Leftovers



Pricey Meal



Quicker-Fix



Slow-Cooker



Club Favorite



Easy Meal



Lunch Leftovers

This icon will be shown on the dinner menus to indicate which recipes we suggest as "Lunch Leftovers." We encourage you to eat food from home for lunch as often as possible. We don't give a specific menu lineup for lunch because, in our experience as registered dietitians, we've learned that most people don't cook from recipes at lunchtime. Most either serve up leftovers at home, grab a sandwich on the go, or eat lunch out. You will find many fabulous lunch options in this book, just not in the form of a lunch menu.



Slow-Cooker

This icon will be shown whenever a slow cooker is used to prepare a meal—at least once a week to minimize your kitchen time. Because these meals are often started in the morning, this icon will give you forward notice, so you can make the best use of your [Slow-Cooker](#) as well as your time.



Easy Meal

Most of our Best Body Countdown meals take an average of 30 minutes to prepare from start to finish. Simple meals that take less than 30 minutes will have the [Easy Meal](#) icon. You may want to cluster all the easy meals on weeks that you are especially busy. Since many of the easy meals are perfect for “Lunch Leftovers,” you can get even more mileage out of your brief kitchen time.

Many of the recipes are quick and easy, but we only use the Easy Meal icon if the entire meal can be prepared simply in less than 30 minutes.



Pricey Meal

Over the course of 52 days, if your grocery budget allows for it, these occasional [Pricey Meals](#) provide a nice variety. Though not likely cost prohibitive, the ingredients for these meals do amount to slightly more than the others. While focusing on reaching Your Best Body, cutting back on dining out helps to allocate dollars for these special-occasion meals consumed at home where bottomless bread baskets and endless drink refills aren’t warring against Best-Body progress.



Quicker-Fix

Most of our recipes are made from whole foods that require a small amount of preparation or chopping. However, we know that for some people, time and convenience are paramount, even if it costs more. Many of our recipes offer a Countdown Quicker-Fix to alert you to methods and convenience items that will save you time for that particular recipe. Look for the **Quicker-Fix** icon (instead of the golden arches) during seasons when every five minutes in your schedule counts.



Club Favorite

When I host the 52-day Best Body Countdown each New Year and fall, participants from all over the US join together for accountability, camaraderie, and my expert support through the Best Body Club private Facebook group. Best Body Club members have raved about their favorite recipes and want you to know which ones they like most: look for the **Club Favorite** icon. And, by the way, you are invited to join the Best Body Club, too. Anyone who plans to be lifelong-lean will need support somewhere along the way, so be sure to check out bestbodyin52.com.





“52 days later ... This is something that I can do the rest of my life. I have new meals I like and I’m prepping and planning!”

— DENISE, 31

Be on the lookout for these terms:

Plate Plan Choices: portion out your meals using our Best Body Countdown Meal Measure tool, and our plate graphic and serving size guide

Best Body Beverages: recipes for smoothies and for flavored water using the Best Body Countdown Infuser bottle to give water an appealing zing

Best Body Breakfast: recipes you can rotate among your current healthy breakfasts

Strong Snack: suggestions and recipes for your pre-determined mid-day snack

Strategic Splurges: we suggest you plan your splurges in advance (3 or less per week recommended)

Tools

Our dietitian-approved recommendations for the upcoming 52-days:

- my **Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal**
- Meal Measure or divided plate
- infuser water bottle
- garlic press
- silicone garlic peeler
- meat thermometer
- food processor or blender
- microplane zester
- sharp knives
- zip-top freezer storage bags
- pre-portioned snack cups for portion control
- adequate freezer space for buying healthy items on sale in bulk and for freezing
- double batches of healthy meals on hand in the freezer
- accountability partner and/or group support during the 52-day Best Body Countdown
- charts in the appendix, or the interactive download version of the same (bestbodyin52.com)
- video clips and blogs on the website: sign up for email updates!
- text @mybestbody to 81010 to get occasional text updates and new recipes

"Kitchen Clean-Up"

If you can say YES to these, GREAT!

- Are most of your foods perishable?
- Do you have at least 3 rainbow colors of fresh fruit?
- Do you have veggies in at least 3 colors?
- Do you have any beans without sodium added?
- Do you have fish filets (frozen or fresh), or canned tuna or salmon?
- Are your meats lean cuts (skinless poultry, loin or round cuts for beef and pork, or >90% lean ground beef)?
- Are your dressings low or reduced fat?
- Are your cheeses low or reduced fat?
- Does your milk say Fat-Free (skim) or Reduced Fat (1%) on it (or your non-dairy alternative)?
- Are there any ready-to-serve healthy homemade leftovers in your freezer?
- Is there a tidy table where you can eat mindfully and without distraction?
- Do you have more whole grains than refined grains? Such as:
 - Brown rice
 - Oats
 - Whole grain bread or pita
 - Whole grain crackers/crisp-breads
 - Whole grain cereal
 - Whole grain pasta

If I stopped by right now and looked in your pantry and fridge would I say "You are all set to reach Your Best Body!"?

If you answer YES to most of the following, it's time for a kitchen make-over!

- Are most of the items in your kitchen boxed or canned?
- Do the grains come with seasoning packets? (ex: Rice a Roni, Hamburger Helper)
- On the labels of your cereals and snacks, are added sugars listed as main ingredients (one of the first 3-5 listed)?
- Are many of your foods artificially flavored and colored?
- Are there foods that make your fingers feel greasy after eating?
- Do the ingredient lists include hydrogenated oils?
- Are there tempting snacks or sweets in plain view, or at your eye-level in the pantry or refrigerator?
- What about heavily processed or fatty meats like hot dogs, sausage, salami or bologna?
- Is salt the first ingredient of most of your spices/seasonings?
- Is your eating space one that directs your mind elsewhere while eating? (for example, cluttered with paperwork, or set up in front of the TV)

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Chart from the *Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal*, page 14

Shopping Staples

FRESH PRODUCE (ALL!)

- ✓ Salad greens
 - ✓ Bagged rainbow slaw (also called California slaw or broccoli slaw)
 - ✓ Garlic (fresh, in the tube or minced)
 - ✓ Onions (onions are storage produce and last a long time in the crisper drawer)
 - ✓ Carrots (carrots last a long time in the refrigerator)
 - ✓ Apples (apples keep well in the crisper drawer)
 - ✓ Seasonal farmer's market specials
-

LEAN MEATS

- ✓ Fish
 - ✓ Chicken and turkey breast
 - ✓ Lean pork and beef (loin or round cuts)
 - ✓ Canned tuna and salmon
-

WHOLE GRAINS, CEREALS, AND BEANS

- ✓ Canned reduced-sodium beans and bagged dry beans (black, pinto, navy, kidney, etc.)
- ✓ Whole grains (brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, barley, quinoa, old-fashioned or steel cut oats, etc.)
- ✓ Whole-grain pitas
- ✓ Ezekiel cinnamon-raisin English muffins

LOW-SODIUM CANNED GOODS AND DRIED FRUITS

- ✓ No-salt-added canned tomatoes (diced, stewed, and with green chilis)
- ✓ Reduced-sodium and unsalted stock or broth (chicken, vegetable, beef)
- ✓ Raisins (golden and purple)

DAIRY, EGGS, AND FROZEN FOODS

- ✓ Milk (1% or nonfat), plain soymilk or almond milk
- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Butter or trans-fat-free spread
- ✓ Greek yogurt (plain, nonfat)
- ✓ Frozen fruit (blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, peaches)
- ✓ Frozen vegetables (stir-fry blends, mirepoix, chopped onions and peppers)
- ✓ Frozen chicken or fish (non-breaded)

MISCELLANEOUS

- ✓ Spice blends (Mrs. Dash salt-free seasonings, Jane's Crazy Mixed-Up Salt, Cavendar's Greek seasoning, grill seasonings, Italian seasoning, etc.)
- ✓ Dressings such as Newman's Own Balsamic Vinegar and Bolthouse Farms Greek Yogurt Dressing
- ✓ Healthy oil (canola oil, extra-virgin olive oil, canola oil cooking spray)
- ✓ Nuts and nut butter such as peanut butter or almond butter

Tips

THE PERFECT PLATE

Our recipes all have a nutrient breakdown at the bottom to help you learn what you are putting on your plate. We are not expecting you to count out every single gram of food from your day, but we do want you to be aware of how best to set up your meals. If your plate is set up properly, it generally translates into the appropriate nutrition numbers. The Plate Plan choices correlate with the Diabetes Exchange List established by the American Diabetes Association, as do the serving sizes in Appendix A.

When planning your lunch and dinner, always start with the bottom part of your plate, thinking of it as a big smile: happy because it's full of low-calorie, fiber-rich, disease-fighting vegetables. Cheesy, but memorable, right? Who would want a sad plate? This introduction will guide you as to what comprises a “Best Body Breakfast” and a “Strong Snack,” too. I generally recommend fruit be served at those times, but it could also share the “smile” space on your plate, as long as vegetables are the priority.

Next, divide the top half of your plate into two quarters. In our recipes, if you see “3 lean meats” under the Nutrient Breakdown’s Plate Plan choices, for example, that means that recipe provides about 3 ounces of lean meat to go in that quarter section of your plate. The other quarter of your plate should be starches, such as dried beans, whole grains, or starchy vegetables. (What if you want all three at once? Sure! Just know they have a pretty cozy “quarter” to share). Include a thumb-tip sized serving of fat, and your plate is set up for success.

CARBS AND SUGAR

When carbohydrates overflow out of this quarter of the plate is when they become problematic. Though people tend to fear carbs, typically the carbohydrate found in one quarter of their plate at planned meals is not the weight-gain culprit it gets made out to be. Now, carbs do deserve credit for belly fat and beyond when they come in the form of endless refills of chips, hot bread, and fries at restaurants, or desserts and caloric drinks. Limiting added sugar is essential during the Countdown. Though this adjustment can be tough at first, most actually notice a reduction in constant sugar cravings once they begin to limit their intake, not to mention a reduction in accumulating fat tissue.

Visualize your food fitting into the compartmentalized plate pictured. Consider using a plate divided into sections such as the Meal Measure that comes with my Best Body Countdown program or the divided plates you can get at your grocery store (or visit preciseportions.com for china options such as the one pictured here).

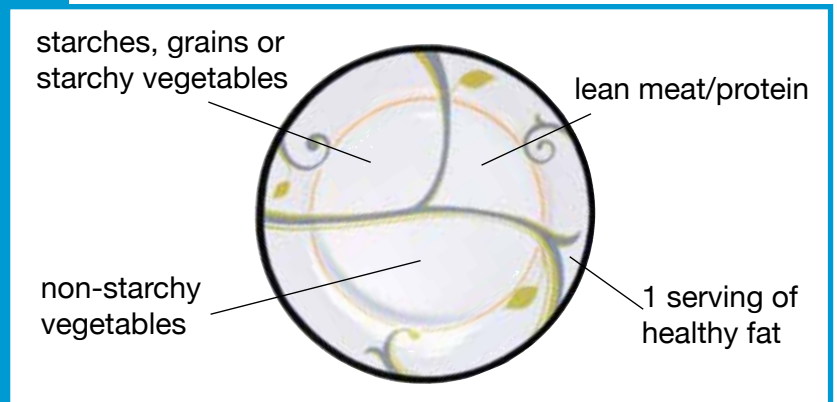


Image from the *Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal*, page 46



Each person reading this cookbook has his or her own unique nutrition needs. For some of you, these compartments will pile high, and for others less fuel is required. The serving sizes recommended in our recipes are average for most healthy adults, and are based on the balance suggested in the Countdown's guidelines for breakfast, lunch, and "Strong Snack," in addition to dinner. You may adjust the portions to meet your personal nutrition needs based on your activity level and lean mass. Additionally, you may want to consult a registered dietitian nutritionist to help you to individualize the serving sizes of the recipes based on your calculated calorie needs.

“Your fuel needs (that is, your caloric needs), will depend on the size of your ‘engine’ (your lean body mass), and how much time you spend ‘on the road’ (moving and exercising).”

To get an idea about how much to put in each of the sections of the plate just described, refer to the “SmartCar vs. Expedition” analogy on page 25 in the *Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal*



Start-Up Set-Up

We understand that your week may be busy, and if you are prioritizing exercise, that could be an added time commitment for you. You will need some strategy to make it all work. Setting aside about an hour to do some of the suggestions below when you have time on the weekend or at the beginning of your week will make all the difference.

“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.”

— VIRGINIA WOOLF

- Boil a half a dozen eggs to keep handy for use in quick breakfasts, lunches or “Strong Snacks.”
- If you need quick ready-to-serve breakfasts for the week, choose from the “Best Body Breakfast” recipes offered in this cookbook and prepare in advance/freeze.
- Make sure you have some ready-to-eat vegetables and fruits available, whether you prep them during your pre-prep hour, or buy them cut and washed.
- Using our Staples List, prepare your grocery list for the week (see Appendix B to customize and make copies, or type it into the interactive grocery list you can download from bestbodyin52.com).
- If you like to have soup for lunches, drop a variety of frozen veggies, a can of diced tomatoes with chilies (such as Ro-tel), desired seasonings, and a couple of chicken breasts into a slow cooker with reduced-sodium broth in the morning on low heat. It will be ready for dinner that evening, and to warm up for lunches during the next few days of the week, even if you only have 5 minutes!

- Whenever you grill or cook lean meat, make extra for the upcoming days' salads, soups, and recipe ingredients.
- If you have the grill fired up, fill a grill basket with the vegetables you have on hand and you'll have delicious roasted veggies to add to any meal for the next few days.
- Start a slow cooker full of water on low and add 2 pounds of any dried beans you like: most take about 6 hours to cook. Drain and rinse well, allowing beans to cool. Set some aside for the upcoming week's salads, soups or sides and freeze the rest.
- Prepare grains or quinoa for meals in advance. Many of our recipes call for precooked grains. Having these ready at the start of the week, or in the freezer, makes dinner prep a snap (storing and freezing instructions to follow).



FAQ

Frequently Asked Question

What do you think about going gluten-free?

There are various reasons people avoid gluten, the protein in wheat, barley, and rye (and found in cross-contaminated oats). I have found that many who feel better on a gluten-free diet may feel just as good, without the challenges of going completely gluten-free, if they:

1. Trade out their refined grains for whole grains, choosing products with short ingredient lists and less preservatives.
2. Vary their grains/starches over the course of the day (intentionally eat grains besides wheat).
3. Make sure grain servings fit only on a quarter of their plate, or in the case of bread, limit it to 1-2 slices on their plate.

Excerpt from the *Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal*, page 77-78

baked brown rice or barley

Total time: 20 minutes

This is a great way to cook both brown rice and barley. Not only does it turn out moist, but it is truly a timesaver! This recipe is plain (unseasoned), so you can use it in any recipe. It's ready fast, but without the extra cost and potential additives of quick-cook rice options.

Canola oil cooking spray

1 16-ounce bag of brown rice or barley

5 cups water (or 2½ cups reduced-sodium chicken broth and 2½ cups water)

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

¾ teaspoon salt

GROCERY LIST:

Brown rice or barley (16 ounces)

Reduced-sodium chicken broth (2½ cups)

Canola oil cooking spray

Extra-virgin olive oil

Salt

Flavor add-ins, as desired



1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Spray a 9x13-inch baking dish with cooking spray and add brown rice.
2. Bring the water to a boil, add oil and salt, and pour the mixture over the rice. Stir to combine, cover tightly with heavy-duty aluminum foil and bake for 60 minutes.
3. Once done, remove aluminum foil and fluff rice with a fork. Cover with a clean kitchen towel for 5 minutes. Uncover for another 5 minutes, then fluff with a fork and serve or freeze as desired.

Yield: 10 cups or 30 servings

(serving size: ⅓ cup)

Nutrient Breakdown:
for brown rice (barley):

Calories 60

Fat 1g

Cholesterol 5mg

Sodium 60mg

Carbohydrate 12g

Fiber 1g (2g)

Protein 1g (2g)

Plate Plan choices:

1 starch

precooked quinoa

Total time: 25 minutes

Quinoa can be cooked ahead of time and stored 3–5 days in the refrigerator or for 2 months in the freezer.

INGREDIENTS AND GROCERY LIST:

Plain quinoa

Reduced-sodium chicken broth

Flavor add-ins as desired

1. Cook unflavored quinoa ahead by following the directions on the package, except use half water and half reduced-sodium chicken broth to cook the quinoa.
2. Once cooked, allow the quinoa to cool.

Nutrient Breakdown:

(serving size: 1/3 cup cooked)

Calories 70

Fat 1g

Sodium 35mg

Carbohydrate 13g

Fiber 2g

Protein 3g

Plate Plan choices:

1 starch

flavor add-in suggestions:

Sautéed onions, shallots, celery, bell pepper, mushrooms, or garlic

Citrus zest, toasted nuts, or dried fruits

Examples:

lemon zest + parsley + toasted almonds

orange zest + cumin + cilantro

storing and freezing

To store precooked grains, quinoa or prepared dried beans, place 1½–2-cup portions into sandwich bags (with date noted), removing the air and flattening the contents. Then place the filled bags in a gallon-sized plastic zip-top freezer bag. Freeze for up to 2 months. To use, simply remove from the sandwich bag and transfer the grain/beans to a microwave-safe bowl, cover with a damp paper towel, and microwave for 1–2 minutes, stirring halfway through warming time. Add an additional minute or two if necessary.

READ THE RECIPE

It is important to read the entire recipe prior to beginning to cook. You don't want to be an hour away from meal time only to learn you were supposed to refrigerate something for a couple of hours or marinate overnight.



GATHER INGREDIENTS FIRST

Practice *mise en place*: pronounced [MEEZ ahn plahs]. This is a French term that literally translates to “set in place.” It is a practice that professional chefs use before they begin cooking, and it is a real time saver for the home cook as well.

Gathering your ingredients together before you begin to cook allows you to verify that you have the ingredients you need. It also allows the cooking process to proceed smoothly without interruption. Think of it like taking a shower: all of what you need to get clean is already in the shower, so there is no need to get out to get the soap, shampoo, and conditioner. The same principle applies to cooking: if all your ingredients are gathered and ready, the process flows more efficiently.

GET YOUR PAN JUST RIGHT

Let your pan and oil or butter get hot before adding ingredients. A hot pan is essential for sautéing veggies or creating a great crust on meat, fish, and poultry. It also helps prevent food from sticking. Take care that it doesn't get too hot. No smoking oil, please!

Avoid over-crowding the pan. Food releases moisture as it's cooked, so leave room for the steam to escape and let the food brown. The brown crusty bits are critical for flavor, particularly with lower-fat cooking. Cook in batches if necessary.

Best Body Breakfast

Is breakfast really the most important meal of the day? Absolutely! People who skip breakfast have a hard time meeting their fiber needs, often overeat later in the day or evening, and are not well fueled for an active day (not to mention they might have a bit of a foggy brain). Those who want to be at their best need to fuel up well for their day. One of the five essentials of the Best Body Countdown is to eat three balanced meals (and a “Strong Snack”) daily.

I often hear, “I don’t have time for breakfast.” Now, Kim and I can’t help you get up 5–10 minutes earlier to prioritize breakfast, but we do have some suggestions for quick breakfasts. At some point, most people tire of feeling sluggish, foggy, and “belly heavy” and give breakfast a try.

For those who feel they can’t stomach breakfast in the early morning or have a hard time eating first thing related to their morning workout timing, try my *breakfast block* strategy: meet the **Best Body Breakfast** guidelines within 4 hours of waking up, even if it’s not all once.

A **Best Body Breakfast** meets the following criteria to start your day off strong:

- ☑ At least 7–10 grams fiber from 1–3 grain servings (depending on your fuel needs and activity level), and 1 fruit serving*
- ☑ 15–30 grams of protein (from all of the food groups combined over the *breakfast block*)
- ☑ 300–500 mg calcium (typically found in 1 dairy serving, noted below):
 - skim or 1% milk or yogurt (1 cup)
 - reduced-fat cheese (1.5 ounces)
 - low-fat cottage cheese (¼ cup)

- a dairy alternative fortified with calcium such as soy milk, rice milk, almond milk, or orange juice (see product label for calcium quantity)
 - or a 300–500 mg calcium supplement
- ☑ 5–15 grams of fat, ideally from a small serving of nuts

*Check out Appendix A for serving sizes of common foods, and Appendix F for a list of foods containing fiber.

Breakfast suggestions that take less than 5 minutes to prepare and about 5 minutes to eat:

old fashioned oatmeal

Cover ¼ cup old-fashioned rolled oats with water and microwave for 3 minutes on high in a deep, microwave-safe bowl. While it cooks, dice up a ripe pear (or a small apple), and pour a glass of milk. Add the pear, a tablespoon of raisins and a dash of cinnamon. You'll be surprised at how you don't really miss the sugar like you'd expect.



english muffin

Spread almond butter over an Ezekiel cinnamon-raisin English muffin and serve with a glass of milk.



“Breakfast is a non-negotiable as it relates to my success in maintaining my weight loss.

—SONYA, 49

basic eggs and toast

Sprinkle eggs with reduced fat cheese and serve with whole-grain toast and a piece of fruit.

Also, many of the breakfast recipes that follow can be prepared in advance so that they don't take much time from your morning. Some just need to be quickly toasted, warmed or defrosted. Shake recipes follow as well - simply requiring a moment in the blender before you take them on your way out the door on those mornings you don't have time to sit down to eat.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Question

Why is the sugar content in yogurt so high?

Yogurt is tricky because the “sugars” on the label can be from both naturally occurring sugars (the milk sugar, lactose, and the fruit sugar, fructose) as well as added sugars. Sugar that naturally occurs in milk or fruit is not considered “added” sugar, therefore does not count towards the sugar-gram totals recommended during the Best Body Countdown. Regardless, moderation is always key! Greek yogurt has more protein to hold you over to your next meal, and naturally less sugar. Plus, those who are lactose intolerant can tolerate small amounts of Greek yogurt better. Plain, nonfat Greek yogurt is our yogurt of choice for our recipes such as the Raspberry Power Parfait on page 36.

The following breakfast recipes are suitable to be made in advance, so you can grab a quick breakfast in the morning if needed.

apricot baked oatmeal

Hands-on time: 20 minutes
Total time: 60 minutes (includes oven time)

This is delicious! It is the earthiness of the oats and the slight sweetness of the banana that make this a tasty grab-and-go breakfast.

suggested side: berries and milk

Canola oil cooking spray
2½ cups dry rolled oats
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1¾ cups milk
2 large bananas, mashed
2 eggs
¾ cup nonfat, plain Greek yogurt
3 tablespoons chia seeds
¾ teaspoon almond extract
10 dried apricot halves, chopped
½ cup slivered almonds

GROCERY LIST:

Bananas (2 large)
Rolled oats (2½ cups)
Slivered almonds (½ cup)
Chia seeds (3 tablespoons)
Dried apricot halves (10 halves)
Milk (1¾ cup + suggested side)
Plain, nonfat Greek yogurt (¾ cup)
Eggs (2)
Baking powder
Cinnamon
Almond extract
Canola oil cooking spray
Berries (suggested side)

Kim's Comment

This is wonderful baked on a week-end and then served throughout the week. I have used it as a grab-and-go breakfast with much success.



1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray an 8x8-inch pan with cooking spray and set aside.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the oats, baking powder and cinnamon. In a medium bowl, combine the milk, banana, eggs, yogurt, chia seeds and extract. Stir to combine. Add the milk mixture to the oats and stir until thoroughly combined. Fold in the apricots. Pour the mixture into the prepared dish and bake for 10 minutes. Add almonds and bake for 30–35 additional minutes until done. Allow it to cool before cutting into 12 pieces.

Yield: 6 servings

(serving size: 2 pieces)

Nutrient Breakdown:

Calories 330
Fat 11g (2g saturated fat)
Cholesterol 65mg
Sodium 170mg
Carbohydrate 45g
Fiber 8g
Protein 15g

Plate Plan Choices: 1½

starches, 1 fruit,
½ milk, 1 protein, 1 fat

To make this an approved Best Body Breakfast, serve one of the following two ways:

Option 1: 2 slices (1 serving), plus ½ cup of milk

Option 2: 1 slice (½ serving), plus 1 cup berries (or other high-fiber fruit) plus 1 cup milk

sweet potato oat pancakes

Full of flavor and protein, perfect to get your day started on the right track. Pancakes are great to make on the weekend and freeze or refrigerate for use during the week. If you make a double batch, you'll use the whole sweet potato and have enough for a busy morning: we recommend it!

suggested toppings:
apple-chia jam or chia peanut butter

Total time: 25 minutes



1 sweet potato (scrubbed clean) or ½ cup pureed pumpkin
1½ cup dry rolled oats
3 eggs
½ cup low-fat cottage cheese or plain, nonfat Greek yogurt
¼–½ cup nonfat or 1% milk
1½ teaspoon baking powder
⅛ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon vanilla
Canola oil cooking spray
Nutmeg (optional garnish)

1. Carefully pierce the sweet potato skin 5–6 times and microwave for 5–8 minutes, rotating after a few minutes. Once the potato is cooked, slice it in half and allow to cool for a couple minutes. Scoop the flesh out of the peel and mash. Tip: hold the potato with an oven mitt while scooping out the flesh to avoid getting burned.
2. Add ½ cup of mashed sweet potato and remaining ingredients to a blender. Blend until smooth. You may need to add a little more fluid (milk or water) if your batter is thick.
3. Heat a nonstick skillet or griddle on medium-low heat (300–350°F). Spray with cooking spray. For each pancake, pour ¼ cup of batter onto griddle or skillet. Allow the pancakes to bubble. Flip to cook on the second side until golden brown. Serve with Apple-Chia Jam or Chia Peanut Butter.

Yield: 4 servings
(serving size: 3 pancakes)

Nutrient Breakdown:
Calories 230

Fat 6g (1.5g saturated fat)

Cholesterol 135mg

Sodium 230mg

Carbohydrate 31g

Fiber 4g

Protein 13g

Plate Plan choices:
2 starches, ½ fat, 1 lean meat

GROCERY LIST:

Sweet potato (1) or 1 can pureed pumpkin
Rolled oats (1½ cups)
Eggs (3)
Low-fat cottage cheese or plain, nonfat Greek yogurt (½ cup)
Nonfat or 1% milk (½ cup)

Baking powder
Salt
Cinnamon
Vanilla
Nutmeg (optional garnish)
Canola oil cooking spray

GROCERY LIST:

for Apple Chia Jam (suggested topping)
Apple (1)
Apple juice (1 cup)
Suggestion: keep individual servings of juice on hand
Chia seeds (2 tablespoons)

GROCERY LIST:

for Peanut Butter Chia Spread (alternate suggested topping)
Peanut butter (¼ cup)
Chia seeds (3 tablespoons)

To make this an approved **Best Body Breakfast**, serve one of the two following ways:

1

Serve with ¼ cup Apple-Chia Jam and a cup of milk

Apple-Chia Jam Recipe: Place 1 finely chopped or grated apple (peel on) in a medium saucepan with 1 cup apple juice and 2 tablespoons chia seeds. Cook over medium heat until the mixture boils and then reduce heat to simmer for 5 additional minutes until the fruit softens a little and the mixture thickens. Remove from heat and serve on pancakes. We know it doesn't look anything like syrup, but you've got to try it: it's delicious! The jam will last about a week in the refrigerator and can be made with other fruits such as strawberries and blueberries. This is also great as a yogurt topping.

2

Serve with Chia Peanut Butter and a cup of milk

Chia Peanut Butter Recipe: Place ¼ cup peanut butter in a microwave-safe bowl and microwave for 20 seconds. Stir in 3 tablespoons of chia seeds. Divide mixture among 4 servings of pancakes.

Nutrient Breakdown with jam:

Calories 290, Fat 7.5g, Carbohydrate 41g, Fiber 8g, Protein 14g

Nutrient Breakdown with jam and milk

(suggested): Calories 370, Fat 7.5g, Carbohydrate 53g, Fiber 8g, Protein 22g

Nutrient Breakdown with Chia Peanut Butter:

Calories 370, Fat 16g, Carbohydrate 38g, Fiber 8g, Protein 18g

Nutrient Breakdown with Chia Peanut Butter and milk:

Calories 450, Fat 16g, Carbohydrate 50g, Fiber 8g, Protein 26g

Kim's Comment

Chia seeds, while small, pack a big fiber punch. While we do not believe in being a slave to nutrition numbers, we do think it is critical to start each day with a good dose of fiber. Not only are chia seeds a great plant source of omega-3 fatty acids, but they also provide 4 grams of fiber per tablespoon.

raspberry power parfait

Total time: 10 minutes + refrigerator time (overnight if desired)



It's ideal to prepare this the night before serving. This is as close to perfect as a breakfast can get: ready to serve when you wake up, calcium, fiber and protein rich, no sugar added, and holds you over strong from breakfast until lunch! You may want to double or triple the recipe, as this can be refrigerated up to 5 days and portioned into mason jars to take on the go.

- ½ cup plain soymilk
- 1 tablespoon ground flaxseed (or flaxseed meal)
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- ½ cup plain, nonfat Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup old-fashioned oats
- ¾ cup raspberries, frozen or fresh
- Cinnamon, to taste

GROCERY LIST:

- Raspberries, frozen or fresh (¾ cup)
- Old-fashioned oats (¼ cup)
- Ground flaxseeds or flaxseed meal
- Chia seeds
- Plain soymilk or other unsweetened milk (½ cup)
- Plain, nonfat Greek yogurt (½ cup)
- Vanilla extract
- Cinnamon



1. In a bowl or a jar that has a lid, put all ingredients in the order they are listed above, except the berries.
2. Stir to combine well.
3. Add raspberries and gently mix until throughout. This can be eaten right away or allowed to thicken overnight. Serve with cinnamon, if desired.

Yield: 1 serving
(serving size: 1 large serving without honey or granola)

Nutrient Breakdown:
Calories 333
Fat 9.75g (0.75g saturated fat)
Carbohydrate 43.5g
Fiber 15.5g
Protein 15g

Plate Plan choices:
1 fruit, 1 milk, 1 starch,
1 lean meat, 1 fat

“I make this at the beginning of the week for me and my husband and put it in snap-top containers to grab in the mornings. It’s a great way to start the day.”

—MICHELLE, 35

If you need to sweeten this tart treat, add ½ teaspoon of honey when it's time to serve. Or, if you like it sweet and crunchy, add a tablespoon or two of granola. If you prefer a smooth consistency, try oat bran instead of rolled oats. Any berries will work well if raspberries aren't on hand. My youngest child and I make this every Sunday night at my house in large glass bowl and keep it handy for ready-made **Best Body Breakfasts** and **Strong Snacks** all week!

Sohaila Says

quiche breakfast to-go

Hands-on time: 20–25 minutes
Total time: 20–25 minutes



Easy Meal

These have a great flavor and one recipe makes several days' worth of grab-and-go breakfasts. Keep some in the refrigerator for this week and freeze the rest for next week or beyond.

Canola oil cooking spray
5 Flatout Foldits
6 eggs
3 egg whites
½ cup reduced-fat sharp cheddar cheese
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ cup finely diced onion
4 cups chopped raw spinach (lightly packed)
2 plum tomatoes, chopped (~¾ cup)
½ teaspoon Cavender's Greek seasoning or seasoning blend of choice

GROCERY LIST:

Baby spinach (4 cups)
Plum or Roma tomatoes (2)
Garlic cloves (2)
Onion (1 medium)
Flatout Foldit flatbreads (5)
Eggs (9)
Reduced-fat sharp cheddar (½ cup)
Cavender's Greek seasoning or seasoning of choice
Canola oil cooking spray



1. Preheat the oven to 375°F and spray 10 muffin cups with non-stick cooking spray. Cut the flatbreads in half (widthwise) and press them into the muffin cups. Make sure to press the flatbread into the cups so that the bottom of the cup is covered with flatbread and overlap the edges of the flatbread around the sides of the cup, pressing them together (this will decrease the likelihood of the egg mixture leaking out).
2. In a large bowl, whisk the eggs until well combined. Add in the remaining ingredients and mix.
3. Carefully fill each Flatout with the egg mixture (just under ½ cup). Bake for 20–25 minutes or until done in the center.

Yield:

10 servings
(serving size:
1 muffin)

Nutrient Breakdown:

Calories 180

Fat 7g (2.5g
saturated fat)

Cholesterol 180mg

Sodium 400mg

Carbohydrate 14g

Fiber 5g

Protein 18g

Plate Plan choices:

1 starch, 1
medium-fat meat/
protein,
1 vegetable

These will freeze well. Simply wrap in plastic or foil and place in a freezer bag. You can literally grab and go after a quick minute on defrost in the microwave! We suggest adding a piece of fruit and a cup of milk.

healthy harvest muffins

With 4 grams of protein, 4 grams of healthy fat, and 4 grams of fiber, these will give you great “holding power.” They freeze well and take some chopping effort, so you may as well make a double batch. When ready to eat, simply use the microwave and defrost for about a minute for 1 muffin, and it comes out perfectly (best if served warm)!



Hands-on time: 25 minutes Total time: 50 minutes

Canola oil cooking spray

1 cup Bob’s Red Mill 7-grain cereal with flax (or similar mix)

¾ cup + 2 tablespoons white whole-wheat flour

1 tablespoon baking powder

2 teaspoons cinnamon

2 over-ripe bananas, mashed

1 large zucchini, shredded

1½ cups shredded carrot

1 large apple (skin on), finely chopped

½ cup nonfat milk

2 eggs

½ cup plain, nonfat Greek yogurt

2 teaspoons vanilla

1 cup golden raisins

¼ cup chia seeds

½ cup walnuts or pecans, finely chopped

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Line 18 muffin tins with paper liners or spray muffin tins with cooking spray.
3. In a large bowl, whisk the dry ingredients together (multi-grain cereal through cinnamon).
4. In a medium bowl, mix the wet ingredients together (banana through vanilla).
5. Make a well in the flour mixture and pour the wet ingredients into the center of the well.
6. Mix batter until just combined. Fold in raisins, chia seeds and nuts. The batter will be thick.
7. Spoon into muffin cups (~¼ cup batter per muffin).
8. Bake 20–25 minutes or until golden brown. They may still be a bit gooey in the middle, so check to see if they need a few more minutes.

GROCERY LIST:

Bananas (2 over-ripe)

Zucchini (1 large)

Carrots (1½ cups shredded)

Apple (1 large)

Bob’s Red Mill (or similar)
7-grain cereal with flax (1 cup)

Chia seeds

Milk (½ cup)

Eggs (2)

Plain, nonfat Greek
yogurt (½ cup)

Walnuts or Pecans
(½ cup)

White whole-wheat
flour (¾ cup plus 2
tablespoons)

Golden raisins (1 cup)

Baking powder

Cinnamon

Vanilla

Yield:

18 muffins

Nutrient Breakdown:

(serving size: 1 muffin)

Calories 140

Fat 4g (0.5 g saturated
fat)

Cholesterol 20mg

Sodium 150mg

Carbohydrate 23g

Fiber 4g

Protein 4g

Plate Plan choices:

½ starch, 1 fruit, ½
protein, 1 fat

Strategic Splurges

As a general rule, the Best Body Countdown guidelines suggest three Strategic Splurges per week. How a splurge is defined is up to you. This means you decide in advance what it will be and set yourself up to savor each bite or sip, mindful of your portion-sizes. Examples include fried foods or chips, sweets, caloric beverages, snack foods, chocolate, alcoholic beverages, or pizza. Keep in mind that eating out pretty much will count as your Strategic Splurge even if you don't choose especially rich food due to the preparation methods and portion sizes typically served at restaurants.

On a very special occasion, you may have all three splurges for the week in one day, and sometimes you may want to have a really tiny splurge two days in a row that just adds up to one of your three. The point is that you are strategic and mindful, leaving no room for careless ("did I eat that?") munching, binging, or regret-based determinations.

Check out the ***Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal*** for more information about alcohol and other splurges.

“It's easy to say ‘no!’ when there's a deeper ‘yes!’ burning inside.”

—STEPHEN COVEY

Sweet-Tooth Satisfiers

CREAMY:

Add about 60 Ghirardelli mini semi-sweet chocolate baking chips (that's about 2 tablespoons, just 35 calories and 4 grams of added sugar) to plain Greek yogurt with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of chopped strawberries.

CRUNCHY:

If it's a cookie you're after, think "small is better than not at all" and know you'll have to bump a starch plus a fat serving to make room in your day for two Oreo-sized cookies.

HOT:

One packet of Swiss Miss 25-calorie hot chocolate plus 2 tablespoons mini-marshmallows (totaling 45 calories, 4g added sugar)

COLD:

Frozen blueberries or raspberries ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup = 1 fruit serving, 0g added sugar)



Coffee and Cream Shake

¼ cup Edy's Slow Churned French Silk Ice Cream, 3 ounces chilled black coffee, 3 ounces unsweetened almond milk, cinnamon to taste.

1. Combine the first 3 ingredients with ½ cup of ice in a blender and process until frothy.
2. Sprinkle with cinnamon and serve immediately.

Nutrient Breakdown: Calories 78, Fat 5g, Carb 11g, Fiber 0g, Protein 3g, Sodium 60g, Sugars 8g (about 6g of which is added sugar)

Sweet Protein Perfection



Sweet, quick and nutritious too! See page 108 for recipe.

CAKE-LIKE:

Strong Snack Mug Cake

In a small bowl, mix 1 large ripe mashed banana, 1 tablespoon of any nut butter, 1 egg, 2 teaspoons chopped walnuts, 3 level tablespoons cocoa powder, and 1 teaspoon honey. Pour into 2 small mugs. Microwave on high for 2 minutes (one mug at a time). Or, if you are sharing one large mug cake, microwave on high for 2½ minutes. Serve with 8 ounces of milk.

Nutrient Breakdown for 1 cake: Calories 200, Fat 9g, Carbohydrate 22g, Fiber 4g, Sodium 65mg, Protein 7g

“At first I thought it would be hard to cut my added sugar intake, but it really wasn't! I learned how to hold myself accountable. I had the best experience doing the 52-day Countdown!”

—LORI, 35



pita pizza

Hands-on time: 15 minutes Total Time: 25 minutes



Easy Meal

Perfect for a fun lunch or a super-quick dinner, and a whole round is about the same number of calories as just one slice of restaurant pizza! These are always a hit with kids, too!

- 4 whole-wheat pita rounds
- ¼ cup pizza sauce
- 1½ cup fresh baby spinach, chopped
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh basil
- 1 cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese, divided
- ¼ cup chopped red onion
- 1 cup chopped tomato
- 1 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 1 2.25-ounce can sliced black olives
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 24 pepperoni rounds, cut into quarters (about 6 per pizza)

GROCERY LIST:

- Baby spinach (1 1/2 cups)
- Fresh basil
- Red onion (1 small)
- Tomato (1 cup chopped)
- Red bell pepper (1)
- Whole-wheat pita rounds (4)
- Pizza sauce (¼ cup)
- Sliced black olives (2.25-ounce can)
- Pepperoni rounds (24)
- Part-skim mozzarella cheese (1 cup)
- Dried oregano



Pizza is another splurge that quickly gets people over their calorie budget for the day. If ordering pizza occasionally, have a big salad and think of pizza more as a “side.” Or even better, try this recipe for both at once: pizza and veggies in each bite!

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Place the pita rounds on a baking sheet and spoon 1 tablespoon of pizza sauce over each.
2. Evenly distribute the chopped spinach and basil over the pita rounds.
3. Spoon 2 tablespoons of cheese over each pita (about half of the cheese will be used here). Add the remaining toppings (onions through olives).
4. Sprinkle the remaining cheese and oregano over the pizzas and top with pepperoni.
5. Bake at 400°F for 7–10 minutes or until the cheese is bubbly and edges are beginning to brown.

Yield: 4 servings

(serving size: 1 pita pizza)

Nutrient Breakdown:

Calories 281

Fat 10g, (4g saturated fat)

Sodium 752mg

Carbohydrate 35g

Fiber 6g

Protein 16g

Plate Plan choices:

2 starches, 1 vegetable, 1½ medium fat meats, 1 fat

“These are a hit with my entire family!

The kids like to help add toppings.

They’re easy to make and delicious!”

— DENA, 44

Strong Snacks

Choose one from each category in the following chart for what I consider a Strong Snack, or try some of the suggested recipes listed such as the Raspberry Power Parfait breakfast recipe or the upcoming Sunflower Seed Spread. Strategically schedule this snack at that time of the day where the hungry monster tries to make you frantic for food, despite the fact that your typical mealtime is a couple hours away. This Strong Snack combination typically ensures a minimum of 5 grams of protein and 3 grams of fiber, both of which meet your midday nutrition needs and help to hold you over gracefully until your final meal of the day. Choosing one item from each column will be about a 200–300 calorie snack. Because they are healthy choices, they won't really “spoil your supper.” If you eat a little less at supper because you ate at healthy snack at 3:30 p.m., that's no loss. If you are especially active, you may need to have two Strong Snacks daily.

STRONG SNACK SUGGESTIONS:

- Healthy Harvest Muffin
- Sweet Protein Perfection
- Avocado Salsa Topper
- Watermelon Feta Salad
- Klassic 3-seed Dr. Kracker Crispbreads with cheese
- Edamame
- Sunflower Seed Spread
- Monkey Shake
- Raspberry Power Parfait

DAIRY OR ALTERNATIVE	FRUIT (LOOK FOR FIBER AND COLOR VARIETY!)	HEALTHY FAT (1 FAT SERVING= 50 CALORIES)
1 cup milk (fat free or 1%), or 1 cup soy milk, rice milk or almond milk	1/2 banana or any other fruit (see portion sizes in Appendix J)	pecans or walnuts: 4 halves (50 calories) or 8 halves (100 calories)
6-8 ounces of yogurt (go for Greek)	3/4 cup raspberries or any other berries	sunflower seeds (1 tbsp = 50 calories)
1/4 cup Fat Free or 1% cottage cheese	1 orange, or any other tennis-ball sized fruit	large olives - 8 black, 10 green (stuffed)
string cheese piece	1 medium apple, sliced	1-1/2 tsp peanut butter
milk with cereal noted to the right:	occasional cereal substitute: look for >3 grams of protein and >2 g fiber in a 15 gram carb portion (see label)	10 peanuts or 16 pistachios (50 calories) almonds or cashews 6 (50) or 12 (100)
1.5 ounce of reduced fat cheese	occasional substitute: 15 grams carb portion of whole grain crackers	2 tablespoons avocado (1/5th of an avocado)

Excerpt from the *Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal*, page 59

sunflower seed spread

Total time: 10 minutes

This recipe is always a hit! You should have seen the response when we did a taste test... it's surprisingly delicious!

3 cups sunflower seeds (unsalted if available)
¾ cup lemon juice
¼ cup almond butter
3 garlic cloves
1–2 teaspoons fresh ginger, grated
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon dried cayenne pepper, or to taste
1 cup kale
1 red bell pepper
1 cup sweet onion
1 cup fresh parsley stems removed

GROCERY LIST:

Garlic cloves (3 cloves)
Fresh ginger (2-inch piece)
Kale (1 cup)
Red bell pepper (1)
Sweet onion (1 cup chopped)
Parsley (1 cup)
Lemon juice (¾ cup)
Sunflower seeds, unsalted if available (3 cups)
Almond butter (¼ cup)
Cumin
Salt
Cayenne pepper

1. Grind sunflower seeds in a food processor. Transfer to a mixing bowl.
2. Combine the lemon juice, almond butter and spices in the food processor and process until mixed.
3. Add all of the vegetables and pulse. There should be little pieces and the color of all the veggies but not big chunks.
4. Combine the vegetable mixture with the ground sunflower seeds in the mixing bowl. Serve with cut fresh vegetables or spread on whole-grain crackers.

Yield: 32 2-tablespoon servings or 4 cups

Nutrient Breakdown:

Calories 80
Fat 6g (1g saturated fat)
Sodium 70mg
Carbohydrate 5g
Fiber 2g
Protein 3g

Plate Plan choices:

½ vegetable, ½ lean meat/protein, 1 fat

To make this a Best Body Countdown Strong Snack, serve with either:
Raw Veggies (cucumber, carrots, and red bell pepper)
Flatbread crackers and a cup of milk

To make this for lunch, serve rolled up in a whole-grain wrap with fresh spinach. Delish!

Kim's Comment

Unless you are taking it as an appetizer somewhere, this makes a bit much to eat at once, even if you love it like I do. The good news is that this gem of a recipe freezes well. I usually freeze it in small disposable plastic containers in ¼-cup portions.

That way, I can just pull a container out and thaw it in the refrigerator when I need a quick snack later that day. Or, I might pull a couple containers out if I need an appetizer on the fly.

Best Body Beverages

FRESHLY INFUSED WATER RECIPES

Adequate water intake is critical to good health: one of the five Best Body Countdown essentials is to have four water bottles daily. While leading the Best Body Club Facebook page and reading participants' vents, I have come to realize just how many people are "water-haters." So, I've added a fabulous infuser bottle to my programs that helps minimize excuses and maximize hydration. Herb- or produce-infused water counts as REAL water and is a refreshing change from plain water.

When you take a look at these delightful infused water recipes, you can tell which one of us is the foodie and which one of us still has hip-high little ones at home tugging a leg in the kitchen. Kim is the "recipe fancy pants," and I tend to keep it simple in the kitchen, for this season anyway!

KIM'S INFUSED WATER FAVORITES:

Cucumber Mint Cooler:

Several thin slices of cucumber

A few sprigs of mint

Shake well and let sit for a while (preferably overnight) before enjoying.

This is so refreshing and makes a good pick-me-up mid-afternoon.

Orange Spritzer:

Fresh cut oranges (rinds removed)

Slice of lime (give it a slight squeeze into the water bottle)

Thinly sliced fresh ginger root (to get the most flavor, smash the peeled ginger a little)

If you like a bubbly beverage, you can add a dash of club soda after shaking well. This makes a really nice evening beverage to sip on in place of a cocktail or wine.

SOHAILLA'S INFUSED WATER FAVORITES:

Take-me-to-Jamaica Punch:

Strawberries, sliced

Fresh-cut orange wedges
(wash rinds well)

Cantaloupe slices (rinds removed)

Shake well and let sit for a while (preferably overnight) before sipping. My favorite place in the world is Jamaica, and this is just the right blend to bring on the memories.

Easy Does It:

Peeled orange sections or fresh cut orange wedges (rinds removed)

Honestly, this is surprisingly perfect as-is after a quick shake of the infuser bottle.

SMOOTHIES AND SHAKES

Monkey Shake

Place the following into your blender in this order:

1 cup milk

½ banana

½ cup ice

1 teaspoon cocoa

¼ cup vanilla Greek yogurt (or ¼ cup fat free cottage cheese)

1½ teaspoons natural creamy peanut butter

Blend on high until smooth.

Yield: 1 serving

Nutrient Breakdown (using 1% milk): Calories 259, Fat 8g, Carb 32g, Fiber 3g, Protein 17g



Monster Shake

Place into your blender in this order:

½ cup milk

½ cup peach low fat Greek yogurt

¼ cup 100% apple juice or grape juice

3 frozen peach wedges (or fresh)

½ cup ice, and a handful of baby spinach
(about 1 cup of leaves), raw and washed.

Blend on high until smooth. Drink promptly.

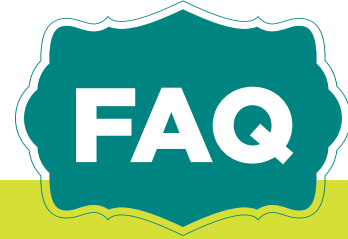
Yield: 1 serving

**Nutrient Breakdown (using 1% milk): Calories 196,
Fat 2g, Carb 34g, Fiber 2g, Protein 12g**



“These shakes are great! I did the Best Body Countdown with my wife and I lost 24 pounds in 52 days! I intend to continue to use the guidelines and start another 52 days.”

—KENNY, 48



Frequently Asked Question:

"What about having a drink?"

How drinking alcohol impacts your health and weight is largely dependent on how much you have, and your overall calorie balance. First, let's define a standard alcoholic "drink:"

12 oz. of beer (0 added sugars)

5 oz. of wine (most have 1-5g sugars)

1.5 oz. or a "shot" of liquor (0 added sugars initially)

Moderate drinking is defined as up to one daily drink for a woman, and up to two for a man. Though moderate alcohol intake can be part of a healthy diet, our nation's obesity level is an indication of how difficult moderation is. In addition to the calories consumed in the beverage (including the mixers) and the way the body processes alcohol into fat tissue readily, drinking can impact the number of servings you choose to eat at that time, and can increase the risk of certain cancers. So, the question to ask yourself is, "Is it worth it?" If you decide it is, then mindfully savor each sip, having committed to your limit in advance.

Excerpt from the *Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal*, page 42

Happy Half-a-Plate

Do you recall that half of your lunch and dinner plate should be thought of as a big smile—**happy** because it's full of healthy vegetables? Many people dread eating veggies, but in our experience, we've learned it's mostly because they haven't yet tried the preparation methods that are most enjoyable.

Try not just to recall what you don't like about certain veggies. I've learned it's all about how they are prepared, and often when mixed into something delicious or in a new recipe, you won't mind them one bit. Simply stand in the produce section and look around at your options: perhaps there are some vegetables you have dismissed that deserve another chance, maybe this time prepared an entirely different way and consumed with a smile. Like I tell my kids, "Of course food tastes bad if you frown while you are eating it." Take this seriously; your success at becoming more lean and healthy largely depends on the make up of half your plate!

Excerpt from the *Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal*, page 47

“I'm very surprised how many veggie-based recipes I liked!”

—TAMMY, 35



Salad Building 101

Our cookbook offers several different kinds of salad recipes, such as the Refreshing Rainbow Salad pictured. However, we'll often suggest a "green salad" as a side in addition to the recipes offered for the dinner's menu. Or, on evenings when you don't have time to cook, you may just want to toast a pita lightly in the oven while throwing together a quick entree salad with last night's leftover grilled meat on top. When you are building an impromptu salad, consider the following tips.

Be sure that veggies are the star ingredients of your salad. If loaded down with dressing and non-vegetable toppings, salads can be very high in calories.

Don't get bogged down with the same old five ingredients you've always put in your salad. This guide will help you to get creative. Remember, if you allow yourself to get in a rut, eating the same foods all the time, you may tire of healthy eating just before reaching Your Best Body.

Use this quick formula to help you make creative side salads yielding 4 servings:

6 cups greens + 2 cups add-ins + garnishes (amounts listed) + dressing

GREENS:

Red or green leaf lettuce, Boston lettuce, iceberg lettuce, romaine lettuce, baby spinach, baby kale, Swiss chard, bagged salad greens

SALAD ADD-INS:

Shredded cabbage, rainbow slaw, beets, arugula, radicchio, tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers, artichoke hearts, hearts of palm, bell peppers, squash, zucchini, slivered sugar snap peas, celery

GARNISHES OF CHOICE:

- 2–4 tablespoons fresh herbs, such as basil, chives, dill, cilantro, parsley, or oregano
- ¼ to ½ cup sliced or chopped red, yellow or green onion, roasted red peppers, olives, pickled vegetables
- 1-3 tablespoons cheese, nuts, seeds, or dried fruit
 - Feta, goat, blue or parmesan cheese
 - Pecans, walnuts, almonds, pine nuts or peanuts
 - Sesame, sunflower or pumpkin seeds
 - Raisins or other dried fruits (without added sugar, ideally)

I once worked where there were a bunch of dietitians in one building and we'd have a "salad bar" lunch on Fridays, each bringing a couple of the ingredients above to share. It is an easy and inexpensive way to get have great lunch with friends or colleagues...try it! RDN credentials not required.



Sohaila
Says

SALAD DRESSING:

Use the least amount of salad dressing needed. Start with 1-1½ tablespoons vinaigrette, light vinaigrette, or light creamy dressing per serving.

TO DRESS THE SALAD:

In a large salad bowl, gently toss the greens with the add-ins.

Vinaigrette: Drizzle the dressing over the salad and gently toss until all ingredients are lightly coated with the vinaigrette. Arrange the salad on a serving plate and top with garnishes.

Creamy dressing: Divide the salad among serving plates, drizzle with dressing, top with garnishes and serve (creamy dressings are heavy and weigh down lettuce if tossed).

In a hurry? Just put your salad in a bowl, add dressing and eat. It does not have to be complicated....but Kim admits she likes it to be just a little bit fancy...she even has a favorite salad tossing bowl. My favorite salad is pictured.

For a couple quick examples, see Day 23's **Sweet and Simple Spinach Salad** or Day 43's **4-Ingredient Kale Salad**.





Vegetable Cooking Options

SIMPLE SAUTÉ:

“To sauté” simply means to cook food in hot fat (such as oil or butter). It is best to sauté tender vegetables such as asparagus, bok choy, sugar snap peas, mushrooms, spinach, squash, zucchini and bell peppers.

Cut vegetables into uniform pieces (to promote even cooking).

Heat the pan over medium-high heat, add 1-3 teaspoons oil and spray with cooking spray. Once the oil is hot swirl the pan to coat the bottom, add food in a single layer; stir to promote even cooking and browning.

To sauté less tender vegetables, such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, potatoes or carrots, first sauté as mentioned above, stirring to coat in oil. Once the vegetables begin to soften, add a little liquid (water, broth or a combination) to the pan. Bring to a slow boil, reduce heat and cover. Cook until the desired degree of doneness is achieved.

STEAMING 3 WAYS:

Steaming is a great choice because it is quick, helps veggies to retain their nutrients, and doesn't require fat.

- Steamer bags are readily available in markets everywhere. Both fresh and frozen vegetables can be steamed in the microwave by simply following the instructions on the bag.
- Steaming vegetables in a microwave-safe bowl is another easy way to steam vegetables if you prefer not to cook in plastic or if you don't buy your vegetables in a bag. Simply place uniformly cut vegetables in a microwave-safe bowl and add 2-4 tablespoons of water; cover the bowl loosely with a paper towel and microwave for 1-3 minutes. At 30-60 second intervals, check for doneness and stir to promote even cooking.
- Stove-top steaming is an equally simple way to steam vegetables. Place a steamer basket filled with uniformly cut vegetables into a sauce pan and add 1-inch of water to the pan. Place the pan over medium-high heat, cover, and cook until the vegetables reach the desired degree of doneness.



ROASTING:

We both love this method! If you aren't a fan of traditionally prepared vegetables, you really should try roasting them. They taste totally different...and are delicious!

Cut vegetables into uniform pieces and spread them in a single layer on a baking sheet. Add 3-4 teaspoons of oil plus seasonings of choice; toss to coat the vegetables. Cook in a preheated oven at 400-425 degrees. Stir halfway through cooking time. Cook until tender, usually 25-30 minutes.



Extras

SEASONING BLENDS

Many of our recipes use seasoning blends in an effort to save you time and reduce the ingredient list length. Over our years as dietitians, we have noticed that people can be discouraged by long ingredient lists, so seasoning blends are a great convenience. Blends are a nice way to add flavor with “one shake.” Some blends contain more sodium than others, but we have monitored that in our recipes for you.

Jane’s Crazy Mixed-Up Salt® includes salt, dehydrated onion, garlic and dried herbs. Although it is a salt blend, Jane’s Crazy Mixed-Up Salt® contains half the sodium of straight salt. If you replace salt in your recipes with this blend you will automatically reduce the sodium to half. If you prefer to use salt instead, simply use half of the amount called for in the recipe and add any other salt-free seasonings you prefer.

Greek seasoning (such as Cavenders®) is another salt blend with a variety of spices and dried herbs used to add a wonderful umami (or savory) flavor to our recipes.

Salt-free blends (such as Mrs. Dash®) come in many varieties that complement a lot of foods. Many times we pair them with salt or another blend containing salt; this adds flavor without increasing the overall salt content in your food.

OILS AND FATS

Most of our recipes call for extra-virgin olive oil or canola oil. These are the two most healthy and versatile oils for your pantry. Canola oil is less expensive, is refined, has a neutral flavor and can withstand higher temperatures. Extra-virgin olive oil is more expensive and less refined therefore it imparts more flavors. It does not withstand high temperatures as well as canola oil. This does not mean they have to be the only two oils you use. Specialty oils are wonderful to experiment with and enjoy. Coconut oil also imparts a nice slightly tropical flavor to cooking and while it is quite trendy, the research does not support use of coconut oil exclusively over other oils. It is important to include a variety of healthy fats in your diet (in moderate amounts), just as it is important to eat a variety of vegetables (in significant amounts).

MILK

When unspecified milk is called for in this cookbook, we are referring to nonfat or 1% milk. Feel free to substitute for a different milk product if desired, keeping in mind that they have different nutritional profiles and varying benefits. Choose your milk based on the nutritional profile that best suits your nutrient needs. For example, use dairy products for cheese and yogurt, use plain soy milk or cow's milk with breakfast for more protein to hold you through the morning, and use almond milk when you need the calories as low as possible and have already met your protein needs for that segment of the day, like when having a treat such as the Coffee and Cream Shake.

Naturally occurring sugar from milk (that does not have sugar added in processing) doesn't count toward your number of grams of daily added sugar, but remember the importance of moderation.



BEFORE



HALFWAY



CURRENT

“I have completed 3 rounds of the Best Body Countdown and lost 65 pounds!
I am so happy to have recipes at my fingertips that meet the Countdown
criteria for healthy eating! So many favorites!

—ESMERALDA, 46

menu plan

PRE-COUNTDOWN DAY... 62

Garlic Pork Loin
Refreshing Rainbow Salad
Sweet Potato Mirco-Mash

DAY 52 (typically Tuesday) 69

Blackened Cod
Couscous with Pistachios
Suggested side:
steamed or sautéed broccoli

Day 51 72

Easy Asian Stir-Fry

Day 50 74

Toasted Eggplant Sandwiches
Quinoa Pilaf with Pine Nuts

Day 49 77

Bruschetta Chicken
Roasted Vegetables with Orzo
Suggested side: green salad

Day 48 80

Spice-Coated Turkey Burgers
Green Beans with
Roasted Red Peppers

Day 47 84

Steak with Mushroom Gravy
and Broccoli
Suggested side: green salad

DAY 46..... 90

Mediterranean Mahi Mahi
Simple Sautéed Spinach
Suggested side: barley

DAY 45..... 95

Buffalo Chicken Pita Sandwich
Suggested sides: raw veggies
with yogurt ranch dressing,
steamed corn

Day 44 97

Chicken Fiesta Soup
Avocado Salsa Topper

Day 43 99

Cocoa-Spiced Pork
4-Ingredient Kale Salad

Day 42 101

Quinoa Salmon Patties
Oven Potato Fries
Suggested side: sugar snap
peas and carrots (*steamable bag*)

Day 41 103

Penne Pasta Casserole
Sautéed Swiss Chard

Day 40 106

Perfectly Filling Quinoa
Lettuce Wraps
Sweet Protein Perfection

DAY 39..... 110

Best-Ever Spinach Lasagna
Suggested sides: green salad,
Italian bread

Day 38 112

Salmon with Salsa Verde
Cilantro-Lime Rice
Suggested side: squash and
zucchini

Day 37 114

Steakhouse Chicken
Cuban-Style Black Beans
Roasted Asparagus with Garlic
and Lemon

Day 36 117

Planned-Over Best-Ever
Spinach Lasagna
Green Beans with Toasted
Almonds

Day 35 119

Jerk Fish Tacos with Pineapple
Salsa
Suggested side: green salad

Day 34 120

All-American Backyard Burger
Refreshing Rainbow Salad

Day 33 122

Dad's Oven-Roasted Chicken
with Vegetables
Suggested side: steamed
broccoli

menu plan

DAY 32..... 126

Hearty Black Bean Soup

Suggested side: raw veggie sticks

DAY 31..... 128

Pistachio-Crusted Tilapia

Barley with Spinach and Corn

Suggested side: steamed beets

Day 30 130

Mediterranean Chicken Over Orzo

Suggested side: crackers with hummus appetizer

Day 29 132

Slow-Cooked Pineapple Pork

Sautéed Sugar Snap Peas

Suggested side: brown rice

Day 28 134

Broiled Salmon

Super-Food Salad with Perfect Dressing

Pita Chips

Day 27 138

Grilled Steak with Garlic and Lime

Roasted or Grilled Cabbage

Edamame Pasta Salad

Day 26 142

One-Dish Roasted Turkey Dinner

DAY 25..... 146

Turkey Enchilada Casserole

Mexican Slaw

Day 24 150

Vegetarian Chili

Roasted Cauliflower with Paprika

Suggested side: raw veggies and yogurt ranch dressing dip

Day 23 153

Pasta with Artichokes and Shrimp

Sweet and Simple Spinach Salad

Day 22 155

Southwestern Chopped Salad

Day 21 156

Sesame-Crusted Tuna Steak

Green Beans with Lemon

Suggested side: brown rice

Day 20 159

Broiled Chicken with Herbs

Pasta Salad Florentine

Suggested side: broccoli

Day 19 162

Easy Slow-Cooker Beef Roast Dinner

Suggested side: green salad

Whole grain rolls (if needed)

DAY 18..... 168

Flounder with Tarragon Aioli

Sautéed Spinach and Tomatoes

Suggested side: barley

Day 17 171

Chipotle Chicken Butternut Stew

Suggested side: green salad or raw veggies and hummus

Day 16 172

Taco Salad

Day 15 174

Chicken and Bok Choy Stir-fry

Suggested side: edamame

Day 14 176

Zucchini Boats

Day 13 179

Grilled Balsamic Pork Tenderloin

Carolina Salad

Roasted Brussels Sprouts and Carrots

Grilled Whole-Grain Bread

Day 12 184

Spice-Rubbed Salmon on the Grill

Watermelon Feta Salad

Suggested side: grilled corn on the cob

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Appendix A

Serving Sizes *hint: 1 grain or starch = 15 g carb; limit or avoid those along the bottom*

Meats	Vegetables	Grain/Starch	Fruit	Dairy	Fat
Fish (not fried) Salmon, trout, herring, flounder, mackerel, tuna, and others	1 cup raw vegetables ½ cup cooked or finely chopped vegetables	1/3 cup cooked rice 1/2 cup cooked pasta, oats, quinoa, bulgur, or barley	1 tennis ball-sized fruit such as an apple, peach, etc. ½ banana	1 cup skim or 1% milk 1 cup yogurt, regular or Greek yogurt	2 tbsp. avocado (1/5) 8 olives 4-10 nuts 1 ½ tsp nut butter 1 tbsp. sunflower, pumpkin, or flax seeds
Poultry: White meat, no skin	starchy vegetables and beans are counted with grains because of their starchy quality	½ cup grits	¾ cup any berries	1.5 oz fat-free or reduced-fat cheese	1 tsp. oil 1 tbsp. Promise or Smart Balance spread
Beef and Pork: Loin and round cuts are typically lean		6 saltine-size crackers or 2 crisp- breads	1 cup any melon cubes	Mozzarella, ricotta, and feta are naturally lower in fat	1 ½ tsp. salad dress- ing (2 if tbsp. light) dressing
Lean lunch meat (limit nitrates) 1 egg = 1 oz. meat		1 slice whole-grain bread (1 ounce)	½ cup applesauce, unsweetened	¼ cup low-fat cottage cheese	2 tsp. mayo 1 tsp. coconut oil 1 tsp. butter 1 tbsp. cream cheese
Avoid: Bologna, bacon, sausage, salami, hot dogs, and limit highly processed deli meats		2 tbsp. dried fruits 4 ounces 100% juice	Limit: Juice, fruit drinks	Limit: Whole milk, full-fat cheeses and yogurts, ice cream, cream soups	Limit or Avoid: Butter, cream soups, stick margarine, bacon, fatback, gravy, cream, shortening, full-fat dressings, and hydrogenated oils (trans fat) in packaged products
		1 slice whole-grain bread (1 ounce)			
		½ whole wheat pita or English muffin			
		¾ cup whole-grain cereal			
		1/2 cup of corn, peas, potatoes, sweet potatoes, or beans			

Appendix B

My BEST BODY Shopping List (think perimeter!)

Fresh produce (did you get all colors of the rainbow?)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Lean protein (fish, poultry & round/loin cuts of pork/beef or tofu)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Whole grains, cereals and beans

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



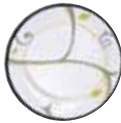
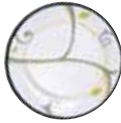
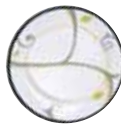
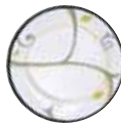
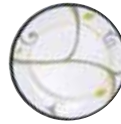
Low sodium canned goods and dried fruits

_____	_____
_____	_____






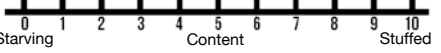


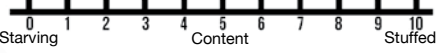
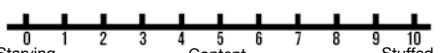
Dairy, eggs, and frozen foods

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Appendix C

MEAL PLANNING	PICTURE IT!	GROCERY NEEDS	PREPARATION TIPS
<i>Monday's Dinner</i>			
<i>Tuesday's Dinner</i>			
<i>Wednesday's Dinner</i>			
<i>Thursday's Dinner</i>			
<i>Friday's Dinner</i>			
<i>Saturday's Dinner</i>			
<i>Sunday's Dinner</i>			

Appendix D

FOOD LOG DATE: _____	WHEN AND WHERE?	HUNGER BEFORE AND SATIETY AFTER
BREAKFAST		
		
SNACK		
LUNCH		
		
SNACK		
DINNER		
		
NOTES: <input type="checkbox"/> I REACHED MY WATER GOAL!		

Appendix E

Shopping Staples

FRESH PRODUCE (ALL!)

- ✓ Salad greens
- ✓ Bagged rainbow slaw (also called California slaw or broccoli slaw)
- ✓ Garlic (fresh, in the tube or minced)
- ✓ Onions (onions are storage produce and last a long time in the crisper drawer)
- ✓ Carrots (carrots last a long time in the refrigerator)
- ✓ Apples (Apples keep well in the crisper drawer)
- ✓ Seasonal farmer's market specials

LEAN MEATS

- ✓ Fish
- ✓ Chicken and turkey breast
- ✓ Lean pork and beef (loin or round cuts)
- ✓ Canned tuna and salmon

WHOLE GRAINS, CEREALS, AND BEANS

- ✓ Canned reduced-sodium beans and bagged dry beans (black, pinto, navy, kidney, etc.)
- ✓ Whole grains (brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, barley, quinoa, old-fashioned or steel cut oats, etc.)
- ✓ Whole-grain pitas
- ✓ Ezekiel cinnamon-raisin English muffins

LOW-SODIUM CANNED GOODS AND DRIED FRUITS

- ✓ No-salt-added canned tomatoes (diced, stewed, and with green chilis)

- ✓ Reduced-sodium and unsalted stock or broth (chicken, vegetable, beef)
- ✓ Raisins (golden and purple)

DAIRY, EGGS, AND FROZEN FOODS

- ✓ Milk (1% or nonfat), plain soymilk or almond milk
- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Butter or trans-fat-free spread
- ✓ Greek yogurt (plain, nonfat)
- ✓ Frozen fruit (blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, peaches)
- ✓ Frozen vegetables (stir-fry blends, mirepoix, chopped onions and peppers)
- ✓ Frozen chicken or fish (non-breaded)


MISCELLANEOUS

- ✓ Spice blends (Mrs. Dash salt-free seasonings, Jane's Crazy Mixed-Up Salt, Cavendar's Greek seasoning, grill seasonings, Italian seasoning, etc.)
- ✓ Healthy oil (canola oil, extra-virgin olive oil, canola oil cooking spray)
- ✓ Dressings such as Newman's Own Balsamic Vinegar and Bolthouse Farms Greek Yogurt Dressing
- ✓ Nuts and nut butter such as peanut butter or almond butter

Appendix F

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	FIBER (GRAMS)
pear with skin*	1 medium	5.5 grams
apple with skin*	1 medium	4.4 grams
strawberries*	3/4 cup	3.0 grams
orange*	1 medium	3.1 grams
whole wheat pasta	1/2 cup	3.2 grams
barley, cooked*	1/2 cup	3.0 grams
bran flakes*	3/4 cup	5.3 grams
oatmeal*, cooked	1 cup	4.0 grams
popcorn, air-popped	3 cups	3.5 grams
lentils*	1/2 cup	8 grams
lima beans*	1/2 cup	7 grams
baked beans*	1/3 cup	3.5 grams
green peas*	1/2 cup	4.4 grams
navy beans*	1/2 cup	6 grams
kidney beans*	1/2 cup	6 grams
broccoli	1/2 cup	2.6 grams
brussels sprouts*	1/2 cup	3.0 grams

*denotes soluble fiber-rich foods



“ Nothing would be more tiresome than eating and drinking if God had not made them a pleasure as well as a necessity.”

— VOLTAIRE

Acknowledgments

We were acquaintances at best when we started to write this book together, but each met our match in grit; both of us equally willing to persevere through more details than we ever imagined... and harmoniously, too! We are grateful to each other for committed teamwork and friendship, and we acknowledge God graciously allowed our paths to cross at this juncture and is the giver of anything noteworthy that we have to offer.

Our designer has been a gem -- doing the finishing work to create a book that is as beautiful as it is all-inclusive. One that beckons you to choose healthy food while supporting you in staying the Best-Body course. Thank you Summer, for your tireless work to make our words look as lovely as the recipes taste.

We are deeply grateful for our precious husbands who support us and share life's loads with us. Without them we could not accomplish pieces of work such as this in order to enrich and extend lives, and strengthen bodies and families. Many thanks to our children for tasting recipes, helping clean up Mommy's messes in the kitchen, and for timely hugs on the long editing days.

We appreciate our dear friends, family members, and fans: testing recipes, proofing documents, lending a hand, and cheering us on while excitedly awaiting the finish line of this project. Our dietitian colleagues and the Best Body Nutrition & Fitness team have been a wealth of support in this endeavor as well. We are blessed!

Last but not least, we applaud the thousands of clients and readers that have had the determination to finish out the Best Body Countdown's 52-day journey (and the boldness to insist on a menu plan to complement it). Thank you for allowing us to share tidbits from your personal experiences and your recipe favorites. Your progress is inspiring...our hope is that these recipes and tips become part of your Best-Body success story.

About the Authors

SOHAILLA DIGSBY



Sohailla Digsby is a registered dietitian nutritionist, fitness instructor, national speaker and author of the ***Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal***. She is the Founder of Best Body Nutrition & Fitness, LLC, supporting facilitators around the nation in using her 52-day Best Body Countdown™ program to affect lifestyle change.

Sohailla has been teaching fitness since beginning her nutrition studies about 20 years ago. Over her years of experience as a dietitian and fitness pro, she has learned that just as exercise regimens must be enjoyable to be adhered to regularly, meals must be flavorful and balanced for people to make lasting changes in their eating habits.

On a typical day you might find her in heels giving a presentation, later in sneakers jogging alongside her kids as they bike in the neighborhood while a slow-cooker dinner simmers, and then around the table with her family in her slippers. Sohailla prioritizes making health, food, and fitness both fun and practical so that you will be compelled to do the same for the long-haul!

Sohailla is an award-winning dietitian, holding a Dietetics degree from the University of Georgia, with honors. She completed her post-graduate dietetic internship in Augusta, Georgia, close to where she currently resides with her husband of 17 years and 3 children. As a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), she actively participates in the Nutrition Entrepreneurs and Weight Management AND practice groups, and is also an ACE-certified fitness instructor. She is passionate about keeping her message balanced and realistic, knowing that after the hype of the fads fade, people need practical steps, wholesome, delicious recipes, and accountability to stay the Best-Body course.

Check out Sohailla's Countdown to Your Best Body Success Journal to pair with this Cookbook & Menu Plan to reach Your Best Body in 52 days! And be sure to watch for the next accompanying publication to the Success Journal and Cookbook to learn more about why Sohailla chose exactly 52 days for the Countdown. Stay in touch through bestbodyin52.com.

About the Authors

KIM BEAVERS



Kim has been writing and talking about food throughout her 20-year career as a registered dietitian nutritionist. For the past ten years she has been the producer and co-host of University Health Care System's culinary nutrition segment *Eating Well with Kim*, which airs three times a week on local television. Several of the recipes included in this book originated as *Eating Well with Kim* recipes. In addition, Kim writes a regular column for the Augusta Family Magazine, highlighting favorite recipes and nutrition topics.

Demonstrating recipes on air has allowed her to hone her recipe development and presentation skills. One of Kim's passions is to show viewers that eating healthfully is delicious. As a "picky eater" in her youth, Kim developed a natural appreciation for the importance of flavor. She believes strongly that healthy food must taste good in order for eating habits to change. Just as form follows function, so too does nutrition follow flavor. You can be sure that Kim did not eat "yucky" food as a child, does not eat it now, nor will she suggest that you do. Pass the flavor please!

Kim is an award-winning dietitian and holds a Bachelor and Master of Science degree in Health Sciences from James Madison University. She is a Certified Diabetes Educator and a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND). She actively participates in several AND practice groups including the Food and Culinary Professionals, Diabetes Care and Education, and Nutrition Entrepreneurs groups. She enjoys sharing her nutrition expertise with others and is delighted with the growing interest in fresh local food. After all, fresh food is more flavorful.

Kim enjoys an active lifestyle which includes tennis, running, biking and various fun adventures with her husband of 14 years, 2 energetic children, and family dog.




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