



your

... It's Worth the Trip!



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Thinned Down, So Creamy, Ground Turkey Alfredo with Peas

When people consider increasing the nutrition quality of their diet or beginning a weight loss journey, for many, the fear that keeps them from committing is a bland diet full of nothing but vegetables, completely absent of any comfort. A high-quality nutrition diet that consists of an adequate variety of fruits and vegetables (at least a combination of 8 servings per day), lean meats, and whole grains, can still allow room for enjoyable foods. You don't have to turn away from your favorite foods when aiming to shrink your waistline.

Before sharing how comfort foods can fit, it is important to note that vegetables don't have to be bland or boring. Adding herbs and spices, and broiling, grilling and baking them are surprisingly delicious to most "vegetable haters." Also, consuming a combination of 8 servings is a goal that can be easily met by adding a serving or two to a morning smoothie, consuming fruits as snacks, and blending vegetables to casseroles.

An easy strategy to improve the nutrition quality of the diet is to consume less foods containing empty calories. These type of calories offer no nutritional value and only add to the caloric intake. Regardless of the varying information out there regarding the optimal amounts of fat, protein and carbohydrates that diets should contain, eventually excessive calories, no matter the source, are stored as body fat.

Empty calories come from added sugars and unhealthy fats. Most of your favorite "comfort foods" that you enjoy making and/or ordering out have high amounts of empty calories. With a few tweaks along with preparing the dishes at home (so you can control the quality of the ingredients and the portion size), many of your favorite comfort food recipes can be "slimmed down" while upping their nutrition quality, increasing vitamins and minerals as well as the amount of fiber.

For example, added sugar in any recipe is a source of empty calories. However, for baked goods, pureed fruit such as unsweetened applesauce, plums, and/or bananas can be substituted. Heavy cream used in cream sauces is loaded in unhealthy saturated fat and calories. Switching to nonfat- evaporated milk slashes the calories and cuts out the fat from the cream. Yet the taste is just as pleasing. Why use sour cream that is loaded in fat? Why not switch and use nonfat Greek yogurt? This great source of calcium switch will increase the amount of protein while cutting the fat and calories! These are just a few simple easy switches that you can adopt now without sacrificing taste! Just remember, this doesn't mean that you can eat larger portions or eat your favorite comfort foods every day, for every meal. If you do so, your calorie level may be too high. Remember, no matter how nutrient dense your diet is, excessive calories will still result in thwarting your weight loss and waistline goals.

Here is a childhood favorite for many! The sauce is a creamy and tasty as the original version that Mom or Grandma makes.



Ingredients: 4 servings

- 1 ½ tbsp. olive oil
- 12 oz. ground turkey, lean
- 3 tbsp. all-purpose flour (wheat or white)
- 12 oz. evaporated milk
- 4 oz. skim milk
- ½ cup non-fat Greek yogurt
- ½ cup parmesan cheese
- 1½ tsp. minced garlic
- ½ tsp. salt
- Black pepper to taste
- 8 oz. whole wheat fettuccine
- ½ cup frozen peas

Directions:

1. Spread the non-fat Greek yogurt in a thin layer on a plate so it can quickly come to room temperature.
2. In a large, deep frying pan, heat oil over medium heat and add the ground turkey. Brown the turkey stirring occasionally.
3. While the ground turkey is cooking, begin cooking the fettuccine according to package directions.
4. Pour the frozen peas on a microwave-safe dish, add 1/3 cup of water, cover, and microwave on high for 5 minutes.
5. Once the turkey is no longer pink, sprinkle the flour over it and then toss. Cook for an additional minute until the flour is well absorbed into the meat and then slowly add the skim milk, evaporated milk and spices. Whisk constantly until the mixture begins to thicken. Drain the peas and add them to the sauce. Add the yogurt, mix, then add the cheese. Turn down heat to medium low and continue gently stirring until cheese is melted.
6. Serve ¼ of the pasta on a plate and, if desired, top it with additional freshly grated parmesan cheese and a sprinkle of fresh chopped basil.

Notes:

- This recipe works well with ground pork and ground beef.
- Omit the peas and serve the dish alongside a dark green leafy side salad.
- Consider using fresh or frozen broccoli instead of the peas. This will decrease the calories.
- Any type of lean meat can be used in this recipe.
- Don't have any meat thawed or cooked? Used canned (drained) tuna or chicken with the Heart Healthy seal.

DISCLAIMER:

THIS RECIPE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT BY DOD OF ANY INDIVIDUAL VENDOR. ANY PRODUCT OF SIMILAR SPECIFICATION MAY BE USED TO MAKE THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL.

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