

# THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX HOLIDAY MEATBALLS



Is protein the “magic” potion to promote weight loss? Are there other health benefits? Many may be wondering this due to the increase in popularity of protein powders and packaged items drawing attention to the amount of protein in products. What’s going on with all this focus on protein?

Here is the scoop! Whether you want to lose weight, build muscle, feel more satisfied from meals or promote optimal health, consuming an adequate amount of healthy sources of protein is very important. For adequate intake, the Dietary Reference Intake is 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram which is about 56 grams per day for the average sedentary man. The amount is greater for those that are physically active and usually the elderly.

However, to truly assist with weight loss and prevent the loss of muscle, studies show that a protein intake of about 30% of calories appears optimal. This is because the amount of energy a person burns increases. It actually takes more calories to burn protein than it does fat or carbohydrates. The number of calories consumed in a day is also reduced because the 30% level has been shown to decrease the appetite. In addition, this level does not cause negative health effects in individuals that are healthy. In fact, studies also show that this level, when comprised of heart healthy protein sources, also improves blood pressure and cholesterol values.

Multiply the number of calories that you consume on a daily basis to

meet your weight goals by 0.075. The resulting figure represents the number of grams of protein you would need to consume per day to make up 30% of your calories. For example, 135 grams of protein is the amount for an 1,800-calorie level. Aim to distribute this evenly throughout the day. Include at least 30 grams at breakfast. If you work out, refuel with at least 15 grams of protein within 30 minutes of finishing your workout. Just remember protein also has calories, so more is not better because excess calories, no matter where they are from, lead to weight gain.

To promote optimal health and keep saturated fat in check, choose mostly protein that is lean and low-sodium and limit highly processed foods. Also be sure to include vegetables at every meal and aim to choose fruits and vegetables as snacks. Also review the Nutrition Facts Label, to see how much protein is in the item you are consuming. This is because meat isn’t the only source.

This meal features a lean protein, 100% ground turkey, and a whole grain, which also provides a plant-based source of protein. Add a side of tossed salad topped with a sprinkle of cheese and your favorite nuts for added protein and 1-2 servings of veggies.

## MACROS/SERVING SIZE

Protein 28 g | Fat 13 g | Carbs 45 g

## % CALORIES OF MACROS/SERVING SIZE

Calories 405 | Protein 28 % | Fat 28 % | Carbs 44 %

## NUTRIENTS/SERVING SIZE

Fiber 3 g | Sodium 589 mg | Sat. Fat 3 g

## INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

- 1 lb. lean ground turkey
- 1/2 cup plain panko bread crumbs
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. poultry seasoning
- 2 tbsp. ketchup
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp. cranberry sauce
- 14-16 oz instant brown rice

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375°F
2. In a mixing bowl, add 1 lb. of lean ground turkey, 1/2 cup of plain panko bread crumbs, 1/2 tsp. of salt, 1 tsp. of poultry seasoning, 2 tbsp. ketchup and 1 egg. Using clean hands, mix the ingredients well. Roll the mixture into 12 equal balls. Wash hands with soap and water.
3. In a muffin tin, place 1 tbsp. of cranberry sauce in each hole. Place a turkey ball on top of the cranberry sauce in each hole. Place turkey balls in the oven and bake until the center is no longer pink (about 20-25 minutes).
4. While the turkey meatballs are baking, cook 14-16 oz. of instant brown rice according to package instructions.
5. Serve each plate with 3 meatballs, a little cranberry sauce, 1/4 of the rice, and your favorite mix of greens topped with grated cheese, a sprinkle of nuts and a dash of balsamic vinegar.

## NOTES

- For an Italian spin, swap out the poultry seasoning for Italian seasoning.
- Serve with your favorite marinara sauce on a bed of whole wheat noodles.
- Instead of salad, microwave a 14-16 oz. bag of frozen broccoli or cauliflower and top with shredded cheddar cheese.
- Nutrition analysis is based on the use of 93% lean ground turkey.

## DIETITIAN TIP

Ground meats like turkey, chicken and pork and beef can be very lean and low in fat. Choose options that are 95% or more lean. The protein level will be the same as the higher fat options, but the calories will be less.



A list of recipes on [commissaries.com/healthy living](https://www.commissaries.com/healthy-living) also has nutrition education.