

● **USA TODAY** | **SPECIAL** HEALTH & WELLNESS SECTION

BEST YEARS

2020

FABULOUS LIVING AT 50+

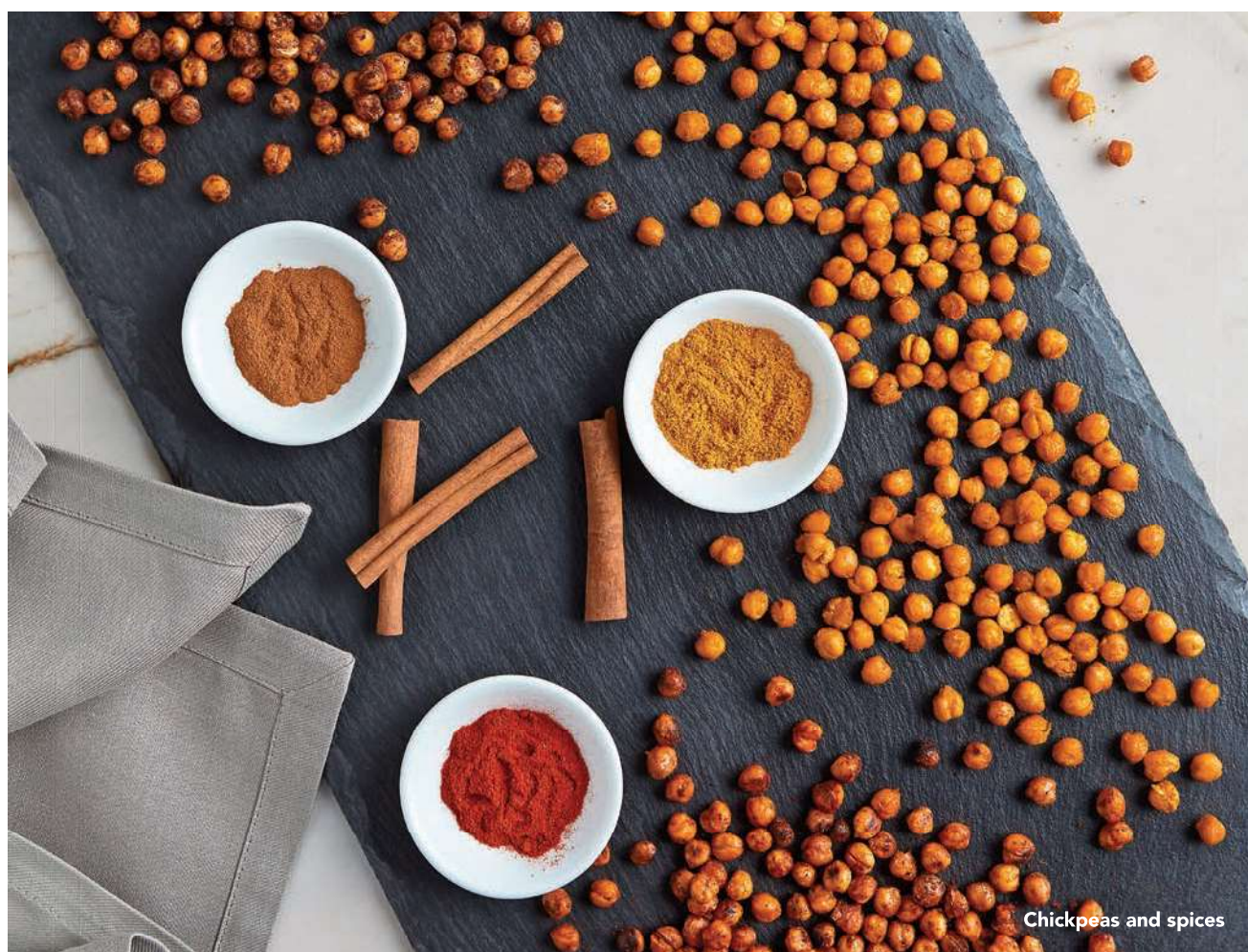


FALL IN LOVE
WITH FASHION

FIND JOY IN
YOUR NEXT ACT

TELEMEDICINE
DURING COVID-19





Pantry Powerhouse

Whip up healthy meals using ingredients you might already have on hand

BY LISA A. BEACH

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, people are eating out less. According to a recent survey by food and beverage communication firm Hunter, 54 percent of respondents say they cook more now than before the pandemic and 51 percent say they'll continue to cook at home even as life slowly returns to a new normal.

It looks like cooking from scratch is back in style.

Fortunately, this gives home cooks a wonderful opportunity to eat healthier by controlling what ingredients make it into meals.

Nutritionist Haylie Pomroy has authored several books, including *The Fast Metabolism Diet: Eat More Food and Lose More Weight*. Her food-is-medicine philosophy touts the power of proper nutrition to heal and nourish your body and fight against weight gain, lethargy, stress and illness.

"It's always important to focus on what you eat to create the health you desire," says Pomroy. "Now more than ever, it's really important to have internal strength and physical fortitude during these times — not just from a viral perspective, but from stress, and from having to be so adaptive right now."

We all know to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and power up with whole grains and lean meats. But how



GRILLED ALMOND BUTTER AND PEAR SANDWICH

Looking for a quick-and-easy alternative to peanut butter and jelly or grilled cheese? Try this healthy option:

Serves 1

Ingredients:

1½ teaspoons coconut oil
2 slices sprouted-grain bread
1½ tablespoons almond butter
1 cup sliced ripe pear
Celery and/or jicama sticks

Instructions:

Heat a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Spread the coconut oil on one side of the bread. Place it in the skillet, oiled-side down. Grill until golden brown. Remove the skillet from the heat. Place the grilled bread on a plate and spread the ungrilled sides with the almond butter and sandwich the pears in between. Serve with celery and/or jicama sticks on the side.

— Haylie Pomroy

do you pull that together on a busy weekday? And, if you're still limiting your trips to the grocery store, you might not know what to do with all that fresh produce you stockpiled.

Pomroy suggests using extra vegetables to make your own stock. Packed with nutrients, homemade stock works as a base for many meals and as a flavor boost when cooking vegetables.

Another trick? "Throw fresh pro-

duce in the freezer," says Pomroy. "Later, when you're making soups, smoothies, chili or stew, just pull out those frozen fruits, vegetables or herbs, puree them and put them in the stock. You'll still get all those nutrients."

Need some inspiration — using common ingredients — for healthier meals and snacks? Pomroy suggests these quick-and-easy ideas: >

HEALTHY FOODS TO STOCK UP ON

Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is part of a healthy diet. Here are a few standouts to stock in your fridge:



Apples: antioxidant-rich; anti-inflammatory properties; may help prevent constipation and lower LDL cholesterol levels



Oranges: anti-inflammatory properties; boost immune system; protect against cell damage and aids iron absorption



Blueberries: heart-healthy and antioxidant-rich; help lower blood pressure; protect against aging and improve brain health and cognitive function



Leafy greens: antioxidant-rich; help prevent cancer; protect bones and lower risk of heart disease



Tomatoes: can reduce risk of heart disease and cancer and promote healthy skin



Sweet potatoes: can help prevent cancer, control blood sugar and lower risk of heart disease and macular degeneration



Beans and legumes: rich in protein, iron and fiber; aid in gastrointestinal health; help with weight management and protect against Type 2 diabetes and heart disease



Whole grains: fiber-rich; lower risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, obesity and high blood pressure



Nuts and seeds: antioxidants; anti-inflammatory properties; provide heart-healthy fats; help reduce the risk of heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and cancer



Fermented foods: help promote gut health, improve mood, aid digestion and boost immunity



BREAKFAST

Put a twist on fiber-rich oatmeal by making it with your favorite tea, such as peppermint or chai, instead of plain water. This not only enhances the flavor, but it can even make your oatmeal medicinal. For example, you can use ginger tea to alleviate nausea. If you like the nutritional boost of steel-cut oats but don't have time to make them, Pomroy suggests placing steel-cut oats in a pot, cover with water, put on a lid and let it soak overnight. Then they become five-minute oats in the morning.

Another easy, healthy way to jumpstart the day is with a smoothie. Start with a liquid base — such as water, fruit juice, plant milk or yogurt— then add fresh, canned or frozen fruit and/or vegetables. To enhance the flavor and increase the nutrients, you could also mix in peanut butter, chia seeds, oats, cocoa powder, vanilla extract or spices such as cinnamon or nutmeg.

LUNCH

Repurpose those dinner leftovers by making bowls. Choose a base, such as mixed greens, lentils or wild rice, then top with leftovers, such as grilled chicken, steamed veggies or even chili. "Cooking should be a labor of love, not laborious," notes Pomroy. For another easy lunch, bake a batch of sweet potatoes, then mash them and freeze in ramekins. Heat them up for a hearty meal and season with cinnamon, cardamom or pumpkin spice.

DINNER

Pomroy understands how difficult it can be to get dinner on the table for a busy family like hers. To make it easier — especially during this challenging pandemic — she suggests cooking family-style. Work together to make casseroles, soups, chilis and stews, which allow you to add in nutrient-dense veggies, protein-filled beans and fiber-rich whole grains. Plus, you can easily portion some out for a quick lunch the next day. Make a double batch and freeze leftovers — perfect for a weeknight dinner when you're short on time.

On the weekend, grill up vegetables and protein sources, like tuna, chicken or steak and use them throughout the week to make tacos, build-your-own bowls, wraps and salads.

SNACKS

To make sweet potato hummus, combine cooked and mashed sweet potatoes (the ones you froze work well here) in a blender with garbanzo beans. Add a little lime, garlic and olive oil to taste and puree until smooth. Serve with crackers, pita chips or fresh-cut veggies like baby carrots or jicama sticks.

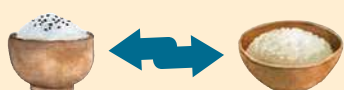
Or, head to your pantry and grab a can of chickpeas for a quick and easy snack. "When you feel 'snacky' or the urge to stress-eat, chickpeas are a fabulous source of natural protein with so much fiber," Pomroy says. She prepares them three different ways:

sweet (cinnamon, sea salt); savory (curry powder, turmeric, sea salt, red pepper flakes); and spicy (paprika, sea salt, chili powder, cumin, cayenne pepper). Just mix seasonings in a bowl then drain and rinse one can of chickpeas. Add them to the bowl and toss to coat. Spread out the seasoned chickpeas on a baking sheet and bake at 375 degrees, stirring occasionally, for 40 to 45 minutes or until crispy.

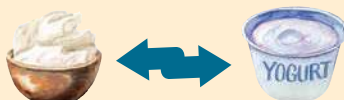
Find more of Pomroy's recipes at hayliepomroy.com.

HEALTHY SWAPS

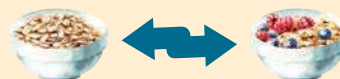
Try switching these ingredients for easy-to-find, healthier alternatives:



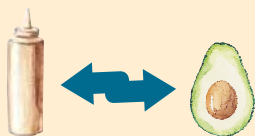
Replace white rice with brown rice
More fiber, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals



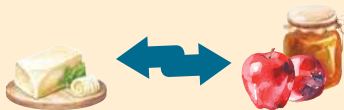
Replace sour cream with yogurt
Fewer calories and fat, higher protein and calcium



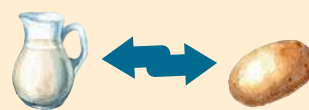
Replace sugar with fruit
Natural sweetener with vitamins and minerals



Replace mayonnaise with avocado
More monounsaturated (good) fat, less saturated or trans (bad) fat



Replace butter (in baking) with applesauce (but then reduce amount of sugar used in recipe)
Less saturated fat, more vitamins and minerals, natural sweetener



Replace heavy cream (for soups and sauces) with pureed starchy vegetables (like potatoes)
Less saturated fat, more vitamins and minerals