

Lemon Broccoli with Avocado

Try this spring spin on broccoli, brightened with lemon juice and topped with heart-healthy avocado. It's hearty enough for a lunch, but also a flavorful accompaniment to Ronit's Asian Salmon.

- 2 bunches broccoli
 - 1 lemon, juiced
 - 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon sea salt
 - 1 avocado, cut into chunks
1. Chop broccoli into bite-size pieces and separate stems from the crowns.
 2. Fill a pot with 1 inch of water, place a steamer basket inside, cover and heat to boiling. Add stem pieces, and steam for 2 minutes. Add crown pieces, cover and steam for 5 minutes.
 3. In a mixing bowl, combine the lemon juice, olive oil and salt.
 4. Chop the avocado into chunks and add to the mixing bowl.
 5. Add the warm broccoli to the bowl, mix gently and serve.
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Green Tahini Dressing

This simple and versatile dressing is an excellent go-to for spring because it spices up everything from salads and steamed veggies to wraps and grilled tuna. It's perfect for party platters and foods that need a little extra zing without added

sugar or other unhealthy ingredients.

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sesame tahini
- 2 tablespoons shoyu or tamari
- 1 tablespoon ume plum vinegar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch parsley, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch scallions, chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water (more or less)

Blend tahini, shoyu/tamari, vinegar, parsley and scallions in food processor, slowly adding water to achieve desired consistency.

Pour tahini dressing over steamed greens or use as dipping sauce for crudité veggies.

Dressing stays fresh in the refrigerator for three to four days.

Sumptuous Spring Greens Salad

One of my favorite things about spring is the abundance of farmer's market produce. This salad combines the freshest, most flavorful picks in one delicious bowl.

- 2 to 3 medium beets, red or golden
- 1 bunch young dandelion greens or watercress leaves, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ head radicchio, thinly sliced
- 2 Persian cucumbers, thinly sliced
- 6 radishes, thinly sliced
- 1 Granny Smith apple, quartered, cored, thinly sliced
- 1 medium ripe avocado, peeled and diced
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil or flax seed oil

- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
 - Sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
1. Cut beets into quarters. Place in a steamer basket over 2 inches of water in a large pot set over high heat. Cover and steam until tender but firm, about 12 minutes.
 2. When the beets are cool enough to handle, peel and dice them.
 3. Combine the avocado, oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper together in a small mixing bowl.
 4. In a separate serving bowl, mix beets with all the remaining ingredients.
 5. Toss together with the dressing mixture. Serve at once.
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Baked Fish in Tomato-Caper Sauce

This is a great recipe that even people who aren't fish lovers enjoy. It's also one of my favorite dishes for dinner parties because the sauce is easy to prep in advance, so all that's left to do is bake the fish when guests arrive.

This dish is always a winner at my house and with Smart Life clients. What I love about it is that I can pre-make the tomato sauce a day or two ahead and bake it with fish right before serving. I can also use the sauce to bake fish or shrimp for different meals.

Give this Mediterranean flavored dish a try and elevate your fish dinner to a new level of YUM!

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

2 large yellow onions, chopped

3 cloves garlic, chopped

2 teaspoons fresh oregano

2 tablespoons capers, drained
2 cups canned crushed tomatoes
2 cups fresh tomatoes (with seeds and juices), chopped
1 to 2 zucchinis, chopped
2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 teaspoon Himalayan or sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 ½ pounds fresh white fish like cod or sole

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Heat olive oil over medium heat in a sauté pan. Add onion and sauté until soft, 5 to 7 minutes. Add garlic and sauté until lightly colored, about 1 minute. Stir in oregano, capers and zucchini.

Add crushed tomatoes, fresh tomatoes, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Lower heat to a simmer and cook for 15 minutes. Spread one quarter of tomato sauce on the bottom of a large baking dish.

Arrange fish in a single layer on top of sauce. Bake in over for 15 to 20 minutes, or until fish is just done and opaque. Garnish with lemon and fresh herbs and serve.

Oat Milk with Muesli and Superfoods

This powerful, filling and fiber-rich breakfast will hold you over on days when you're expecting to eat a late-afternoon lunch. The oat milk lasts three days in your refrigerator when stored in a sealed glass jar.

Not keen on oats or simply prefer seeds or nuts? Just replace the oats with the same quantity of seeds or nuts and blend in their place. Almonds, brazils and hazelnuts need soaking overnight, whereas cashews absorb water more quickly so they only need about three hours of soaking.

Oat milk

1 cup whole oats or raw nuts (soaked in tap water)

1 liter spring or filtered water

2 teaspoons coconut oil

1 drop vanilla extract

2 dates

Muesli & Super Foods

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar-free muesli

2 tablespoons Goji berries

1 to 2 tablespoons omega 3-rich seeds (hemp, flax or chia)

To prepare the oat milk:

Soak the oats in tap water for 2 hours and drain. Add the oats and spring or filtered water to a blender and liquidize until smooth. Add the rest of the ingredients and blend for another 30 seconds.

To prepare the rest of the dish:

Pour 1 cup of the oat milk over the sugar-free muesli. Top with Goji berries and seeds.

Guilt-Free Hot Chocolate

When it's cold outside and you want to warm up your insides, all you need is a guilt-free hot chocolate.

- 1/2 cup raw cashew nuts, soaked in water for 20 minutes
- 2 cups water (1 cup room temperature, 1 cup boiling)
- 4 dates, pitted
- 1 tablespoon raw cacao powder

Drain and rinse the cashews. Blend all the ingredients in a blender until smooth. Add the boiling water and pulse until combined. Drink it while it's hot!

Warm Spice Smoothie

When it's cold outside and you want to warm up your insides, a frozen smoothie just won't do the trick. You can still have all the components of a healthy shake but the warmth and nourishment of comfort food by creating "hot" smoothies. Use the recipe below as a base and switch up spices, drop in some berries or add protein powders to suit your palate. All you'll need now is a frosty winter day.

- 1 ripe banana
- 1/4-inch knob fresh ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 3/4 cup hot almond milk

Warm the banana in the microwave for 20 to 30 seconds, while

heating the milk on the stove. Blend all the ingredients in a blender for 2 minutes and you're done. Drink it while it's hot!

10 Tricks for Tackling Health in 2014

It's easy to slip off track with our health goals during the holiday season, but the New Year is the perfect time for a fresh start. Whatever your fitness level or weight-loss goals, try incorporating one or two of these smart tricks to help you speed your results.

1. **Become "breathless"**. Regardless of what types of activities you normally do, make sure to fit in cardio at least twice a week. While less aerobic activities, like yoga or weight lifting, have countless benefits, workouts that leave you breathless help jumpstart your metabolism and drop weight more quickly.
2. **Mix it up**. Some people think we're more likely to stick to a program if we create a weekly schedule and stick to it. Not me. Our lives are too hectic. Instead of committing to a specific routine – Monday night spinning, Tuesday night yoga, Wednesday night kickboxing, and so on – commit to exercising a certain number of times per week. One week you might take three morning Pilates classes, while the next week, you can only fit in lunchtime Spinning classes. This way, just because you miss your favorite workout, you don't skip the gym altogether.
3. **Add movement, whenever, wherever**. Movement is more about a lifestyle, rather than an hour-a-day commitment in a

class or at the gym. It's about squeezing in health every chance you get. Here are a few tricks I love: Take a walk when you're bored. Walk home after work, the gym or dinner out instead of taking a cab or train. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk up the escalator in stores. Use bathrooms on different floors at work. Get lunch from a place further away and opt for take-out, not delivery.

4. **Book one "Surprise Myself" exercise class each week.** After I reach my workout goal for the week, I add one more class I didn't plan on taking. I think about it as 'treat' to my health! It varies. Some weeks, I'll take a new instructor; other weeks, I'll try something completely different. I burn more calories and always find new activities I love. If surprising myself doesn't happen, I don't get discouraged because I've already hit my targets.
5. **Upgrade your salads.** Take your health up a notch by not wasting your time on romaine or mixed greens. The smarter choice? Kale, spinach, arugula and watercress, which are higher in vitamins and minerals. Once you've got your base, load it with nutrient- and fiber-dense vegetables. You'll get fuller faster and cut down your calories without feeling deprived. I top mine with flax seed or extra virgin olive oil, lemon juice and herbs, rather than dressings especially when I don't know what's in them!
6. **Make veggies your main plate.** Most people follow the formula: choose your protein then build side dishes around it. I say flip the model and pick your produce first. Start with roasted veggies, salad or veggie soup, then top them with grilled chicken, poached salmon or a cup of whole grain like quinoa. Finally, use spices and herbs to jazz up flavor, rather than butter and salt. It's a great way to try new vegetables or taste combinations, rather than stick with the traditional, boring and tasteless romaine with tomatoes combo (I

couldn't stick with that menu either!). Nearly all my clients start with this easy strategy to jumpstart weight loss.

7. **Keep it simple in the kitchen.** It doesn't take a culinary degree, a library of cookbooks or a pantry filled with high-tech gadgets to make a fantastic and healthy meal. Look for simple recipes that call for what you already have in the kitchen or require 5 or fewer ingredients. If you need inspiration, try this trick: Next time you buy fish, ask the salesperson for their fastest, easiest, most flavorful preparation. Same strategy goes with dining out and delivery. Choose entrees with the fewest ingredients and simplest preparation, like grilled fish or chicken with no sauce. Cutting down on just two restaurant meals a week will dramatically change how you look and feel.
8. **Don't listen to your mother (when it comes to eating!).** Sorry, mom, but we don't have to finish what's on our plate. That's the fast track to weight gain. After a meal, you should leave feeling energized from your food, rather than lethargic and stuffed. My favorite trick? I stop eating when I feel that if I had to get up and take an easy exercise class, I could handle it. That's pretty easy to do when you eat slowly, sitting down (versus on your commute) and with the TV off.
9. **Keep healthy snacks ready to go.** Stash them everywhere you might need to nosh – your gym bag, your office, your handbag, your apartment. Snacking between meals keeps your metabolism revved and blood sugar levels balanced. Plus, when you get to meals feeling like you can eat like a horse, you usually do! Opt for raw vegetables and fresh fruit instead of processed bodega snacks. Or, make your own trail mix and divide it into small storage bags. I mix cocoa nibs, dried fruit, raw almonds and raw cashews. Sometimes I don't feel hungry, but if it's there, it's much better than grabbing a bag of chips or a high-calorie, processed bar.

10. **Remember your motivation.** Why do you want to lose weight? To look better in your clothes? To feel more energetic? Or to simply improve your overall health? First, get clear about what you want, and then use that desire to inspire you throughout your journey. Train your brain to think positively and don't let negativity mess with your health (or your head!). Next, eliminate the phrase "I can't" and replace it with a phrase that says, "I can and I will." Use this mantra to stay on track. Mine is "I can do this – I am living the Smart Life." Whenever I start making excuses to skip a workout or cheat on my diet, I say my mantra aloud and instantly feel energized.

What I learned about my health in 2013...

We all eat, all day and every day, yet for some reason so many people are confused about food. What fascinates me about being a health coach is seeing how we truly are what we eat and how the key to health is each person's individual needs. What I noticed this year with my Smart Life clients is the more they improve their health, the more empowered they feel to pursue the life they want to live.

As I reflect back over the year, I'm inspired by all the changes and epiphanies my clients have shared with me as

they've begun to live a Smart Life. I've shared some below and hopefully they'll inspire you, too, as you set new challenges for yourself in 2014.

What I learned about my health in 2013 ...

"... That I have much more control over my health than I ever imagined! I also learned that prioritizing my health truly does make a difference in other areas of my life."

"... A radical new way to look at food. This year I turned 59 and there was no way I wanted to enter my sixth decade as a fat, tired woman. With Ronit's help, I've tried new foods and adopted different diet strategies. Not only have I lost weight, but I have gained so much valuable information on how to eat healthier. I'm eating "smarter" today than ever."

"... To say goodbye to my Weight Watchers app and stop counting calories! I learned to eat healthy whole foods and not only did I finally lose the weight, I also gained freedom from the annoyance of counting points and calories."

" ... Small changes add up to big results. Adopting a healthier lifestyle can seem daunting and impossible, but adding just one simple change every week adds up over the course of a year. I've made small changes in my diet and exercise routines one step at a time. It's been as simple as adding 10 minutes to my workout, choosing to reduce the amount of animal protein I consume in a week or switching to organic produce. Just one change per week allowed me to embrace a healthier lifestyle. The physical changes were enormous. I look better, but more important, I'm much healthier than I was two years ago with more energy and stamina than I had 10 years ago!"

" ... How much health and happiness go hand in hand. When I made smarter choices about my diet, my mood changed drastically. I felt better about myself and that confidence improved my relationships and my productivity at work. Those little successes kept me motivated to stick with it. The better I

felt the healthier I wanted to be.”

“ ... Staying connected to people who inspire me is important in keeping my goals top of mind. Being part of the Smart Life community not only empowers me but it holds me responsible to me and reminds me to put myself first.”

“...2013 has been a wake up call for me... I learned that the most important thing in life is to take care of myself. With Ronit’s help, I learned how to nourish my body with whole foods and plenty of fresh vegetables. Trying new spices, herbs and simpler ways of cooking made choosing new foods a breeze. Bring on 2014...I am ready!!!”

Roasted Root Vegetables

I love this super-easy recipe, not just because it tastes fantastic and uses local, in-season produce, but also because it takes just 10 minutes to prep and 30 minutes or so to cook. You can make the rest of the meal while it bakes.

1 sweet potato

2 parsnips

2 carrots

2 turnips or 1 large rutabaga

1 daikon radish, or substitute/add in other favorites, like squash

Extra virgin olive oil

Salt and pepper

Herbs: rosemary, thyme or sage, fresh if possible

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Wash and dice all vegetables into bite-size cubes.

Place in a large baking dish with sides.

Drizzle with olive oil; mix well to coat each vegetable lightly with oil.

Sprinkle with salt, pepper and herbs.

Bake uncovered for 25 to 35 minutes until vegetables are tender and golden brown, checking every 10 minutes to stir and make sure veggies are not sticking. Serves 4 to 6.

Tip: Any combination of vegetables will work. Roasting only one kind of vegetable also makes a nice side dish.