

Butternut Squash Soup

This healthy, vegan, and gluten-free soup is one of the easiest soups to make. It is delicious, warming, and it helps me feel aligned with the Fall-Winter season. When I make it, I make sure to double the amounts and freeze half in smaller mason jars for lunch or dinner appetizers on wintery days when I crave that cozy, nurtured feeling.

- 2 butternut squash cut into 2" cubes
- 2 containers of organic vegetable broth (add more broth to cover vegetables)
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 parsnips, sliced
- 1 large spanish onion, diced
- 2 tablespoons grapeseed oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage, chopped
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- pinch of nutmeg
- Sea salt and pepper to taste

In a large pot, sauté diced onion and chopped carrots for about 3 minutes.

Add squash, parsnips and vegetable broth to cover vegetables. Bring to boil and lower heat immediately.

Add fresh sage, turmeric, nutmeg, sea salt and pepper to taste and cook until tender, about 20 minutes.

Let cool a bit and pour mixture into a blender (or use a hand blender) and pureé the soup until smooth.

Garnish with your favorite herb and pumpkin or sunflower seeds.

Butternut squash contains many vital poly-phenolic antioxidants and vitamins. It is a rich source of dietary fiber

and phyto-nutrients. Squash is one of the common low-calorie vegetables recommended by dieticians in cholesterol controlling and weight reduction programs. It is high in vitamin-A , providing about 354% of RDA. Vitamin A is a powerful natural anti-oxidant and is required by the body for maintaining the integrity of skin and mucus membranes. It is also an essential vitamin for good eye-sight. Research studies suggest that natural foods rich in vitamin A help the body protected against lung and oral cavity cancers.

Protein-Packed Plant Diets That Work

Most people think steak, chicken or fish when they think of protein-packed meals. That's not the entire truth. And unfortunately, this myth is fueled by a healthy meat industry that profits when you buy their propaganda. Turns out, a plant-based diet can pack the same punch as other sources. A complete protein is one that contains all nine essential amino acids that you need to consume through food: histidine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan and valine.

Try these 3 tricks for the ultimate protein-packed plant diet:

1. **Eat a variety of whole foods.** Loading your diet with different vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, peas, beans, legumes and fruits optimizes the amount of the nine essential amino acids you're giving your body. The World Health Organization recommends that 5 percent of our daily calories (a little more if we training or working out) come from protein. On average, fruits have

about 5 percent of their calories from protein. Vegetables, 20 to 50 percent. Sprouted seeds, beans and grains, 10 to 25 percent.

2. **Eat more raw foods.** Studies have shown that baking or grilling makes about half of the protein in the food unusable to the human body. Raw or living proteins are an even better source than cooked plant foods. We need 25 to 35 grams of protein a day. That means that if you eat 2,000 calories per day of raw plant foods containing average of 10 percent of their calories from protein, you would get 200 calories worth of protein, or 50 grams. This is more than adequate to support great health. Optimize your intake of raw foods by adding a fresh raw vegetable salad to every meal.
3. **Eat more superfoods: Plant-based sources of complete protein** are referred to as 'superfoods' and they're easily obtainable from supermarkets, health food stores and online. They include:

- Hemp seeds
 - Quinoa
 - Amaranth
 - Buckwheat
 - Bee pollen
 - Goji berries
 - Chia seeds
 - Flax seeds
 - Spirulina and chlorella
 - Dulse (a sea vegetable)
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5 Reasons to Love Quinoa

Quinoa may be a super food, but most people don't find it super interesting. I disagree! It packs the same amount of protein per serving as milk, while giving you loads of nutrients, vitamins and minerals. It can easily stand alone in meals or be incorporated into a variety of healthy and flavorful recipes.

Not convinced to put this powerful grain into your meal rotation yet? Maybe these five reasons will change your mind:

1. **It super fuels your body with energy.** Cooked quinoa contains approximately 8 grams of protein per cup, according to the USDA. It's also one of the few vegetarian complete proteins, meaning it contains all 9 essential amino acids your body needs. Try it for breakfast or lunch to help you power through tough afternoon workouts or long days at work.
2. **It stimulates healthy digestion.** One cup of quinoa contains a healthy serving of 5 grams of fiber, which improves digestion, lowers cholesterol levels, controls blood sugar and helps you maintain a healthy weight.
3. **It's a nutrient-dense food.** Quinoa is an amazing source of iron, magnesium, calcium, potassium, folate (a B vitamin) and more. In fact, a recent study showed that the grain contains the same concentrated amounts of two flavonoids, quercetin and kaempferol, as found in antioxidant-rich berries like cranberries and lionberries.
4. **It's naturally low in calories.** One cup of quinoa boasts just 222 calories. Because of its high levels of protein and fiber, this healthy carbohydrate doesn't convert quickly to sugar in your body. This means it doesn't spike your blood sugar levels and keeps you feeling fuller longer.
5. **It's a versatile grain.** Breakfast, lunch and dinner?

Check, check and check! Quinoa can be prepared in delicious ways at all mealtimes. And research has shown that this superfood's nutrient profile isn't compromised by boiling, steaming or simmering. Toss it in salads, stir-fries, soup and porridge, or shape it into a veggie burger or a sushi roll.

10 Tricks that Speed Weight Loss

When you're trying to drop pounds, these healthy tips may help you shed them faster. Try one or two! All you've got to lose is weight.

You Want it? Be Smart and Make it Happen

Two friends are chatting about their diets. The first one says, *"I want to be healthy and feel great."* The second one says, *"I intend to be healthy and feel great."*

Which one do you think is going to get healthy and feel great? Yup – the one who intends it.

Wanting is simply wishing you can have or do a particular thing it. *Intending* means you're committed to achieving

something by making a plan for success—and sticking to it!

The Fuel for Desired Results

The key to intention is action – try this to build your intention muscle:

- Get clear on what you want. Create a vision board by gathering images and words that pertain to your goal, and gluing them onto a large piece of construction paper. Hang the collage in a spot where you'll see it often.
- Do something to make your desire happen. Let's say you want to eat four servings of vegetables a day. Your first action may be to go to a farmers' market and purchase a few veggies you can cook for dinner.
- Celebrate your achievement! Don't forget to congratulate yourself for meeting your goal.

How to Have a Great Day... Every Day!

Did you know that you can even set an intention to have a great day?

Rather than diving into your morning and hoping you'll achieve your day's big goal, why not take a moment and set yourself up for success?

Try this **"Setting An Intention to Succeed"** exercise used by professional athletes, speakers, politicians, and performers:

- Upon waking, lie in bed and think about what you have planned for your day (or, find a quiet spot to sit and contemplate).
- Think about your desired outcome. Take a deep breath and visualize yourself succeeding.
- Replay your success several times in your mind.
- Next, add other senses, including sounds, smells, and touch. For instance, as you replay your

success, you now also hear the director offering you the gig, or you feel the physical sensation of your finger hitting the “send” button on your latest assignment.

- Lastly, replay the scene again, adding emotions. Feel your elation at getting the part, or your pride at finally finishing your work.

You can perform An Intention to Succeed, throughout the day as desired.

Get even healthier – Begin your transformation!

Do you intend to lose weight, eat healthy, and feel fantastic? Make a plan to succeed by getting the support you need! As a Health Coach, I specialize in helping people make their own healthy changes. Ready to get started living the Smart Life? Schedule a FREE One Hour Consultation with me today—or pass this offer on to someone you care about!

9 Ways to Get Organized for Fall

Early fall is the perfect time to get organized. With the end of lazy summer days and the beginning of a new school year, my family, possibly like yours, needs to get its act together. As I prepare to send one daughter off to college and another to a new grade in middle school, I like to gain control of my home before we all get very busy and life gets less manageable.

Let's start with the kitchen. Try these 9 fast tips for prepping your refrigerator, freezer and pantry for autumn:

1. **Multitask shopping trips.** While shopping with your kids for school supplies, grab a few extra items, like folders, organizers and office supplies, that will make shopping, menu planning and meal prep a snap this season.
2. **Create a recipe file folder.** Buy an extra accordion folder and label the tabs with Poultry, Fish, Beef, Vegetarian, Smoothies, Breakfast, Vegetarian, Dessert and Snacks. Whenever you come across a recipe in a magazine that you want to try, print or tear out the page and slip it into the folder. Check out your options before you go grocery shopping for new ideas and shopping lists.
3. **Protect your favorites from wear and tear.** Use a few extra sheet protectors to keep your go-to recipes safe from liquids or foods. I keep my signature salad dressing recipes in these easy-to-clean sheets in the same cabinet where I keep my spices, oils and vinegars. No more hunting for my recipes, and no more destroying the pages when I cook!
4. **Become a smart labeler.** It starts with extra colorful masking tape (you know, the kind you never knew what to do with). My favorite trick is to use it to label mason jars stored in the freezer with extra smoothies. Include the date it was stored and the contents on the tape. If you've got a big family, you can even mark whose smoothie it is. The same masking tape is also useful for party guests to tag their wine glasses.
5. **Purge your fridge and freezer.** During the summer months, when the days are longer and schedules are more flexible, I find that dinner plans often change last minute – we travel, go out for the day and never make it home until late, or get last minute invitations – and I end up throwing things in my freezer. Now is the perfect time to toss anything from pre-summer months that you never got around to using, or anything that's been frozen and forgotten. This includes all those opened

jars or packages with no clear purchase or expiration date.

6. **Hunt for suspicious freezer items.** Examine frozen foods for freezer burn or packed ice crystals and check expiration dates. Use all the items that are about to expire the earliest and toss out expired items. Any mystery items? They get tossed, too.
 7. **Be a pantry sleuth.** Dig through the shelves (yes all the way in the back) and check expiration dates on all canned or jar foods and spices. Trash the ones too old to use and move the items about-to-expire to the front. Bonus points if you add recipes to your weekly menu plan that use these ingredients.
 8. **Recycle your food containers.** Instead of throwing out used glass food jars, wash and reuse them. These can become great containers for smoothies, nuts and seeds. They can also be used to carry a healthy snack to work or school. Trim celery or carrots into sticks that fit right within the jar. Place with almond or pumpkin seed butter on the bottom as “glue” to keep the veggie sticks in place.
 9. **Stay inspired.** Don’t let all this de-cluttering go to waste. Buy a clear picture frame with magnets. Print motivating quotes and insert in the frame. Place on your fridge or your office bulletin board. Keep changing the quote to keep yourself on track and making smart choices, especially when you’re reaching into the fridge. I can always get myself going by looking at the logo of my health coaching company which reads, “I live the Smart Life!”.
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4 Healthy Lunch Box Suggestions

It's hard enough to get kids to eat healthy, especially at school when junk food or sugary snacks seem to magically sneak their way into the cafeteria. Try these easy, nutritious lunch box ideas that your kids will actually enjoy instead of toss in the trash.

1. Switch out the traditional unhealthy white bread sandwich for something a little more interesting. One of my favorites is a vegetarian bagel sandwich, which you can re-create each week with new toppings.

Bagel Sandwich

1 whole grain seeded bagel

$\frac{1}{4}$ large ripe avocado, sliced

Pinch of sea salt

1 tablespoon sprouted sunflower seeds

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sprouts

4 thin slices cucumber

- Slice the bagel in thirds horizontally and save the middle slice for another use – smear with nut butter for your own mid-day snack. Bagels have ballooned in size over the years so the top and bottom part are plenty for a sandwich.
- Mash avocado into the bottom part of the bagel and sprinkle with sea salt, sunflower seeds and sprouts. Arrange the cucumber over the sprouts and cap with the bagel top.
- Cut in half. Wrap well or store in a snug container.
- *This is best made in the morning before school to keep the bagel fresh and soft, not soggy.*

2. Innovate classics, like PB&J, with ingredients that are so

yummy, your kids won't know they're good for them. My Nut-Butter Pinwheels, for example, get their sweetness from apples and honey, not sugar-laden jelly, and the nuttiness from natural nut butters. The roll-up lavash makes them a fun finger food.

Nut-Butter Pinwheels

1 whole wheat lavash

2 tablespoons unsweetened almond, peanut or pumpkin seed butter

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup apple, chopped and unpeeled

1 teaspoon honey

2 teaspoons unsweetened granola (optional)

- Cut the lavash in half crosswise and spread both halves with the nut butter. Drizzle with honey and top with apple and granola.
- With the shorter edge of the lavash toward you roll up into a wrap. Do the same with the second half and cut each roll into four pinwheels.
- Store in snug container or reassemble each half and wrap in parchment paper.
- *This can be made a day ahead, but it's really best made in morning before school.*

3. Add a side of veggie sticks. Adding one cup of veggies to meals will help prevent the blood-sugar swings that may make them feel tired and cloud their thinking mid-day. By adding zucchini, celery, carrots and cucumbers to their snack bags, your child can benefit from more energy and better focus. If they can't bear to eat "plain" veggie sticks, add a tablespoon of hummus for dipping.

4. Surprise them with blueberries for dessert. These berries soothe their sweet tooth while boosting their brain power at the same time. The bold color of this fruit comes from anthocyanins, antioxidants that studies have shown activate brain neurons. A recent report from Tufts University suggests

that 1 cup of blueberries can increase brain energy by approximately 45 percent. Your kids can enjoy them fresh, dried or frozen all school year long.

Probiotics? Prebiotics? What are the benefits and how do we pick one?

Doron Kahana, M.D., CPNS

There's been a lot of hype recently about the benefits of probiotics and prebiotics. And rightly so, these healthy bacteria keep our digestive system balanced, healthy and in optimal condition. When our digestive system works like it should, many symptoms and issues disappear. This month, I invited guest blogger, Doron Kahana, MD, CPNS to help me bring the best advice for Smart Life readers.

Sure, they're both "Biotics", but what do "Pro" and "Pre" mean?

Probiotics are live microorganisms that benefit your body. Usually either bacteria or yeast, they boost immunity, aid digestion and promote regularity. If it sounds strange to consume "good bacteria" to stay healthy, consider that more than 400 different types of happy bacteria already live in your GI tract. No joke.

Prebiotics are functional foods that can be used by healthy bacteria for nourishment. A fancy word for fiber, prebiotics promote a healthy microecology, or the composition of the

intestinal microflora, in our body. Prebiotics are naturally found in onions, garlic, flaxseeds, whole-grain breads, beans and other high-fiber foods.

Probiotic benefits

I recommend probiotics because they are preventive powerhouses that enhance digestion, strengthen the immune system, rev the metabolism, and ensure detoxification and elimination. Not bad, huh? Especially because the safety profile of probiotics is excellent, with minimal adverse effects reported even with very large doses.

The 3 most common issues

Researchers believe we're only beginning to discover how valuable pre- and probiotics can be to our bodies. Whether or not you're prone to the conditions below, consider that many things – stress, anxiety, fatigue, junk food – can put a strain on our system. Here are just a few benefits:

1. It treats UTIs, vaginitis and yeast infections. These conditions arise when there's an imbalance in good and bad bacteria. Probiotics, when taken daily, regulate the balance so unhealthy situations don't spring up.
2. It reduces the severity and frequency of colds. Healthy bacteria bolster your immune system and keep sickness at bay.
3. It alleviates constipation, diarrhea and IBS. Studies have shown probiotics are a natural and effective way to reduce and/or eliminate the symptoms like pain, bloating, discomfort and irregular bowel movements.

How to pick a Probiotic

Before buying, determine:

- **What type of bacteria it contains**, including the genus (first letter/word) and species (second word). Some types include: *L. acidophilus*, *L.*

bulgaricus, L. casei, L. gasseri, L. plantarum, Bifidobacterium bifidum, B. lactis, B. longum, Saccharomyces boulardii. The more types of bacteria, the better, since different strains benefit your body in different ways.

- **How many bacteria per dose it contains.** You want at least 2 to 10 billion. If a brand doesn't list potency, that's a red flag not to buy. S. boulardii may sometime be listed in milligrams, choose 250 mg or more.
 - **How pure is the dose.** Does it have additives or unhealthy bacteria? The cultivation and purification process varies considerably. Some higher grade products will request that you keep the probiotics refrigerated, others will be blister-packed to ensure freshness. Except for S. boulardii, which has a darker, sandy color, probiotics should look white (like sugar). Expect the scent and taste to be pleasant and not offensive.
 - **What research or reviews say about the product.** ConsumerLab.com, for example, is an excellent resource for finding out which supplements are effective. Stay with reputable brands and shy away from discount offers. In this instance, there's a reason they're on sale. Good quality probiotics usually cost upward of \$1 a day.
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What is a Smart Life?

Many of you have asked me why I started Smart Life. The essence of this brand stems from my overall approach to health and how my family and I live. Each component is represented in

the vibrant, energetic colors of the Smart Life logo, as well as the entire design process behind the brand by TLVD. Hopefully, you'll feel as vibrant and energetic when living this way, too. Follow the link above to see The Smart Life journey unfold conceptually, much like it will in your own life.

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Fresh + Healthy + Nourishing

The Smart Life logo is shown through primary colors. Their vividness represents the energy found in naturally bright, antioxidant-filled foods that produce those same effects in your body: bold, colorful and high-energy. The soft gradients remind us that the nourishing food plays into other areas in our life, keeping us strong, focused, powerful and happy. Whether it's fresh organic foods from a variety of food groups, exercise that makes you sweat, or relationships that bring you joy, pursue what feeds you. That's a Smart Life.

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Natural transformation

Natural and whole foods as they appear in nature, superfoods that change your mind and body, workouts that actually work. No chemicals, gimmicks, tricks, false promises or fads. When you nourish your body with real whole foods, support it with vitamins and minerals found in nature, and stay active every day, change happens gradually and proportionally allowing you

to achieve balance.

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Balance

The Smart Life refers to the simple math behind balancing all areas of your life. When all the components of your health – food, fitness and lifestyle – work together in harmony and unison, the result is strength, energy, and vibrancy in perfect proportions. When life is in balance, change happens naturally.

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Cycle of Life

The Cycle of Life is the perfect symbol for our core 6 Months to a Smart Life program. Like the Cycle of Life, you become more vibrant and energetic the longer you stay in the program. We've used each month as a milestone, represented in the six golden ratio spirals in a circular arrangement. These reflect the changes you will go through as we work together each week over the course of 6 months, or 24 weeks. And like in nature, you will see your body flourish in response to your efforts.

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Smart + Active + Engaged

When you actively take charge of your health, your mind and body respond. Whether this is upping your workouts, cooking more at home, organizing your kitchen or involving your family in healthy activities, being proactive about health means success. For all of you. This concept is represented in our logo through dimension and depth with abstract highlighting and shadowing. The circular motion and 24 segments show that a Smart Life is about staying engaged and active, not just on the surface, but by making good choices all the time.

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Smart Life's commitment is to be your personal health champion, showing you exactly what good choices look like and how to make them moment by moment. Whether teaching you proven diet strategies, arming you with new fitness tools, or sharing secrets for balancing work and play, my 6 Months to a Smart Life program will help you learn to live a life you love. Book a FREE one-hour consultation with me today and see how one call can change your life.

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Super Healthy Kale Salad

This makes for a super healthy salad that you can prepare in advance and enjoy for a couple of days. I adapted it from Crazy Sexy Kitchen by Kris Carr & Chef Chad Sarno. You can serve it solo, with your favorite cooked grain, or wrapped in nori. When I have guests, I like to serve it wrapped in a cucumber slice and topped with sprouted sunflower seeds. Its a fancy and super healthy start to your meal!

- 1 bunch kale, any variety, chopped (you can all mix varieties)
- 2 cups diced bell peppers, red, yellow, and orange
- 1/2 cup chopped parsely
- 1 1/2 avocados, pit removed and chopped
- 2 tablespoons flax oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- sea salt, to taste
- pinch of cayenne, to taste
- sprouted sunflower seeds

In a bowl, combine all the ingredients. Massage and mix with your hands to “wilt” the kale and cream the avocado. Serve and enjoy!