

Why cleanse with soup, not juices?

Juicing is a controversial subject in the nutrition world, especially since juice fasts and cleanses are currently a major dietary trend. With a juice shop on every corner, you might think that cold-pressed juices had all the answers. Advocates for juicing claim it's a fast and convenient way to get nutrients into our bodies, while opponents argue we miss out on important health benefits from the nutrient-rich skin and fiber that is extracted during the processing. Let's face it, cold juice that is void of fiber and protein is not a meal, so how do you have a whole day of juices and feel satisfied or nourished, especially during the cold winter months. And so soup – the ultimate comfort food – makes more sense as an alternative to juicing, especially during the colder seasons.

Soups, which I love, give you more digestible nutrients, and create more satiety – you feel nourished, and in fact you are. Soups, especially the organic and vegan soups we created for the Smart Life soup cleanse, are filled with plant-based protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals. Moreover, because soups are easy-to-digest, all the organs like the liver and kidneys are given a little time off and they can work on disposing of toxins.



While I don't think juice is necessarily bad if enjoyed in moderation or as a supplement to your regular diet, I do believe – and doctors, nutritionists, and fitness experts agree – that soups are a better way to support the body and achieve the goals of cleansing. This is why Smart Life cleansers and I love “SOUPING”:

1. Plants are better consumed whole: Plants, especially fruits and vegetables, hold many of their nutrients in the peel, the pulp, the rind, the seeds, and the flesh and all of these go into our nourishing soups. But most important, using whole vegetables, seeds, and fruits means getting every bit of their fiber.

2. Your body loves Fiber: Fiber is essential to total health. It feeds the good bacteria in your gut, it helps balance blood sugar, it keeps cholesterol in check, and it helps you get

fuller faster and aids with weight loss. When juicing we are not including the fiber from the plants and we end up reducing most fruits and vegetables to simple sugars, which spike blood sugar levels. Plus, plant fiber is what's going to bind to the toxins in your system and naturally pull them out of your intestinal tract and colon.

3. Your digestive system can use a break: Cleansing with soups allows you to rest your digestion while at the same time flooding your body with nutrients which help your body restore itself. If you are trying to lose weight, but your scale is stuck on a number, cleansing can help you tip the scale. The soup cleanse can help your metabolism recalibrate.

4. Warm foods help ignite your digestive fire: According to traditional Chinese Medicine and Ayurveda (Hindu medicine), warming foods like soups are more healing, nourishing, and soothing to the body. They also help ignite the digestive fire, which is at the center of your body's ability to break down and assimilate foods and all their nutrients. Having a lot of cold foods can put out that fire and dampen your digestion as well as your energy level. During the cold season, this is especially important to support your body and stay in balance with nature.

Meatless Loaf

Serves 6-8: Yields one 8-inch loaf

Ingredients:

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups uncooked red lentils (yields 4 to 4.5 cups cooked lentils)
- 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup tomato paste
- 3 cups cremini mushrooms (first measure whole, then finely chop)
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons Bragg Liquid Aminos
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup flaxseed meal
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raw walnut pieces
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup organic rolled oats
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped fresh oregano, or 2 tablespoons dried.
- Olive oil or coconut oil spray, for loaf pan

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly coat 8-inch pan with coconut oil or olive oil cooking spray and set aside.
2. In a large stockpot, combine the lentils and water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for about 35 minutes, or until the lentils are a little mushy and slightly overcooked. Strain the lentils if needed.
3. In a separate large stockpot, warm the olive oil over medium-low heat. Add the onion and minced garlic and cook for about 8 minutes (do not let the garlic brown). Add the tomato paste and cook for 3 minutes, stirring with a spatula or wooden spoon. Add the chopped mushrooms and continue to cook over medium heat, until liquid evaporates, 6 to 8 minutes, then turn the heat off.
4. Add the lentils to the pot and then fold in well. Using a potato masher, slightly mash the lentils into the mixture. Let the mixture cool slightly, then add the balsamic vinegar, Bragg Liquid Aminos, and flaxseed meal. Fold in the oats, walnut pieces, and oregano.
5. Transfer the mushroom-lentil mixture to the prepared

loaf pan and cover with aluminum foil. Bake 30 minutes, or until completely set and cooked through. Remove the foil and cook for an additional 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.

6. Once the loaf is completely cool, transfer it to a clean work surface and slice it into 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch pieces. Serve topped with chutney or barbecue sauce. Save the loaf in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 1 week.

Sweet Potato, Kale and Chickpea Soup

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 3 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
- sea salt, to taste
- 2 tablespoons Thai red curry paste (available at Asian section at most grocery stores) I like the Thai Kitchen brand
- 1 cup uncooked farro, rinsed (you can replace with 2 cups of cooked wheat berries or quinoa)
- 3 quarts low-sodium organic vegetable broth (I like Pacific) + 2 cups of water
- 2 cups cooked chickpeas (or one can, rinsed and drained)
- 1 bunch of Lacinato kale (flat, dark green), finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)

Directions:

1. In a large pot, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Stir in

the onion and sweet potatoes and a big pinch of sea salt. Sauté for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions start to soften.

2. Add the curry paste and stir until onions and sweet potatoes are coated and the curry is fragrant (about 1 minute).

3. Add the farro, the vegetable broth, and 2 cups of water and bring to a boil. Then cover and reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes.

4. After 30 minutes add the chickpeas. Taste and season with more salt as needed. If you chose to use cooked grains like wheat berries, add them now. Cover and simmer for another 20 minutes.

5. Uncover, stir in the kale, add cayenne pepper if desired, remove from heat. Ready to serve.

Oatmeal Dulse Crackers

Yield: approximately 24 triangles (6 servings)

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups rolled oats
- 1¼ cup sunflower seeds
- 2 tablespoons whole wheat pastry flour
- 1½ teaspoon Sea Seasonings Dulse Granules with Garlic
- pinch sea salt
- 1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon melted coconut oil
- 1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon brown rice syrup
- Up to 2 teaspoons filtered water
- 2 tablespoons Sesame seeds

- 2 tablespoons Poppy seeds
- 2 tablespoons Caraway seeds

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. In food processor, finely grind oats, sunflower seeds, and flour together. Add dulse granules and salt.
3. In separate small bowl, whisk together coconut oil and rice syrup.
4. Add oil-syrup mixture to dry ingredients in food processor, adding in water as needed. (Dough should be stiff, yet pliable.)
5. Between parchments sheets, roll out dough with rolling pin to uniform thickness, 1/8 inch. Remove top sheet of parchment.
6. Mix together equal amounts of sesame, poppy and caraway seeds and sprinkle liberally over rolled dough. Cover with top sheet of parchment again and roll seeds into dough.
7. Remove top sheet of parchment again. Score dough all the way through using pizza cutter or knife at 2-inch intervals vertically and horizontally to create squares. Score diagonally to make triangles. Slide dough with bottom parchment onto half sheet pan.
8. Bake until lightly browned, about 15 to 20 minutes. (Caution: crackers on outer edges may brown more quickly than those in center.)
9. Transfer to wire rack and cool completely. Separate crackers along scored cuts and store in airtight container at room temperature.

*Thank you to the Natural Gourmet Institute / NYC for this recipe.

Spinach and Goat Cheese Stuffed Tomatoes



Ingredients:

- 6 medium tomatoes
- 2 cups quinoa (cooked)
- 3 ounces crumbled goat cheese
- 3 cups sautéed organic baby spinach (about 2-3 5oz boxes raw spinach)
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh basil
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley or cilantro
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350F. Lightly grease a rimmed baking dish large enough to hold all of the tomatoes.
 2. Cut the top off the tomatoes and gently scoop out and discard the pulp and seeds. Arrange the tomatoes, cut side up, in the baking dish.
 3. In a mixing bowl, combine the quinoa, goat cheese, sautéed spinach, basil, parsley/cilantro, salt, and pepper and stir to combine. Gently spoon the quinoa mixture evenly into the tomatoes.
 4. Bake until the tomatoes begin to soften and the quinoa filling turns golden brown, about 15-20 minutes.
 5. Sprinkle the parmesan cheese evenly over the tomatoes and bake until the cheese melts, an additional 4-5 minutes.
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Lemon Chicken Kale Soup

(Adapted from Skinny Meals by Bob Harper)

This lemony, garlicky soup with chicken and kale is a great all-in-one nutrition boost that can be enjoyed all year round.

Ingredients

- 2 teaspoons coconut oil (or olive oil)
- 1 cup chopped yellow onion
- 4-6 garlic cloves, crushed
- 8 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into cubes
- 2 teaspoons herbs de Provence (or combination of dried thyme, rosemary, oregano and basil)
- 2 bay leaves

- 2 1-quart boxes of organic low-sodium chicken broth
- 1/3 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 3-4 cups chopped kale

Directions

1. Heat the coconut oil in a soup pot over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic; sauté for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
 2. Add the chicken, dried herbs, and bay leaves, and raise the heat to medium- high and cook for 6-8 minutes.
 3. Pour in the broth and lemon juice. Reduce the heat, cover, and simmer for 25 minutes.
 4. Turn off the heat and remove the bay leaves. Add the kale and stir until slightly wilted.
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Easy Fish Fillet

Ingredients

- 2 5oz. pieces of fish fillet (halibut, cod or red snapper are really great with this marinate)
- 1 lemon juiced
- 2 Tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic, chopped
- 1 Tablespoon fresh oregano, chopped
- 2 small tomatoes, diced
- 1 Tablespoon fresh Italian parsley, chopped

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

2. Mix lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, and oregano in small mixing bowl.
 3. Place the fish in a shallow baking dish and pour the marinate over the fish. Let the fish marinate for 10-15 minutes.
 4. Top the fish fillets with the diced tomato and bake for 10-12 minutes.
 5. Garnish with fresh parsley and serve immediately.
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Zucchini Noodles with Pesto and Parmesan

Serves 2

Ingredients

- 4 large zucchini
- 2 bunches basil
- 2/3 cup pine nuts, toasted
- Juice of 1 large lemon
- 1/2 cup grated Pecorino cheese (optional)
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil + 1 Tablespoon
- Sea salt, to taste

Directions

1. Trim zucchini ends and create noodles using a spiralizer
2. Sauté your zucchini noodles in 1 Tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil over medium heat for about 5 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste.

3. Wash and dry basil and add to a blender with pine nuts, lemon juice, olive oil, and sea salt. Blend until smooth, adding a little water as needed.

4. Toss the zucchini noodles with the pesto and garnish with grated pecorino cheese, if desired.

Mmm... CHOCOLATE

Chocolate is the only ingredient that should be in its very own food group. Well, not really, but it seems as if it should be. Powerfully comforting, creamy, and delicious, many of us crave chocolate at least several times a week. In fact, most of my clients ask me whether a Smart Life can include chocolate, which begs the question...

Is Chocolate Good for You?

The answer is both yes and no.

Chocolate has been used for centuries to treat bronchitis, sexual malaise, fatigue, hangovers, anemia, depression, memory loss, high blood pressure, poor eyesight and more. It also helps release that feel-good neurotransmitter, serotonin, in the brain. The key is eating the right kind, otherwise you're simply loading up on sugar, calories and junky ingredients.

Have Your Chocolate and Eat It, Too

Chocolate begins life as raw cacao (pronounced, kah-kow) beans. Loaded with antioxidants, minerals, vitamins and plant phenols, cacao is a powerful superfood.

However, the more processed cacao becomes – think commercially produced candy bars – the fewer healthy components remain. So

how do you get the most out of your chocolate fix?

- **Don't be afraid of the dark.** The darker the chocolate, the more beneficial cacao it contains.
 - **Know your percentages.** The number on dark chocolate packaging refers to the percentage of cacao bean in chocolate. To boost your health and satisfy your sweet tooth, look for dark chocolate that has 75% to 85% cacao.
 - **Go raw.** The more unprocessed your chocolate, the more nutrients it contains, and the least amounts of additives like sugar, milk and preservatives.
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The New Fat Formula: Sugar + Stress

There's no magic formula to dropping pounds, but take away sugar and stress, and you'll see a huge difference in how you look and feel. Guaranteed.

If you're serious about losing weight, the first thing to do is clean out the sweets. It's where I start with all of my clients. Sugar increases insulin, which in turn triggers your body's storage of fat. The process is simple: you need to eat to get energy – that's how your cells provide you with the fuel to go about your day. When insulin is low, fatty acids come into cells, boost energy and leave as fatty acids. That's healthy. Foods low in sugar don't spike insulin levels, so this fatty acid process works efficiently. But when insulin is high, fatty acids get stored in cells as triglycerides (a type of fat), a process that makes you gain weight. Eating less sugar means lowering your insulin levels, thereby lowering your weight.

Stress also makes you gain and retain weight. Insulin and cortisol are interconnected hormones. When insulin is high, so are your cortisol levels. And when cortisol hikes up, it keeps insulin hiked up, too. Increased cortisol is your body's response to stress, which is why stress can pack on the pounds. There's a myth that when you're stressed out, you eat unhealthy food, make bad choices or stuff yourself for emotional comfort, causing you to gain weight, but that's only part of the story. The reality is that so many people are eating healthy but still can't lose inches. Why? Their cortisol levels are keeping insulin spiked, so it's nearly impossible to shed pounds.

The answer: stress less, weigh less.

3 things you can do in the next 24 hours to feel calmer:

Right now: Breathe. Do a breathing exercise that gets you out of anxiety, worry, or fear and into the present moment. I love this one from Dr. Andrew Weil: inhale slowly for four counts, hold your breath for four counts, then exhale slowly for eight counts. Repeat three times whenever you need to clear your thoughts or just before bed to help you drift off to sleep.

Today: Organize. Clutter and chaos can make you feel overwhelmed and stressed out. Create a To Do list based on how you like to work – by priority, by ease, by due date – to streamline your day and give you a sense of control. Check them off when completed. When you juggle your obligations in your mind, they never turn off which increases anxiety and the feeling like they'll never get done.

Tonight: Sleep. Get at least seven hours of shut-eye each night. Anything less and you'll begin to compromise your system, which lowers productivity, focus, memory, concentration and hormones related to hunger satiety. At the same time, fatigue, irritability and moodiness increase. And yep, you guessed it, all that adds to even more stress.