

# 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.

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## Oatmeal Dulse Crackers

Yield: approximately 24 triangles (6 servings)

### Ingredients:

- 1½ cups rolled oats
- ¼ cup sunflower seeds
- 2 tablespoons whole wheat pastry flour
- ½ 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.

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## **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.

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# 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.

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# 6 Weight-Loss Secrets from a Health Coach

In any profession, there is knowledge that you can learn through books, classes or research, and there is knowledge that you can only see through first-hand experience with clients. That's where real life meets science. In my work, I've discovered six secrets about why people become stalled in their health and weight loss goals, and how to kickstart great habits – and results – immediately.



**1. You won't drink enough water unless you track it.** We all know that we have to drink water. Experts have been saying this for years. The problem is that it's easier said than done, and it's the first habit people forget about when they fall off track. When my clients gain or maintain weight from week to week, the first thing I ask about is their water

intake. In nearly every case, their water intake is low. The problem is that water is key to eliminating cravings and curbing hunger. I shoot for 6 Smart Life water bottles a day (approximately 120 fl. ounces) and I make sure that I reach my goal every day by marking a dot on my hand or a piece of paper to count each one. Why? Because when I try to guess how many bottles I've had, I always overestimate the number. To keep myself sipping, I add flavor from fruit, fresh herbs or flavored Stevia drops.



**2. Hunger is not a muscle we need to strengthen.** Many of us think that the only way to truly lose weight is to learn to deal with hunger. The myth is that hunger cues will subside over time. They won't. The truth is that depriving yourself of food stands in the way of weight loss. When you're hungry, your body goes into stress fat storage mode and your metabolism slows down, which prevents you from dropping pounds. What I learned first-hand is that you need to journal what you eat. Using a simple pocket notebook, a diary or your

smart phone, list your meals and snacks to keep yourself honest about what you actually consume and help yourself avoid skipping meals and feeling hungry. Most of my clients don't lose weight until they try this trick.



**3. Eating out stops weight loss. Period.** “But it’s a healthy restaurant,” all of my clients say. Or, “it’s the same meal I would’ve made at home.” Actually, it’s not. Restaurants have hidden ingredients, larger portions and preservatives that mess up digestion and slow down weight loss. I help my clients reduce the number of times they eat out by showing them that they can make easy, healthy meals at home. On the weeks that my clients cook at home, they lose more weight and save money. When they eat out, they gain or maintain the same weight. The key to this is to pre-make ingredients that you can mix and match for simple healthy and delicious meals. Also, remember that not every meal has to be so sophisticated; it isn’t the last meal you will ever enjoy in this lifetime. Pairing some veggies with a clean protein or whole grain will work

brilliantly on most nights. Eggs are an easy protein to make last minute for any meal, and stocking up on some frozen black bean veggie burgers is also fast, easy, and good for you.



**4. Choose your demon (you only get one).** When people decide they are “letting go” and cheating on their eating goals, they overdo it and go for everything in a single meal – alcohol, dessert, fatty protein *and* But you don’t need to cheat all the way. Instead of thinking you’ll be either “good” or “bad” during a meal (or an entire day), choose one vice. Maybe enjoy a bit more alcohol because a friend is sharing a special bottle *or* eat the bread because this restaurant is known for its baker. Decide before you go out which “demon” will be worth the splurge and stick to it. The next day is another “smart life” day, but the next course can even be another “smart life” course. When you indulge on everything, your body won’t lose weight for a few days while it’s detoxing everything you splurged on.



## **5. Healthy food and snacks must be as simple as junk food.**

I've learned that if you don't find ways to make your healthy snacks easily, you'll go back to the convenience of what's readily available: junk. I show my clients new products, frozen meals, snacks, and on-the-go items that are both nutritious and easy to make or eat. These aren't always fresh veggies and fruits, but they're organic, they include few ingredients, and they're so much better than processed options. Try organic veggie burgers, organic frozen vegan meals, organic frozen quinoa and brown rice, organic frozen veggies and fruit, fruit bars made from real fruit, gluten-free and organic black bean chips, quinoa chips, lentil chips or chickpeas. True, chips are still packaged snack food, so you don't want to eat them all at once, but if you need something crunchy, eat a few organic gluten-free black bean chips. The idea is to have some healthy foods on hand that are quick and easy to grab when you have cravings.



**6. Your mindset can help you break any plateaus.** Most of us know what's good to eat and what's not, but it's challenging to stay motivated long enough for our bodies to reach the point where we can't even tolerate bad food. Consistency is crucial. Just when you think you are plateauing is when change is about to happen. When getting healthy, most of my clients lose 6 to 8 pounds immediately, but then hit a plateau where weight no longer drops off consistently. What happens with weight loss is that your body replaces fat in cells with water first. Water weighs more than fat. It's only as water leaves the cells that you see weight loss. That's normal and it's why you're not going to lose weight every day. Accept that plateaus are natural and re-examine what's holding you back. Wait it out, stick with the plan, re-visit your weight loss tips and secrets, and your body will respond. This type of roadblock is also the time you may need a coach, or someone in your corner, who will guide you through the uncomfortable phases and keep you on track and moving toward your goals.



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# Surviving the Holiday Season the Smart Life Way!

As you continue on your holiday adventures, I wanted to be sure you were armed with 3 of my favorite supplements. They are especially helpful for digesting heavy meals and keeping your blood sugar balanced if you're eating things your body might not be used to.

My 3 favorite supplements for digestive health:

1. **Chromium Picolinate** – This trace mineral can boost your insulin's response, so is especially good for meals heavy on the carbohydrates.
2. **Cinnamon** – This power-food has been proven to reduce blood sugar levels and triglycerides in patients with type 2 diabetes, which means that it can be super-effective for those of us with hormonal blood-sugar sensitivities. Sprinkle it on your meals, or pick up a supplement packed with the good stuff.
3. **Digestive Enzymes** – These enzymes help you break down the food you eat and absorb nutrients better. If you experience indigestion, gas, or bloating, try them out! Rainbow Light is one of my favorite brands.