Sonja FRANZMANN | health & life stylist

12 Healthy and Heavenly Dinner Recipes

By Natalie Farr Murphy

Chinese Noodle Soup

1 (48 oz) carton reduced sodium chicken stock or 6 cups homemade chicken stock
2 green onions, sliced on the diagonal
1 (1-inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled and minced (or more if you want, I do it to taste)
1 Tbsp. reduced sodium soy sauce
6 baby bok choy, halved
1 cup matchstick-cut carrots (I use more cause I like carrots)
2 cups cooked whole wheat capellini
6 oz. lean cooked pork or chicken, cut into match sticks
1 cup lightly packed baby spinach

1. Combine broth, scallions, ginger, and soy sauce in large saucepan and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer until scallions are tender, about 3 min. Add bok choy and carrots; simmer until barely tender, about 7 min.

2. Stir pasta, pork, and spinach into soup; simmer just until spinach is wilted, about 2 min longer.

Quick Tuna Salad Nicoise with fresh herb vinaigrette

This recipe serves 4 or two with leftovers for the next day.

2 cans solid white albicore Tuna
1 small bag baby potatoes (red skinned, yellow or white whatever you can find), halved if they are really large otherwise leave them whole.
1 lb fresh green beans, blanched
4 eggs, hard boiled, cooled and halved
6 sweet tomatoes quartered, such as campari (they are bigger than a cherry tomato) if you can't get these then use as many cherry or grape tomatoes as you like as long as they are ripe.
Good quality kalamata or sundried Olives (I try to make sure everyone gets at least 4 olives)
Romaine, green leaf, or red leaf lettuce torn into bite size pieces. Enough to cover a platter to make a "bed" for the other ingredients.
2 Tbsp. low sodium chicken stock

Herb Vinaigrette ingredients: (I make a lot of this dressing to put away in the fridge for salads or to drizzle on chicken or fish for a couple of days cause it's soooo good!)

1/4 cup Champagne or White Wine vinegar
1/2 cup good quality Extra Virgin Olive Oil (a finishing olive oil not one you'd cook with)
1 tsp dijon mustard or more if you like dijon
salt and pepper to taste
Minced green onion or shallot to taste
2-3 Tbsp fresh minced dill
2-3 Tbsp fresh minced flat leaf parsley
2-3 Tbsp chiffonade (or roughly chopped) fresh basil leaves

Whisk the vinegar, mustard and salt and pepper then stream in the olive oil till emulsified add the remaining ingredients and stir til combined. Vinaigrettes for me are a taste as you combine experience, if you think you need more vinegar or any ingredient for that matter after you've done what I've suggested then please do so. You must taste to make sure it's seasoned correctly for you and your family.

1. Boil washed potatoes in salted water until they are just cooked through, probably 15 min. Drain and return to pot (not on the heat) and add the chicken stock to them and put the lid on to allow the stock (you can add a Tbsp or so of white wine with the stock to add more flavour too) to soak in and steam the potatoes for at least 7-10 more minutes. Take off lid and allow to cool.

2. While the potatoes are boiling, clean and trim green beans. Boil a pot of water and drop beans in. Boil until tender crisp, around 4 min. Make sure you pull one out after 3 min and taste it to see how they are. The beans should not be mushy!! When they are perfect drain them in a colander and run cold water over them until they stop cooking. Set aside until your ready for them.

3. Bring your water and eggs to a boil while your potatoes and beans are going. As soon as the eggs boil for a minute or so turn off the heat and let sit covered for 10 min with the lid on. After the 10 min run under cold water until they cool. Peel and set aside until ready to halve and put on the platter,

4. Wash and tear lettuce and arrange on platter. Drain tuna and place on platter as you like (I try to give each ingredient a quadrant on the platter). Place potatoes, beans, tomatoes, halved boiled eggs. Then sprinkle the olives around. Drizzle with the herb vinaigrette...YUM!!

Poached Chicken and Vegetables

This recipe can be adapted easily for how many you are cooking for, I'm giving the ingredients for 2 people.

2 Bone in skinless chicken breasts (bone in is much more flavourful and moist for this recipe but you could use Boneless skinless if that's all you have)
1 carton low sodium chicken broth, you need enough to cover the chicken and vegetables, so if you need to add more than that then do.
8 baby potatoes, washed leave whole or you can halve them if they are really big
1 bunch rapini, washed and trimmed
2-3 carrots, peeled and sliced on the diagonal
salt and pepper to taste
Fresh Thyme leaves roughly chopped
Fresh flat leaf parsley, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced

1. Brown chicken breasts in a pan with a drizzle of Grapeseed oil flesh side down. Once browned, put off to side.

2. In large soup pot drizzle some grapeseed oil then add garlic, salt, pepper, and thyme. Sautee on Med. heat until fragrant, do not brown the garlic. Put the chicken on top of the sauteed garlic, then layer the potatoes then the carrots. Add the broth and simmer on medium. About 15 min later add the Rapini and cook for another 15 min or until the chicken is cooked through and the potatoes and carrots are tender. Add the parsley at the end and serve.

Turkey and Kale Soup

1lb Lean ground turkey or chicken
1 onion, diced
2-3 cloves of garlic, minced
1 cup chopped celery
1 cup chopped carrots
1 medium zucchini grated
1 bunch kale washed and chopped into bite size pieces
1 can no salt added white kidney beans rinsed and drained
1/2 a large red pepper chopped for garnish
1 carton no salt chicken stock plus 1/2 carton of water
Fresh herbs such as thyme, marjoram, flat leaf parsley (I use them all)

Salt and pepper to taste

Sauté the onion and garlic til fragrant add the turkey, celery, salt and pepper, thyme and marjoram and cook stirring until no pink remains. Add the carrots, zucchini and kale cook until carrots are slightly softened and the kale cooks down, about 5 min. Add the stock, water and beans and let simmer for 10m or so. Taste to adjust seasoning. Add the red pepper and chopped parsley to the top and serve. I also will grate a little fresh Parmesan on mine, it tastes yummy!!

Quick Fish Tacos with homemade salsa

2-4 white fish fillets (I used Basa, but you could use talapia, halibut, or cod)
Salt and pepper to taste
Chili powder to taste
Cumin to taste (1/4-1/2 tsp goes a long way)
Zest of 1 lime, then slice the lime into rounds to top the fish
1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
1/2 a small red onion, sliced thin in half moons
1/2 a Jalapeno sliced, I took the seeds and ribs out but if you like the heat you could leave them in.
Drizzle of Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Small whole wheat flour tortillas or multigrain. If you can find small authentic corn tortillas then you can use them instead.
Fat free greek yogurt
Fresh Cilantro leaves
Radishes, sliced into thin rounds
Fresh lime wedges

1. Preheat oven to 350

2. Place fish fillets into baking dish. Salt and pepper the fillets to your liking. Sprinkle with chilli powder and cumin. Cover fish fillets with the sliced onions, jalapenos, tomatoes and lime slices. Drizzle with Olive Oil. Bake for 30-35 min or until fish is cooked through and the veggies are tender (not mushy).

3. Heat tortillas in the fry pan on med high heat until slightly browned

4. Scoop fish and all the veg in to your tortilla with a slotted spoon (there will be a lot of juices from the veggies and fish at the bottom of dish) top with fresh lime juice, sliced radish, cilantro leaves and yogurt. You could also chop up avocado to top these too!

I made a quick coleslaw with a mixture of low fat mayo, greek yogurt lime juice and apple cider vinegar. We added a bit of chilli powder to that to make it a bit mexican. It was yummy!

Easy Homemade Salsa

1 large can of San Marzano tomatoes, reserve the juice for another use
Finely minced red onion to taste, I cut one in half then use a quarter of the half
1 jalapeño pepper, seeds and ribs removed, finely chopped
Zest and juice of 1 lime
A handful of chopped cilantro, if you don't like cilantro you could use flat leaf parsley
Garlic powder to taste (I shake it in then stir and taste til I get the right flavour, it's best to think you don't have enough though. Garlic powder can get stronger the longer it sits)
Chili powder to taste. Salt and pepper to taste

Put in a glass bowl and whiz it up with a hand blender. Make sure you can still see the green of the cilantro, don't over blend! Let sit for an hour or so to let he flavours come together.

I make this all the time and use it with grilled chicken and veggie fajitas. I also get whole wheat wraps and cut them into triangles and long strips, spray them with a bit of veg oil and sprinkle them with sea salt and bake them til golden. Easy yummy homemade chips!

Quick Greek Salad with Grilled Chicken

2 boneless skinless chicken breasts, flattened and grilled (put whatever seasonings on you like, a marinade or a rub or just plain old salt and pepper)

Greek Salad:
-1/2 long english cucumber, washed, quartered and chopped
-1/2 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
-1/2 red pepper, large dice
-1/2 green pepper, large dice
-1/4 of a sweet onion, diced (if you don't like too much onion you could just skip this and add a bit of finely minced shallot to the dressing)
-8 pitted kalamata olives, roughly chopped
-1/2 cup feta cheese, crumbled

Dressing:
-1/2 small shallot, minced (only if you aren't using the onion)
-3 Tbsp red wine vinegar (this is just a rough estimate, I do everything to taste, if you think you need more acid then add more)
-1 tsp dijon mustard
-1/4 cup Extra virgin olive oil
-1/4 tsp dried oregano
-salt and pepper to taste

-In a small bowl add vinegar, dijon, salt and pepper, and oregano. Whisk together then stream in the Olive oil until emulsified. Add shallot and stir together. Set aside until you're ready to dress the salad. I serve this dish with 1/2 baked whole wheat pita bread per person.

Salad Bar Pad Thai

Another great recipe that I got from Weight Watchers, it's a great vegetarian dish)

-1/4 lb rice sticks (rice vermicelli)
-1/4 cup unseasoned rice vinegar
-2 Tbsp. low sodium soy sauce
-the recipe calls for 1 Tbsp of sugar, but I just use Honey to taste
-1/4tsp red pepper flakes
-2 tsp canola oil
-8 green onions, sliced
-1 garlic clove, minced
-1 1/2 cups cooked snow peas, halved crosswise
-1 tomato, cut into 3/4-inch chunks
-1 cup bean sprouts
-3 hard boiled eggs, cooled and finely chopped
-1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
-1/2 cup chopped fresh mint
--1/2 cup chopped fresh basil
-3 Tbsp unsalted dry roasted peanuts, finely chopped

1. Place rice sticks in large bowl; add enough hot water to cover and let soak until softened, about 10 min.; drain. (If using spaghetti, cook according to package directions)

2. Whisk together vinegar, soy sauce, sugar or honey, red pepper flakes and garlic in small bowl.

3. Heat nonstick wok or deep large nonstick skillet over high heat until drop of water sizzles in pan' add oil and swirl to coat pan. Add green onions and garlic; stir fry until softened, about 2 min (do not burn garlic). Add rice noodles and toss to coat. Stir in vinegar mixture' stir fry until heated through, about 2 min. Add snow peas. tomato, and bean sprouts; stir fry 1 min. Spoon pad thai into serving bowl. Top with eggs, cilantro, mint, basil, and peanuts.

Roasted red peppers with marinated white beans

This is great as a lunch on its own but you can add a chicken breast or a nice piece of fish for dinner.

2 red peppers (any colour is good), cut in half, seeds removed and washed.
1 can no salt white kidney or canelinni beans, rinsed and drained
1 shallot, minced
1 garlic clove, minced
2 celery spears and some celery greens, finely chopped
Fresh thyme, fresh basil, flat leaf parsley, finely chopped
Salt and pepper to taste
1tbsp. Dry white wine (optional)
1tbsp balsamic vinegar
A little splash of red wine vinegar
A good drizzle of olive oil or grape seed oil

Set oven to 400 and put the peppers on a parchment covered baking sheet. At least 25 m. Place all the other ingredients in a glass bowl and toss together. Let sit for at least 30 min to let the flavours meld. When peppers have cooled place a scoop of the bean mixture into the pepper cups and serve with pita crisps or grilled chicken or fish.

Quinoa black bean salad

I serve this with chicken or fish, it's great on a hot summer day.

1 box of PC organics quinoa
Chilli powder (I do this to taste so however much you like)
Cumin (same as above)
The zest and juice of 2 limes (if they aren't that juicy then use another lime)
1 can no salt added black beans, rinsed and drained
1 small red pepper, finely chopped
1 small yellow pepper finely chopped
Either fresh cooked corn from the cob or you can use frozen thawed corn, 3/4 cup

Cook quinoa to package directions but add the chilli powder and cumin to the water as it cooks. This adds a ton of flavour. Place cooked quinoa in a bowl and let cool. Add the rest of the ingredients and toss together. Add a little salt and pepper to taste. You can add a bit of olive oil if you need to. Fresh cilantro tossed into this is amazing too!

Mixed greens with grilled flattened chicken

A mixture of greens such as red leaf or green leaf lettuce, arugula, radicchio, pea shoots (I buy these individually because the mixes are usually slimey)
Cucumber, sliced
Tomato, sliced
Steamed cooled asparagus or green beans
Roasted cooled golden beets, thinly sliced in rounds
Boneless, skinless chicken breasts pounded flat.
Salt and pepper to taste

Dressing: (I eyeball all these ingredients and taste everything to adjust the seasonings)

1/2 shallot, minced
Tarragon vinegar
Fresh tarragon, finely chopped
Dijon mustard
Extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper
Whisk all together and taste, adjust to your preference (if you need to sweeten it up you can add a drizzle of honey)

Toss the greens and asparagus or beans together. Arrange beet slices in the centre of your serving plates (like a bed for the chicken). Place the grilled chicken on the beets then top the chicken with the greens. Drizzle with your homemade dressing.

Hot Bruschetta

This a good one for all those tomatoes in the summer.

As many tomatoes as you want as long as they can stand upright if you slice a small round off the bottom to create a flat surface. Core the tomatoes without going all the way to the bottom.
Place minced shallots, sliced garlic, finely chopped basil, salt and pepper in the core of the tomatoes. Then drizzle with balsamic vinegar, and extra virgin olive oil. Bake at 350 until the tomatoes are soft and very fragrant. About 45m. Serve with thinly sliced whole wheat baguette or pita crisps. Just get a spoon and dig into those tomatoes! They are ridiculously yummy!

Homemade Hummus

1 can no salt added chickpeas
The juice and zest of 1 lemon
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 Tbsp. peanut butter, warmed in the microwave so it's runny
1/4 tsp cumin or more if you want
Salt to taste

I put all ingredients in my food processor and pulse, then I stream in extra virgin olive oil until it starts to get smooth. I also add in a bit of water to cut down on the oil.

Enjoy!