

Unleash Your Inner Chef!

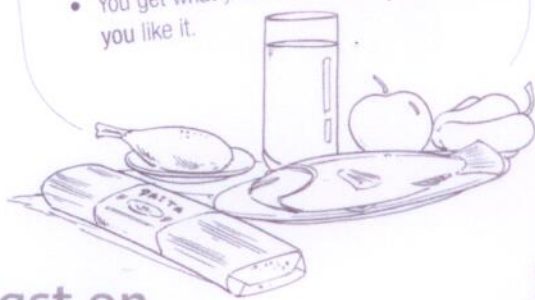


Want healthier meals, fresher tastes and platefuls of satisfaction? Discover the pleasures of home cooking. Involving family and friends can make it easy, rewarding and fun! Here are some tips and irresistibly simple recipes to get you pumped.

Homier Is Healthier

When you cook at home, you get a big serving of health benefits on the side:

- It's easy to have balanced meals with lots of variety from each of the four food groups.
- You choose the ingredients.
- It's easier to avoid industrially produced trans fats and unwanted sodium.
- You can watch portion sizes—no restaurant mega-portion temptations!
- No deep-fried-whatever calorie overloads.
- You get what you like, prepared the way you like it.



Feast on Family Time

Studies show that families that enjoy meals together tend to have healthier eating habits and be better connected. Top up family meals with more fruits, vegetables and milk products—healthy foods Canadian children, teens and adults don't get enough of.

Get Your KICKS

Gourmet tastes aren't just for restaurants! Herbs, spices, zests and condiments make simple foods a taste adventure without adding a lot of salt and fat. Stock your kitchen with all sorts and experiment! Some ideas:

- **GINGER ROOT**—Grate a bit into soup and stir-fries. It keeps well in the freezer and grates better when it's frozen.
- **PARMESAN, ASIAGO, AGED CHEDDAR**—Highly flavourful cheeses, grated or thinly sliced into soups, salads and sauces add taste and important nutrients.
- **NUTS, LIKE ALMONDS, WALNUTS AND PINE NUTS**—Toasting nuts enhances their flavour. Toss quickly in a hot dry pan until light brown. Sprinkle a few on salads and stir-fries—a healthy kick that makes everything seem gourmet.
- **CHILI POWDERS, CHILI PASTES AND HOT SAUCES**—No food ever lacks taste with these around to give them a jolt. Try some on eggs—awesome!
- **WHITE AND RED BALSAMIC VINEGAR**—Lots of flavour and less acidic-tasting. Lets you dress salads even without oil.

Play Around!

Plan a family cooking night once a week. Pizza is a great meal to make together—let everyone choose his or her own toppings. Aim for four food groups on each pizza, encourage experimentation and enjoy yourselves exchanging the news of the day. Want a drink? Toast each other with a *Chocolate Monkey*—just whirl 2 cups (500 ml) of chocolate milk and a banana together in a blender and pour!

It's all easy, breezy fun!

Use flatbreads, tortillas, pitas, or store-bought pizza crusts as bases. For the healthiest combinations use whole-wheat bases, go easy on high-fat, high-sodium meat toppings like pepperoni, and pile on the vegetables (or fruit!). Some different ideas to get you started:

BESTO PESTO

Basil pesto, cooked chicken pieces, cooked spinach, sliced mushrooms and cherry tomatoes, topped with Oka and Mozzarella.

HAWAIIAN CANUCK

Pizza sauce, chopped Black Forest ham, green pepper, mushrooms, pineapple (canned and well drained), Mozzarella and Feta.

THAI CHICKEN

Store-bought Thai peanut sauce, cooked chicken, thinly sliced red and green peppers, onions, Mozzarella. Sprinkle with fresh cilantro once cooked.

UPPER CRUST

Olive oil, cooked asparagus, pollock-crabmeat, pear slices, sautéed packaged pre-sliced leeks, Mozzarella and a mild Canadian blue cheese like Bluebry or Borgonzola.

Season to taste and bake on a cookie sheet at **400°F (200°C)** for about 12-15 minutes.

Make It Pizza