

# Chapter 6 Organizing Your Meals

## There's a Place for Everything

### 6.1 The Art of Eating – how to maximize your enjoyment and nutrition:

- **Your plate as an art work** – Think of choosing your food as putting artwork together that **feeds your five senses**. Each food offers its unique taste, color, smell, and texture (touch and sound when you eat). When **different foods complement each other in a dish**, a new flavor profile is created which elevates your enjoyment. Just like the colors in a painting come together to create a certain expression, and purpose.

- Foods also give us **nutrients and substances that work synergistically**. The oil in salad dressing offers a source of fat to help us absorb fat soluble vitamins in the salad. Iron is more readily absorbed from animal sources than plant sources. Eating foods high in vitamin C (orange, bell pepper) enhances the absorption of iron. B vitamins help our body to metabolize carbohydrate for energy.



Fresh corn and tomato salad

- **Protein is often the main attraction** because it tastes so good and fills you up! It is often the starting point that sets the stage for what else to add to the dish. Protein also gives you a sense of fullness and helps your energy last longer between meals and snacks.

- **Vegetables are your paints and structure** – they **add color, texture, height, and shapes** to the composition, as well as vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Without vegetables your plate of food will be flat!



Cucumber Bisque  
with grape tomatoes garnish

- **Starch is the background of your picture and gives you energy.** Whole grains also offer fiber and bulk. On the plate or in your bowl, starch serves two purposes:



- **A palate cleanser:** when starch is served apart from the main dish, they are eaten between bites of different food, so your next bite tastes almost as a new sensation. This is especially important in Asian style meals, where rice or noodles are served with minimal sauce on them. **That is why pouring soy sauce, gravy, or other heavy sauces on your rice, or piling food on top of rice actually diminishes your eating experience.** Potatoes and noodles are also palate cleansers.
- **Flavor carrier:** when starch is cooked with the main ingredients, such as in pasta, fried noodles, fried rice, dumplings in soup, they absorb the flavor of the other ingredients that are cooked together.

## 6.2 What's on My Plate?

- **My Plate - Our Plate:** The “My Plate” concept, which replaces the old “food pyramid”, can be used as a guide to build not just a healthy, but **a great tasting plate!** It offers a quick and easy way to plan your meals and decide on what to cook, while giving you options and variety. <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>
- If you eat **family style**, my plate then becomes “my table” – you can use the same idea to organize the different dishes in the middle of the table that your family shares.

- **Think of a sandwich or a wrap as your plate** also - Include the various food groups in the sandwich/wrap, and/or as a side:



- Grain - whole grain bread, pita, or tortilla
  - Protein - meat, fish, or egg
  - Vegetables – uncooked or cooked/grilled
  - Dairy - cheese in the sandwich, milk as a drink, or yogurt as a side dish
  - Fruit - pineapple or fruit salsa in the sandwich, or fruit as a side dish
- **Our HEALTHY Plate Lunch:** Hawaii’s rich food culture gives us even more options – you can include food from different ethnic styles of cooking and cuisine to put on a single plate.

### 6.3 My Plate Guidelines:

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Vary your protein food choices – include seafood twice a week
- Make at least half your grains whole grains.
- Switch to low fat (1%) , or fat free (skim) milk.
- Balance your portions so you can enjoy everything



<http://www.choosemyplate.gov>

### 6.4 Grains:

- **Mix it up** with whole grains - use whole grains in mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soups or stews and bulgur wheat in casseroles or stir-fries. Try a quinoa salad or pilaf.
- **Substitute** a whole-grain product for a refined-grain product e.g. brown or mixed grain “hapa” rice instead of white rice; 100% whole-wheat bread or bagels instead of white bread or bagels; whole-wheat pasta instead of white pasta. Pre-mixed Asian grains or rice are also available in many stores and China Town.
- **Cook and freeze:** Cook extra bulgur or barley when you have time – Freeze half to heat and serve later as a quick side dish.
- **Gluten Free products:** There are many whole-grain products for people who are allergic to gluten.
  - Gluten is the protein found in wheat, barley, rye, and triticale.
  - Gluten free foods: buckwheat, certified gluten-free oats, oatmeal, popcorn, brown rice, wild rice, quinoa, amaranth, millet, corn, teff, sorghum, arrowroot.
  - Gluten free flours: potato flour, brown rice flour, tapioca flour, millet flour, sorghum flour, soy flour, corn flour, bean flour.
  - **Avoid** these wheat flours if you are allergic to gluten: bulgur, durum flour, farina, graham flour, kamut, semolina, spelt, buckwheat flour that is mixed with wheat flour (buckwheat flour does not contain gluten, however wheat flour is often added to buckwheat flour for baking purposes).



## 6.5 Proteins:

- **Vary your choices.** Eat a variety of foods from the Protein Food Group each week. Experiment with main dishes made with beans, dried peas, legumes, nuts, soy, and seafood.
- **Get creative and have seafood twice a week** - Eat seafood in place of meat or poultry. Select a variety of seafood – include some that are higher in beneficial oils omega-3-fatty acids and low in mercury, such as salmon, trout, herring, Saba (Atlantic mackerel), **Hawaii's open ocean (pelagic) fish** including Pacific mackerels, Wahoo (Ono), Sanma (Pacific Saury), Opah etc. Shellfish counts too! Think of oysters, mussels, clams, calamari (squid), and tako (octopus) which all supply healthy omega-3s.



- **Aim for 8 ounces of seafood a week** to get sufficient omega 3 fatty acids. Your body needs omega 3 fatty acids and cannot make them in your body, so you need to get it from food.
  - A drained can of tuna is about 3 to 4 ounces
  - A salmon steak ranges from 4 to 6 ounces
  - 1 small trout is about 3 ounces.

- Use **lean or low fat cuts of meat**: sirloin, loin, round, flank, 90% or more lean ground meat. Use lean cuts of poultry: chicken breast, turkey breast.
- Chicken thigh has more fat (13 g for 3 oz portion) than chicken breast (7 g for 3 oz portion) and may be a better option for certain cooking methods for a more tender and flavorful dish. To help cut down on calories from fat, cut off visible fat and take off the skin before cooking or eating.



*Chicken Adobo with wilted Arugula*

- **How many eggs can I eat?** Eggs can fit into a healthy eating pattern since they provide many beneficial nutrients.
  - For someone without diabetes or heart health concerns up to 7 eggs a week is okay.
  - For someone with diabetes or heart disease (or at risk for these conditions), the recommendation is no more than 3 egg yolks a week. (FYI I changed not to no)
  - Just be aware of what you are eating with eggs. Often times, eggs are served with foods that are high in saturated fat, which has a greater effect on increasing blood cholesterol and increasing the risk of heart disease.
  - One way to enjoy more eggs is using 2 egg whites for every egg yolk.
  - **Eggs are a high quality protein source and healthy choice**, since it has all 9 essential amino acids, a complete protein that your body needs
  - The egg white is primarily lean protein.
  - The egg yolk provides protein, fat, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and cholesterol.
  - Although egg yolks do contain cholesterol, the cholesterol you eat from food may not significantly affect blood cholesterol levels for many people, except for someone who has diabetes or heart disease. Then the cholesterol from food may have a greater impact on increasing blood cholesterol. Saturated fat and trans fat has a greater affect on increasing blood cholesterol.
  - One egg yolk has less than 2 g. saturated fat and has trace amounts of trans fat. It also contains healthy monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats (less than 3 g.) that may lower blood cholesterol and promote heart health. For someone requiring 1800 calories, less than 20 g. of saturated fat per day is recommended.



*Loco Moco Fried Rice  
with poached Egg White &  
Mushroom Sauce*

- **Vegetable Proteins: Naturally low in saturated fat and high in fiber.**

- Beans - kidney, pinto, red, black, white, lima, garbanzo, black-eyed, navy, great northern
- Dried peas - green and yellow split peas, whole green peas
- Soy products - tofu, tempeh, veggie burgers



Seared Tofu with Ginger and Green Onion Sauce

Tuscan style Bean Soup with mixed vegetables



- **Include nuts and seeds** - Nuts and seeds are great snack choices because they offer healthy fats, vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
  - **Fats in nuts and seeds primarily come from monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats** which play a role in reducing the risk of heart disease.
  - The high fat content offers a concentrated source of calories to keep you satisfied.
  - Remember nuts are high in fat, so a little goes a long way and less than ¼ cup is a reasonable amount to eat.

## 6.6 Vegetables:

- **Cooking vegetables can be fast.** Blanching/poaching or sauté leafy greens, beans. Steaming root vegetables. Roasting squashes and root vegetables.
- Be ahead of the game - Cut up a batch of bell peppers, carrots, or broccoli. Pre-package them to use when time is limited. You can enjoy them on a salad, with hummus, or in a veggie wrap.



Okinawan Sweet Potato

- **Choose vegetables rich in color.** Brighten your plate with vegetables that are red, orange, dark green, yellow, white, and purple. They are full of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and phytochemicals which help keep your body working at it's best.



Tuscan style bean soup with Swiss Chard and mixed vegetables

- Make your garden salad glow with color - Brighten your salad by using colorful vegetables such as sliced red and yellow bell peppers, cherry or grape tomatoes, shredded radishes, chopped red cabbage, or watercress.
- **Vegetable soup can incorporate more than one vegetables, as well as protein (chicken, lean ground beef).** Try Minestrone, Tuscan Bean soup, tomato, butternut squash, or garden vegetable soup. Look for reduced- or low-sodium broth (chicken or vegetables) as a base, then add seasonal vegetables.
- Savor the flavor of seasonal vegetables: **Buy vegetables that are in season for maximum flavor at a lower cost.** Check your local supermarket specials for the best-in-season buys. Or visit your local farmer's market.



## 6.7 Dairy

### *How much dairy do you need a day?*

2-3 years old: 2 cups  
4-8 years old: 2 ½ cups  
> 9 years old: 3 cups

- **Choose low fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk, yogurt, and cheese** instead of whole milk or full-fat dairy foods.



- You will still benefit from key nutrients that dairy foods offer without the added calories from fat.
  - Milk and yogurt contain natural sugar (lactose) that provides your body with energy and protein that builds your body.
  - Dairy foods provide potassium for heart health, vitamin A for immune system, and riboflavin to help our body make energy from food.
- **Build your bones and teeth**
    - The majority of people do not get enough calcium and vitamin D. Vitamin D improves calcium absorption.
    - Milk and yogurt are an excellent source of calcium and vitamin D to build strong bones and teeth.
    - Calcium is also found in leafy greens however calcium is more readily absorbed from dairy sources than plant sources. It is difficult to get enough calcium and vitamin D without dairy foods.
    - Getting adequate calcium is especially important during childhood, adolescence, and teen years as that is the crucial period when bones are being built.
    - Building strong bones during the early years may help prevent the risk of fractures and osteoporosis later.

- **Maintain your bones and teeth**
  - In addition to bone building benefits, calcium also helps to send messages in your body and contract your muscles.
  - Sufficient calcium is important in adults and elderly as well to help minimize bone loss.
  - If you don't get enough calcium from food, then your body starts to take calcium from bones which increases your risk of fractures and osteoporosis later in life.
- **How much calcium is in dairy?**
  - 1 cup of milk or yogurt provides about 300 mg calcium.
  - **Higher calcium dairy products** - milk, yogurt, cheddar cheese, swiss cheese, mozzarella cheese, American cheese
- **Dairy products that are lower in calcium or have added sugars or are higher in fat:** pudding, milk shake, frozen or soft serve yogurt, ice cream.
- **Think your drink**
  - Milk provides key nutrients to build a strong body and is a better choice than sugar sweetened beverages (soda, fruit punch, other artificially flavored sugar drinks).
  - Milk also contains high quality protein - all 9 essential amino acids that your body needs to get from food.
  - The protein in milk can help you feel energized longer.
  - Add milk to cereal and oatmeal for a quick and easy breakfast to start your day.
  - Calcium fortified soymilk counts as dairy too!
  - Every little bit adds up - Enjoy your coffee with milk (OR replace entire line with "Add milk to coffee").
  - An 8 oz. glass of low fat milk contains 14 g. of naturally occurring sugar in the form of lactose.



- **Yogurt makes a quick and healthy breakfast and snack**

- Yogurt contains natural sugar from lactose (milk sugar) that gives you **energy**.
- Fruit flavored yogurt may contain a combination of real fruit and added sugar. Go easy on the added sugar and look at the ingredient list on the nutrition label: If the list contains "fructose" or "glucose" or "high fructose corn syrup" then these are added sugars and are not real fruit. If real fruit is added to yogurt it is listed as the actual fruit (strawberries, blueberries, etc.) and not as fructose.



*Carrot Cake Parfait with pineapple, grated carrot, yogurt, granola, & raisins*

- **Real fruit** offers vitamins, minerals, and fiber whereas added sugars like "fructose" and "glucose" just adds sugar and calories.
- **Create your own fruit yogurt!** Take advantage of the local fresh fruit Hawaii has to offer. Add fresh or dried fruit to yogurt for more color, sweetness, vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- **Make a yogurt parfait!** Add granola, fruits, and nuts to yogurt for an even greater nutritional boost!

- For a quick and fun snack, look for **squeezable and drinkable yogurt**.



- **Freeze yogurt** for a frozen healthy treat



*Dipping fruits in yogurt, granola and coconut flakes to make "Monkey Fruits"*

- Look for yogurt that contains "**live and active cultures**" which provide "good" bacteria that may help with lactose intolerance, constipation, diarrhea, and other gastrointestinal conditions.
- **Top it off or dip into it.** Use yogurt to top vegetables and other dishes. **Dip fruits or vegetables into yogurt.**
- **Go for Greek!** Greek yogurt offers a creamy satisfying texture, contains more protein (than regular yogurt), and is fat free. So you'll feel satisfied longer.
- **Make a smoothie** with milk, yogurt, fruit, and ice for a refreshing healthy drink that provides body and bone building nutrients.

- **Cheese**

- 1 ½ ounces of natural cheese or 2 ounces of processed cheese contain similar amounts of calcium as 1 cup of milk or yogurt. Just be aware that cheese has more sodium and more fat than milk and yogurt.
- **Choose low fat or fat-free cheese.** Use sweet fruits and vegetables or savory ingredients to enhance the flavor of dishes made with low fat or fat-free cheeses.
- Some cheeses do not come in low fat or fat-free options. If you use full-fat cheese, just use less or half of what the recipes asks for.
- **Take advantage of strong flavored cheeses to enhance the flavor of dishes -** parmesan, gorgonzola, extra-sharp cheddar, feta cheese, bleu cheese. A little goes a long way.
- Cottage cheese has less calcium than natural or processed cheese, but it still offers the health benefits of protein and riboflavin.



**Enjoy the variety of ways to add cheese to your meals and snacks!**

- Add cheese to pasta, casseroles, or soups
- Make a grill cheese sandwich
- Top your taco with shredded cheese
- Boost the traditional mac and cheese with pumpkin or squash
- Have string cheese with crackers or fruit
- Make an omelet with cheese and vegetables
- Put cheese cubes on a vegetable or fruit kabob
- Top cottage cheese with diced local fruits
- Pizza: Vegetable cheese pizza, pineapple cheese pizza
- Put cheese between whole grain crackers for a crunchy and creamy snack
- Sprinkle cheese on salads
- Top vegetables with cheese

**Lactose intolerance:** People with **lactose intolerance** can still enjoy and include yogurt, hard cheese (Parmigiano-Reggiano), firm cheese (Cheddar, Swiss), and lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk to help meet their nutrient needs.

- *Yogurt with active live cultures helps to convert lactose to lactic acid.*
- *Hard and firm cheeses have very little or no lactose.*
- *Smaller amounts of milk may also be tolerable and introduced.*

## 6.8 The Composition of A Salad

- Think of the salad plate as a playground for your creativity – it can be pleasing, dramatic, playful, or even outrageous! Salad is a dish consisting mostly of vegetables.
  - A salad can be served with uncooked vegetables or slightly cooked vegetables (wilted with a hot or warm dressing).
  - Once you understand the general elements that make up a salad, you will realize it can be a creative process for inventing your own composition. It will help you recognize the purpose for each ingredient when you are given any recipe or find one on-line.
1. **Base** – Lettuce (iceberg, romaine etc.), leafy greens (e.g. spinach, baby greens, arugula etc.). It forms a “bed” of greens or mixture of colors on the plate.
  2. **Body** – main item, can be a vegetable or a protein. The “star of the show” e.g. a roasted beet salad, or a curried chicken papaya salad.
  3. **Garnish** – for adding contrasting colors, texture, and flavors.
    - Nuts, granola, sesame seeds
    - Fresh herbs – mint, basil, green onions
    - Another vegetables – finely chopped (tomato, red onion)
    - Protein e.g. boiled egg, beans, tofu, chicken, fish
  4. **Dressing/Sauce** – add moisture, mouth feel.
    - **Oil** – olive, canola, flavored oil (macadamia nut oil, truffle oil etc.)
    - **Acid** – vinegar, wine, wine-vinegar, rice vinegar, lemon or citrus juice etc.
    - **Binder or thickening Agent** – mustard, egg yolk, sour cream, yogurt, miso, etc.
    - **Seasonings and flavorings** – salt and pepper, spices, aromatics: minced garlic, minced shallots; herbs (fresh or dried e.g. oregano, basil, tarragon etc.)

