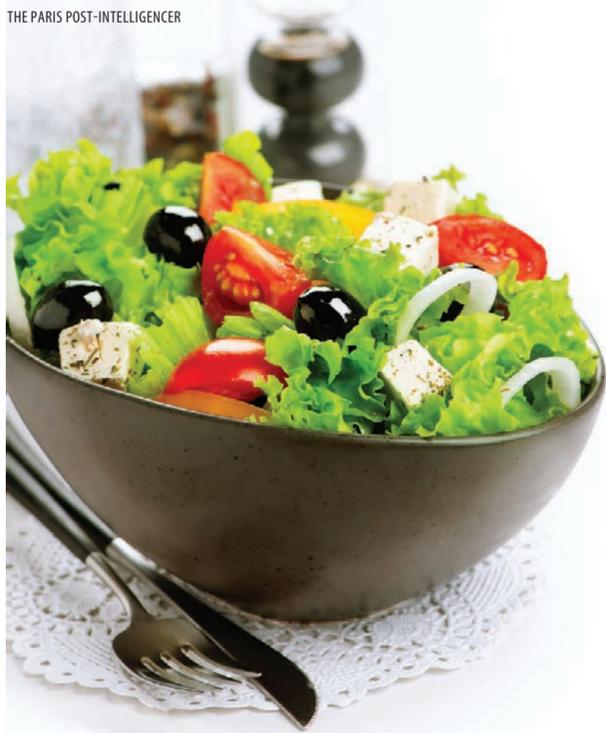


Put your best fork forward



Did you know you can use bananas instead of eggs, applesauce instead of oil and avocado instead of butter? By preparing meals at home, you can try new things and learn to substitute healthy ingredients for the not so healthy. National Nutrition Month is here and reminding you that every bite counts!

Making informed food choices along with creating good eating habits and engaging in physical activity will benefit you in the long run.

There are many small steps you can take to improve your health. Swapping out water for one unhealthy beverage a day, taking the stairs instead of the elevator or even parking a little farther away from the store to get those few extra steps in are great changes in the right direction.

Trying new foods, like avocado or quinoa, can add variety and spice to your dinner plate and help improve your lifestyle. Eating out does not have to

be an excuse to make unhealthy choices. Most restaurants have healthy menu options to explore. Whether you're eating out with friends or being creative in the kitchen, remember to put your best fork forward.

Chicken Cobb Salad

1 pound frozen breaded chicken breasts or cutlets
1 large head romaine
2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
1 cup corn kernels (canned or frozen)
1/2 cup crumbled blue cheese
1 avocado, diced
1/2 pound bacon, cooked and chopped
Ranch dressing, for drizzling

Preheat oven to 350°F. Bake chicken

JENNIFER SOMMERVILLE



A "Peas" of Nutrition

per package directions. Let cool and slice. Make salad. Add chicken, tomatoes, corn, blue cheese, avocados and bacon to your bed of lettuce.

Season and drizzle with ranch dressing.

Vegan Banana Bread

6 ripe bananas
2 cups flour
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mash bananas. Add other ingredients to bananas, mix well.

Bake in greased bread pan for 1 hour.

JENNIFER SOMMERVILLE is a senior majoring in dietetics at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

COOKBOOK REVIEW

Sneaky Blends not a juicing or smoothies book



Make healthier dishes without sacrificing flavor, and nobody will be the wiser.

Enter Missy Chase Lapine, founder of the

Sneaky Chef brand of foods and cookbook author. Her book, *Sneaky Blends: Supercharge Your Health With 100 Recipes Using the Power of Purees* (2016, North Star Way) focuses not just on kids, but the whole family and will give readers recipes for nutrient-rich "blends" that can be easily added to multiple menus.

Some of these include:

- Pumpkin Base Blend — great for pies, seasonal soups and desserts.
- Raspberry-Beet Base Blend — for sweeter vegetable dishes.
- Carrot-Sweet Potato Base Blend — ramps up sweet potato recipes.
- Butternut Squash-Apple Base Blend — for breads and flaky crusts.

Lapine's goal is simple: Help families cut calories, eradicate unhealthy sugars and fats and slim down by "sneaking" nutritious — and delicious — blends into favorite recipes by cutting higher caloric ingredients out and swapping vegetable blends into beloved recipes.

Raspberry-Glazed Pork Tenderloin with Roasted Broccoli

For the pork:
1/2 cup Raspberry-Beet Base Blend (recipe follows)
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon raw honey
1/4 teaspoon sea salt

1 pork tenderloin (about 1 pound)
For the broccoli:
8 cups broccoli florets
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 large shallots, peeled and thinly sliced

Make the pork: In a medium bowl, whisk together the blend, vinegar, honey and salt. Pour half the sauce into a large resealable plastic bag; refrigerate remaining sauce until ready to use. Place pork in bag, squeeze out air, seal it tightly, shake to distribute sauce. Allow pork to marinate in refrigerator at least 30 minutes and up to 24 hours, turning bag occasionally. Remove pork and place in a foil-lined baking dish; pour sauce it was marinating in over top.

Make the broccoli: Place broccoli on a baking sheet, toss with oil. Season with salt and pepper, sprinkle

shallots over top.

Preheat broiler. Place pork on baking sheet alongside broccoli. Broil pork and broccoli 5-6 inches from heat source 15-20 minutes, turning once halfway through cooking, until meat registers 145°F at the thickest part and the broccoli is crisp and browned around edges.

Allow pork to rest for 5 minutes, then slice and divide it among plates.

Serve each with 2 tablespoons of the reserved sauce and a quarter of the broccoli.

Makes four servings.

Raspberry-Beet Base Blend

2 medium beets
4 cups frozen raspberries
Filtered water

This blend is the most gorgeous color — and that rich pigment is where its great nutrition comes from.

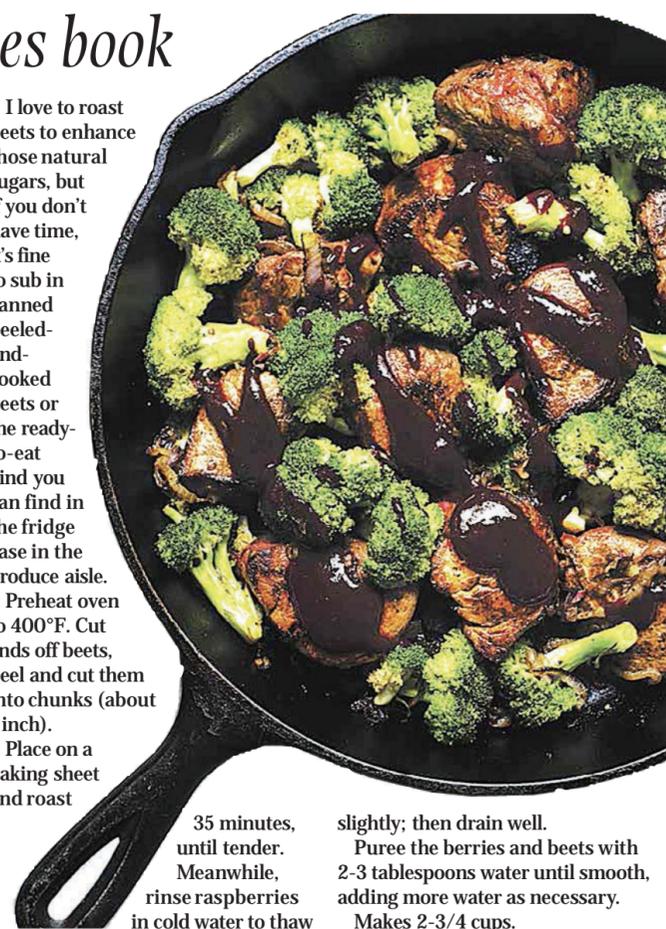
And even if you think you don't like beets, you've got to give this a try.

The raspberries take down some of the earthiness of the veggie; but because both have lots of natural sugars, you can sweeten many dishes with this blend without adding actual sweeteners (or at least use much less of them).

I love to roast beets to enhance those natural sugars, but if you don't have time, it's fine to sub in canned peeled-and-cooked beets or the ready-to-eat kind you can find in the fridge case in the produce aisle.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Cut ends off beets, peel and cut them into chunks (about 1 inch).

Place on a baking sheet and roast



35 minutes, until tender. Meanwhile, rinse raspberries in cold water to thaw

slightly; then drain well. Puree the berries and beets with 2-3 tablespoons water until smooth, adding more water as necessary. Makes 2-3/4 cups.

Shed winter weight with healthy curry soup

Did you know that the average woman gains between 5-7 pounds during the winter months? Yikes! That's kind of depressing if you ask me.

There are a number of reasons for this weight gain; we spend more time being sedentary in the cold weather, most people feel hungrier during cold weather months and we tend to eat heavier foods.

The problem is that the weight that creeps up on us in the winter does not magically go away when the weather warms.

One thing I do to keep the pounds from creeping up is to eat lighter at night during the winter months. Even though I am one of those people who tend to feel hungrier during those cold, dark nights, I have learned how to trick my body into thinking it is full and satisfied.

Soup is my best trick! Piping hot soup takes a while to eat. It takes about 20 minutes from the time you start eating for your brain to send signals to your tummy that it is full.

So, it stands to reason that if you eat slowly you will eat less, and really hot soup is my answer.

My other trick is to incorporate spices into the food — hot peppers and such rev up your metabolism and who doesn't want that?

Finally, my biggest trick is flavor — lots and lots of flavor! If food is delicious, you feel more satisfied even if you are eating less of it.

This Curry Noodle Soup has all these tricks. And another one — instead of using gluten-free pasta for the noodles, I use pasta made from beans. It's higher in protein and fiber than most pastas, plus it's filling.

CAROL KICINSKI



Simply Gluten Free

Don't be a sad statistic this winter! Eat more soup and gain fewer, or better yet, no extra pounds.

Gluten Free Curry Noodle Soup

1 large (about 1 pound) red skinned sweet potato, peeled, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
One 7-ounce package gluten-free bean pasta
4 cups gluten-free chicken stock
2 cans (full fat or light) coconut milk
2 tablespoons curry powder
2 teaspoons chili garlic sauce
3/4 pound boneless skinless chicken thighs, thinly sliced
3 red chilies, thinly sliced
4 green onions, thinly sliced
Handful Thai or regular basil
1 lime, cut into 6 wedges

Bring a pot of salted water to boil. Add cut sweet potatoes, boil 7 minutes until tender. Remove sweet potatoes with a sieve or slotted spoon, rinse with cold water and set aside.

Add noodles to boiling water, cook 4-5 minutes until al dente. Drain and rinse.

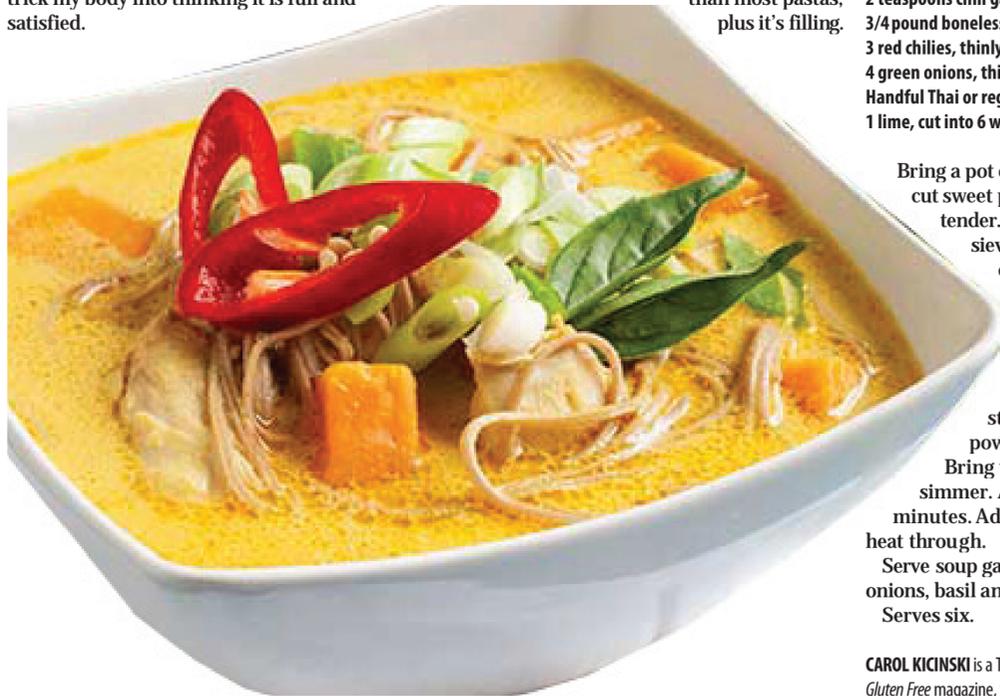
In a soup pot, combine stock, coconut milk, curry powder and chili garlic sauce. Bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer. Add sliced chicken, cook 10 minutes. Add sweet potatoes and noodles, heat through.

Serve soup garnished with chilies, green onions, basil and a lime wedge. Serves six.

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Serves six.



RECIPE ROUNDUP

Bunny-Faced Microwave Oatmeal

FROM MILKLIFE.COM, TIFFANY EDWARDS OF CREME DE LA CRUMB

1/3 cup instant oats
3/4 cup fat-free milk
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon brown sugar
2/3 small banana
2 fresh blueberries
1/2 small strawberry
Chocolate syrup (optional)

In microwave-safe bowl, stir together oats, milk, cinnamon, vanilla and brown sugar. Microwave on high 30 seconds to 1 minute and stir.

Cut banana in half crosswise. Cut 1-1/8-inch thick coin slices from flat end of each banana half. Place slices in upper-third of oatmeal bowl, side-by-side, to make eyes. Top with one blueberry on each banana slice.

Place remaining banana halves at top of bowl, hanging off edge, to create ears. Put strawberry in middle of bowl for the nose, drizzle chocolate to make mouth and whiskers.



CAROL KICINSKI is a TV chef, author and editor-in-chief of *Simply Gluten Free* magazine, www.simplygluten-free.com.