

SLIM SMART

RECIPE BOOKLET

 Jessica Joy LIFE



EAT GREAT &
LOSE WEIGHT

20 Recipes

Mix & match recipes to create
your easy & delicious weekly
meal plan.

Nutrition Guidelines

I'm so happy you're here, gorgeous! I know one of the hardest parts of eating healthy and keeping weight off is finding recipes that are fast, light, tasty and use easy-to-find, affordable ingredients.

I used to spend hours creating meal plans going through so many recipes that didn't fit this criteria. Thankfully, all that work taught me a lot and now I get to support you with making meal planning a breeze.

You can mix and match any of the recipes to create your weekly meal plan. You can swap any breakfast for any breakfast, lunch for lunch, snack for snack. You can do as many repeat meals as you like. For example, you can save yourself time and have the same breakfast several days in a row.

All meals are balanced with macronutrients (carbs, proteins and healthy fats) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) and portioned for you so all you have to do is choose which ones, eat them based on hunger and lose weight!

BREAKFASTS

- YAM & TURKEY FRITTATA or SCRAMBLE
- CHOCOLATE MINT SMOOTHIE w/COCONUT FLAKES
- STRAWBERRY SMOOTHIE BOWL
- FRUIT & NUT OVERNIGHT OATS

SNACKS (150-225 calories, balanced w/p

- CHOCOLATE PB COCONUT PROTEIN BITES
- FRUIT & NUTS
- SKINNY HORCHATA SMOOTHIE
- VEGGIES & HUMMUS
- STRAWBERRY CHIA PUDDING

LUNCHES

- PICNIC BASKET SALAD
- CAULIFLOWER RICE BOWL
- ASIAN TWIST SALAD
- AVOCADO TUNA SALAD TOASTS

DINNERS

- ZUCCHINI BOATS w/TURKEY MEATBALLS
- YAM 'BUN' SLIDERS
- ASIAN LETTUCE CUPS
- SLOW COOKER PORK TOSTADAS
- CHICKEN NUGGETS w/YAM & GREEN BEAN FRIES
- STIR-FRY with PEANUT SAUCE

Feel free to swap similar ingredients within the recipes. For example, if you like the strawberry smoothie bowl but are in the mood for blueberries, switch 'em.

RECOMMENDED DAILY EATING STRUCTURE

- Plan a Breakfast, Snack, Lunch, Snack & Dinner for each day.
- Eat all your meals, and then eat snacks based on hunger. If you're hungry for a snack between breakfast and lunch, have one, if not, don't. If you've eaten breakfast, lunch & dinner + 2 snacks and are still truly hungry 2 hours before bed, add another snack. Always stay in tune with your hunger cues and honor them. Eat when you're hungry, if you're not, don't. Stop eating 2 hours before bed. If you're still hungry, increase the portions in your meals.

MIX & MATCH RECIPES to CREATE YOUR MEAL PLAN

Because all the meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) and snacks are portioned and balanced similarly, you can mix and match them all. Swap any breakfast for a breakfast, any lunch for a lunch etc.

When planning your meals & snacks for the week, feel free to repeat as many recipes as you want. If you know you have a busy week ahead, you could eat the same meals for a few days in a row. Or, maybe you could eat the same snacks all week, and prep them all at once. Also, feel free to use dinner leftovers for next day's lunches, just use the same portions as described in the recipe.

MAKE YOUR GROCERY LIST & SHOP - Once you've determined which meals and when, write your grocery list and shop.

FOOD PREP - All you really have to food prep is enough to have a great start on Monday. I'd recommend making your lunch and snacks for Monday on Sunday, and maybe your breakfast too. Lunch typically has some cooked protein and grains, so for example, you'll cook some chicken breasts, prep a cup of quinoa or rice, and prep veggies for salads and veggies packs. If the weekend is packed, you can do more food prep on Monday night, so focus on being ready for Monday's meals, and go from there.

Week at a Glance

BREAKFAST

SNACK

LUNCH

SNACK

DINNER

M

T

W

Th

F

Sa

Sun

Grocery List

FRUIT

HEALTHY FATS

VEGETABLES

REFRIGERATED & FROZEN

CANS - low-sodium options recommended

HAVE ON HAND - Flavorings & Cooking/Baking Staples

PROTEIN

HERBS & SPICES - have on hand

GRAINS/LEGUMES

SUPPLEMENTS

YAM & TURKEY FRITTATA or SCRAMBLE

3 ounces yam, cooked and chopped
1 egg + 2 whites
1 1/2 ounces cooked ground turkey
1/2 ounce goat cheese (14 grams)
mixed greens

EGG, YAM & TURKEY BAKE - makes 3 servings

3 whole eggs
6 egg whites
9 ounces baked yams, chopped or broken up
4 1/2 ounces cooked ground turkey, broken into small bits
2 cups mixed greens, chopped
1 ounce goat cheese, crumbled

For the scramble - Warm a fry pan to medium heat and spray with oil. Place yams and turkey in pan, and warm through. While warming, whisk eggs and pour into pan. Season with s&p. Add in greens and continue to stir until eggs are cooked. Top with goat cheese.

Cook yams. Preheat oven to 350'. Spray a 9 by 9 inch pan (or similar size) with cooking spray. In a large bowl, add eggs and whisk. Season with s&p. Add yams, turkey, greens and feta. Pour mixture into a baking dish. Try to make the ingredients fairly even. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until eggs are done. Remove and allow to cool. Divide into 3 portions and wrap tightly with foil to prevent eggs drying out. Store in the fridge. Reheat in the microwave. Add hot sauce if desired.



HOW TO COOK YAMS IN THE MICROWAVE

Pierce yams 4-5 times with a fork or knife. Cook on high in the microwave for 4 minutes. Carefully check how soft they are. If they aren't squishy, continue to cook 1-2 minutes at a time, checking after each cooking session until soft. You should be able to cut through the whole yam easily.



CHOCOLATE MINT SMOOTHIE with COCONUT FLAKES

1 scoop chocolate protein powder, swap vanilla if needed
1 Tbsp cocoa powder + 1 tsp almond butter
1 Tbsp fresh mint
1 cup spinach or other milk leafy greens
2 ounces banana (about 1/2 banana), fresh or frozen
1/2 - 3/4 cup unsweetened almond milk
1 Tbsp unsweetened coconut flakes (sprinkled on top)

Combine all ingredients, except coconut flakes, in a blender, starting with just 1/2 cup almond milk. Once blended, add more to reach desired consistency. Taste and add a little stevia if desired. Top with coconut flakes.

STRAWBERRY SMOOTHIE BOWL

1 cup strawberries, fresh or frozen (save some for topping)
1 scoop vanilla protein powder
1/3 cup almond milk + more for desired consistency
1 handful leafy greens + 1/2 cup ice

Toppings

2 ounces banana, sliced
1 Tbsp chia seeds + 1/2 Tbsp nut butter
1 Tbsp unsweetened coconut flakes

Combine all smoothie ingredients in the blender, starting with 1/3 cup almond milk. It's best to keep the smoothie thicker than normal so the toppings don't fall to the bottom. It can help to place the smoothie in the freezer for awhile to create a quick frozen layer. Add toppings and eat with a spoon.

Option - reserve some raspberries from smoothie for toppings



FRUIT & NUT OVERNIGHT OATS

1/3 cup old fashioned oats
1/2 cup almond milk
stevia, optional
2 Tbsp chia seeds
1/2 cup fruit of choice, fresh or frozen, chopped
1 Tbsp nut butter or 2 Tbsp nuts or seeds

RECIPE IN PHOTO is peaches and almonds. YUM. Get creative!

Combine oats, almond milk & chia seeds in a bowl or jar. Sweeten w/stevia if desired. Add fruit on top now, or just before serving. Cover & refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, or overnight. Top with nut butter or nuts/seeds.

For regular oats - Combine oats, almond milk & stevia (optional) in a bowl. Microwave for 1-1 1/2 minutes. Top w/chia seeds, fruit & nut butter or nuts/seeds.



CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER COCONUT PROTEIN BITES

Portions for 1 serving

1 scoop chocolate protein powder (vanilla can be used)

1 Tbsp honey

1 Tbsp all-natural peanut butter

1/2 Tbsp unsweetened coconut flakes

add water as needed, will vary depending on protein powder

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl. Use a fork to smooch it together, it will take a lot of smooching and scraping. Making these becomes a skill - you'll be masterful in no time but have patience on your first time. Add just a very little bit of water at a time until mixture is just moist enough to form a ball. Be careful, it can easily turn to goo. Divide 1 serving into 3 balls and roll in coconut flakes.

FRUIT & NUTS

1 piece of fruit (for small fruits like plums and kiwis, have 2)

1 Tbsp. nut butter or 2 Tbsp nuts/seeds

IDEAS

- Oranges and almonds (make it extra fancy by chopping up the orange and sprinkling with cinnamon)

- Apple & almond butter with a little coconut flakes. Holla!

- Frozen banana slices with peanut butter. Shut up! Haha



SKINNY HORCHATA SMOOTHIE

1 scoop vanilla protein powder

1/3 - 1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk

1/2 - 1 Tbsp almond butter

A few big sprinkles of cinnamon

Optional - add a handful of spinach for a greens boost

Blend ingredients together. For a really refreshing treat with a twist of fanciness, I'd recommend pouring it over ice, putting a straw in it and dusting the top with cinnamon. I prefer a tall glass to hear the ice cubes moving around. On my heaven!



STRAWBERRY CHIA PUDDING

1/3 cup unsweetened almond milk + stevia (optional)
2 Tbsp chia seeds
Toppings
1/2 cup strawberries, chopped
1 tsp honey

In a small bowl, combine chia seeds, almond milk and stevia (optional). Stir every few minutes for the first 10 minutes, then allow to rest in the fridge for another 20 minutes. Once set, top with strawberries and honey. Tip - Instead of stirring, use a lidded jar and shake & flip it every few minutes for the first 10 minutes.

VEGGIES & HUMMUS

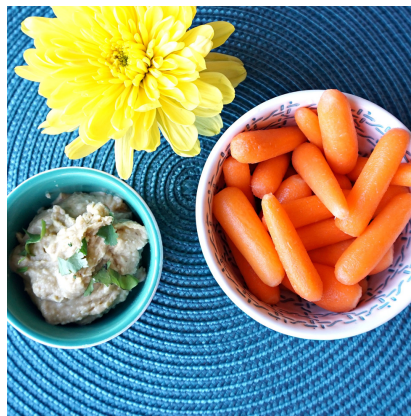
1/4 cup hummus + unlimited vegetables



I encourage you to start enjoying a veggie plate on the daily. It's a simple way to stay consistent with a big dose of veggies.

HUMMUS UPGRADE IDEAS

- Top your hummus with salsa and or herbs
- Use refried beans, add salsa & corn and a lil guac for a 'layered bean dip'
- Treat yourself with a fancy organic hummus. There are so many amazing ones.
- Use romaine lettuce leaves as a wrap, spread hummus on it, add a little leftover chicken from another meal, wrap up and eat. YUM!





'THE PICNIC BASKET' SALAD

Food prep tip - leave dressing and cantaloupe separate until ready to serve

3 ounces chicken, prepped from Monday's dinner
 1.2 cup cooked barley or rice, from Food Prep
 1/2 cup cantaloupe, minced
 1 Tbsp mint, minced
 1-2 cups mixed greens
 Dressing - 1/2 Tbsp EVOO, 1 tsp balsamic or wine (red or white) wine vinegar, s&p to taste.

Place greens on a plate and add toppings. For the dressing, you can drizzle ingredients separately on top, or whisk together in a small bowl first and drizzle. You pick depending on time and personal taste.

FOOD-LOVE MOMENT

This salad was inspired by a trip to Santa Cruz. It will forever be held in my memory as the perfect salad in the perfect place. 'The Picnic Basket,' is the name of the restaurant it came from. Feel free to take a mental break to Santa Cruz while you eat. :) Always be present & enjoy your food.

CAULIFLOWER RICE BOWL

2 cups cooked cauliflower rice (or swap 1/2 cup regular rice)
 4-6 ounces cooked lean protein (shrimp, chicken, 3/4 cup beans, tofu etc.)
 2 oz (2 golfballs) guacamole (quick mash of avocado w/a lil salt & lime juice)
 1 over-easy egg (optional), can swap with a little cheese
 red pepper flake (optional)
 additional vegetables (optional)

MY VIDEO ON HOW TO MAKE CAULIFLOWER RICE FROM FROZEN CAULIFLOWER - <https://bit.ly/zzwopWz>

HOW TO MAKE CAULIFLOWER RICE THAT'S PRE-CHOPPED

Saute 2 cups fresh or frozen cauliflower rice over medium heat in 1 tsp olive oil. Cook until soft 3-6 minutes.

B.T.C. - 'Be The Chef' Cauliflower Rice Bowl

Cauliflower is a blank canvas. Feel free to get creative with what you like or what you have available.

1. Unlimited veggies - shredded carrots, bell pepper, green beans etc.
2. 4-6 oz lean protein - chicken breast, tofu, salmon, beans etc.
3. Healthy fat toppings - guacamole, hummus, 2 Tbsp pesto, goat cheese, cheese (vegan and/or dairy free if needed, pre-made curry sauce or Tikka Masala (I love all flavors of Maya Kamal sauces, see photo above)
4. Low-calorie toppings - salsa, hot sauce
5. Herbs (optional) - cilantro, basil, mint, dill, parsley



Recommendation - Food prep your lean protein and cauliflower rice ahead of time for a quick meal!



ASIAN TWIST SALAD

4 ounces lean protein, cooked
1/2 cup edamame, thawed (swap cooked rice if needed)
1/2 orange or 1 cutie/tangerine, peeled & chopped
1 Tbsp almonds or peanuts, chopped
cilantro and/or green onions, chopped
greens - spring greens, spinach, napa cabbage, some red cabbage
(If you're prepping many salads at once, napa cabbage will hold up really well with the dressing on it)

Dressing - 1/2 Tbsp EVOO or sesame oil
1 tsp vinegar of choice
couple dashes of soy sauce or Bragg's liquid aminos
1/2 - 1 tsp honey (optional if you like a sweeter dressing)

Place greens on a plate and add toppings. For the dressing, you can drizzle ingredients separately on top then mix the salad, or whisk dressing together in a small bowl first and drizzle. You pick depending on time and personal taste.

AVOCADO TUNA SALAD TOASTS

1 slice bread, you can use quinoa toast, sprouted grain or gluten-free. If bread is tiny and you're hungry, use 2 slices.
1 can tuna packed in water, drained
2 ounces avocado
1/2 cup celery + 1/4 cup apple + 2 Tbsp red onion
- all 3 finely chopped
1/2 tsp lime juice + s&p to taste
mixed greens

Toast bread. Finely chop celery, apple and red onion. In a small bowl, mash avocado with a fork and season with a little lemon juice and s&p to taste. Add to tuna mixture and stir together. Place greens on toast and top with tuna salad.

BREAD-SWAP OPTIONS - If you're anti-bread (I don't judge, I eat bread here and there because sometimes it just hits the spot), then you could replace the bread with romaine lettuce leaves for wraps. Add some carrots on the side or some other type of veggie or grain to bump up the carbs (for your energy's sake). Or use a good-quality tortilla for a tuna salad wrap.



6 DINNER RECIPES



Each protein source in these recipes can be used for several dinners, so once you cook that protein source, you can use the leftovers to create a new meal. For example, if you make a big batch of meatballs for zucchini boats on Monday, then use the extra meatballs for Tostadas on Tuesday. The meatballs are so delish you might want to double the recipe, and use the meatballs again for Yam Bun Sliders on Wednesday. Then you could do Chicken Nuggets on Thursday, and use the extra cooked nuggets in your Stir-Fry on Friday. Or, feel free to repeat the same meal any day to save time!

The goal is, whenever you're spending time cooking, prepare extras that will help you whip-up a quick meal later.

MEATBALLS can be used in - Zucchini Boats, Yam Bun Sliders, Tostadas, Stir-Fry & Lettuce Cups

CHICKEN BREAST can be used in - Chicken nuggets, (great for lunches), Tacos, Stir-Fry

SHRIMP (pre-cooked & defrosted = little to no work) - Tacos, Stir-fry & Lettuce Cups

PORK ROAST (lean) - Tostada, Yam Bun Sliders

BEANS or TOFU - all except the chicken nuggets



TURKEY MEATBALLS, LOW-CARB

makes 5 servings, 25 meatballs altogether

- 1 pound lean ground turkey (or ground chicken)
- 1 zucchini, grated and blotted, see instructions. Can swap with 2 cups cauliflower rice
- 1 tsp each salt & pepper
- 1 tsp each cumin & oregano

1. Preheat oven to 425'
2. Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper (for easy clean-up) and spray with oil.
3. Grate zucchini & blot with a paper towel to remove some excess moisture
4. Combine all ingredients into a bowl
5. Divide mixture into 5 equal parts. With each 1/5 mixture, make 5 meatballs.
6. Lay all meatballs onto baking sheet
7. Cook for 15 minutes, or until cooked through
8. Allow to cool, and store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 5 days. (Option - cook two batches and freeze one. Defrost overnight in the fridge and reheat 'til warmed through)

ZUCCHINI BOATS

Portions for 1 serving

5 Low-Carb Meatballs, from recipe above

1 zucchini, (Yes, 1 whole zucchini per serving, they're low cal)

1/4 - 1/2 cup tomato sauce, pizza sauce or low-calorie pasta sauce

1 oz. cheese of choice (or 1 mozzarella stick as shown)

Preheat oven to 425'. Line a baking sheet with foil (for easy clean-up) and spray with oil. Cut zucchini in half, lengthwise, and scoop seeds out to create a well down the center of the zucchini. Place zucchs on baking sheet, cut side up, lightly seasoning with s&p. Roast for 15 minutes or until desired softness is reach. While the zucchini is roasting, warm meatballs in microwave, being careful to just warm and not overcook. Remove cooked zucchini from oven, spoon tomato sauce into zucchini boat wells, top with meatballs, top with a lil more sauce, and place cheese on top. Return boats to oven and roast until cheese is melted.





YAM 'BUN' SLIDERS

Portions for 1 serving

4-5 meatballs (can swap pork roast)

3 ounces yams

1 golfball size of guacamole or 1/2 avocado sprinkled with lime & salt
leafy greens (unlimited)

HOW TO COOK YAMS IN THE MICROWAVE

Pierce yams 4-5 times with a fork or knife. Cook on high in the microwave for 4 minutes. Carefully check how soft they are. If they aren't squishy, continue to cook 1-2 minutes at a time, checking after each cooking sesh until soft. You should be able to cut through the whole yam easily.

To serve - Slice yams into medallions about 1/2 inch thick. Top with greens, meatballs and guacamole or avocado slices. Depending on size of the yam, it may be an open-face 'bun.' Hey, nice buns. ;)

ASIAN LETTUCE CUPS

4 meatballs or 4 oz cooked chicken or shrimp, maybe pork

1/2 cup edamame, thawed, can swap cooked rice

1/4 cup (use more or less) Asian Sauce (see below)

1 Tbsp sesame seeds

Asian Sauce

- combine in an airtight container & store in fridge

4 tsp soy sauce + 1 Tbsp dijon + 1 tsp rice or white vinegar

1/2 tsp black pepper + 2 Tbsp water, 1 tsp honey

3 green onions (white tips in sauce, greens for garnish)

1 8 oz. can water chestnuts, rinsed and drained, chopped

Combine cooked protein, edamame & a portion or all of the sauce (based on how intense you want the flavor) in a small fry pan. Heat through on medium heat and let excess liquid evaporate. Spoon mixture into lettuce leaves/lettuce cups or on top of leafy greens. Sprinkle with sesame seeds.





SLOW COOKER PORK TOSTADAS

Slow cooker ingredients

1-2 lb pork sirloin roast or other lean pork roast
s&p + 1/2 Tbsp cumin + 1/2 Tbsp chili powder

Portions for 1 serving

4 oz pork sirloin roast
1 tortilla, baked (Can prep extra for another meal. once cooled, store in a sealed bag)
1 oz avocado, seasoned with salt and lime
1/2 oz cheese of choice (optional)
1-2 cups shredded cabbage (or swap with tomatoes)
Slaw dressing - double recipe for Saturday's lunch
1/2 Tbsp EVOO + 1 tsp lime juice + s&p
salsa and/or hot sauce, optional

For baked tortillas - preheat oven to 400'. Lay tortillas directly on cooking rack in the oven. Allow to bake until golden, flipping once. Once golden brown, remove from oven and allow to cool for a few minutes in a place that allows air-flow underneath the tortilla. Texture will vary depending on brand of tortilla, but it should be pretty darn crunchy. For extra flavor, give a light layer of cooking spray and sprinkle with salt.

Slow cooker directions - Add pork roast to slow cooker and season all sides with s&p and spices. Add 1/4 cup water and cook on high for 7 hours or low for 3 1/2. Once done, shred and coat in liquid.

To serve - Mix slaw and dressing together (feel free to make 1 big batch of slaw to use for other meals). Place tortilla on a plate and add portion of slaw. Top with pork and avocado. Eat like a giant pizza or break into pieces and eat like messy nachos - Add hot sauce and/or salsa if desired.

CHICKEN NUGGETS w/YAM & GREEN BEAN FRIES ~ makes 2 servings

Chicken Nuggets ingredients

8 oz. chicken breast
1/4 oat flour (grind 1/4 cup oatmeal in a blender)
1 tsp salt + 1 tsp garlic powder + 1/8 tsp pepper (more spices, optional)
serve with Tomato, Pasta or Pizza Sauce for 'ketchup'

Yam & Green Bean Fries

9 ounces yams, peel and cut into fry shapes
2-3 cups green beans

Portions for 1 serving

3-4 oz. chicken nuggets
3 oz. yams
1-2 cups green beans
1/4 cup Tomato, Pasta or Pizza Sauce for 'ketchup'



Chicken Nuggets - Preheat oven to 425'. Line a baking tray with foil (for easy clean-up), and spray with oil. Cut chicken into nugget sized pieces. Combine breading mixture in a sealable bag and shake. Add chicken into bag and toss to coat. Place coated chicken pieces on baking tray, leaving at least 1/2 inch between pieces to prevent steaming. (if possible, place chicken on a elevated grate, if not, no bigs) Spray top layer generously with cooking spray for a crispier crust. Cook for 10 minutes & check for doneness. The firmer the chicken, the more well-done it is. Perfectly cooked chicken will be firm, but still a little tender, have no pink in the middle and read 165' with a meat thermometer.

Yam & Green Bean Fries - Yams - scrub yams and pat dry. Chop into french fry shapes or large cubes. Place on pan, spray with oil, season with s&p and toss to coat. Leave 1/2 sheet pan open for green beans but keep both ingredients separate to accommodate different cooking times.

Green beans - chop tips & stems, place on sheet pan, spray w/oil and season with s&p. Toss to coat. Roast both for 10 minutes, then flip over using a spatula. Continue to check until desired doneness is reached.



STIR-FRY with PEANUT SAUCE

This peanut sauce recipe is magic - it makes ANY stir-fry taste amazing. So, whatever protein and veg you have leftover, you can make a quick stir-fry, add your protein, pour some sauce over and you'll have a yum-azing meal!

Portions for 1 serving

4 - 6 oz leftover protein from earlier in the week

2 cups - unlimited stir-fry

1/4 cup peanut sauce

Top with cilantro (optional)

MY GO-TO STIR-FRY (super affordable and these veggies keep in the fridge for a long time)

1. 1 yellow onion, cut in half and sliced
2. 2-3 celery stalks, sliced
3. 2 big carrots, sliced
4. 1 red bell pepper, sliced
5. Tons of cabbage, chopped or sliced (I'm obsessed with cabbage, but you do you)

USE WHATEVER YOU HAVE!

Instructions - Bring a large sauté pan or wok to medium high heat. Spray with cooking spray. Always start with adding onion and hardest vegetables first, then sprinkle with salt. For this recipe, add the onion, celery and carrots and cook for about 5 minutes, then add the bell pepper. Once everything is to desired softness (keep some of the crispness in the bell pepper, then add the cabbage. Stir and cook for 1 -2 minutes, then take it off the heat. Take a sample to test flavor, and add a little salt if necessary.

Jessica Joy's Signature PEANUT SAUCE

1/4 cup peanut butter (swap with almond butter if desired)

1-inch piece ginger, freshly grated (I keep peeled ginger pieces in the freezer for fast, easy grating)

2-3 garlic cloves, minced

1 1/2 Tbsp soy sauce or liquid aminos

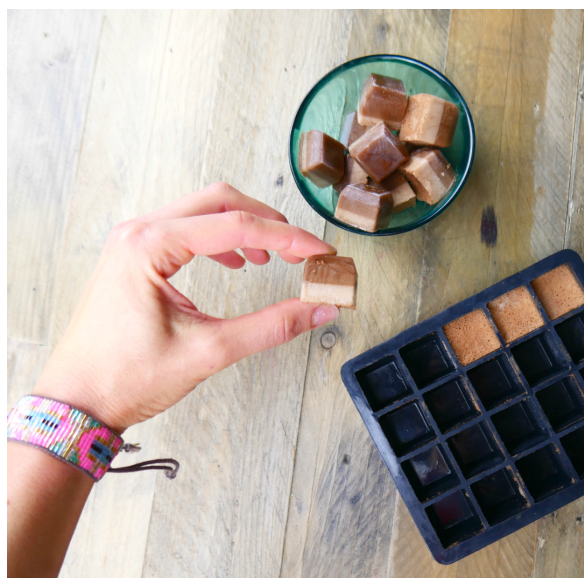
1/2 packet stevia, or a few drops if using liquid stevia

1 cup chicken broth, low-sodium preferred (or swap healthy bouillon)

1/4 - 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper or a few squirts of sriracha. Adjust according to your spice-level preference

Instructions - Combine all ingredients in a large sauté pan. Simmer for 7-10 minutes, whisking occasionally, until desired thickness is reached. Adjust seasonings according to preferences. If you're not sure what's missing, try adding a little bit more sweetness - that often takes it over the top.

Refrigerate peanut sauce in an airtight container, and use for up to 5 days.



FUDGSICLE CUBES

1 cup unsweetened almond milk
1 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
1-2 Tbsp chocolate protein powder (I used whey for better flavor)
Stevia to taste

Combine all ingredients in a blender, and whir to combine. Taste for sweetness. If it's too bland or bitter, add a little stevia at a time. Whir again. Once it's reached your desired sweetness, pour into ice cube trays and freeze.

Swap option – For a creamier consistency, you could replace the almond milk with full-fat unsweetened canned coconut milk. The original recipe obviously has fewer calories, but sometimes a little fat goes a long way to feel satisfied. :)

I created this fudgesicle cube recipe to satisfy my post-dinner chocolate cravings. Not only is it healthy with a boost of protein and magnesium, but it's low-calorie and low-carb so it won't spike insulin, leading to more cravings later. Plus, the iciness forces you to slow down and chill out. ;) I like to put 4-5 in a small bowl and suck on them after a meal.

HOW I BALANCE TREATS IN MY LIFE

During the week, I am the queen of healthy swaps – I make yogurt parfaits taste better than froyo, I make smoothies taste better than milkshakes, I make healthy food taste amazing. Not only is it good for me, keeps me energized and light, but it's so delicious I will say yum out loud when I'm done. Then on Saturday or Sunday I get a 'whatever-I-want-even-if-it's-that-12-layer-carrot-cake' dessert. Typically, Chad and I will split a gourmet slice of cake from 'Extraordinary Desserts' in downtown San Diego. (Seriously, THE best artisan desserts) I am fully aware that I could end this weekly pattern in my life, IF I wanted to. But, I don't want to. I LOVE experiencing decadent, delicious desserts. I love enjoying my tastebuds and taking them on adventures. I am a little bit like the mouse on Ratatouille who enters bliss while eating culinary masterpieces.

If you want to have your cake and eat it too, I highly encourage this type of balance. Enjoy a meal out, and order the unhealthy options sometimes if that's what you really want! Then, stick to healthy eating otherwise.

Also, have high standards for your treats. Treats are all about tasting something crazy delicious, having fun and celebrating. They aren't about nourishing your body, so they get to be balanced in our lives. If you're not excited about the treat, don't eat it. The excitement and fun is the whole point. Treats should feel special, they should feel good to eat. If there is guilt or wishing for something else, you have 100% power to not put it in your mouth. Even better, don't put it in your hand. Even better, get out of reach of it. Even better, get out of sight and shift your focus.

Deprivation doesn't exist in my life and I am thin year round. It's not because I have a fast metabolism or I workout a lot. It's because I use smart strategies and structures like this, have mastered my mindset, conquered emotional eating, and know how to keep my hormones balanced to maximize fat-burning. Stick with me, and I'll teach you all of it too! I love you!