



Beginning this month, dietitians and moms Janice Newell Bissex and Liz Weiss (left to right), a.k.a. The Meal Makeover Moms, beef up favorite family meals by making small changes that pick up the pace, kick up the flavor, and boost the nutrition. **PHOTOGRAPHED BY PAULA HIBLE**

## Tacos With a Twist

When all you have is 20 minutes to get dinner on the table, tacos are a meal waiting to happen. But nix the usual high-fat ground beef and salty taco-seasoning packet and replace them with lean ground beef, seasonings from your own spice rack, and black beans and corn to double the fiber.

**SERVES:** 6 • **PREP TIME:** 10 Minutes • **COOKING TIME:** 10 Minutes

- 1 pound lean ground beef (90% lean or higher)
- 12 taco shells
- 1 can (15½ ounces) black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1½ cups shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese
- 1 can (8.5 ounces) corn kernels, drained and rinsed, or 1 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed
- 1 cup salsa
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- Optional toppers: avocado, chopped tomato, reduced-fat sour cream, shredded lettuce, sliced olives

1. Heat oven to 350°F.
2. Cook meat in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, until no longer pink, about 5 minutes. Drain excess fat.
3. Meanwhile, bake taco shells according to package directions.
4. When the meat is browned, stir in beans, cheese, corn, salsa, cumin, chili powder, and garlic powder. Cook until cheese melts and the mixture is heated through, about 2 minutes.
5. Let your older children spoon 3 to 4 tablespoons of the meat filling into each taco shell. Serve with toppers.

**NUTRITION INFO (2 TACOS):** 350 calories; 12g fat (4.5g saturated); 570mg sodium; 34g carbohydrates; 6g fiber; 28g protein; 240mg calcium

## NUTRITION IQ

## Ground Beef

When it comes to choosing the leanest ground beef in the supermarket, the numbers can be deceiving. Take 80% lean, for example. At first glance, it looks like 20% of the calories come from fat. But in fact, when you crunch the numbers, it turns out that nearly 60% of the calories are from fat. The reason for this dietary disconnect is that the fat in ground beef is measured by weight, not calories. The bottom line is, if you really want low-fat beef (which means less than 3 grams of fat per ounce), reach for the 99% lean package.

## MAKEOVER TIP OF THE MONTH

## An apple a day?

Pump up your family's nutrition by adding an extra serving of fruit each day.

- For breakfast, serve sliced strawberries, pears, cantaloupe, or any other favorite fruit first when everyone is hungry.
- For your child's snack, pack sliced apples, grapes, dried apricots, or a mini fruit cup.
- After school, blend up a fruit smoothie with 100% fruit juice, fruited or vanilla low-fat yogurt, frozen berries, and half a ripe banana.

## PRODUCT WATCH

## Taco Shells

When shopping for taco shells, look for a brand made without hydrogenated vegetable oils, which produce unhealthy trans fat. We discovered Bearitos Taco Shells ([hain-celestial.com](http://hain-celestial.com)) and Garden of Eatin' Taco Shells ([gardenofeatin.com](http://gardenofeatin.com)). Both of these trans-free, all-natural products come in yellow-corn and blue-corn varieties and are available nationwide.

## TASTY TRICK

**Q** My children won't touch green vegetables. How can I make veggies more appealing?

**A** Make them taste better! For example, our kids love the flavor of baby spinach and steamed broccoli sautéed with garlic and olive oil and then sprinkled with kosher salt. Be a good role model by eating the vegetables yourself, and remember to offer those veggies over and over. Kids can be fickle; what they reject today they may gobble up tomorrow. If your children still refuse to "go green," don't get frustrated or discouraged. Instead, choose from the other colors of the rainbow—such as red watermelon, orange bell peppers, yellow corn, blueberries, and purple plums. Fruits and vegetables, no matter the color, are packed with health-enhancing antioxidants, so serve 'em up at every meal.

## MYTH BUSTER

## Avocados

**THE MYTH** Avocados are off-limits because they're too high in fat.

**THE BUST** Half a California avocado contains about 12 grams of fat. While that may seem a bit high, bear in mind that most of that fat is the heart-healthy mono-unsaturated kind. In addition, this rich and creamy fruit (yes, avocados are a fruit!) comes packed with a number of other important nutrients, including lutein (an antioxidant that keeps our eyes healthy), fiber, potassium, vitamin E, and vitamin C. Whether you add it to your salads or mash it for guacamole, avocados are a great way to kick up your family's nutrition.



Janice Newell Bissex and Liz Weiss are registered dietitians and moms and the authors of *THE MOMS' GUIDE TO MEAL MAKEOVERS: Improving the Way Your Family Eats, One Meal at a Time!* (Broadway Books, 2004) ([MealMakeoverMoms.com](http://MealMakeoverMoms.com)).