

Oatmeal Does Dinner

Good-for-you oatmeal is a winter breakfast staple, but why stop there? By replacing the breadcrumbs with oatmeal and adding sweet shredded carrots, we lightened up traditional meatloaf and packed it with healthy fiber. Since we know you're working overtime to gear up for the holidays, we doubled this recipe to make enough for two meals. Serve one tonight and freeze the other for a night when you need dinner—fast.

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Pizzalicious Meatloaf

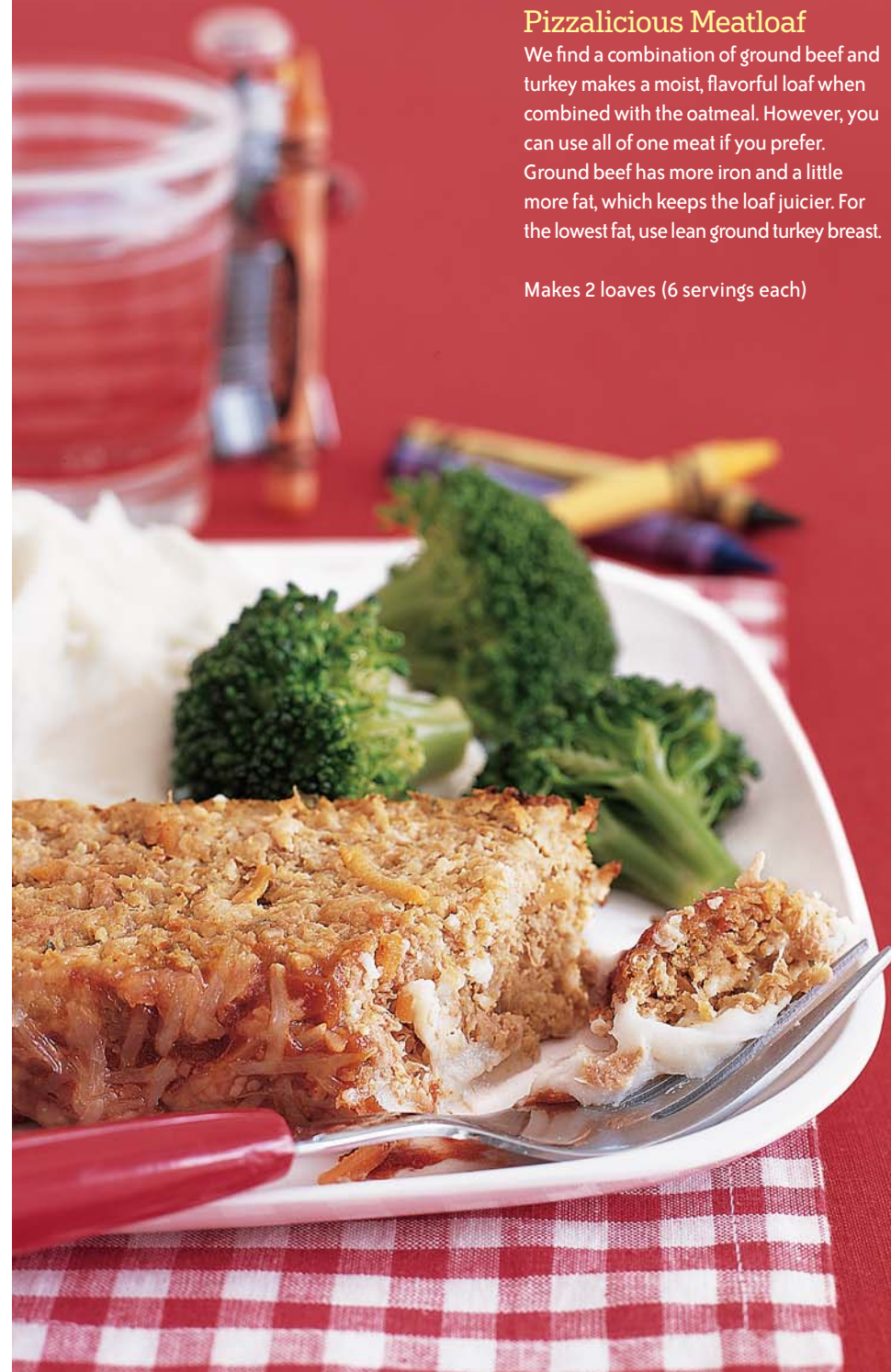
We find a combination of ground beef and turkey makes a moist, flavorful loaf when combined with the oatmeal. However, you can use all of one meat if you prefer. Ground beef has more iron and a little more fat, which keeps the loaf juicier. For the lowest fat, use lean ground turkey breast.

Makes 2 loaves (6 servings each)

- 1 1/2 pounds lean ground beef (90 percent or higher)
- 1 1/4 pounds lean ground turkey breast
- 4 large eggs, beaten
- 2 cups quick-cooking oats
- 2 cans (8 ounces each) tomato sauce (reserve 1/3 cup for topping)
- 1-2 large carrots, shredded (about 1 cup)
- 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese (reserve 2 tablespoons for topping)
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

1. Heat oven to 375°F. Coat a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Combine all ingredients except 1/3 cup tomato sauce and 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese in a large bowl, mixing lightly but thoroughly with clean hands.
3. Divide mixture in half. Shape each half into a loaf, 6-inches-by-8-inches-by-1 1/2-inches high, on the baking sheet. Spread the reserved tomato sauce on top of loaves and sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan cheese.
4. Bake until an instant-read meat thermometer registers 160°F, about 50 minutes. Slice to serve.
5. To freeze meatloaf, wrap loaf in plastic wrap, aluminum foil, or a resealable freezer bag. Freeze up to 4 months. To use, defrost in refrigerator overnight. Place on a baking sheet in a 350°F oven and bake 25 to 30 minutes, to heat through.

NUTRITION INFORMATION (per serving): 220 calories, 7g fat (3g saturated fat), 480mg sodium, 12g carbohydrates, 2g fiber, 29g protein, 35 percent vitamin A, 10 percent iron



SMART FOOD

The Dish on Oatmeal

Oatmeal, in all its forms, is good for you. The soluble fiber found in oats—a whole grain—helps to lower cholesterol. Besides their heart-healthy benefit, oats are also low in calories. A half-cup serving of quick-cooking or old-fashioned oats has just 150 calories, as well as an impressive 4 grams of fiber and 5 grams of protein. A packet of unsweetened instant oatmeal has just 100 calories (the portion size is smaller) and shares the same nutritional benefits of the quick and old-fashioned varieties.

PRODUCT WATCH

Instant Oatmeal

Instant oatmeal comes in lots of fun flavors—Honey & Cinnamon, Triple Berry, and Maple Nut, to name just a few. From our perspective as nutritionists, most are A-OK for kids to eat. Although they contain anywhere from 1 to 4 teaspoons of sugar, they're also a good source of whole grains and fiber. To make instant oatmeal even healthier, make it with low-fat milk instead of water and top with sliced bananas or berries. You can also use half a packet and mix with plain oatmeal to cut the sugar. Our favorite flavored brands are lower in sodium and made without artificial colors and flavors.

FROM OUR TABLE

3-Minute Meal

A packet of instant oatmeal is an easy-does-it breakfast before the kids run off to school. With a few extra minutes, however, you can make our almost-instant oatmeal instead. You'll get more nutrition on the table—calcium, protein, and heart-healthy fats—and save a few pennies too.

Simply stir together 1/4 cup quick-cooking oats, 1 tablespoon dried cranberries, 1 tablespoon chopped pecans, 1 teaspoon ground flaxseed, 1 teaspoon brown sugar, and 1/2 cup 1 percent milk in a microwave-safe cereal bowl. Place in the microwave oven, uncovered, and heat on high for 90 seconds. Let stand a minute before serving. Serves 1.

NUTRITION INFORMATION (per serving): 230 calories, 9g fat (2g saturated fat), 55mg sodium, 32g carbohydrates, 16g sugar, 3g fiber, 8g protein, 15 percent calcium



NATURE'S PATH ORGANIC INSTANT HOT OATMEAL
(naturespath.com)



EREWHON INSTANT OATMEAL
(usmillsinc.com)



KASHI GO LEAN INSTANT HOT CEREAL
(kashi.com)



BEAR NAKED ALL NATURAL OATMEAL
(bearnaked.com)

SMART SWITCH...

...To Smaller Plates

The holidays may not be the ideal time to think about losing weight, but a recent study offered a tip on how to have your whipped cream without sabotaging your (or your guests') diet. Instead of placing large plates and serving utensils on your holiday table, put out smaller pieces. Big dishes and spoons often tempt people to serve themselves too much. The study, led by Brian Wansink, Ph.D., of Cornell University, showed that subjects given a large bowl (34 ounces) served themselves over 30 percent more food than those given a smaller bowl (17 ounces). Spoon size also correlated with portion size. The experts concluded that the larger sizes acted as subversive clues—the people being tested were generally unaware of serving themselves more.

Janice Newell Bissex and Liz Weiss are registered dietitians, authors of *The Moms' Guide to Meal Makeovers*, and founders of the *Meal Makeover Moms' Club* at MealMakeoverMoms.com.



Food styling: Victoria Grand. Prop styling: Karen Shibaum. Photos (opposite page, top right): Wendell T. Webber (Bettini/Getty Images)