

KID- FOOD MAKEOVER

In many families, dinnertime's a stressful exercise in figuring out something healthy to make—and then getting kids to actually eat it. What if, instead of trying to get your child to taste a new veggie tonight, you gave in and had pizza? You can do just that, minus the guilt, thanks to these healthy updates on four tried-and-true kid favorites.

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Photography by Ghazalle Badiozamani





Sausage, Mushroom, & Cannellini Pesto Pizza

A slice of sausage pizza can have upward of 500 calories and 10 grams of bad-for-you saturated fat. To lighten things up, go for chicken sausage, mushrooms, and this pesto-cannellini bean concoction. It may be an unlikely combination, but kids love how it tastes!

- 1 15-oz. can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 tbsp. prepared basil pesto sauce
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. water
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 oz. mushrooms, coarsely chopped
- 1 12-oz. package chicken sausage (use your favorite flavor), casings removed and meat crumbled
- 2 12" premade pizza crusts
- 2 cups shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese

1 Place beans, pesto, lemon juice, and water in the bowl of a food processor and process until smooth and creamy. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.

- 2** Preheat the oven to 450°F (or the temperature indicated on the prepared pizza-crust package).
- 3** Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring frequently, until softened, about 7 minutes. Add crumbled sausage and continue to cook until heated through and completely cooked, an additional 5 to 7 minutes.
- 4** Spread bean purée evenly over two pizza crusts. Top each with mushroom and sausage mixture. Top with cheese (1 cup per pizza crust).
- 5** Bake according to package directions. Cut each pizza into 5 slices and serve.

Tip: The bean purée and mushroom/sausage mixture can be refrigerated or frozen for later use if you want to make only one pizza at a time.

Serves 10

Per serving (1 slice): calories 320, fat 12g, protein 20g, carbohydrates 33g, dietary fiber 3g

Mac & Cheese & Carrots

The nutritional merits of mac & cheese—which is typically made with white pasta, milk, butter, and a packet of powdered cheese—are ho-hum at best. For our made-from-scratch makeover, use a whole wheat blend pasta for extra fiber, tiny bits of carrot for immune-boosting vitamin A, and real cheese for calcium. The honey and carrots add natural sweetness to the dish.



- 8 oz. whole wheat blend elbow pasta
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and diced (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup)
- 1 tbsp. canola oil
- 1 tbsp. butter
- 2 tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1 cup 1% milk
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 cup shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese (4 oz.)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tbsp. honey
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

- 1 Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. Add pasta and carrots and cook until pasta is done and carrots are soft. Drain and set aside.
- 2 In the same saucepan, heat canola oil and butter over medium heat until butter melts. Add flour and cook for 1 minute, whisking until smooth.
- 3 Whisk milk and broth slowly into flour mixture. Bring to a simmer, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and stir gently until mixture thickens, about 2 minutes.
- 4 Remove from heat and stir in cheeses and honey. Stir in pasta and season with salt and pepper.

Serves 5

Per serving (1 cup): calories 340, fat 11g, protein 19g, carbohydrates 43g, dietary fiber 4g

Pigs & Beans in a Blanket

Nothing could be easier than a dinner of hot dogs and fries, but it's far from a well-balanced meal. For this twist on pigs in a blanket, you need flour tortillas, all-natural hot dogs, refried beans, and reduced-fat cheese. Consider nutrient-rich sweet potato fries on the side (you can find them in the freezer section of most supermarkets).

- 1 16-oz. package nitrite-free hot dogs (8 beef, chicken, turkey, veggie, or any other favorite)
- 1 cup refried beans
- 1 cup shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese
- 8 6" flour tortillas (white or whole wheat)
- ketchup, optional

- 1 Cook hot dogs according to package directions.
- 2 Spread refried beans evenly over each tortilla (2 tbsp. each). Sprinkle with cheese (2 tbsp. each).
- 3 Heat individually in microwave for about 30 seconds, until cheese melts and beans are heated through. Or, heat in a 350°F oven for about 5 minutes.
- 4 Place one cooked hot dog along center of each tortilla, roll up, and serve. Dip in ketchup if desired.

Serves 8

Per serving: calories 230, fat 9g, protein 14g, carbohydrates 21g, dietary fiber 3g



Blueberry Oatmeal Cookies

Traditional chocolate-chip recipes often call for 2 sticks of butter and about 2 cups of chocolate chips, making them delicious—and decadent. For a cookie you can feel good about giving your kids, try this healthier (but still really tasty) look-alike, made with blueberries instead of chocolate.

- 2 cups quick-cooking oats
- 1 cup pecans, finely chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole wheat flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried blueberries
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ground flaxseed
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup canola oil
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

- 1 Preheat the oven to 375°F. Lightly oil or coat two large baking sheets with non-stick cooking spray and set aside.
- 2 In a large bowl, whisk together oats, pecans, all-purpose flour, whole wheat flour, dried blueberries, flaxseed, baking soda, and salt.
- 3 In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, brown sugar, oil, and vanilla until well combined.
- 4 Pour liquid ingredients over dry ingredients, and stir until just moistened.
- 5 Working in batches, use a tablespoon to scoop batter and place on the prepared baking sheets. Flatten slightly with the heel of your hand, leaving about 1" between cookies.
- 6 Bake 10 to 12 minutes, until golden brown. Cool for 5 minutes on the baking sheet before transferring to a wire rack. Repeat with remaining batter.

Makes 3 dozen cookies

Per serving (1 cookie): calories 120, fat 6g, protein 2g, carbohydrates 15g, dietary fiber 2g

