



# Food Bites



March 2014

## Rice & Bean

### Nutrition Info...

Rice and beans are the epitome of prepping staples. In many countries, rice and beans are equivalent to "our daily bread." Every prepper from East to West have different varieties of these foods safely stored for a rainy day.

### A Perfect Match

These low cost preps are not only packed with nutrition, but are extremely versatile. Beans are packed with protein, iron, fiber, folate, antioxidants and vitamins. Rice is rich in starches and carbohydrates, and when beans are accompanied with rice, it makes a complete protein which provides all the amino acids needed to survive. One serving of beans and rice provides 19.9 g, or 40 percent of your daily vitamins.

## Rice & Beans

- 1Tbsp. vegetable oil
  - $\frac{1}{2}$ yellow onion, chopped
  - 1tsp. ground cumin
  - 1tsp. dried oregano
  - 4cups cooked pinto or black beans, with cooking broth
  - 1Tbsp. chipotle pepper in adobo, finely chopped
  - ~Salt and pepper
  - 4cups cooked brown rice
  - 1cup grated Cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese
  - 1cup Tomato-Avocado Salsa or store-bought salsa
  - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh cilantro (optional)
  - ~Warm corn tortillas for serving (optional)
1. Heat the oil in a large skillet. Add the onion, cumin, and oregano, and sauté over medium heat, stirring often, until the onion is soft and beginning to brown. Add the cooked beans and about 1 cup of cooking broth or water, along with the chipotle pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer while you prepare the rest of the ingredients (make the rice, grate the cheese, wash and dry the cilantro, etc.)
  2. Season the beans to taste with salt and pepper.
- To serve: Divide the warm rice into bowls. Top with the cooked beans, grated cheese, salsa, and fresh cilantro. Serve with warm tortillas if you like.



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The Food Stamp Program helps low-income people buy nutritious foods. Food Stamps can help you and your family eat a healthier diet. Better Living for Texans is supported by USDA's Food Stamp Program. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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## Build a Healthy Plate...

Before you eat, think about what goes on your plate or in your cup or bowl. Foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and lean protein foods contain the nutrients you need without too many calories. Try some of these options.

- **Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.**
  - Eat red, orange, and dark-green vegetables, such as tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, in main and side dishes.
  - Eat fruit, vegetables, or unsalted nuts as snacks-they are nature's original fast foods.
- **Switch to skim or 1% milk**
  - They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but less fat and calories.
  - Try calcium-fortified soy products as an alternative to dairy foods.
- **Make at least half your grains whole.**
  - Choose 100% whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, and pasta.
  - Check the ingredients list on food packages to find whole-grain foods.
- **Vary your protein food choices.**
  - Twice a week, make seafood the protein on your plate
  - Eat beans, which are a natural source of fiber and protein.
  - Keep meat and poultry portions small and lean.
- **Keep your food safe to eat - learn more at [www.FoodSafety.gov](http://www.FoodSafety.gov)**

## Does MyPlate Save Calories?

A double cheeseburger and large fries has 940 calories. You might not realize how many calories as you drive through to get your meal. Further, everyone is used to the packaging: a small box of fries and a sandwich wrapped in paper. It is a value meal that you can get in about 5-8 minutes from a drive through!

But, we took this meal home and put it on a dinner plate. All of the sudden, the perspective changed. If you were cooking at home, chances are you would not "overfill" your plate the way this dinner did coming out of the package.

AND the best part is that MyPlate is a great system that helps you balance your meals and get the required fruit and vegetable servings. In order to change this meal to a healthy plate we put one patty, one half bun and removed the fries. Then we filled the plate with a salad. The outcome? We saved over 600 calories. The healthy plate method is only 300 calories and it provides a plate that is half veggies and 1/4 starch and protein.

[Www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://Www.ChooseMyPlate.gov)

## Featured Flavor: Greens

There are tons of greens in the market today, but most people still aren't eating enough of them. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans advise people to "Eat a variety of vegetables, especially dark green vegetables."



There are tons of amazing greens out there — which ones will be your next favorite?

- Mustard greens and arugula are spicy — a little bit goes a long way in salads or soups.
- Spinach is very mellow and is delicious either raw or cooked.
- Kale, collard greens, and chard are tougher than other greens, which makes them tastier when cooked, though there are ways to make them delicious when raw too. We especially like them in stews and braises.
- Lettuces like Bibb, Romaine, and butter lettuce are all wonderful in salads. Generally they taste better raw than cooked.

There are tons of different ways to buy your greens. Our favorite approach is to pick up pre-washed raw greens from the produce section. That gives us the flexibility to serve them either raw or cooked throughout the week. You can also get unwashed greens and clean them up yourself at home. Frozen spinach with no added sodium is a good alternative to fresh greens when you need a freezer staple or two, and greens featured in no-salt-added stir-fry mixes are always welcome at our table. You can even get dehydrated and flavored kale chips for a healthful snack on the run. The possibilities are endless!



**Greens and Your Health:** But why should you pick up a container or two of fresh greens? Well, the long and short of it is that they're good for your health. Dark leafy greens rock the vitamin count, with excellent supplies of vitamins A, C, and K. These vitamins protect your bones, decrease inflammation, support cell growth and development, protect vision, support your circulatory system, and improve immune function. Some greens are also good sources of vitamin E, which protects your cells from free radical damage while boosting your immune system. Furthermore, dark green leafy vegetables are good sources of folate, which is key for several vital functions in the body. It's especially important during early pregnancy. According to the National Institutes of Health, "Due to its role in the synthesis of DNA and other critical cell components, folate is especially important during phases of rapid cell growth." Unfortunately, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans has found that "many women capable of becoming pregnant still do not meet the recommended intake for folic acid." Don't be one of those people!

**Greens as Flavor Boosters:** Greens are as versatile as they are healthful. There's simply a ton of ways to eat them. When it comes to salads, we love a mix of raw greens, whether they're crunchy Romaine or peppery arugula. Try mixing a few different types of greens for side salads and see which ones are your favorite.

Stemming and steaming collard greens and chard is a quick and simple way to soften their tasty leaves into a fun side dish. Top the steamed greens with a squeeze of lemon juice and a bit of salt or grated Parmesan. Of course, there's lots to be said for sautéing too. Spinach is super tasty when cooked with sliced garlic in just a

teaspoon of olive oil. Have you made kale chips? Slice some kale leaves into bite-size pieces and toss them with a little olive oil, salt, and pepper before spreading them on a baking sheet and roasting them at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 10-15 minutes, until they're nice and crispy.



# What's In Season?!!!

## Spring Fruits:

Apricots  
Avocados  
Carrots  
Cherries  
Grapefruit  
Kiwis  
Kumquats  
Lemons  
Mango  
Pineapple  
Navel Oranges  
Strawberries

## Spring Vegetables:

Artichokes  
Arugula  
Asparagus  
Beets  
Greens  
Leeks  
Lettuce  
Peas  
Radishes  
Scallions  
Spinach  
Turnips

**Spring Fruits and Veggies:** Spring brings the beginning of fresh fruits and vegetables. Enjoy Strawberries, Spinach, Green Leafy Lettuce and Asparagus. Spring vegetables are great sources of the nutrition that your child needs, such as vitamins A, C, K, and folic acid, iron, calcium, and fiber.

### Strawberries:

- Top low fat yogurt, pudding or cottage cheese with sliced strawberries.
- Blend strawberries, banana and yogurt together for a smoothie.
- Top angel food cake with strawberries.
- Blend strawberries with apple juice. Freeze for a slushy. Eat with a spoon.
- Top breakfast cereal with sliced strawberries.
- Slice strawberries on top of a peanut butter sandwich.
- Eat fresh strawberries—a fun finger food.

# Springtime Family Fitness!!!

When the weather turns balmy, everyone in the family is eager to exercise! The kids are itching to get outside and move, move, move. And most adults are with them in this. The family that exercises together has more fun! There is less cause for concern about couch potatoes, obesity, and over-consumption of junk food, too, which makes everyone happy. Even as we wring our hands about overweight families and too much "screen time" for everyone, many experts agree that finding an antidote can and should be a family affair. This does not have to mean gym memberships for all or group training for the next big road race, but it does mean making a commitment to get everyone moving — and loving it!

## 20 Ideas for Family Fitness

1. Dance together
2. Walk the dog together
3. Run or jog together
4. Ride bikes together
5. Locate accessible hiking and biking trails and use them
6. Walk on the beach
7. Play beach volleyball
8. Play tag
9. Take up juggling as a family
10. Jump rope
11. Go to the park; bring a ball or Frisbee
12. Go on a nature walk
13. Fly a kite
14. Visit the roller rink
15. Play softball or Wiffle ball
16. Rollerblade together
17. Swim in the local pool
18. Play driveway basketball
19. Play pick-up soccer
20. Visit a pick-your-own local farms

As a quick perusal of the 20 ideas listed here illustrates, there are numerous activities families can do together to have fun and get some exercise at the same time. Sure, there's a big difference between planning a day-long hiking trip and taking a walk along a beach, but both have a place in a family's life. And both can be fun.

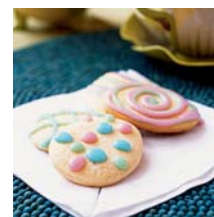
The important thing is to work these activities into your daily and weekly life. Don't make it a one-time thing to crank up the music and dance with your kids through the house, or to toss a ball around in a nearby park. If you think about taking advantage of these and other opportunities whenever possible, everyone will be happier and more active. Encouraging your kids to move, joining them in activities, and making these outings part of family life is a good way for everyone to keep fit. And doing so suggests to kids that physical activity is a natural and pleasurable part of life.

Surely you can add another 20 ideas to our list! Have fun.

[www.familytime.com](http://www.familytime.com)

# Spring Has Sprung!!!

Enjoy these Spring Recipes!!!



## Easter Egg Cookies

### Cookies:

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 large egg

### Icing:

- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 3 Tblsp fat-free milk
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- Food coloring (optional)

### Directions:

1. To prepare cookies, spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt, stirring with a whisk.
2. Place granulated sugar and butter in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed until well blended (about 5 minutes). Beat in 1 teaspoon vanilla and egg. Add flour mixture, beating at low speed until blended.
3. Place dough between two sheets of plastic wrap. Roll dough to a 1/4-inch thickness. Chill 1 hour
4. Preheat oven to 375°.
5. Cut dough with a 2 1/4-inch egg-shaped cutter. Place cookies on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake at 375° for 8 minutes or until edges of cookies are browned. Cool cookies 1 minute on pan. Remove cookies from parchment; cool completely on a wire rack.
6. To prepare icing, combine powdered sugar, milk, and 1/4 teaspoon vanilla; stir until smooth. Add food coloring, if desired. Stir well. Spread or pipe icing onto cookies.

## Grilled Apricots

### Ingredients:

8 ripe apricots (about 2lbs) halved, and pitted  
1 Tbsp olive oil  
1/8 tsp salt  
1/8 tsp. freshly ground pepper  
2 pints good-quality vanilla ice cream  
1/4 cup honey  
1/2 cup sliced almonds, toasted (optional)

### Directions:

Prepare grill or heat a cast iron grill pan over high heat on a stove. In a medium bowl, toss together apricots, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Grill apricots, cut side down, until marked and beginning to soften, about 1 minute. Flip and cook about 30 more seconds on the skin side until marked.  
Remove from grill. Serve 4 warm apricot halves per bowl with 1 cup ice cream; drizzle with honey and sprinkle with toasted almonds.

## Roasted Asparagus

### Ingredients:

2 lbs trimmed asparagus  
1Tbsp olive oil  
1/3 cup pine nuts  
1/2 cup parsley, chopped  
Zest of 1 lemon, grated  
Salt  
Pepper

### Directions:

Toss asparagus, olive oil, and salt and pepper on baking sheet.

Roast at 450 degrees until lightly browned, 15 minutes.

Mix pine nuts, parsley, lemon zest, and salt and pepper. Sprinkle over asparagus.

## Chicken Quesadillas

### Ingredients:

2 (10 inch) whole wheat tortillas  
1 cup cooked diced chicken  
1/2 cup shredded mozzarella or Monterey Jack cheese

### Directions:

Lay 1 tortilla on a board. Sprinkle the chicken and cheese on the tortilla. Top with another tortilla.

Heat a large skillet with vegetable oil spray over medium heat.

Place the quesadilla in the skillet and cook for 2 minutes.

Gently flip the quesadilla and cook for 3 more minutes until lightly brown and cheese is melted.

Cut the quesadilla into 6 slices.

### Try something different...

- Use rotisserie chicken in your quesadilla - quick and easy.
  - Try barbecue flavored chicken
- Use cooked ground beef or ground turkey
  - Try chopped ham for a Ham & Cheese Quesadilla
    - Add finely chopped spinach
- Cook diced onions and red or green pepper—add to your quesadilla
- Add mushrooms, chopped tomatoes or diced avocado.
  - Add finely chopped cilantro