

How to create a nutritious smoothie

Smoothies are an excellent option for a snack or meal at any time of the day. To build a nutritious and satisfying smoothie it is important to make sure you have sources of protein, fiber, and fat. These sources help to keep you feeling fuller longer and curb your hunger to avoid overeating. They also assist in weight maintenance, digestive health, and lean muscle mass maintenance. The average adult is recommended to consume 5-7 servings of fruits and vegetables per day; blending a smoothie provides an ideal opportunity to include fruits and vegetables. A guide to building a nutritious yet satisfying smoothie is presented below.

Select the base of your smoothie
Water
Almond milk
Low- fat milk
Vegetable juice
Unsweetened tea

Focus on liquids that do not have added sugars

Select a protein source to add
Yogurt
Greek yogurt
Cottage cheese
Tofu
Pasteurized egg whites
Protein powder (whey, soy, rice, etc.)

Protein helps to maintain lean muscle mass & keep you more full longer

Add at least one serving of fruit

Fruit (with no added sugar)

High fiber & Low sugar fruits

Strawberries

Blackberries

Raspberries

Papaya

Blueberries

Pineapple

Papaya

Provides an abundance of antioxidants, vitamins & minerals

Add at least one vegetable source

Spinach

Pumpkin

Kale

Carrots

Cucumber

Helps to provide the nutrients vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin K, iron calcium and potassium

Add a hearty fat source

Avocado

Nut butter (Almond butter, Sun butter, Almond butter) –

1 Tbsp

Nuts/ Seeds- 2 Tbsp

Beneficial Add- ins

Chia seeds- Whole grain source that provides fiber, protein, omega- 3, and antioxidants

Flaxseed- Omega-3 , lignans (help to fight off free radicals and reduce inflammation), fiber

Oatmeal

This refreshing smoothie is loaded with potassium, protein, fiber, and heart-smart monounsaturated fats.

Blueberry Basil Blast

Makes 1 serving

10 ounces coconut water

3/4 cup blueberries

1 scoop protein powder (such as Designer Whey Natural Vanilla Protein or Garden of Life's RAW Protein in Vanilla)

2 tablespoons avocado, mashed

2 fresh basil leaves

Optional no-calorie sweetener of choice

Scoop of ice

Per serving: 285 calories, 6 grams fat, 1 gram saturated fat, 150 mg sodium, 38 grams carbohydrate, 6 grams fiber, 27 grams sugar, 19 grams protein.

With the protein equivalent of a chicken breast and a serving each of fruit and veggies, this pina-colada-like smoothie can legitimately be called a meal replacement. And you can't really taste the spinach - if it weren't for its light green color, you probably wouldn't even know it was in there.

Green Pineapple Crush

Makes 1 serving

6 ounces no-sugar-added vanilla coconut milk

3/4 cup plain 2 percent Greek yogurt

3/4 cup pineapple chunks

1 cup fresh spinach

1 tablespoon coconut oil

Optional no-calorie sweetener of choice

Scoop of ice

Per serving: 400 calories, 21 grams fat, 17 grams plant-based saturated fat, 95 mg sodium, 35 grams carbohydrate, 3 grams fiber, 27 grams sugar, 20 grams protein.

The ricotta cheese adds a rich creaminess, plus it provides as much protein as one and a half eggs.

Mocha Frappe

Makes 1 serving

6 ounces unsweetened almond milk

1/2 cup part-skim ricotta cheese

1 shot of espresso or coffee concentrate (2 shots for stronger version)

Optional no-calorie sweetener of choice

Scoop of ice

Per serving: 185 calories, 11 grams fat, 5 grams saturated fat, 250 mg sodium, 5.5 grams carbohydrate, 0.5 grams fiber, 4 grams sugar, 11 grams protein.

Soups

Zucchini-Soup

- 1 whole zucchini (or substitute with yellow summer squash)
- 1-2 whole plum tomatoes or 2-3 small Campari tomatoes
- 1-2 stalks of celery
- 1 sliver of red onion (optional, to taste)
- 1/2 – 1 clove garlic, crushed (optional)
- Spices: A dash of dill, some cilantro (fresh or dried). Add a dash of sea salt and pepper to taste.
- 1 and 1/2 to 2 cups hot water

Carrot Soup

- 1 whole carrot
- 1-2 whole plum tomatoes or 2-3 small Campari tomatoes
- 1-2 stalks of celery

- 1 sliver of red onion (optional, to taste)
- 1/2 – 1 clove garlic, crushed (optional)
- Spices: Have fun with this one. Try different variations of Oregano, Basil, Dill, Italian seasoning or even taco seasoning. Add a dash of sea salt and pepper to taste.
- 1 and 1/2 to 2 cups hot water

Homemade Butternut Squash Soup

2 tbs olive oil

1 garlic clove

1 medium white onion 1 large butternut squash

2 carrots

chicken stock

nutmeg

all spice

salt and pepper

Instruction:

To start, cutt butternut squash into 1-inch chunks, along with carrots. Chop onions into chunks and mince garlic. In a large pan, sautee garlic and onions in 2 tbs of olive oil. Let sit for a few minutes until onions begin to brown. Add carrots and squash to pan. Let the veggies begin to brown for about 2 minutes. Add 1 cup of chicken stock. Add 1 tbsp of nutmeg and 1 tbsp of all spice, 1/2 tsp salt and a touch of black pepper. Stir until spices are evenly distributed throughout the dish. Cover pan and let simmer for 15-20 minutes. When your vegetables are tender, turn off heat and scoop contents of the pan into a blender including the liquid. Blend on high until smooth. You may need to stop inbetween and turn off the blender, fork through the blender to mix the ingredients more. Depending on the desired consistency of your soup, you can add more stock to the blender and mix thoroughly. Return the puree back into a sauce pan where you can re-heat to serve.

References Kimball, Molly. Build a better good-for-you smoothie. 2013.

http://www.nola.com/health/index.ssf/2013/07/build_a_better_smoothie.html