

The Outpost Exchange
2005 Wellness Guide
“Convenience Foods”
Maggie Jacobus
December 2, 2004

Let's be honest: how many of us really have the time to craft homemade meals from scratch on a regular basis? Resorting to convenience foods or quick recipes doesn't have to mean compromising health. The experts tell you how.

Meet the Experts

Accomplished foodie Phillip Pepler, also known as The Chef on the Run, is a Milwaukee-based personal chef who cooks healthy meals for busy people. He does not use convenience foods, but I was able to eek some information out of him on what he *would* bless for those of us who do. Likewise with holistic health and nutrition consultant Nancy Lee Bentley of Plymouth. As a nutritional expert, chef and co-author of Dr. Joseph Mercola's "Total Health" cookbook, quickie foods are not on her grocery list. But she was willing to offer some suggestions for those of us who are more harried yet still want healthy. I got both of them to name names and share some preparation suggestions (see sidebar for suggestions).

So here's the scoop:

Healthy Convenience Foods

Following is a sampling of some packaged foods that also rate high on the health meter. Note that when specific brands are cited, it's because they are the recommendation in that food category. Other brands in the same category may not be healthy.

- Apple sauce (organic, such as Santa Cruz)
- Boxed or packaged meals (Seeds of Change, Amy's)
- Bread (Ovens of Manitowoc, French Meadow sourdough, Nokomis Farmer rye)
- Cereal (Barbara's Bakery)
- Condiments (look for low additive-brands of tapenade, salsa, pesto and mayonnaise)
- Cookies (Ovens of Manitowoc)
- Corn chips (Bearitos blue corn)
- Hummus (Forty Thieves ready-to-eat or Fantastic Foods boxed hummus mix)
- Meatless products (all Boca products, such as soy burgers, sausage, bratwurst and more)
- Nut butters (natural, such as Maranatha or East Wind; fresh ground is even better)
- Pasta (fresh, such as Bella Luna)
- Refried beans (Bearitos)
- Salad dressings (Newman's Own and Annie's)
- Salad mixes (organic, such as Earthborn)
- Sauces: Taj Ethnic Gourmet (Indian), all Muir Glen products, Burilla (pasta sauce), Newman's Own (pasta sauce)

- Snack bars (Barbara's Bakery)
- Vegetables and fruit (frozen, organic such as Cascadian Farms)
- Vegetarian meals and one skillet meals (frozen, organic, such as Cascadian Farms)
- Waffles (Frozen, organic. NOT Eggo's.)
- Wraps (Tumaros low carb)

Add the foods below to your grocery list. They are still quick and easy, but a big step up from prepared packaged foods. Whenever possible, the experts advise to buy organic.

- Butter (real, organic)
- Chicken breast or tenders (organic)
- Cottage cheese
- Eggs (look for Omega-3 enriched)
- Fish
- Fruits (fresh, organic)
- Juice (fresh squeezed and/or no added sugar)
- Meat (organic fresh ground turkey or beef, deli meats—Boor's Head has no nitrates)
- Milk (organic cow, soy, goat, etc.)
- Nuts
- Oatmeal (NOT fast-cook)
- Oils (olive, coconut and palm oil (NOT palm kernel oil)
- Tofu
- Vegetables (fresh, organic)
- Yogurt (organic, Cascadian Farms has the lowest sugar)

The foods listed above will get you started, but you'll need to fill out your grocery list with other items. It's recommended you make an initial time investment to closely read product labels and avoid any with the following ingredients:

- Artificial coloring
- Artificial sweeteners, including Splenda
- Corn syrup
- Cottonseed oil
- High fructose corn syrup
- Palm kernel oil
- Partially hydrogenated oils
- Refined sugar, starch and flour
- Sucrose
- Sugar alcohols, mannitol, xylitol (often found in low carb foods)
- Trans fats

Some time-saving tips that still provide fresh foods include:

- Hit the salad bar for fresh veggies

- Stop at the deli counter to grab some fresh sliced turkey, buy a whole wheat roll and add some lettuce
- Eat a piece of fresh fruit
- Take time to cut up cucumbers, carrots, radishes, celery, peppers and store them in separate bags in the 'fridge for easy snacking and salads all week long.
- Make trail mix with Barbara's Bakery cereal, raisins and nuts and carry it in the car for kids and grown ups alike.
- Whenever baking or making sauces, double the batch and freeze half for later use.

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Convenience Foods Sidebar I
“Preparation Suggestions”
Maggie Jacobus

Keeping It Simple

Chef Phillip XX and holistic health and nutrition consultant Nancy Lee Bentley shared some suggestions for quick, but healthy, meals and snacks.

- For a protein-rich breakfast, lunch or snack combine one-half cup of cottage cheese with a low-sugar yogurt. Sprinkle with sunflower seeds, almonds or walnuts.
- For a quick breakfast, combine in a blender 1 cup milk, water or fresh juice, 1 cup fresh or frozen berries, half a cup of plain yogurt and/or 2 raw eggs. Throw in a couple of almonds and some ice and blend on high.
- Combine ready to use, aseptically packed Chai Tea blender shake mix with almonds or cashews, yogurt, kefir or raw cream and blend on high.
- Eggs Florentine: grease a heavy oven skillet, spread with baby spinach or frozen chopped spinach and coat lightly with prepared Dijon mustard. Make an indentation in the spinach and fill with organic or Omega-3 eggs. Sprinkle with cayenne and imitation bacon bits. Cook at 350 until spinach wilts and eggs are poached.
- Sautee fresh ground turkey with seasonings such as cumin, rosemary, thyme and coriander for a Mexican flavor or with basil, thyme, oregano and parsley for Italian. Serve with organic shredded cheese and organic taco shells free of hydrogenated oils.
- Cook some pasta. At the last two minutes, toss in your favorite vegetable (fresh preferably, or frozen), drain, toss with pesto or olive oil, fresh cracked pepper and dash or salt and a squeeze of lemon. Make enough for lunch the next day.
- Sautee quick-cooking protein foods such as organic fish, chicken, turkey or beef. Top with a healthy, low additive condiment (check the label) such as tapenade, salsa, pesto or mayonnaise. Make a quick curried mayo by stirring in curry powder to taste and lightly top steamed broccoli or cauliflower to serve on the side.
- Use Cascadian Farm frozen veggies and stir fry with organic chicken breasts.
- Flash-in-the-pan stir-fry turkey bacon or organic summer sausage with dark leafy greens such as kale, bok choy, turnip greens, mustard greens or others and splash with a wheat-free tamari or low sodium soy sauce.
- Use a Seeds of Change Boxed meal with protein added during cooking or topped with seeds and cheese. Serve with steamed broccoli or cauliflower.
- Sautee one pound of extra firm tofu, add Taj Ethnic Gourmet simmer sauce and half a bag of frozen veggies. Serve over brown rice.
- Prepare Amy’s burritos (not microwaved). Serve with a tossed prepared caesar or mixed spring greens salad with sprouts and Annie’s bottled Sesame Shitake salad dressing.
- Quick Mexican wraps: Prepare Bearitos canned refried beans seasoned with a little cumin, garlic and thyme. Saute ground turkey. Serve with cheese, prepared, chopped romaine lettuce, avocado chunks, shredded cheese, canned, drained Muir

Glen organic tomatoes, black olives, sour cream and salsa on Tumaros low carb wraps or with Bearitos Blue Corn Chips.

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Convenience Foods—Side Bar II
“Organic Musts”
Maggie Jacobus

For maximum health and minimum chemicals and antibiotics, it's recommended that you buy organic fruits, vegetables, meat and dairy products. But for various reasons, that's not always possible. Following is the Dirty (Baker's) Dozen that really should not be purchased unless they are organic:

- Apples
- Celery
- Cherries
- Imported grapes
- Peaches and nectarines
- Pears
- Potatoes
- Strawberries and raspberries
- Spinach
- Sweet bell peppers
- Poultry and meat
- Dairy products, particularly milk

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