

Salsa: Not Just for Chips Anymore

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Right about now those New Year's Resolutions seem harder and harder to keep, and we may be tempted to climb bag onto the couch with a big ol' bag of chips and click away with the remote. When the winter doldrums hit, and they usually do about this time of year, salsa is a great way to add zing to your meals and keep your plate loaded with lots of nutrition.

My clients are often surprised when I tell them that salsa counts as a vegetable. One-half cup of the stuff equals one serving of vegetables—so having a heavy hand with the salsa can be good for your veggie intake in a delicious way.

Yet salsa isn't just for dipping anymore. Many upscale supermarkets carry fancier alternative to the standard concoction of tomatoes and onion, but it is easy to create delicious and new salsas at home. Not only are they usually rich in Vitamins A and C, but many of the ingredients contain disease-fighting phytochemicals that will help keep you disease free and living longer.

Fruit salsas, for instance, offer a refreshing twist and are incredible served with grilled chicken or fish; and because they often score high on nutrition and are low in calories, these will be good to both your heart and your waistline. They are also easy to make ahead of time, and will last for 2-3 days in the fridge (depending on the ingredients, some may last up to a week).

The papaya-black bean salsa, for instance, packs beta carotene (in the papaya), plus a dose of protein and fiber from the beans. When served over grilled or broiled fish you will pack loads of flavor while keeping an eye on artery-clogging fats.



If you like a bit of a bite the pineapple cilantro salsa below packs a jalapeno pepper for added zing. You can, of course, omit the pepper for an equally delicious but milder salsa. And at just 80 calories per ½ cup you can afford to be heavy handed.

You can visit cookinglight.com's website for dozens of salsa recipes that can be downloaded for free, as I did below.

Papaya- Black Bean Salsa

Ingredients

2 cups diced peeled papaya
1 large red bell pepper, roasted, peeled, and diced
¾ cup sliced green onions
¼ cup fresh lime juice
3 tablespoons raspberry vinegar or white wine vinegar
3 tablespoons pineapple juice
2 tablespoons brown sugar
⅛ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon ground red pepper
1 (15-ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained

Directions

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Combine all ingredients, and stir well. Chill.

Per Serving (¼ cup): 39 calories, .2g fat, 1.6 protein, 8.5g carbohydrate, 0mg cholesterol, 1.2 g fiber

Source: www.Cookinglight.com

Pineapple Cilantro Salsa

4 servings

2 cups fresh pineapple, diced
2 tbsp fresh cilantro leaf, chopped
½ cup red onion or other sweet onion, minced
2 tsp minced garlic
1 tbsp fresh lime juice
2 jalapeno peppers, minced
2 tsp olive oil (optional)

Combine all ingredients and serve with grilled fish, chicken, meat, yogurt or salad.

Per Serving: 68.6 calories, 2.7g fat, 0.7g protein, 12g carbohydrate, 0mg cholesterol, 2mg sodium

Source: Ellie Krieger, LivingbetterTV.com