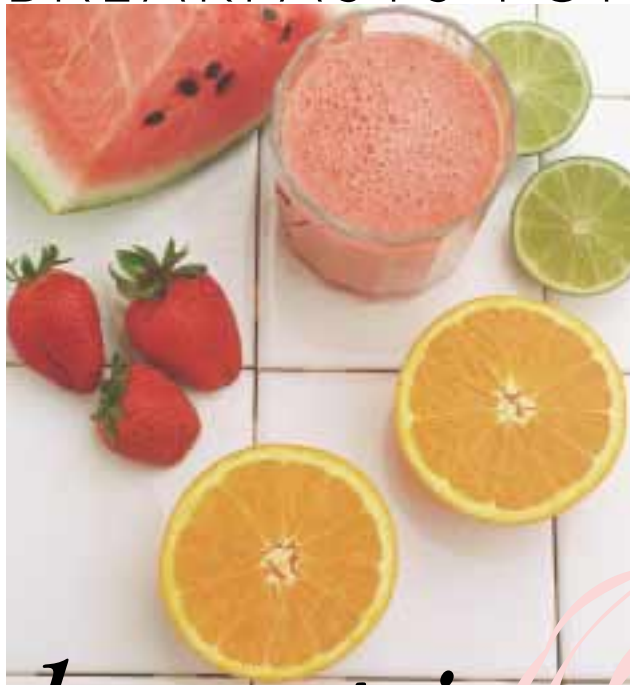


BREAKFASTS FOR



champions

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day but it is the most frequently skipped. Fast and nutritious ideas can help put breakfast back in your day.

BY ROSLYN RALPH, FOOD EDITOR

A wise person once said you should eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a pauper. Good advice indeed but most of us do the reverse. We eat little or no breakfast, a fast, light lunch and a large dinner, often followed by an evening of snacking in front of the TV. Consuming the better part of our daily caloric intake when we are least active makes little sense from a health perspective.

Healthy eating not only means making

healthy food choices but balancing our intake to when we need it most. And we need it most at the start of the day. Although we may not always feel hungry upon waking, our bodies need to be fueled for the day ahead.

Since lack of time is one of the most frequent excuses for not eating breakfast, *Home Digest* offers a number of fast, nutritious ideas for healthy breakfasts. Each recipe is time-tested so cooks will have an

idea of how long it will take to prepare.

A Berry Good-Morning Smoothie

Preparation time – 10 minutes

Smoothies are a great way to start the day.

A blend of fruit, fruit juice and yogurt provides good nutritional balance.

Ingredients • Makes 2 servings

- 1 cup low-fat plain or vanilla yogurt
- 1 cup fresh or frozen berries (raspberries, strawberries, blueberries)
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 tsp. honey

Directions: Place all ingredients in a blender and whip until smooth.

Alternative ingredients

Substitute bananas, kiwis, mangos, peaches or any soft fruit for the berries. To increase the fibre, add a teaspoon of bran.

Ricotta Pancakes

Preparation/cooking time – 25 minutes.

Reheating – 2 minutes

Home-made pancakes are more dense than the packaged variety but making them yourself allows you to control the quality of ingredients. These pancakes are yummy and great topped with fresh fruit, either whole or pureed. Make pancakes on the weekend when there is more time and then freeze the leftovers. To reheat mid-week, just pop a couple in the microwave.

Ingredients • Makes 18-20 small pancakes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 4 Tbsp. sugar
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup low-fat ricotta cheese
- 2 cups milk
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil

Directions: Combine dry ingredients in a large bowl. In separate bowl, mix eggs and ricotta, then stir in milk and oil. Stir wet ingredients into dry and mix, being careful not to over-mix. Allow about 1/3-cup batter per pancake. Pour batter on to hot non-stick pan. Turn when bubbles appear on the surface of the pancake. If freezing leftovers, allow cooked pancakes to cool completely, then wrap and freeze. To re-heat, place frozen pancake in microwave and cook on high for 1 minute or until heated through.

Breakfast Burritos

Preparation time – 15 minutes

This is a twist on the traditional scrambled eggs and toast breakfast. The kids will enjoy the novelty of burritos for breakfast.

Ingredients • Makes 4 burritos

- 6 eggs
- 1 slice cooked ham, diced
- 4 sandwich-size whole wheat tortillas
- 2 oz. grated cheddar cheese
- Salsa

Directions: Beat eggs with 2 tablespoons of water until smooth. Scramble eggs in non-stick pan. Mix in chopped ham. Place 1/4 of the egg mixture down the centre of each tortilla, fold up one end and sides and place seam side down in a microwave-proof baking dish. Top with grated cheese and cook on high for 60-90 seconds or until cheese is melted. Serve with salsa.

Alternative ingredients

Substitute the ham with 1/2-cup chopped cooked chicken, leftover cooked vegetables or a small tomato, seeded and chopped.

Granola Parfaits

This is an eye-catching way to serve granola and yogurt. A tasty multigrain granola coupled with low-fat yogurt and fruit offers a nutritious meal that is fun.

Ingredients

Granola • Makes 4 cups

1/4 cup vegetable oil

1/4 cup liquid honey

1 tsp. vanilla

3 cups rolled quick-cooking oats

1 cup shredded or flaked unsweetened coconut

1 cup chopped nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, sunflower seeds)

1/4 cup sesame seeds

1 tsp. cinnamon

2/3 cup dried cherries, cranberries, blueberries or raisins

Parfaits

plain or vanilla yogurt

fresh fruit or berries

Directions: Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix oil, honey and vanilla. Combine all dry ingredients except fruit. Stir wet and dry ingredients together to coat. Spread mixture in shallow baking dish and bake for 45 minutes, stirring regularly. Remove from oven and stir in dried fruit. Allow granola to cool completely before transferring to airtight storage container. The granola will keep for several weeks.

To assemble parfaits, place 1/2-cup granola in small parfait dish. Top with 1/2-cup of plain or vanilla yogurt. Add a layer of fresh fruit or berries and top with a sprinkle of granola. 🌿