

# nutrition

## (*Making sense of all that science*) made easy

**EASIER**

The anatomy of a *Cooking Light* recipe, and why you'll now find sugar listed with every one of them.

BY SIDNEY FRY, MS, RD

### [PART 1] HOW IT WORKS

**MORE THAN EVER**, consumers want to know the truth about how producers in the food industry create the products they sell. Now it's our turn to pull back the curtain on our recipes.

At *Cooking Light*, our team of food editors, experienced cooks, and dietitians builds recipes with whole foods and whole grains, and bigger portions of plants and seafood than meat. We emphasize oil-based fats more than saturated, and we promote a balanced diet low in processed foods and added sugars.

Whenever we look for ingredients that are high in saturated fat (think butter), sodium (soy sauce), or both (bacon), we use them in small amounts as flavor-boosting solutions in quicker-cooking dishes rather than the focal point of the plate. Our no-no list is short: We don't cook with any products containing artificial sweeteners or trans fats, aka partially hydrogenated oils.

Most important, each recipe must deliver the same pleasures—all the creaminess, crunch, richness, comfort, and satisfaction—as its heavier counterpart. Recipes are retested in the *Cooking Light* Kitchen if they fall short of delivering these joys, and we constantly reevaluate them to see if the nutrition would allow for, say, a sprinkle of Parmesan, a dash of kosher salt, or a splash of olive oil to help meet our high standards for taste.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JENNIFER CAUSEY; FOOD STYLING: CHELSEA ZIMMER; PROP STYLING: CLAIRE SPOLLEN



[PART 2]  
**THE PORTIONS**

**EACH RECIPE** that comes through the Cooking Light Kitchen is evaluated visually, too, to ensure that we're providing a satisfying, realistic portion (no one-bite brownies here) that fulfills its role as part of a balanced plate. Per person, we consider the following when portioning.

**THE PROTEIN**

Our aim is to shift the focus of the plate to more plant-based proteins. See our Flip, page 110.

**SEAFOOD**

5 ounces cooked. Try to eat twice per week.

**BEEF AND PORK**

3 ounces cooked

**CHICKEN**

4½ ounces cooked breast; 3 ounces cooked thigh (based on supermarket portions)

**SAUSAGE & BACON**

Used in small amounts, to boost flavor

**THE GRAINS**

Preferably whole, to fill a quarter of the plate (about ½ cup)

**ALCOHOL**

1 drink per day for women, 2 for men. A drink is defined as 1.5 ounces liquor, 5 ounces wine, or 12 ounces beer.

See page 64 for these recipes.

**THE FRUITS & VEGGIES**

These should fill half your plate. Our servings start at ½ cup; more is encouraged.

[PART 3]  
**THE NUMBERS**

**COOKING LIGHT RECIPES** adhere to a rigorous set of nutrition guidelines that govern calories, saturated fat, sodium, and sugar based on various recipe categories. The numbers in each category are derived from the most recent set of USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans:

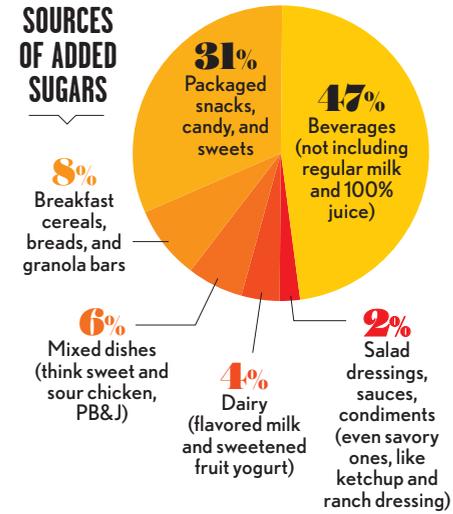
**Calories:** 1,600–2,000 calories per day. We break this down into three meals that range from 350 to 550 calories, plus two (100- to 150-calorie) snacks.  
**Sodium:** Less than 2,300mg per day.  
**Saturated Fat:** Less than 20g per day.  
**Sugars:** Less than 38g *added* sugars per day (as recommended by the American Heart Association).

**A word about sugars:** Starting with this issue, we're listing sugars with each recipe, and we are taking our stats a step

further by calculating and including estimated added sugars (those added during processing).

**Why should you care?** Naturally occurring sugars, like those found in fruit and dairy, contain essential vitamins, minerals, protein, water, and fiber—nutrients that boost health and keep us full. But added sugars have little to no added benefit, only empty calories, of which the average American consumes 350 a day—the equivalent

**SOURCES OF ADDED SUGARS**



of 88g. The cumulative effect of these added calories has been linked to heart disease, weight gain, and diabetes.

**Why list them now?** The American Heart Association recommends no more than 25g (that's only 100 calories, or about 6 teaspoons) of added sugars a day for women, and 38g (146 calories, or about 9 teaspoons) for men, roughly the same amount as in half a 20-ounce bottle of soda. One caveat: The FDA doesn't yet require food manufacturers to list added sugars, only total sugars, so it's impossible to know how much of a food's sugar is added and how much occurs naturally.

We expect the USDA to set new nutrition standards this year, so we're proactively setting our guidelines for added sugars to 38g now.

As cooks, we know a little bit of indulgence can be part of a balanced diet, and we value the role sugar—in moderation—plays in a healthy kitchen: It has the unique ability to balance acidity, add texture to baked goods, and preserve foods. Lowering sugar intake becomes easier when you control the amount you use in your kitchen. Our new nutrition stats will help you do just that.

As we wait for the FDA to require added-sugar totals for manufactured foods, here's a guide to help you identify where added sugars tend to hide.

**Sugar, Sugar Everywhere**

Not all sources of added sugars are obvious, nor are they necessarily sweet. Here are a few unusual suspects, and a few suggestions for how to eat less.

NATURAL	ADDED	TOTAL	TRY THIS
8 ounces 2% reduced-fat milk 12g natural sugars	+ 13g added sugars	= 8 ounces low-fat chocolate milk 25g total sugars	Store vanilla bean pods in regular milk to infuse it with a hint of flavor.
1 packet plain unsweetened oatmeal 0g natural sugars	+ 12g added sugars	= 1 packet maple-brown sugar oatmeal 12g total sugars	A savory take on oatmeal: Top quick-cooking steel-cut oats with a poached egg and diced avocado.
1 cup fresh tomato puree 6g natural sugars	+ 9g added sugars	= 1 cup marinara sauce 15g total sugars	Tomatoes are a fruit, slightly sweet on their own. Choose tomato products without any sugars on the ingredient list, and stir in a splash of naturally sweet balsamic vinegar.
½ cup pinto beans 2g natural sugars	+ 30g added sugars	= 1 cup canned maple-bacon baked beans 32g total sugars	Try our recipe on page 122, where we emphasize smoky flavors like chipotle, bacon, and smoked paprika for a bowl of comfort-filled baked beans with only 4g added sugars per cup.
12 ounces nonfat plain latte 18g natural sugars	+ 17g added sugars	= 12 ounces nonfat flavored latte 35g total sugars	Spice up your espresso with cinnamon, vanilla bean, cardamom, or a surprisingly tasty splash of pomegranate juice.
6 ounces 2% reduced-fat plain Greek yogurt 6g natural sugars + ¼ cup fresh blueberries 4g natural sugars	+ 19g added sugars	= 6 ounces blueberry-flavored yogurt 29g total sugars	Stir in 2 teaspoons of natural nut butter, and top with toasted nuts for crunch.



**KALE AND SPINACH SALAD  
WITH BEETS AND ROASTED  
GARLIC-CITRUS VINAIGRETTE**

**Hands-on: 20 min. Total: 1 hr. 20 min.**

Filling half the plate with plants isn't as hard as you think. We make it easier with salty, crispy bacon—one piece is all it takes to elevate this bountiful bowl of fruits and vegetables.

- 1 whole garlic head
- 12 ounces baby red beets
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon water
- 2 teaspoons fresh orange juice
- 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 4 cups baby spinach
- 4 cups torn Lacinato kale
- 1 thick applewood-smoked bacon slice, chopped
- 1 cup fresh orange segments

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Remove white papery skin from garlic head (do not peel or separate cloves). Wrap head in foil. Arrange beets on a large sheet of foil; wrap tightly. Bake garlic and beets at 350° for 1 hour or until beets are tender; cool 10 minutes. Separate garlic cloves; squeeze to extract garlic pulp. Discard skins. Combine garlic pulp, oil, and next 5 ingredients (through pepper) in a small bowl, stirring with a whisk. Place spinach and kale in a large bowl.
3. Heat a medium skillet over medium heat. Add bacon; cook 5 minutes or until crisp, stirring occasionally. Increase heat to high. Stir in garlic mixture; remove from heat. Pour hot bacon mixture over kale mixture, tossing to coat.
4. Peel beets; discard skins. Cut beets in half. Arrange beets and oranges over kale mixture.

➤ **SERVES 6** (serving size: 1 cup)

**CALORIES** 144; **FAT** 8.1g (sat 1.3g, mono 5g, poly 1g); **PROTEIN** 4g; **CARB** 16g; **FIBER** 4g; **SUGAR** 7g (est. added sugars 0g); **CHOL** 2mg; **IRON** 2mg; **SODIUM** 197mg; **CALC** 113mg

**QUINOA WITH  
TOASTED WALNUTS**

**Hands-on: 25 min. Total: 25 min.**

The USDA recommends making half your grains whole, but we say go all in. Make them in batches, and eat all week long. A toasty nut topper adds just the right crunch.

- 1 cup uncooked quinoa
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped shallots
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1¼ cups organic vegetable stock
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ cup walnuts, toasted
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
- 1 tablespoon toasted walnut oil
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Rinse and drain quinoa. Heat a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add 2 teaspoons olive oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add shallots; sauté 1 minute or until tender. Add garlic; cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add quinoa; cook 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Add vegetable stock, thyme, and kosher salt; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 12 minutes or until the liquid is absorbed and quinoa is tender.
2. Combine quinoa mixture, walnuts, chives, walnut oil, and pepper; toss.

➤ **SERVES 6** (serving size: ½ cup)

**CALORIES** 178; **FAT** 8.8g (sat 0.9g, mono 2.5g, poly 5.1g); **PROTEIN** 5g; **CARB** 21g; **FIBER** 3g; **SUGAR** 2g (est. added sugars 0g); **CHOL** 7mg; **IRON** 2mg; **SODIUM** 197mg; **CALC** 24mg

**PAN-SEARED HERB SHRIMP**

**Hands-on: 30 min. Total: 45 min.**

The size of meat portions is shrinking, leaving more room on the plate for heart-healthy seafood. Eat fish more often, and make it pop with this herb- and lemon-packed dressing.

- 3½ tablespoons olive oil, divided
- ¾ cup fresh cilantro leaves
- ¾ cup fresh parsley leaves
- ½ cup fresh basil leaves
- 2 tablespoons chopped green onions
- 2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 garlic cloves
- 24 jumbo shrimp (about 1½ pounds), peeled and deveined

1. Combine 2 tablespoons olive oil and next 10 ingredients (through garlic) in a food processor; process until smooth. Set aside 2 tablespoons marinade. Place remaining marinade in a bowl; add shrimp, tossing to coat. Marinate in refrigerator for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add remaining 1½ tablespoons oil to pan; swirl to coat. Remove shrimp from marinade. Add shrimp to pan; sauté 3 minutes or until thoroughly cooked. Drizzle remaining 2 tablespoons marinade over shrimp.

➤ **SERVES 4** (serving size: 6 shrimp and 1½ teaspoons marinade)

**CALORIES** 228; **FAT** 12.2g (sat 1.6g, mono 7.6g, poly 1.3g); **PROTEIN** 24g; **CARB** 5g; **FIBER** 1g; **SUGAR** 1g (est. added sugars 0g); **CHOL** 214mg; **IRON** 1mg; **SODIUM** 434mg; **CALC** 124mg

[PART 4]  
**THE RECIPE MAKEOVER**

## Naturally Sweet Citrus Smoothie

**ORANGE DREAMSICLE** packs a creamy, citrusy kick in the pants, a better alternative to that carb-loaded breakfast bagel, right? Not so fast. An orange smoothie is a great way to add a few servings of fruit into the diet, but it's also packed with sugar—more than 70g total. That's a milk shake in disguise with nearly 18 teaspoons of sugar.

But wait—smoothies are the perfect example of why we need to better understand the difference between natural and added sugars. Most of the sugars in smoothies come naturally in the form of fruit or dairy,

along with the fiber, protein, and calcium that are inherently tied to these foods. The rest is added in the form of honey, turbinado, or agave—all sweeteners with little nutritive value other than calories.

To lighten, we use creamy Greek yogurt as the protein-packed base, then sweeten with fresh oranges and ripe mango. We drop all added sugars, cutting out 25g, and allow the naturally sweet fruit to shine. A creamy, dreamy, portable, sunshine-filled sip with half the calories and 70% less sugar? Now that's a resolution revolution.



**OUR DREAMSICLE SMOOTHIE**

saves **183 calories**, adds **5g protein**, and cuts **49g sugar** from the classic orange-cream smoothie. Bonus: Double the fiber.

**ORANGE DREAMSICLE SMOOTHIE**

**Hands-on: 10 min. Total: 10 min.** Segment the orange over a bowl to catch all of those tasty juices, and add them to the blender before processing. You can buy frozen mangoes, but for the creamiest sip, start with fresh, and freeze overnight.

- 1 cup 2% reduced-fat Greek yogurt
- <sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> cup ice cubes
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cup chopped peeled ripe mango, frozen
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cup fresh orange juice
- 1 medium orange, peeled and sliced into segments
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

**1.** Place all ingredients in a blender; process 1 minute or until completely smooth. Divide mixture evenly between 2 glasses.

➤ **SERVES 2** (serving size: about 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cups)  
**CALORIES** 164; **FAT** 2.6g (sat 1.6g, mono 0.1g, poly 0.1g); **PROTEIN** 11g; **CARB** 25g; **FIBER** 2g; **SUGARS** 22g (est. added sugars 0g); **CHOL** 8mg; **IRON** 0mg; **SODIUM** 39mg; **CALC** 113mg

FOOD STYLING: KELLIE GERBER KELLEY

## BUILD A BETTER BLEND

The smallest smoothie-shop smoothies start around 16 ounces, making more room in the cup for added sugars. We downsize the portion by a third but pack heartier, more filling ingredients like a whole orange, fresh mango, and Greek yogurt into the blender for a smarter on-the-go weekday breakfast solution.



**Greek Yogurt**

We use 2% Greek yogurt in place of whole milk, adding a whopping 10g protein per serving (6 more than milk) and a pleasantly tangy, creamy flavor and texture to our smoothie.



**Fresh Orange Juice and Whole Orange**

Fresh-squeezed juice and a whole, segmented orange sub in for frozen concentrate to cut sugar by 29g per serving. Whole fruit adds more fiber, too.



**Fresh Mango**

Mango adds a rich, creamy texture and naturally sweet, juicy goodness for only 25 calories and 5.5g natural sugars per serving. Pop fresh peeled mango into the freezer for a few hours or overnight.

## Swap out sugar for a sweet evening



Home Sweet Hummus



Citrus Glazed Chicken



Peanut Butter Cookies



Enjoy a sweet life without all the calories from added sugar. Follow us for hundreds of tips, tricks & recipes that swap full sugar for SLENDA® Sweeteners.

SweetSwaps.com

Think sugar,  
say

