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7 Fresh and Healthy Dinners

By Sara Wells

Additional reporting by Kiera Aaron, Sarah D'Angelo and Jackie Stewart

Breakfast

Start your morning right. These picks are low in calories (250 or fewer) and high in fiber and protein to keep you satisfied until lunch.

BEST CEREAL

Nature's Path Optimum Blueberry Cinnamon

A combination of cinnamon and dried blueberries gives these whole-grain flakes a touch of sweetness.

Per cup: 200 calories, 9 g protein, 38 g carbohydrate, 3 g fat (0 g saturated), 7 g fiber

BEST BREAKFAST BAR

Kashi TLC Pumpkin Spice Flax

The perfect I-don't-have-time for-breakfast excuse buster: Throw one of these crunchy bars full of heart-healthy flaxseed in your tote and munch it on your commute.

Per package (2 bars): 180 calories, 6 g protein, 26 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat (0.5 g saturated), 4 g fiber

BEST OATMEAL

Holly's Wickedly Plain

Top it with a little bit of maple syrup or honey and you're good to go until noon, thanks to the 8 grams of fiber and 12 grams of protein in each serving. Make it with skim milk for a creamier texture.

Per ½ cup: 220 calories, 12 g protein, 39 g carbohydrate, 3.5 g fat (0 g saturated), 8 g fiber

BEST WAFFLE

Van's All Natural Multigrain

For the second year in a row, testers loved these slightly sweet, crunchy waffles. "They taste almost homemade," one reviewer said.

Per 2 waffles: 180 calories, 4 g protein, 25 g carbohydrate, 7 g fat (0.5 g saturated), 3 g fiber

BEST BAGEL

Thomas' Hearty Grains 100% Whole Wheat

Unlike most bagels, these are just the right portion size. Plus, they're surprisingly high in protein and fiber, which will keep you full.

Per bagel: 240 calories, 10 g protein, 49 g carbohydrate, 2 g fat (0.5 g saturated), 7 g fiber

BEST ENGLISH MUFFIN

Food for Life 7-Sprouted Grains

Testers raved about the nutty flavor and chewy texture. Our nutritionists loved the 6 grams of fiber in each hearty muffin.

Per muffin: 160 calories, 8 g protein, 32 g carbohydrate, 2 g fat (0 g saturated), 6 g fiber

BEST MUFFIN

Fiber One Apple Cinnamon Bun

Store-bought muffins that are healthy? We found 'em. This brand is moist and not too sweet and has chunks of real apple.

Per muffin: 170 calories, 3 g protein, 34 g carbohydrate, 4.5 g fat (1.5 g saturated), 7 g fiber

BEST YOGURT

Fage Total 0%

Supremely creamy despite containing no fat. Top with a drizzle of honey or your favorite jam for a protein-packed, low-calorie breakfast.

Per 6-ounce container: 90 calories, 15 g protein, 7 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat (0 g saturated), 0 g fiber

Try It!

Swiss Morning Melt

Food for Life 7-Sprouted Grains English Muffin + Sargento Reduced Fat Swiss + Boar's Head Branded Deluxe lower-sodium ham

Fry 1 egg in a skillet coated with cooking spray. Top toasted English muffin with egg, 1 slice cheese and 1 slice ham. Add a piece of fruit for a filling, balanced meal.

Lunch

To make the cut, these winners had to be low in saturated fat but offer plenty of whole grains, protein and fiber—the key building blocks for a healthy afternoon meal.

BEST CHEDDAR CHEESE

Cracker Barrel Reduced-Fat Extra Sharp

A crowd pleaser, this low-fat cheese tastes like the regular kind. Slice it for crackers, cube it for salads, or grate it for omelets.

Per ounce: 90 calories, 7 g protein, 1 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat (3.5 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST SWISS CHEESE

Sargento Reduced Fat

A full-flavored pick that won't wreck your diet even if you have two slices.

Per slice: 60 calories, 7 g protein, 1 g carbohydrate, 4 g fat (2 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST SLICED HAM

Boar's Head Branded Deluxe Lower Sodium

Full of flavor, this packaged ham tastes deli-fresh.

Per 2 ounces: 60 calories, 10 g protein, 2 g carbohydrate, 1 g fat (0 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST SLICED TURKEY

Applegate Farms Organic Roasted Turkey Breast

No nitrates or added fillers—just plain turkey breast. "Great on a sandwich. Not as salty as most deli turkey," one tester said.

Per 2 ounces: 50 calories, 12 g protein, 0 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat (0 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST SLICED BREAD

Nature's Pride 100% Whole Wheat

We loved the soft texture and chewy crust of this brand-new bread. Use it for a sandwich and you'll get almost one-quarter of your daily fiber intake.

Per slice: 110 calories, 5 g protein, 20 g carbohydrate, 1 g fat (0 g saturated), 3 g fiber

BEST WRAP

MexAmerica 100% Whole Wheat Tortillas

Wraps at many restaurants are made with tortillas that are 300-plus calories. DIY with this brand and you'll keep the calories in check and get a serving of whole grains.

Per large wrap: 210 calories, 6 g protein, 35 g carbohydrate, 5 g fat (0.5 g saturated), 5 g fiber

BEST PEANUT BUTTER

Smucker's Reduced Fat Natural Style Creamy

"Thick and smooth without being too oily," one tester raved. This PB was a hit thanks to its fresh, peanuty aroma and easy stirring.

Per 2 tablespoons: 200 calories, 9 g protein, 12 g carbohydrate, 12 g fat (2 g saturated), 2 g fiber

BEST JELLY

Bonne Maman Strawberry Preserves

If we had the time to can our own jam, this is what it would taste like: sweet, juicy chunks of fresh strawberry. *Très bon!*

Per tablespoon: 50 calories, 0 g protein, 13 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat (0 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST PREPACKAGED LUNCH

Healthy Choice Fresh Mixers Southwestern Style Chicken

A perfectly portioned lunch for days you don't have time to make your own. Stash a few in your desk (they don't have to be refrigerated) and enjoy fresh-tasting chicken with beans.

Per package: 310 calories, 13 g protein, 60 g carbohydrate, 2.5 g fat (1 g saturated), 5 g fiber

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Try It!

Southwestern Black Bean & Tortilla Salad

MorningStar Farms Spicy Black Bean Burger + Food Should Taste Good Multigrain Tortilla Chips + Wholly Salsa Medium

Top 3 cups shredded romaine lettuce with ½ cup chopped bell peppers (any color), 1 warmed burger chopped into small pieces, ½ cup crushed tortilla chips and 4 tablespoons salsa.

JOSEPH DELEO. FOOD STYLIST: SUSAN OTTAVIANO FOR HALLEY RESOURCES. PROP STYLIST: CINDY DIPRIMA.

Dinner

Comfort food doesn't have to be off limits just because you're watching your waistline. Our favorites make portion control easy and contain healthy, natural ingredients.

BEST FROZEN VEGGIE DINNER

Amy's Vegetable Lasagna

A suppertime classic made healthy (and vegetarian!). What's not to love?

Per package: 310 calories, 16 g protein, 35 g carbohydrate, 12 g fat (4.5 g saturated), 5 g fiber

BEST FROZEN MEAL IN A BAG

Bertolli Mediterranean Style Shrimp & Penne Primavera

A new favorite to add to your freezer; this dinner has shrimp, penne and black olives mixed in a light tomato sauce.

Per ½ package: 320 calories, 15 g protein, 35 g carbohydrate, 15 g fat (1.5 g saturated), 5 g fiber

BEST PASTA

Barilla Whole Grain Penne

It tastes like regular pasta, and it's loaded with filling fiber.

Per 2 ounces: 200 calories, 7 g protein, 41 g carbohydrate, 1.5 g fat (0 g saturated), 6 g fiber

BEST PASTA SAUCE

Rao's Homemade Marinara

A blend of garlic, onion, tomatoes, olive oil and spices gives this sauce a made-from-scratch flavor.

Per ½ cup: 70 calories, 1 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 4.5 g fat (0.5 g saturated), 2 g fiber

BEST VEGGIE BURGER

MorningStar Farms Spicy Black Bean Burger

A hearty blend of black beans and spices.

Per burger: 120 calories, 11 g protein, 13 g carbohydrate, 4 g fat (0.5 g saturated), 4 g fiber

BEST FROZEN DINNER

Healthy Choice Roasted Sesame Chicken

This meal packs in 27 grams of whole grains and even includes dessert.

Per package: 340 calories, 18 g protein, 53 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat (1.5 g saturated), 5 g fiber

BEST FROZEN PIZZA

Amy's Margherita

A crispy, crunchy crust that's not too thin and not too thick topped with mozzarella and tomatoes. Just as good as if you'd ordered in.

Per ⅓ pizza: 250 calories, 11 g protein, 32 g carbohydrate, 12 g fat (3.5 g saturated), 2 g fiber

BEST VEGETABLE SOUP

Campbell's Select Harvest Light Southwestern-Style

A slightly spicy tomato broth filled with big chunks of vegetables, including corn, carrots and celery. Pair with a slice of whole-grain bread for a satisfying dinner.

Per cup: 50 calories, 2 g protein, 14 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat (0 g saturated), 4 g fiber

BEST CHICKEN SOUP

Kettle Cuisine Chicken Soup with Rice Noodles

This soup tastes homemade with big, juicy chunks of chicken. The rice noodles make it a great choice for anyone with a gluten allergy.

Per package: 140 calories, 15 g protein, 12 g carbohydrate, 3 g fat (0.5 g saturated), 1 g fiber

Try It!

Pretzel Chicken With Citrus Sauce & Baked Potato

Newman's Own Organics Hi-Protein Pretzels + Fage Total 0% Yogurt + Florida's Natural Calcium & Vitamin D Orange Juice

Preheat oven to 350°F. Dip one 3-ounce boneless, skinless chicken breast in 1 beaten egg and ¼ cup crushed pretzels. Bake chicken and 1 small potato for about 40 minutes. Whisk together 2 tablespoons orange juice with 2 teaspoons olive oil, 1 tablespoon vinegar and salt and pepper to taste. Drizzle baked chicken with orange sauce and top potato with 2 tablespoons yogurt. Serve with 1 cup steamed broccoli.

Snacks

Salty and sweet, crunchy and chewy, all the bases are covered here, with munchies that easily beat afternoon hunger pangs for 140 calories or fewer per serving.

BEST BAKED POTATO CHIP

Kettle Brand Baked Lightly Salted

A baked chip that's all potato (not reconstituted potato bits), this brand won for keeping the crunch and heft of a regular chip with about half the fat.

Per ounce: 120 calories, 3 g protein, 21 g carbohydrate, 3 g fat (0.5 g saturated), 2 g fiber

BEST PRETZEL

Newman's Own Organics Hi-Protein

These super-crunchy pretzels have 5 grams of protein and 4 grams of fiber per serving, giving this snack some staying power.

Per 22 pretzels: 120 calories, 5 g protein, 22 g carbohydrate, 1.5 g fat (0 g saturated), 4 g fiber

BEST DRIED FRUIT

Sun-Maid Mixed Fruit

A delicious blend of dried apples, pears, apricots and plums, this mix makes a good topping for oatmeal. Or munch it straight from the bag for an instant energy boost.

Per ¼ cup: 100 calories, 1 g protein, 26 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat (0 g saturated), 3 g fiber

BEST FRUIT CUP

Del Monte SuperFruit Mixed Fruit Chunks

A yummy blend of pears, peaches and more in 100 percent fruit juice. Stash a few in the fridge for easy snacking.

Per ½ cup: 70 calories, 1 g protein, 17 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat (0 g saturated), 2 g fiber

BEST PITA CHIP

Athenos Baked Whole Wheat

Tasty enough to snack on straight from the bag, these chips are also delish with hummus and other dips and spreads.

Per 11 chips: 120 calories, 4 g protein, 18 g carbohydrate, 4 g fat (0 g saturated), 2 g fiber

BEST HUMMUS

Sabra Classic

This chickpea spread is so supremely creamy that testers gobbled it up. We love it with veggies or as a sandwich spread in place of mayo.

Per 2 tablespoons: 70 calories, 2 g protein, 4 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat (1 g saturated), 1 g fiber

BEST TORTILLA CHIP

Food Should Taste Good Multigrain

This chip is just as delicious with salsa and guac as it is with cheese or hummus. Immerse in your favorite dip and enjoy.

Per ounce: 140 calories, 3 g protein, 18 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat (0.5 g saturated), 3 g fiber

BEST SALSA

Wholly Salsa Medium

You'll find this fresh new salsa in the refrigerated section. A blend of onions, peppers and garlic gives it "a spicy kick," one tester told us.

Per 2 tablespoons: 10 calories, 0 g protein, 2 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat (0 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST GRANOLA BAR

Kashi TLC Trail Mix

A combination of oats, dried cranberries and whole almonds, this bar is chewy, moist and just a tad sweet thanks to a drizzle of honey.

Per bar: 140 calories, 6 g protein, 20 g carbohydrate, 5 g fat (0.5 g saturated), 4 g fiber

Try It!

Mushroom-Olive Pasta & Salad with Lemon-Hummus Dressing

Barilla Whole Grain Penne + Rao's Homemade Marinara Sauce + Sabra Classic Hummus

Cook 2 ounces dry pasta according to directions. In a saucepan, heat 2 teaspoons olive oil and sauté ¼ cup chopped onion, 1 cup sliced mushrooms and ¼ cup sliced black olives for 5 minutes. Add ½ cup pasta sauce and heat until warm. Top cooked pasta with sauce. Mix or whisk 2 tablespoons hummus with 1 tablespoon lemon juice and 1 tablespoon water; drizzle over 2 cups mixed spring greens.

—Recipes developed by Dawn Jackson Blatner, R.D.

Dessert

We all need a sweet treat now and then. None of these goodies have trans fats, and almost all are low in saturated fat. Four of them are just 100 calories per serving.

BEST COOKIE

Back to Nature Chocolate Chunk

These practically ooze chocolate chips, which makes them a winner in our book. Plus, two cookies have just 6 grams of fat.

Per 2 cookies: 130 calories, 1 g protein, 17 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat (1.5 g saturated), 1 g fiber

BEST 100-CALORIE PACK

Mister Salty Milk Chocolate Covered Pretzels

Can't decide if you want salty or sweet? Have both! These crunchy minis have just enough chocolate and salt to satisfy any craving.

Per pack: 100 calories, 2 g protein, 16 g carbohydrate, 3.5 g fat (2 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST MILK CHOCOLATE

Ghirardelli Luxe Milk

Super-creamy, this chocolate will melt in your mouth. Warning: It's hard to stop sampling!

Per 4 pieces: 220 calories, 3 g protein, 26 g carbohydrate, 13 g fat (8 g saturated), 1 g fiber

BEST DARK CHOCOLATE

Cadbury Royal Dark

Not too bitter and not too sweet, this antioxidant-rich treat makes the perfect post-dinner indulgence.

Per 7 blocks: 170 calories, 2 g protein, 23 g carbohydrate, 12 g fat (8 g saturated), 3 g fiber

BEST PUDDING

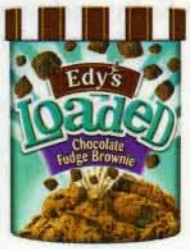
Jell-O 100 Calorie Packs Chocolate

Chocolaty goodness for only 100 calories. "Thick and velvety; this definitely satisfies my sweet tooth," said a happy reviewer.

Per container: 100 calories, 1 g protein, 24 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat (0 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM

Edy's Loaded Chocolate Fudge Brownie



Big chunks of gooey, fudgy brownies mixed with low-fat chocolate ice cream.

Per ½ cup: 120 calories, 3 g protein, 19 g carbohydrate, 4 g fat (1.5 g saturated), 1 g fiber

BEST FROZEN YOGURT

Edy's Slow Churned Yogurt Blends Vanilla

An authentic vanilla flavor at just 100 calories per serving. "This tastes so decadent, I thought it was regular ice cream!" said a tester.

Per ½ cup: 100 calories, 2 g protein, 17 g carbohydrate, 3 g fat (1.5 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST ICE CREAM SANDWICH

Klondike Slim-a-Bear 100 Calorie Vanilla

Rich vanilla ice cream between two soft chocolate cookies. Yum!

Per sandwich: 100 calories, 2 g protein, 21 g carbohydrate, 1.5 g fat (1 g saturated), 2 g fiber

BEST SORBET BAR

Blue Bunny FrozFruit No Sugar Added Chunky Strawberry

Huge chunks of real strawberry nestled in frozen fruit juice take this beyond your standard ice pop.

Per bar: 35 calories, 0 g protein, 15 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat (0 g saturated), 3 g fiber

Shop and drop: Forty-five minutes of loading your cart and putting the groceries away burns 120 calories. That's enough to enjoy a serving of either ice cream winner on our list!

Drinks

When water won't cut it, grab one of these tasty beverages. No artificial anything.

BEST SPORTS DRINK

Luna Sport Electrolyte Splash Lime-ade

Mix this lightly flavored powder into your water bottle and you're set to power through a workout.

Per packet: 80 calories, 0 g protein, 20 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat (0 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST ICED TEA

Ito En Lemongrass Green

Pure green tea with a hint of lemongrass. Add a teaspoon of sugar or honey for sweetness.

Per bottle: 0 calories, 0 g protein, 0 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat (0 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST SMOOTHIE

Bolthouse Farms Perfectly Protein Mocha Cappuccino

This smoothie does double duty: It gives you a caffeine boost in addition to a satisfying 10 grams of protein. Drink up!

Per cup: 178 calories, 10 g protein, 29 g carbohydrate, 2.5 g fat (1.5 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST ORANGE JUICE

Florida's Natural Calcium & Vitamin D

The packaging is right on: "This OJ really does taste fresh squeezed," several of our testers said. And it gives you 35 percent of your RDA for calcium and 25 percent for vitamin D.

Per cup: 110 calories, 2 g protein, 26 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat (0 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST JUICE

Naked Bare Breeze Peach Mangosteen Bliss

Sure, you could choose straight apple or cranberry, but why not go tropical with mangosteen, a fruit that tastes like a strawberry, kiwi and plum all in one?

Per cup: 130 calories, 1 g protein, 31 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat (0 g saturated), 0 g fiber

BEST HOT CHOCOLATE

Twinings Chocolate Indulgence

Nope, this isn't diet hot chocolate, and that's why we love it. Pure dark chocolate loaded with antioxidants makes this great to sip anytime. Mix it with warm skim milk for an extra protein boost.

Per 4 teaspoons: 80 calories, 1 g protein, 10 g carbohydrate, 4 g fat (2.5 g saturated), 3 g fiber

Go to www.fitnessmagazine.com/foodawards to get a printable shopping list of the 2009 Healthy Food Award winners listed on these pages.

Save money at the supermarket with coupons for a bunch of our product winners! Log on to www.fitnessmagazine.com/coupon to get yours.

What makes a winner?

Four of the best nutritionists in the country—all FITNESS advisory board members—created healthy criteria for each category (such as the number of calories and grams of fat each food should contain; that deli meats be low in sodium, breads and cereals high in fiber, and so on). The top three to five brands of each food that met these stringent standards were taste-tested by dozens of staffers throughout our company. (Only nationally available products qualified.)

HEALTHY FOOD fitness 2009 AWARD

Our nutrition experts:

Dawn Jackson Blatner, R.D., dietitian and spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association in Chicago; Leslie Bonci, R.D., director of sports nutrition at the Center for Sports Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center; Kathy McManus, R.D., director of nutrition at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston; Lisa Young, Ph.D., R.D., adjunct professor of nutrition at New York University and author of *The Portion Teller Plan*