

HEALTHY RAMADAN

July 2014

Ramadan: Healthy

When we are very hungry, oftentimes we choose unhealthy foods. Being mindful of this tendency is especially important at **Iftar**. Breaking the fast with whole fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, healthy fats, and whole grains is important for a good night's rest and a clear mind.

Filling up on heavy fried foods, fatty meats, and sweets may contribute to excessive fatigue and weight gain during Ramadan. Choose the following lean proteins and healthy fats to feel satisfied and have healthy digestion which allows for restful sleep.

- ✦ Poultry
- ✦ Eggs and yogurt
- ✦ Fish
- ✦ Nuts such as almonds and cashews
- ✦ Avocado
- ✦ Olives and olive oil

Hydration

Since Ramadan falls during the hot summer months this year, staying hydrated is an important concern. Dehydration leads to headaches, irritability, and fatigue. Besides plenty of water and herbal teas, pack your morning and evening meals with these fruits and veggies for extra hydration:

- ✦ Leafy greens
- ✦ Melons
- ✦ Broccoli, cauliflower
- ✦ Oranges, grapefruit
- ✦ Cucumbers, celery, radishes
- ✦ Tomatoes and peppers
- ✦ Kiwi and strawberries

Start the Day Right!

Suhoor is expected to provide you with the energy you need for the entire day. Complex carbohydrates provide fiber and are a great energy source to sustain you throughout the day until **Iftar**. They are filling, easily digestible, and can be prepared in a variety of ways. Combine with a lean protein and healthy fat for a balanced meal. Incorporate the following at **Suhoor** to keep you going till sundown:

- ✦ Oats
- ✦ Brown rice
- ✦ Couscous
- ✦ Lentils and other beans
- ✦ Barley
- ✦ Quinoa
- ✦ Fruits and vegetables
- ✦ Whole grain breads



Photo: www.simplyfreshcooking.com

Let's Get Cooking!

To get the most benefit from your foods, it is important to make sure you cook them in a healthy way. Avoiding cooking methods that require lots of added fat is a great way to decrease the number of calories and improve the overall quality of your diet. Also choosing what goes in your dishes can make them more or less healthy. Try out the following swaps for some healthier meals.

Try these cooking method substitutions:

- ✚ **Bake, grill, or shallow pan fry** *instead of* deep fry
- ✚ **Use olive or other vegetable oils** *instead of* butter
- ✚ **Use skinless chicken, turkey, or fish** *instead of* beef or lamb
- ✚ **Mostly vegetables** in mixed dishes *instead of* mostly meat



Recipes Redone: Baked Veggie Sambusas

- ✚ 9 sheets phyllo pastry, thawed
 - ✚ 2 onions, minced
 - ✚ ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
 - ✚ 10 oz package of frozen peas
 - 1 tbsp coriander
 - ½ pound of potatoes, chopped into ½ in. pieces
 - Salt and pepper to taste
 - ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- (Recipe from About.com)



Photo: www.sambusa.net



During Ramadan we prefer to serve traditional foods; however, traditional foods may not be the healthiest. Using some of the tips listed above, you can make some of your favorite foods a bit healthier!

1. Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees
2. In a large skillet over medium high heat, sauté the onions in a bit of oil until they are soft, about 6 to 8 minutes.
3. Add coriander, cumin, and cayenne pepper, and cook for another minute. Remove from heat and add the potatoes, peas, cilantro, stirring well. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Stack 3-4 sheets of phyllo together and slice into 4 even rectangles. Do the same thing with the rest of the phyllo dough. Cover phyllo dough in plastic wrap when not in use.
5. Place 2-3 tablespoons of the potato and peas mixture in the corner of phyllo square, then roll the corner towards the center. Fold in the left and right corners and roll up again.
6. Place each Sambusa on a greased baking sheet, and lightly brush the tops with olive oil. Bake for 20 minutes, or until lightly golden brown.

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