

Diverse Foods and Flavours

Healthy Diabetes Recipes from the Caribbean



Introduction

This booklet has been developed for healthy eating as part of diabetes prevention and management. It is a healthy take on traditional cultural dishes from the Caribbean. The Canadian Diabetes Association has identified this community as being at higher risk for developing prediabetes, type 2 diabetes and diabetes complications at an earlier age (less than 40 years old) than the general population.

Registered Dietitians at EatRight Ontario, faculty and culinary students at the Centre for Hospitality and

Culinary Arts at George Brown College (GBC) partnered to create this recipe booklet to help address the need for culturally focused healthy eating diabetes resources.

You can use the recipes to create healthy and balanced meals that make the most of your traditional favourites. This recipe booklet can be obtained online from the GBC applied research website (http://www.georgebrown.ca/research/projects.aspx#Food_Science) and from EatRight Ontario (www.eatrightontario.ca).

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a condition whereby the pancreas either does not make enough of a hormone called insulin and/or the body cannot use insulin properly. Insulin's role in the body is to take glucose (sugar) to the cells to be used for energy. With diabetes, glucose can build up in the blood and lead to high blood glucose levels. Over time, high blood glucose levels can lead to complications like kidney and heart problems, blindness and nerve damage.

Healthy eating is important for diabetes management because blood glucose levels are raised by carbohydrate-containing foods like:

- Fruit
- Milk and yogurt
- Grains
- Legumes (dried peas, beans and lentils)
- Starchy vegetables like potatoes and green peas
- Sugars and sweets like desserts, ice cream, and candies

Choosing healthy foods, exercising most days of the week, achieving a healthy body weight and taking medication as prescribed are all part of diabetes management.

Healthy Eating for Diabetes Prevention and Management: Enjoy Your Cultural Foods

If your goal is to prevent or manage type 2 diabetes you can still include many of the cultural foods that you enjoy. Continue to eat a variety of healthy foods, pay special attention to your portions and you will be on the right track!

Try to make these healthy eating habits part of your regular routine:

1. Eat regularly throughout the day. Do not leave more than 6 hours between meals.
2. Eat higher fibre foods more often. Include whole grain breads and cereals, beans and lentils, brown rice, vegetables and fruit with their skins. Fibre can help keep blood glucose (sugar) at a healthy level. Fibre can also help manage body weight and blood cholesterol levels.
3. Eat smaller amounts of rice, noodles, roti, pasta, potatoes, cereal, breads and other starchy foods. Having large servings of these foods can make it more difficult to achieve healthy blood glucose levels.
4. Limit juice, regular pop, desserts, candies, jam, honey and other sweet foods. Having too much of these foods raises your blood glucose levels.
5. Limit higher fat foods like deep fried snacks and pastries. These foods can make it difficult to reach a healthy weight and manage your blood cholesterol levels.
6. Use fresh herbs and spices instead of salt or high sodium sauces to flavour your food. Too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and kidney disease.



(Adapted from Just the Basics, Canadian Diabetes Association 2010).

Understanding the Nutrition Analysis in this Recipe Booklet

Fat

Many of the recipes in this booklet have tips to reduce fat when cooking. Too much fat, especially saturated fat, affects blood cholesterol levels. Limiting fats and oils is part of heart healthy eating.

Sodium

Healthy adults only need about 1500 milligrams of sodium each day. This is the amount of sodium in 2/3 teaspoon of salt. We all need some sodium in our diet but make sure to control the amount by always measuring the salt instead of adding a “pinch”. Too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and kidney disease.

Fibre

Adults with diabetes should aim for 25 grams of fibre or more each day.

Carbohydrate

A Registered Dietitian can help you understand the amount of carbohydrate that you should aim for at each meal and snack. Generally, men can have 60 to 75 grams of carbohydrate at a meal and women can have 45 to 60 grams of carbohydrate at a meal. Snacks range from 15 to 30 grams.

Food Choices

The Canadian Diabetes Association has a food choices system called “Beyond the Basics Meal Planning” to keep track of your servings of carbohydrate, meat and alternatives, fats and extras. This system is a helpful tool for planning menus and meeting healthy eating goals for diabetes. Food choices are included in the nutrition analysis of recipes in this booklet. Your healthcare team can help you learn more about food choices and there is more information available at (www.diabetes.ca).



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Professor Sobia Khan, RD, MSc, and the Centre for Hospitality and the Culinary Arts (CHCA) at George Brown College (GBC) have created an applied research project to serve the culturally-specific communities at high risk for diabetes (including South Asian, Chinese, Caribbean, and Latin American). One objective of this community-based research project is to develop and test culturally-specific recipes and make them healthier. The goal is to help prevent and manage prediabetes and type 2 diabetes in communities that are at increased risk.

EatRight Ontario (ERO) provides free healthy eating advice from Registered Dietitians to everyone in Ontario. Residents of Ontario can call 1-877-510-510-2 and speak to a Registered Dietitian in over 100 languages. ERO has healthy eating information on a wide variety of topics, recipes, menus, videos and an “Email a Dietitian” service at (www.eatrightontario.ca). Examples of the free resources that are available from ERO include culturally adapted and translated diabetes information for South Asian (Urdu, Tamil, Gujarati, Punjabi, and Hindi), Chinese (Chinese), African and Caribbean (French), and Latin American (Spanish) cultures.

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- Nutrition Analysis: Barbara Selley, RD (Food Intelligence)



Flavours of the Caribbean

1. Allspice comes from a dried unripe berry of the pimienta tree. It was named “all spice” because it has the flavours of cinnamon, clove and nutmeg. It is often used in sweet or savoury Caribbean dishes such as mulled drinks, Christmas pudding, pickles and Jamaican jerk chicken.



2. Scotch bonnet pepper is known as being very hot! This pepper provides “jerk” dishes with their unique flavor. If you cannot find this pepper in your usual grocery store ask at your local Caribbean grocer.



3. Callaloo is the leafy greens of the taro or dasheen plant. Callaloo is also the name of a Caribbean soup that is made from the callaloo leaves. Callaloo is commonly found in Caribbean grocery stores but if it is unavailable spinach is a reasonable replacement.



4. Okra, also known as ochro or lady's finger, is a green fruit shaped like an oblong pod. Okra has a soft gooey interior, so it is often used to thicken soups, stir-fries, or sauces in meat or seafood dishes. Okra is a source of soluble fibre which helps to manage blood cholesterol and glucose levels.



5. Fresh thyme comes in many varieties and can often be recognized by its fragrance—a combination of mint and lemon. Fresh thyme often tastes similar to oregano. This herb is also used widely in a dried or powder form.



Rice and Peas

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

3/4 cup (175 mL) dried pigeon peas
1/2 tbsp (7 mL) canola oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 bay leaf
1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) cayenne pepper
2 sprigs thyme, chopped
1 cup (250 mL) long grain brown rice
1/2 can (398 mL/13.5 oz) light coconut milk
1-1/2 cups (375 mL) water
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
1/4 tsp (1 mL) black pepper

NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER SERVING (1 CUP)

Calories: 236
Fat, total: 4 g
Fat, saturated: 2 g
Cholesterol: 0 mg
Carbohydrates: 43 g
Fibre: 6 g
Sodium: 209 mg
Protein: 8 g

FOOD CHOICES

Carbohydrate: 2
Meat and Alternatives: 1

METHOD

1. In a bowl, soak pigeon peas in water overnight in the refrigerator.
2. In a saucepan, add pigeon peas and cover with water; bring to a boil over High heat. Reduce heat to Low, cover and simmer for 45 minutes. Remove from heat, drain and set aside.
3. In a heavy bottomed pot, heat oil over Medium heat. Add onions, garlic, bay leaf and cayenne pepper. Sauté until fragrant and onion starts to soften; about 1 to 2 minutes.
4. Add thyme, rice and pigeon peas and sauté for 1 minute.
5. Add coconut milk, water, salt and black pepper. Reduce heat to Low, cover and simmer about 30 to 40 minutes or until rice and peas are tender and liquid is absorbed.
6. Remove from heat and let sit for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.

TIPS:

1. Dried peas, beans, and lentils are low in fat and high in fibre. They also have a lower glycemic index so they do not cause sharp increases in blood glucose levels.
2. When cooking with less fat, heat your pan before adding the oil—this will prevent sticking.
3. For a more authentic flavour, try purchasing Jamaican thyme from your local West Indian grocer (where available). Jamaican thyme tends to be more pungent than North-American thyme, so you may want to use a smaller amount.

Rice and peas is a traditional side dish in many Caribbean meals. Pigeon peas and brown rice add a boost of fibre to this recipe.



Chinese Long Beans (*Bora*)

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 35 minutes

Makes 5 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 tsp (10 mL) canola oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup (250 mL) onion, chopped
5 cups (1.25 L) fresh Chinese long beans (*bora*),
cut into 2-inch (5 cm) pieces
2 cups (500 mL) chopped tomatoes
1-1/2 cups (375 mL) peeled potatoes, cut into
1/2 inch (1 cm) cubes
2/3 cup (150 mL) water
3/4 tsp (4 mL) salt
1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) black pepper

NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER SERVING (1 CUP)

Calories: 120
Fat, total: 2.5 g
Fat, saturated: 0 g
Cholesterol: 0 mg
Carbohydrates: 22 g
Fibre: 7 g
Sodium: 360 mg
Protein: 5 g

FOOD CHOICES

Carbohydrate: 1/2
Fat: 1/2

METHOD

1. In a large sauté pan, heat oil over Medium heat. Add garlic, onion and sauté until onions are translucent; about 5 minutes.
2. Add long beans, tomatoes, potatoes and water, turn heat to Low, cover and simmer until potatoes and long beans are tender; about 30 minutes. Stir occasionally; about every 10 minutes.
3. Add salt and black pepper, mix and remove from heat.

TIPS:

1. The amount of potato was reduced from the original recipe in order to reduce the carbohydrate content of this dish. Always measure potatoes precisely as adding more can alter the overall carbohydrate content.

Known as bora beans in Guyana, this thin, long bean is also known as bodi, Chinese long bean or the asparagus bean. It takes longer to cook than most North-American green beans, but it is worth it for its unique taste!



Jerk Chicken

- *Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C)*
- *Food processor*
- *8-inch (2L) square baking dish*

Preparation time: 1-1/2 hours

Marinating time: 1 hour or overnight

Cooking time: 40 to 45 minutes

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

3 green onions, minced
1/2 scotch bonnet pepper, seeded and minced
1-1/2 tbsp (22 mL) water
1 tbsp (15 mL) minced garlic
1 tbsp (15 mL) freshly squeezed lime juice
1/2 tbsp (7 mL) minced ginger
1/2 tbsp (7 mL) ground allspice
1 tsp (5 mL) chopped fresh thyme leaves
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
1/2 tsp (2 mL) ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp (2 mL) black pepper
1/4 tsp (1 mL) ground nutmeg
1 lb (500 g) boneless, skinless chicken thighs
(6 thighs)

NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER SERVING (1-1/2 CHICKEN THIGHS)

Calories: 161
Fat, total: 6 g
Fat, saturated: 2 g
Cholesterol: 83 mg
Carbohydrates: 3 g
Fibre: 1 g
Sodium: 372 mg
Protein: 22 g

FOOD CHOICES

Meat and Alternatives: 3

METHOD

1. In a food processor, add green onions, scotch bonnet pepper, water, garlic, lime juice, ginger, ground allspice, thyme, salt, ground cinnamon, black pepper and ground nutmeg. Blend until a thick paste forms.
2. Score the chicken thighs with 1-inch (2.5 cm) slits and place in a shallow 8-inch (2L) square baking dish.
3. Rub marinade on chicken and into slits, cover and let marinate in refrigerator for at least 1 hour or overnight. Overnight marinating is best.
4. Place in preheated oven and bake until golden for 30 minutes and then turn oven to 400°F (200°C) for another 15 minutes or until meat thermometer registers 165°F (74°C).

TIPS:

1. This recipe can also be grilled on the barbeque for a nice, dark rich colour and smoky flavour.
2. You can increase the amount of scotch bonnet pepper in the marinade or leave the seeds in if you want the jerk chicken to be spicier.

Traditionally jerk chicken is a popular Caribbean dish made with the skin on which helps keep the chicken tender and gives the dish its dark colour. However, chicken skin is high in fat so we suggest using skinless chicken instead. "Jamaican jerk" seasoning is an especially spicy blend of hot peppers and spices that is used to flavour chicken and meat.



Callaloo Soup

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

1-1/2 tsp (7 mL) canola oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 medium onion, chopped
1 medium carrot, chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
1 bay leaf
3 cups (750 mL) water
1/3 cup (75 mL) light coconut milk
1/2 lb (250g) fresh callaloo leaves (or spinach), rinsed and dried
1-1/4 cups (310 mL) fresh okra
1-1/2 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped
1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped fresh thyme
1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped chives
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
1/2 tsp (2 mL) black pepper
1/4 tsp (1 mL) cayenne pepper
1 can (185g/6.5 oz) crab meat, drained and rinsed

NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER SERVING (1 CUP)

Calories: 92
Fat, total: 2 g
Fat, saturated: 1 g
Cholesterol: 10 mg
Carbohydrates: 14 g
Fibre: 3 g
Sodium: 345 mg
Protein: 5 g

FOOD CHOICES

Carbohydrate: 1/2
Meat and Alternatives: 1/2

METHOD

1. In a large pot or skillet, heat oil over Medium heat. Add garlic, onion, carrot, celery and bay leaf; sauté until slightly softened and fragrant.
2. Add water, light coconut milk, callaloo, okra and potato; bring to a boil over High heat.
3. Reduce heat to Low, cover and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes or until vegetables are soft.
4. Add thyme, chives, salt, black pepper and cayenne pepper; cover and simmer on Low heat for 5 minutes.
5. Using an immersion blender, blend callaloo mixture until smooth.
6. Add crab meat to callaloo mixture and stir until combined on Low heat; about 2 minutes.

TIPS:

1. Chill your onions in the freezer before cutting them. This reduces the amount of gas released from the onion into the air which makes your eyes tear.
2. If an immersion blender is not available, a blender can be used. Always be careful when handling hot liquid and be sure to cover with a lid to avoid splashing. If liquids are piping hot, leave the air hole open in the blender's cover and use a towel to cover the hole so the steam can be released.

Callaloo is a popular dish that can be served alone as a soup, or with rice, chicken, corn or beans. This recipe is a version from Trinidad but there are various versions of callaloo soup throughout the Caribbean. If callaloo leaves are not available, spinach can be substituted.

