

# Diverse Foods and Flavours

## Healthy Diabetes Recipes from Latin America



# 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 Latin America. 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](http://www.georgebrown.ca/research/projects.aspx#Food_Science)) and from EatRight Ontario ([www.eatrightontario.ca](http://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](http://www.diabetes.ca)).



# Acknowledgements

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](http://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 Latin America

1. Spanish hot paprika is a spice made from red chili and other coloured peppers that have been dried, smoked, and powdered. It is used for its spicy flavour and bright orange or red colour.



2. 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.



3. Yellow pea flour is made by grinding yellow split peas. Split peas are a great source of fibre and they have a low glycemic index. Eating foods with a low glycemic index may help you to control blood glucose and cholesterol levels.



4. Garlic is a heart healthy ingredient that may improve blood pressure, cholesterol and triglyceride levels. It has also been found to protect against cancers of the digestive tract.



# Fish Escabeche

## *(Pescado en Escabeche)*

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Refrigeration time:** Two hours or overnight

**Cooking time:** 10 minutes

**Makes 4 servings**

### INGREDIENTS

1/2 tbsp (7 mL) olive oil  
3 bay leaves  
2 cups (500 mL) onions, sliced into 1/8-inch (0.25 cm) thick rings  
1/2 medium red bell pepper, julienne  
1/2 medium green bell pepper, julienne  
1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped parsley, divided  
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt  
1/2 tsp (2 mL) whole black peppercorns  
2 lbs (1 kg) fresh tilapia fillets, cut lengthwise in half (4 fillets)  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 cup (250 mL) Chilean white wine  
1/2 cup (125 mL) white wine vinegar

### NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER SERVING (1 CUP)

Calories: 220  
Fat, total: 4 g  
Fat, saturated: 1 g  
Cholesterol: 73 mg  
Carbohydrates: 9 g  
Fibre: 1 g  
Sodium: 370 mg  
Protein: 34 g

### FOOD CHOICES

Meat and Alternatives: 4

### METHOD

1. In a large deep skillet, heat oil over Medium-High heat. Add bay leaves, onion, red and green bell peppers, half of the parsley, salt and black peppercorns. Sauté for 3 minutes or until onions are translucent.
2. Add fish fillets ovetop of onion mixture and spread garlic on top of fish fillets and cook for 2 minutes. Then cover and simmer on Low heat; about 6 minutes or when fish turns white in color.
3. Add white wine and white wine vinegar, cover and cook on Low heat until the amount of liquid reduces by half. Ensure that you are not mixing to avoid breaking the fish.
4. Remove from heat and cool at room temperature. For best flavour, refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight and serve chilled before serving.
5. Garnish with remaining parsley if using.

### TIPS:

1. Chilean Chardonnay was used in this recipe. Chardonnay is fruity and dry—which pairs perfectly with a light-textured white fish like tilapia.
2. Try to use fresh fish instead of frozen for this recipe. If you use frozen fish read the label to avoid those with added salt.
3. Traditionally, shark and swordfish are used in this dish. These fish have higher levels of mercury and Health Canada recommends that we only eat them on occasion. This is especially important for children and women who are pregnant. If you choose to substitute for tilapia in this dish, ask your health care provider about the amount that is safe for you.

*Escabeche is the Spanish word for pickled and refers to fresh fish that is cooked in oil and vinegar or cooked and then pickled in a vinegar-based marinade. This dish is traditionally served cold on a hot day.*



# Beef and Potato Stir-Fry (Lomo Saltado)

- Preheat oven to 350 °F (180 °C)
- 13-by 9-inch (3L) baking pan

*Preparation time:* 15 minutes

*Cooking time:* 50 minutes

*Makes 6 servings*

## INGREDIENTS

1-1/2 cups (375 mL) peeled potato, cut length-wise into 1/2-inch (1 cm) by 2-inch (5 cm) fries  
1/2 tbsp (7.5 mL) canola oil, divided  
0.4 kg (400g) boneless beef inside round, cut into 2-inch (5 cm) long and 1/2 inch (1 cm) thick strips  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
3/4 tsp (4 mL) salt  
1/2 tsp (2 mL) black pepper  
1 cup (250 mL) sliced red onions, cut into 1/2-inch (1 cm) thick slices  
2 small tomatoes, cut into 1/2-inch (1 cm) wedges  
3 tbsp (45 mL) finely chopped cilantro  
1-1/2 tsp (7 mL) freshly squeezed lemon juice

## METHOD

1. On a baking pan, place potato fries, add half of oil and mix. Bake in a preheated oven for 40 minutes.
2. In a large bowl, combine beef, garlic, 1/2 tsp (2 mL) of salt and black pepper. Set aside.
3. In a large frying pan, over High heat, heat remaining oil. Add beef mixture and cook covered for 1 minute. Reduce to Low heat and stir uncovered for 1 minute.
4. Add onions, cook for 3 minutes.
5. Add tomatoes and raise to High heat, cook for 2 minutes.
6. Add cilantro, remaining salt, stir and cook for 1 minute.
7. Add lemon juice, stir and cook for 1 minute.
8. Add the potato fries, stir and cook for 1 minute.

## NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER SERVING (1 /2 CUP)

Calories: 135  
Fat, total: 3 g  
Fat, saturated: 1 g  
Cholesterol: 33 mg  
Carbohydrates: 10 g  
Fibre: 1 g  
Sodium: 327 mg  
Protein: 16 g

## FOOD CHOICES

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

## TIPS:

1. Traditionally, this dish uses beef sirloin, however this recipe uses an inside round cut because it is lower in fat. Outside round is another reduced fat option. It is important to not overcook these lower fat cuts of meat as they can easily become tough.
2. A way to easily peel garlic is to put one clove of garlic flat in the centre of a cutting board. place the widest and flat side of your blade on top of the clove and smash down on the middle of it with the palm of your hand. This will crack the papery cover of the garlic and help you peel the skin.

*Lomo saltado is a popular Peruvian stir-fry which is traditionally served with white rice and french fries. In this recipe, rice was removed in order to manage the amount of carbohydrates.*



# Potato Cheese Soup

## (*Sopa de Papa*)

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 minutes

**Makes 6 servings**

### INGREDIENTS

4 cups (1.25L) + 1/4 cup (60 mL) water  
3 cups (750 mL) peeled potatoes, cut into 1/2-inch (2.5 cm) cubes  
1/2 tsp (2 mL) canola oil  
1/2 cup (125 mL) onion, finely diced  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tsp (5 mL) hot paprika  
1 tsp (5 mL) salt  
1/2 tsp (2 mL) black pepper  
1 egg, well beaten  
1/3 cup (60 mL) queso fresco cheese, cut into 1/4-inch (0.5 cm) cubes  
1 tbsp (15 mL) finely chopped cilantro

### NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER SERVING (1 CUP)

Calories: 106  
Fat, total: 4 g  
Fat, saturated: 2 g  
Cholesterol: 39 mg  
Carbohydrates: 15 g  
Fibre: 1 g  
Sodium: 492 mg  
Protein: 4 g

### FOOD CHOICES

Carbohydrate: 1  
Fat: 1/2

### METHOD

1. In a deep pot over High heat, bring water to a boil.
2. Add potatoes and cook uncovered for 3-1/2 minutes on High heat. Turn heat to Low and cover.
3. In a separate pan, heat oil over Medium heat, add onion and garlic; sauté for 1 minute.
4. Add paprika, salt and black pepper and continue to sauté until onions are translucent; about 3 minutes. If ingredients are sticking to the pan, add 1/4 cup (60 mL) water.
5. Add the seasoning mixture to potatoes in the pot and simmer uncovered on Low heat for 5 minutes or until potatoes are cooked and remove from heat.
6. Add egg to potatoes and whisk for about 1 minute.
7. Remove pot from heat, add cheese and cilantro and serve hot.

### TIPS:

1. Traditionally, this dish has more potatoes per serving. In this recipe the potatoes are reduced to help manage the carbohydrate content of the dish. For a heartier soup, other vegetables such as carrots or leeks can be added. For a spicier soup, fry one or two chopped yellow chili peppers (*ajís amarillos*) along with the onion and garlic. The *ajís amarillos* will add a beautiful yellow hue to the soup.
2. There is a risk that raw eggs may be contaminated with bacteria that can cause illness. Health Canada suggests using a pasteurized liquid egg product in a carton for dishes that call for a raw egg. This is a safer option because pasteurization gets rid of bacteria. If you choose to use a raw egg be sure to buy fresh eggs and store them in the refrigerator right away. Once the dish is prepared it should be refrigerated within 2 hours. Dishes with raw eggs are not suitable for young children, the elderly, pregnant women, or people with weak immune systems.
3. Quesco fresco ("fresh cheese") is a traditional cheese used in many Latin American dishes. It has a mild taste and softens when heated but does not melt. Other lower fat cheeses such as mozzarella cannot be used to substitute as they will melt in this recipe.

*Sopa de papa is a potato-cheese soup that is popular in Ecuador and Peru.*



# Peruvian Mushroom and Spinach Empanadas

- *Preheat oven to 350 °F (180 °C)*
- *13-by 9-inch (3L) baking pan*
- *13-by 9-inch parchment paper*

*Preparation time: 45 minutes*

*Cooking time: 50 minutes*

*Makes 13 servings*

## INGREDIENTS

### DOUGH

- 2 1/2 cups (500 mL) whole wheat flour (approx.)
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) yellow pea flour
- 1 1/2 tbsp (15 mL) baking powder
- 1 egg
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) skim milk (approx.)
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) low-fat cream cheese
- 1/2 tbsp (7.5 mL) canola oil

### MUSHROOM FILLING

- 1 bag (175g/6oz) fresh baby spinach, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) water
- 1 tsp (5 mL) canola oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) finely diced onion
- 3 cups (750 mL) white button mushrooms, cut into 1/8-inch (0.25 cm) thick slices
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) low-fat cream cheese
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) plain non-fat yogurt
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) fresh thyme leaves
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) black pepper
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
- 1 egg, well beaten

## NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER SERVING (1 EACH)

- Calories: 119
- Fat, total: 3 g
- Fat, saturated: 1 g
- Cholesterol: 32 mg
- Carbohydrates: 19 g
- Fibre: 3 g
- Sodium: 205 mg
- Protein: 6 g

## FOOD CHOICES

- Carbohydrate: 1/2
- Fat: 1/2

## METHOD

1. In a medium bowl, add whole wheat and yellow pea flour and baking powder. Make a well and in the centre and add egg, skim milk, cream cheese and oil into it. Mix ingredients together with hands until a soft dough is formed. If dough is too dry, add 1/2 tbsp (7.5 mL) of water. Knead dough and sprinkle with 1/4 cup (60 ml) whole wheat flour. Wrap bowl in a plastic wrap and let rest for 30 minutes in the refrigerator.
2. In a pan over High heat, bring water to a boil. Add spinach, cover and cook for 1 minute and remove from water with a slotted spoon. Set aside to cool in fridge. Squeeze spinach with hands to remove excess water and roughly chop.
3. In separate pan, heat oil over High heat. Add garlic and onions and cook for 1 minute.
4. Add mushrooms, cream cheese, yogurt, thyme, black pepper and salt. Cook for 10 minutes or until mixture is dry. Transfer mixture into a small bowl and cool in the fridge for 5 minutes.
5. Add drained spinach and cool for another 10 minutes.
6. In a small bowl, add egg and beat using a whisk or fork. Set aside.
7. Roll out the dough into circles of about 5 inches (12 cm) diameter and 1/4 inch (0.5 cm) thick. Add up to 1/4 cup (60 mL) of extra whole wheat flour for rolling out the dough.
8. Add 2 tbsp (30 mL) of filling in the centre of the circle.
9. Lightly brush egg over half of the edge and close over to form empanada. Using a fork, seal the edges and lightly brush egg on top of the empanada.
10. Line parchment paper on a baking sheet and place empanadas. Bake in preheated oven for 25 minutes or until golden brown on both sides. After cooking for 20 minutes, flip over the empanada and continue baking for another 5 minutes.

## TIPS:

1. The dough for an empanada should be light and fluffy. Baking powder is a key ingredient that helps to increase the volume and lighten baked goods especially when using whole wheat dough.
2. Traditionally the dough is prepared with white flour, butter and full-fat cream cheese. In doing so the dish becomes very high in fat and refined carbohydrates. Replacing these ingredients with whole wheat flour, yellow pea flour, using vegetables and low-fat cream cheese makes for a healthier version.

*In Spain, Portugal, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Philippines, an empanada is typically a stuffed pastry. The name comes from the Spanish verb “empanar” which means “to coat in bread.” There are many varieties stuffed with meats (pork, beef or chicken), seafood, cheese, potatoes, vegetables or fruit.*

