



NUTRITION CONSULTING INC.

Dispelling the Myths About Healthy Cooking!

By Andrea Holwegner BSc, RD

When people find out I am a dietitian they often think I eat boring bland health foods and have no fun. I don't blame them, because the word dietitian contains the word "diet" and also contains the word "die." Surprise, nutrition geeks like tasty food too! After all I am the chocoholic nutritionist (a.k.a. lover of both healthful and soulful foods).

1. What are some of the myths and misconceptions about healthy cooking?



The most common misconceptions about healthy cooking was that the food won't taste good, it is hard to make, takes too much time and is too expensive.

Fat, salt and sugar make food taste good and healthy cooking isn't about avoiding these but using them strategically and showcasing the natural profiles of fresh seasonal food.

Multi-task active tasks (such as chopping) once you have inactive time (such as waiting for something to bake). Cook in bulk for some freezer friendly options and use planned extras (intentionally making more of one thing such as grilled chicken that goes into two meals such as for stir-fry one day and a salad the next day).

If you are time crunched each week pick three meals and shop for these foods specifically and be sure to make enough for leftovers or lunch the next day.

2. What are some of the "must have" items to help get organized in your kitchen to cook healthy food and make it fun?

Must have...

A well stocked pantry, good selection of spices and a selection of "real" food.

Sharp knives and cutting boards.

Metal frying pan (better than non-stick pans for browning known as "fond" and deglazing for flavoring poultry, fish and sauce).

Pot(s) and roasting pan(s).

Inspiration (eg. cookbooks, food/recipe blogs, pinterest, recipes on the fridge)

Nice to have...

Oil sprayer

Potato peeler, julienne peeler, mandolin slicer

Fresh herbs

Grill basket/pans for the BBQ

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Slow cooker
Top-notch blender and/or food processor

3. What are some tips on how to keep flavor while cooking healthier?

- I am a huge advocate for visiting the farmers market for inspiration and quality. Shop from the grocery store flyer since it is typical going to showcase seasonal flavors for fresh produce.
- Take some cooking classes. Once you understand the basics on knife skills, cooking methods and build confidence you will find trying any new recipe or adjusting things much easier. Check out cookbook stores, grocery stores, culinary institutes to begin your search.
- Use fresh seasonal ingredients and when things are out of season think about frozen, dried or canned options (such as canned tomatoes and sundried tomatoes in the winter).
- Learn how to make homemade vinaigrettes. So much tastier than bought versions and simple to do. The basic method is 2-3 parts oil to 1 part acid (such as vinegar, lemon/orange juice or wine), season with salt, pepper and herbs.
- Roast or grill vegetables to bring out and enhance natural sweetness. All you need is veggies (such as peppers, mushrooms, zucchini, eggplant, cauliflower, carrots, beets, squash, onions) tossed in a little olive oil with salt and pepper. Place in a roasting pan and bake until soft or alternatively grill on the BBQ (small pieces can be placed in a grill basket/pan with small holes).
- Slow roast meats to maximize flavor
- Think about healthier desserts such as grilled pears/pineapple, baked apples, fruits sorbets, homemade frozen yogurt, vanilla/chocolate homemade pudding, oatmeal date squares and fruit crisps.

4. Where can I find out more information?

Visit Andrea's website at www.healthstandnutrition.com for more great tips, articles and recipes.

Andrea Holwegner, known as the Chocoholic Dietitian, is founder and president of Health Stand Nutrition Consulting Inc., a member of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers and a media expert for the Dietitians of Canada. For nutrition counselling information and to sign up for a free monthly newsletter loaded with nutrition tips, recipes and more visit www.healthstandnutrition.com. Twitter @chocoholicRD.

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