

## 4 Guilt-Free Ways to Make Food Taste Better



You may feel confident in your ability to identify meal-time fat-traps (think cakes, cookies, pies). But sometimes, otherwise healthy dishes like salads and lean meals can be sabotaged by add-ons like butter, gravy and creamy dressings, which can be sneaky sources of fat, sugar and calories. By being extra mindful of your extras, you'll be one step closer to a healthier you.

Try these four guilt-free ways to make your favorite foods taste even better—so you can still enjoy the flavors you crave without sabotaging your slim-down.

### **Mustard**

This typically calorie-free condiment comes in a variety of flavors, making it a great marinade for grilled chicken and other lean meats. Try topping sandwiches with your favorite flavor, or blend it with some olive oil, vinegar and fresh herbs for a simple salad dressing.

### **Herbs and Spices**

Peanut butter and jelly. Cheese and crackers. Some culinary combos were meant to be. The same can be said for seasonings. Pasta and pizza are nothing without a little basil, just like citrus-y salsas without cilantro are considered a crime in some homes. Try adding rosemary to potatoes instead of butter and salt. Sprinkle sweet potatoes and applesauce

with cinnamon instead of brown sugar. Experiment with different seasonings to determine which you like before you reach for the salt or sugar shaker.

## **Hummus**

This tasty treat is a meal-time must-have. Use it as a replacement for sandwich spreads (think mayo or butter) or make it the main feature in a flavorful veggie wrap. Hummus can even make a great alternative to creamy salad dressings and may also help veggie trays appear more appealing. And, because the more veggies you eat, the less you'll snack on other, less healthy choices (we hope!), we consider this to be a total weight loss win.

## **Pesto**

Pesto adds a delicious flavor punch to pasta and veggie noodles. Skip the store-bought versions, which can be full of fat, and opt for a lightened up, make-at-home recipe like the one presented below. Whip up a quick batch to use as a slimmed-down spread for bread (instead of butter, which can clock in at over 100 calories for just one tablespoon!).

### **Not Your Mother's Pesto!**

What makes this pesto different from the rest? It still boasts all the nutritional benefits that traditional pesto dishes out without overdoing it on fat and calories. Tasty tip:

Prepare zucchini noodles using a spiralizer or vegetable peeler, then top them with this delicious sauce!      Serves 4

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#### **Ingredients:**

- 1/4 cup grated low-fat Parmesan cheese
- 1.5-2 cups of fresh basil
- 2 cloves of fresh garlic
- 1/3 cup chicken stock or vegetable broth
- 1/8 cup of extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper

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#### **Directions:**

1. Remove stems from basil
2. Peel and mince garlic
3. Add all ingredients except chicken stock to blender and blend to achieve a puree
4. While continuing to blend, pour chicken stock through blender spout until thoroughly combined