

Chicken and Brown Rice Salad

This tasty salad provides some healthy fats and some nice crunch! Enjoy with some raw veggies and a slice of cantaloupe or other fresh fruit for a satisfying lunch.

3 cups cooked, cold brown rice (use 1 cup dry and cook according to package directions)
2 cups cooked diced chicken
½ cup sliced celery
¼ cup sliced ripe olives
2 Tablespoons sliced green onion
½ cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
¼ cup fat-free Italian dressing
½ cup cashews (add just before serving, or sprinkle on top)

Method:

In large bowl, combine cooked rice, chicken celery, olives and green onions. In small bowl, combine mayonnaise with Italian dressing, and mix well. Stir lightly into rice mixture. Save cashews to add just before serving. Chill salad overnight for best flavor. (Original source of this recipe is unknown)

Makes 6 servings, about 1 cup each for a main dish. Per serving: 300 calories, 12 gm total fat, 45 mg. cholesterol, 480 mg. sodium, 33 gm carbs, 3 gm fiber, and 17 gm protein.

Creamy Hummus

Hummus is a Middle-Eastern vegetarian appetizer dip, usually served with pita chips, but also good with whole grain crackers or raw vegetables. There are also a variety of other ways to use hummus! Try it as a sandwich spread instead of mayo or mustard; use it as a base for a veggie pizza; try a grilled chicken sandwich with roasted red peppers and spinach, or even an omelet filling with some sautéed veggies. Another use is to mix about ¼ cup in 1 pound raw ground beef before forming patties for grilling.

¾ cup water
½ cup tahini (sesame seed paste)
3 garlic cloves, peeled
6 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
2 cans chickpeas (garbanzo beans), drained and rinsed

Method: Place first 3 ingredients in blender container, process until smooth. Add lemon juice and remaining ingredients; process until smooth, scraping down sides occasionally. This recipe makes 4 cups, but is easy to divide in half if you need a smaller amount. (You may want the entire batch, though, because it's so good – you can just eat it with a spoon!) Per 1 tablespoon serving: 34 calories, 1.5 gm fat, 1 gm protein, 4 gm carbs, <1 gm fiber, 69 mg. sodium. Recipe from Cooking Light magazine.

Then, you may wonder, what to do with the extra tahini paste? It will keep well in the frig until you want to make more hummus. Tahini paste is also used to make Baba Ghannouj, which is a roasted eggplant dip.

For another idea, you can make a **tahini sauce** by blending ½ cup tahini paste, 3 cloves garlic, ½ teaspoon kosher salt, 2 tablespoons olive oil and ¼ cup fresh lemon juice. Add a little warm water if needed to make a drizzling consistency. Stir in 1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley before using. You can then use tahini sauce to drizzle over salads, or use in tuna salad instead of mayonnaise. You can also drizzle a little tahini sauce over grilled burgers for a different flavor.

RAMC's Favorite Homemade Granola

Granola can be very expensive, but here is a delicious recipe for a homemade version using ingredients most people already have at home. We make it frequently in the hospital kitchen, and often use it in strawberry yogurt parfaits, which are a favorite with both patients and staff!

Start by preheating oven to 300 degrees F. Spray a large baking sheet with non-stick coating.

4 cups quick oats
1 ½ cups chopped walnuts
½ cup packed brown sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/3 cup canola oil
¼ cup honey
2 tablespoons sugar
4 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 cup raisins or sweetened dried cranberries (such as Craisins)

Method: combine first 5 ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Combine oil, honey, and sugar in a small saucepan. Bring to a simmer, remove from heat and add vanilla. Pour hot liquid over oat mixture, stirring well to combine. Toss mixture with hands until well mixed. Spread on prepared baking sheet, Bake until golden brown, stirring occasionally, about 30 minutes. Cool completely, and then add raisins or dried cranberries. Makes about 6 and ½ cups. Per ¼ cup serving: 160 calories, 8 gm fat, 21 gm carbs, 2 gm fiber, 25 mg. sodium. 3 gm. protein.