

Cooking Creatively Can Reduce Stress

Cooking may be the one realm of creativity that is accessible to virtually anyone!

How do you know you are being creative with your food?

Watch for one or more of these signs:



1. You pay attention to ingredients when you buy them in the market - creativity starts with a good selective eye
2. You think about the best ways to make your ingredients shine
3. You are not worried about following a recipe to a T, and you are willing to swap ingredients to ones you love, are fresh, or are more available.
4. You show off your food in ways that are pleasing to the eye – Instagram not required!
5. You take time to savor and enjoy your food

Daily access to creativity can be helpful in many ways

As the one realm of creativity open to virtually everyone (and our culture's obsession with TV cooking shows is one sign of it) - this daily access to creativity can be helpful in several ways.




1. It can reduce anxiety and stress and promote feelings of self-confidence
2. It improves your nutrition status and body composition
3. It improves quality time spent with family members
4. It can increase digestive health
5. It makes the most out of the most nutritious seasonal foods
6. It can help you find hidden talents and treasures inside (one friend started painting after she started cooking, another one became a food photographer)
7. It's a hidden way to include more movement in your life (think chopping, washing, bending, lifting cast iron pans, grating...all contributing to micro and macro movements of your body, helping muscle get stronger and sending signals to your bones!!!)

All that said, we have created a few simple and creative recipes using our fun cooking mix-and-match matrix for you, so you can play around with creating simple meals from scratch.

Week of Wellness Recipe Mix-and-Match Matrix

Mix & Match Recipe Matrix – Make Your Own Recipes

On the next pages are a few meals and sides we created using just the first row of the matrix.

PROTEIN	THEME SAUCE	VEGGIES/ FRUIT	EXTRAS
CHICKEN SHRIMP BEEF PORK BEANS SAUSAGE GROUND BEEF CHICKPEAS	SALSA 	BELL PEPPER CUCUMBER ONION TOMATO CARROT TOMATILLO ZUCCHINI POTATO CHAYOTE PAPAYA BUTTERNUT SQUASH MANGO CORN AVOCADO PLANTAIN PINEAPPLE JICAMA	COCONUT LIME CAYENNE CILANTRO COTIJA CHEESE CORN CHIPS TACOS/TORTILLAS RICE NOPALES
LIMA BEANS PAVA BEANS CHICKEN BEEF SAUSAGE SEA FOOD WHITE FISH EGGS LAMB	SPAGHETTI SAUCE 	SPAGHETTI SQUASH TOMATO ZUCCHINI BELL PEPPER MUSHROOMS CELERY OKRA CARROTS ASPARAGUS SPINACH EGG PLANT KALE FENNEL CUCUMBER ONION ARUGULA GARLIC CABBAGE BERRIES	NOODLES PASTA RICE OLIVES MOZZARELLA FETA PARMESAN PINE NUTS CREAM OREGANO
CHICKEN SHRIMP FISH LENTILS PORK BEEF LAMB SEA FOOD TOFU	CURRY SAUCE 	ONION CAULIFLOWER MUSHROOMS BROCCOLI CARROTS EGG PLANT CELERY BAMBOO SHOOTS GREEN BEANS SPINACH SPROUTS OKRA SUGAR SNAP PEAS BOK CHOY SQUASH MANGO PINEAPPLE	RICE NOODLES KAFIR LIME THAI BASIL GARAM MASALA GHEE COCONUT CURRY PASTE TAMARIND

How to use the Mix & Match Matrix

By keeping a few jarred or canned sauces on hand to use as a recipe starter, you can mix-and-match using the protein, vegetable, fruit, and extras columns to create dozens of different, simple, and satisfying meals in a pinch.

While we placed the ingredients into certain slots based on how well they tend to go together, don't be afraid to change things up even further! The sky's the limit.

The next time you're at the supermarket, be sure to check out the variety of jarred pasta and simmer sauces, salsas, and condiments that are inexpensive and last forever on the shelf.

Tip – Print this out and take it with you to the store for ideas on what to buy.

Week of Wellness Recipe Mix-and-Match Matrix

Chicken and Salsa

Serves 4-8

2 lbs chicken tenders

1 16 oz jar of salsa of your choice

1 tbsp olive oil

Directions

Grab a medium heavy pot, heat up the olive oil and brown the meat. Lightly salt. You may need want to taste your salsa before you salt, sometimes they are quite salty. Mix the contents of the jar in, stir and cover. Simmer for 45 minutes. Once done, most of the liquid will have evaporated. Shred with a spatula or fork and use for the following recipes and more.

Shredded Spicy Chicken Salad



Serves 2

2 cups mixed spring greens

1/4 bunch fresh cilantro leaves

Juice of 1/2 lime

2 oz cotija cheese - crumbled

Directions

Mix all the greens, leaves, juice, and cheese, then top with your shredded salsa chicken.

Garnish with any fun toppings you like, like avocado, sour cream, or more salsa.

Voila!

Week of Wellness Recipe Mix-and-Match Matrix

Simple Chicken Tacos



You can use the basic chicken and salsa in tacos - easy to make.

For taco shells you can use corn or flour, cassava, almond, spinach or any tortilla you like.

You can make alternative tacos from zucchini (google zucchini taco shells), celery root, or lettuce cups.

Once you have chosen your shell, heat up and serve.

Use shredded greens, meat, cotija or cashew cheese, cilantro, lime, guacamole, sour cream, pico de gallo or any other toppings you enjoy.

You can take this a step further and even make quesadillas using any sort of tortillas you like - kids love those so much in

our home!

Jicama and Cucumber Crunchy Salad



Serves 4

4 medium Persian cucumbers

2 cups jicama

juice of 1/2 lime

cilantro

cayenne pepper

Directions

Cube the vegetables. Sprinkle with lime juice and cayenne. Make sure you have plenty of cilantro, as well!

Want to make this even more fun - you can blend it into a summer chilled soup!

Week of Wellness Recipe Mix-and-Match Matrix

Fajita Vegetables



These are lovely in a fajita, or just on their own as a side to the basic Chicken and Salsa recipe.

Serves 4

4 medium zucchini

4 medium thin carrots

1 large bell pepper

2 large spring onions or 1 yellow onion or 1/2 Hawaiian onion

2 tbsp olive oil

salt to taste

Directions

Cut everything in strips, making sure the carrots are thin enough (like a 1/2 pencil), so they can cook evenly.

Heat up the oil over medium heat, place the vegetables in the pan and cook while stirring for about 25-30 minutes or until fully cooked.

Another way to go about this is to heat a cast iron pan on high, and just blacken them, but they will be crunchy and less sweet. Your choice!

Week of Wellness Recipe Mix-and-Match Matrix

Mix & Match Shopping List and Pantry Tips

For best results, purchase a variety of fresh, dry, frozen, canned, and jarred foods.

When you can't go to the store regularly, it's nice to have fresh while it's available, but be able to fall back on foods in your freezer until you can head to the store again.

Notes on frozen, canned, jarred, and dried foods

Frozen veggies are just as healthy as fresh, often more so because they were picked and frozen at the peak of ripeness before being shipped to the store.

Frozen meat is healthy, and lasts a long time, but can lose texture over time. Be sure to rotate it, eating the older purchases first, and adding new ones to the back of the freezer.

Dried foods like grains, flours, lentils, split peas, and beans can get old, tough, or even go bad over very long periods. Rotate them so you use older foods first, when possible.

Canned and jarred food, particularly when they are simple ingredients, can be very healthy. Beware of extras, like weird chemicals, added sugar, lots of salt, and high sodium levels.

Jarred sauces last for years on the shelf, are inexpensive, and can turn any protein and veggies into a complete meal, even for those who can't or don't want to cook.

Sauces (the base to your Mix & Match Matrix meals) are found all over the store, in the pasta section, Hispanic foods, Asian foods, canned dinners, gourmet foods, and even near the butcher counters and produce sections.

Creating Your Shopping List and Stock Your Pantry

Use the Mix & Match Matrix to create a shopping list based on your preferences.

Print off the Mix & Match Matrix to carry with you to the store

- Start with the sauces – choose favorite or new jarred or canned salsas, curry pastes and sauces, chutneys, pasta sauces, and simmer sauces
- Choose fresh produce, based on what's in season
- Choose fresh protein based on what's available, on sale, or what you love
- Stock up on frozen veggies and proteins that last a long time
- Add canned beans, chickpeas, tomato products, coconut milk, and other foods you like to have on hand. Consider doubling up because they last basically forever.
- Supplement with staple foods and bases that you can rely on, like pizza crusts, dried split peas, broths and stocks, plus canned foods like beans, chickpeas, and soups for when you really don't want to cook.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me at Roland@EatMoveLive52.com.

Find your recipes, resources, and your community at EatMoveLive52.com