

Words on Wellne

YOUR EXTENSION CONNECTION TO NUTRITION AND FITNESS

Craving Comfort Foods

In the fall, we crave warm, hearty foods like cheesy casseroles and hearty soups. Often, though, these “comfort foods” are high in fat, sodium, and calories.

The next time you make your favorite “comfort foods,” try these tips to make them healthier and even more enjoyable:

- Add extra vegetables of all types—dark green; red and orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other vegetables—without added sauces, fats, or salt. Double the vegetables in a soup or casserole recipe to add extra vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- Switch up your grains, making at least half of your grains whole grain. Like rice? Try replacing white rice with brown rice in your recipe. This month’s recipe uses brown rice.
- Choose reduced-fat dairy foods, including fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese, in casseroles and cream soups. Reduced-fat cheeses, for example, have less fat but just as much flavor and melt just like full-fat cheese.
- Use lean protein foods, including lean meats, poultry, and eggs; seafood; beans, peas, and lentils; and nuts, seeds, and soy products. Cooking on a budget? Canned meats are just as nutritious, cheaper, and easier to use in casseroles.

Source: [Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025/3kf72S4](#).

Thai Chicken Curry

Serving Size: 1 cup chicken curry, 1/3 cup rice | Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 cup instant brown rice
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken
- 1 onion, chopped (about 1 cup)
- 2 carrots, chopped (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons Thai red curry paste
- 1 cup light coconut milk (about 1/2 of a 13.5-ounce can)
- 1 cup chopped spinach

Directions:

1. Cook instant brown rice according to package directions. Set aside.
2. Cut chicken into 1-inch pieces.
3. Spray a large frying pan with nonstick cooking spray. Add chicken, onion, carrots, ground black pepper, and salt. Cook over medium-high heat for 8 minutes.
4. Reduce heat to medium low. Stir in curry paste and coconut milk. Simmer for 5–10 minutes until vegetables are tender, stirring frequently.
5. Stir in spinach. Simmer for 3 more minutes, stirring frequently.
6. Serve curry over brown rice.

Nutrition information per serving:

290 calories, 7g fat, 3g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 85mg cholesterol, 390mg sodium, 29g total carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 5g sugar, 28g protein

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach’s Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu

