

Weekly Newsletter ~ Week of April 27th, 2020

Chocolate Chip Pretzel Cookies

Lauren's Note: With my finals in the beginning of this week, I didn't have time to write my own article or mess around with my newsletter template more to get it in a sharing-compatible format, so I'm going back to a doc and credible article for this week. But, I can't wait to write some more articles for y'all in the next few weeks! Anyway, these cookies are AMAZING!!! They did not last long in my house—my dad ate 2 within 2 hours of me making these and probably ended up eating half of them and usually he doesn't love my healthy treats to eat them that much! They're super simple to make, and with the pretzel on top, I think they look super



adorable! And they taste just as good—especially when you use peanut butter in the recipe, which adds that flavor to the already delicious combo of chocolate and pretzels... HEAVENLY!!! All the ingredients for these are what I'd deem as my "healthy staples" (more on those in my next article, but basically no crazy items you've never heard of and things I try to use in a lot of the recipes I share so that they'll be put to use if you buy them!). Enjoy!

Recipe from @KaleMcMaybe

Ingredients:

- 1 egg or flax egg*
- ¼ cup melted coconut oil
- ⅓ cashew butter**
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp almond milk
- 1 cup almond flour
- ½ cup coconut sugar or stevia

- ¼ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- chocolate chips***
- broken pretzel pieces***
- whole pretzels and sea salt, for topping

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350F. In a medium bowl, whisk the egg (if using a flax egg, no need to whisk), and combine with coconut oil, cashew butter, vanilla, and almond milk.
2. In a separate bowl, mix almond flour, coconut sugar, baking soda, and salt.
3. Mix dry ingredients into wet ingredients. Fold in chocolate chips and broken pretzel pieces.
4. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Scoop the dough into 2 inch balls, and press flat. Top with pretzels and flaky sea salt.
5. Bake for 15 minutes or until golden brown.



Notes:

*To make a flax egg, combine 1 tbsp ground flaxseed meal with 2.5-3 tbsp water, and let the mixture sit for 5-10 minutes to gel up, then add to the recipe in place of an egg. This option makes the recipe vegan or (the reason I use it) saves you from using an egg because they can be a little hard to find in stores right now.

**Any nut butter works here! I used peanut butter, and as I mentioned in my note, I would HIGHLY recommend this substitution because you can taste it in the baked cookies and the peanut butter/chocolate/pretzel combo is insanely delicious!!

***I never measure chocolate chips or add-ins... put in as much as your heart desires!

13 Attainable Nutrition Tips During Quarantine

From onceuponapumpkinrd.com

Lauren's Note: There are a lot of mixed messages going around during quarantine: do you try to be productive because you now have so much time? do you relax more because everything has slowed down more? should this be a time to dedicate yourself to living a healthier lifestyle (since you have the time, lots more free resources than normal online, and unlimited classes from Donna!!!)? but how does one stay away from the daunting calls of the pantry while home all day (anyone else with me on the struggle to not eat everything in my pantry in one day?!)? anyway, how much you do or don't do during quarantine is purely up to you, and if you choose now to slow down and take a rest, that's also being productive because you're putting yourself first! I'm digressing. This article talks about ways you can improve your nutrition that don't require huge commitments—little tweaks can lead to big changes!! Try out one, two, or all of these, whichever helps you the most! I'll include the link to the full article at the end if you are interested in checking out some of the recipes she's linked to the bottom of the article or any of the recipes on her page! I haven't tried any from her yet, but I hope to soon because they all look delicious!

As the corona virus continues to keep Americans at home for at least another month at the time that I'm writing this, I wanted to talk about what I feel are realistic, and attainable tips and goals for keeping your nutrition on track without sacrificing your sanity at home during the coronavirus epidemic. I hope you find these 13 attainable nutrition tips during quarantine helpful.

This list is of course not one size fits all, but my hopes in writing this is that: A) you feel confident that you ARE doing enough for your health and nutrition at this time, because you are. And B) that you see that it is possible to maintain your nutrition goals with a dose of grace and self-compassion at this time for yourself at this time.

Food is very much tied to our emotions — the good ones and the difficult. Remember it's not the enemy, coronavirus is.

1. Go into each week with a loose “game plan”

I'm not a super meal prepper and you don't have to be either, which is why I say a loose game plan is better than none. Take a few minutes to create a little meal plan for dinners (or all) of your meals

for the week. Consider what you're in the mood for, what needs to be used up in your fridge and what you can pull together with a couple pantry staples. Doing this goes a long way in preventing you from standing in front of the fridge wondering what's for dinner when you're already starving.

take it one step further: If you feel like it at the time take it one step further by prepping part of some of the meals you have on your list.

2. Stay on top of hydration

It's like really hard to drink plain old water all day while you're home. I know! And I think it's safe to say we've all been drinking way more than we typically would. Not drinking enough water and drinking more alcohol can definitely lead to dehydration. Often when we're thirsty we think we're hungry and we feel more tired and less energized in general. Our bodies love and need water so drink up! And I know this doesn't sound fun but remember to drink water in between glasses of wine. I promise, your tomorrow self will thank me! 😊

take it one step further: stash a big pitcher with water, lemon wedges, and cucumber in your fridge so that you can easily refill your glass throughout the day and it's not boring.

3. Prep (a little) ahead of time

As I mentioned, I'm not a huge meal prep person myself. I consider my version of meal prep "lazy girl meal prep", but hey, it works! I try to at least prep three things: sources of protein (ex. bake chicken, boil eggs, cook quinoa), veggies (wash and chop in containers). A small step toward putting a full meal together, but this truly helps so much because I can at least use these two things (proteins and veggies) in so many different ways depending on what I'm in the mood for. And these quarantine days, some days it's big green salads, and others it's boxed mac and cheese. Remember: that's ok!

take it one step further: Match up your loose meal plan with your lazy girl meal prep game. The guesswork for what's for dinner and lunches at home just got way easier.

4. Give your gut some extra love

80% of our immune system is in our gut. It's so important (especially now) to incorporate practices into our daily routines that promote gut health. I totally geek out over gut health and we're learning SO much about how many other things in our body our gut is connected to, like our mood. If you can, try to incorporate foods that contain probiotics (the good bacteria our gut needs more of) into your diet. Probiotic rich foods include: yogurt, sauerkraut, sourdough, kombucha, kimchi, and kefir.

take it one step further: Consider incorporating a daily probiotic into our routine.

5. Don't forget about frozen veggies

With cutting back on grocery trips and orders, it's important to be strategic with what you do buy so it will last longer and you have enough to make every single meal at home. Frozen veggies are just as nutritious as fresh, last longer, and can help to shortcut meal time. There's a lot of different medleys out there, even spiralized frozen veggies, so make sure you take a look the next time you're at the store.

6. Stick to your sleep routine

Funny how when we don't really have anywhere to go, staying up bingeing TV feels like no big deal right? I hear ya. The thing about not getting enough sleep even when we're "just staying home" is that it can impact your nutrition choices the next day. Lack of sleep throws off our hunger hormones and is the reason we crave carb-heavy and sugary foods the next day. Not to mention you don't exactly feel like working out the day after a night you don't get enough sleep. I say as much as you can stick to your typical sleep routine and aim for 7-8 hours of sleep, the better.

take it one step further: Disconnect a couple hours before bed lessen your blue light exposure, wind down a little better and promote better sleep before bed.

7. Focus on fiber

Fiber is a very special F word that we need more of in our diets! Fiber helps with digestion, and gives our meals more staying power. The good news is fiber is in every single fruit and vegetable and whole grain (easy to incorporate into your meals!). Fiber also helps our gut microbiome by essentially feeding the good bacteria. Aim for at least 25g of fiber per day. Fiber rich foods: oats, fruit, veggies, quinoa, beans, chickpeas

8. Incorporate more magnesium rich foods

Known as the "calm mineral", magnesium is crucial for nerve and muscle function, among about a hundred other things. It helps to relax us, something I think we could all use a little more of right about now! Magnesium rich foods include: pumpkin seeds, avocado, nuts, beans, chickpeas, leafy greens — eat up!

9. Listen to your hunger signals

With our previous out-of-the-house work routines, we also had certain times of the day that we would eat breakfast, lunch and dinner based around work time, travel time, exercise time, events and activities, etc. Those are gone now so some of the it's-time-to-eat signals have changed. When

establishing a different routine now don't go too long between meals (3-4 hours) max to keep you fueled up and feeling good at home.

10. Eat sitting down at the table

Seems simple enough right? It's crazy but distracted eating can make us feel like we barely ate at all during a meal because we're not paying attention to it. I'm all for Netflix marathons, just stop for dinner, ok? Savor your food, pay attention to it, chat with the ones you're quarantining with during your meals.

take it one step further: Put down your phone during meals too! During mealtimes only consume your food!

11. Don't strive for "perfect" eating

Perfect eating doesn't exist ever. Ever! Please don't beat yourself up over not making "perfect" nutrition choices all the time, especially during this time. Striving for perfection is not attainable. Instead set one small goal each week that you want to follow through with. Examples include: going to bed earlier, eating vegetables at every meal at least 3X a week, and writing down three things you love about your body a day.

12. Bring fun back into the kitchen

Use your extra time to find joy in the kitchen again. Maybe you always felt pressed for time when cooking and meal prepping and actually really didn't enjoy it. Maybe you have a long standing list or Pinterest board with recipes that you've always wanted to try. Get curious, play with different flavors, cook with the ones you're with or bake banana bread for crying out loud! You might just surprise yourself by learning something new and discovering a new recipe you love!

13. Remember that comfort food is not the enemy, corona virus is.

There have definitely been times for me in the past couple of weeks when I'm not in the mood for veggies and only boxed mac and cheese will do. I try to always honor what my body is telling me it wants and if I can add veggies to it (like a handful of spinach into my mac and cheese) I will. In other cases I might not. I don't feel guilty because I know when the next opportunity to make a healthy choice comes around, I'll probably take it and that one meal or dessert or skipped workout won't make or break me. It's habits over time FTW!

How quarantine has affected my approach to nutrition and food choices

For me I'd say this time has been a mix of nutritious foods, and comfort food classics. There have definitely been days when I'm so not in the mood for vegetables and only mac and cheese sounds good and other days where I feel determined to prep proteins and veggies, and make green smoothies. You too? Honestly my mood wavers and my food choices change with it.

No matter what is going on in the world, I always strive for an attainable approach to nutrition, hence these 13 attainable nutrition tips during quarantine! In the past couple of weeks I heard so much unattainable advice from people (mostly unqualified!) about how to stock your fridge, what to do for your immunity and how not to gain weight during this time. All of it has felt extremely self-serving and to me and even as an RD has made me feel like I'm not doing enough for my health and nutrition at this time.

Let me tell you. You ARE doing enough for your health and nutrition at this time and you control what type of content you consume, so pay attention to how it makes you feel and if it's making you feel like what you're doing right now is not enough, I say hit unfollow. It's better for your mental health too, something so important we need to take care of at this time too.

A huge shoutout to all the healthcare workers out there keeping us safe this time and all the grocery store workers who are working so hard to keep food on the shelves and keep the grocery store safe! A million thank you's would not be enough.

Full article:

<https://www.onceuponapumpkinrd.com/13-attainable-nutrition-tips-during-quarantine/>