



Ask Ellie

Dietitian and *Healthy Appetite* host **Ellie Krieger** answers your nutrition questions and makes over a takeout favorite.

Q: Are there any foods that will help jump-start my metabolism?

Donna Reiss, Orlando, FL

A: Green tea can boost your metabolism, but you'll need to drink a lot of it! Studies show that you can burn about 70 calories a day by drinking six cups of green tea, thanks to its combination of caffeine and catechins (antioxidants believed to help burn calories). But *what* you consume isn't the only thing that matters: *When* you eat affects your metabolism, too. Eating the same size meals at the same time each day can help. And, of course, exercise is the best way to burn extra fat. Try to exercise at least five days a week.

Q: What's the best way to make popcorn?

Liz Dzurinda, Clayton, NC

A: My favorite way to prepare popcorn is to toss ¼ cup of kernels in a small bowl with ½ teaspoon peanut oil and ¼ teaspoon salt. Then put that into a paper lunch bag, fold the top over a few times, and microwave for about 2 minutes, or until the popping almost stops. It comes out perfectly! And crunch on this: When you prepare your popcorn this way, you'll cut more than a third of the calories of regular microwave popcorn, plus you'll skip all those artificial additives.



Can you cut the fat from my takeout?

Is there a healthier way to make sesame chicken?

Melissa Rosa, Las Cruces, NM

A: You can get a better version of that Chinese takeout you crave by cooking it at home, where you can control what goes into it. This sesame chicken is marinated and browned instead of breaded and fried. And extra garlic, ginger and crisp snow peas amp up the flavor and nutrition. All said and done, you save a shocking 270 calories, 10 grams of fat and 1,300 milligrams of sodium per portion compared with a typical restaurant version.

SESAME CHICKEN WITH SNOW PEAS

ACTIVE: 40 min | TOTAL: 1 hr | SERVES: 4

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| 5 | tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce | 3 | cloves garlic, minced |
| 4 | teaspoons toasted sesame oil | 1¼ | cups low-sodium chicken broth |
| 2 | teaspoons honey | 3 | tablespoons sugar |
| 1¼ | pounds skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into ¾-inch chunks | 3 to 4 | teaspoons cornstarch |
| 6 | teaspoons canola oil | 1 | tablespoon rice vinegar |
| 2 | scallions, thinly sliced | 1 | teaspoon chili paste |
| 1 | tablespoon grated peeled ginger | 4 | cups snow peas, trimmed |
| | | | Cooked brown rice, for serving (optional) |
| | | 2 | tablespoons toasted sesame seeds |

1. Whisk 3 tablespoons soy sauce, 2 teaspoons sesame oil and the honey in a bowl. Toss in the chicken and marinate 20 minutes.
2. Remove the chicken from the marinade using a slotted spoon. Heat 2 teaspoons canola oil in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the chicken in 2 batches, turning once or twice, until browned, 3 to 5 minutes (add 2 more teaspoons canola oil between batches). Transfer the chicken to a plate and wipe out the skillet.
3. Heat the remaining 2 teaspoons canola oil in the skillet. Add the scallions, reserving some of the green parts for topping. Add the ginger and garlic and cook, stirring, 1 minute. Whisk the broth, sugar, cornstarch, vinegar, chili paste and the remaining 2 tablespoons soy sauce in a bowl; add to the skillet and cook, stirring, until thickened, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the remaining 2 teaspoons sesame oil.
4. Meanwhile, cook the snow peas in a steamer basket set over a few inches of boiling water until crisp-tender, 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Return the chicken to the skillet with the sauce and heat through. Serve the chicken and snow peas over brown rice, if desired. Top with the sesame seeds and reserved scallion greens.

Per serving: Calories 390; Fat 17 g (Saturated 3 g); Cholesterol 90 mg; Sodium 700 mg; Carbohydrate 23 g; Fiber 3 g; Protein 35 g

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