



... It's Worth the Trip!



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Tuna Bahn Mi (Vietnamese Sandwich)

Seafood (shellfish and fish) is a good source of key nutrients like protein and vitamins and minerals. It is also a primary food source for omega-3 fatty acids, which are very important to optimal health. In fact, multiple studies show that omega-3 fatty acids are not only extremely beneficial to heart, brain, and eye health, but that they also protect against certain types of cancer, arthritis, and premature aging of the skin.

Mainly because of the known benefits to health provided by omega-3 fatty acids, the Dietary Guidelines encourages Americans to eat more seafood. In fact, if possible, seafood should be part of building a healthy eating pattern by incorporating into the diet twice a week. Most Americans should aim to consume at least 8 ounces per week usually in 2-4 ounce servings. Pregnant and breastfeeding women should consult their doctor or a dietitian for guidance on the optimal intake level and best types of seafood.

Although seafood is a high-performance, nutrient dense food that can have beneficial effects on the waistline, only 10% of Americans meet the recommended level of intake. Some of the reasons why seafood is not a staple in most American diets are the expense of fresh seafood and, or, the limited knowledge of how to cook it.

USDA analysis has shown that the canned and frozen varieties of fish have roughly the same nutritional value as fresh fish. In addition, these varieties tend to be more economical than fresh fish and also have a substantially greater shelf life and spoilage isn't as much of a burden then fresh fish. Quick dishes using canned and frozen fish are limitless and easy. For example, a tuna-melt grilled cheddar cheese sandwich on whole grain/wheat bread only takes minutes. There are also numerous recipes on the internet for tasty salmon patties using canned salmon. Most all frozen fish fillets turn out great when seasoned with just a dash of salt, pepper and dried dill and then baked or broiled according to package directions. Just remember, for the highest nutritional density and quality, be sure to choose plain frozen fillets and low sodium canned fish.

Speaking of sodium, one great strategy to help keep your sodium in check is to decrease the use of high sodium deli meats for your sandwiches, replacing the meats with low sodium canned tuna or salmon a couple of days a week.

This meal features a unique use of canned tuna to mimic the flavors of a popular Vietnamese inspired sandwich that is taking America by storm.



Directions:

Serves: 4

1) In a medium sized bowl, place 4 oz. of packaged, shredded carrots. Dissolve 2 tsp. of sugar in 2 tbsp. of vinegar and then pour over the carrots. Mix well and set aside so the flavors can blend.

2) Mince 2 tbsp. of canned chipotle peppers and place them in small bowl. Mix in 1/2 cup of mayonnaise.

3) In a medium bowl, mix 3-5 oz. cans of tuna (drained and flaked), 1/4 cup of lime juice (freshly squeezed), 1-4 oz. can of drained diced green chilies and 2 1/2 tbsps. Asian fish sauce.

4) Cut lengthwise 1-12 inch deli style French baguette (preferably whole wheat/grain) in half. Spread the chipotle mayonnaise

on both sides. Top 1 side with the tuna mixture and then lightly pepper. Sprinkle 1 tbsp. of chopped fresh cilantro (optional) over the tuna and then top with the carrot mixture (drained); and, then place the other 1/2 of the baguette back on top.

5) Serve each plate with 1/4th of the sandwich alongside a large piece of melon or 1 fresh peach (sliced) topped with 1/2 cup of nonfat vanilla Greek yogurt.

Tips: The tuna mix works well in wraps too. Try serving them chilled or even warmed a bit in the microwave.

DISCLAIMER: YOU MAY USE ANY LIKE PRODUCTS OF ANY BRAND IN MAKING THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL. THE PICTURES HERE ARE NOT AN ENDORSEMENT OF THESE PRODUCTS.

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