



... It's Worth the Trip!



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Enchilada Chicken Casserole

Have you ever heard of the Pareto Principle, which is also known as the 80/20 rule? The idea is that 80% of problems can be addressed by focusing on 20% of the causes. Many businesses have used and modified this technique to effectively create profits, solve problems, increase productivity, and create targeted marketing strategies.

You may actually have seen that the 80/20 rule has found its way into dieting recommendations. Many "health promoting" celebrities credit the 80/20 diet to their svelte frames. Health professionals also are using the principle in conjunction with nutrient dense, high performance foods and the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* because the principle can, in fact, result in actionable and attainable behaviors that over time become part of a healthy lifestyle.

Using the 80/20 rule to build a healthy eating pattern to meet weight and health goals is pretty simple! You don't have to be perfect or deprive yourself. You get to indulge every now and then on your favorite sweets or comfort foods and not beat yourself up for "falling off" the wagon and then giving up completely. The 80/20 rule can be used to help you build a lifelong "diet" strategy that works for you.

There are many ways to deploy the 80/20 principle. Some people like to build in a "cheat day," while others like to have a few cheat meals spread throughout the week. There are risks with these two techniques to overindulge and consume too many calories. The 3rd strategy, seems to be the one that takes into consideration another goal, which is to fuel the body daily with nutritious foods, while also understanding that it can be difficult to assure that meals are made up of 100% nutrient dense, high quality foods. It allows for the most flexibility in cooking and preparing meals too. In addition, for those in training or those working out to lose weight, this strategy assures that there will be mostly good fuels in your system to give you the energy to power through workouts.

Whatever strategy you choose, the key is that 80% of the diet be made up of whole, unprocessed or minimally processed foods, including fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and whole unprocessed grains, as well as plenty of water. Aim to fill your plate with mostly fruits and vegetables at meals and choose nutritious snacks. Pay attention to the quality of the ingredients in the foods you eat and limit the unhealthy fats, added sugars, and sodium.

This meal is comprised of mostly nutrient dense, high quality foods; but, to give it a down home comfort feel, creamed soup is used. This works for the 80/20 rule; and, just think about the calories saved by preparing this dish at home compared to the restaurant version.



Directions: Preheat oven 350°F

Serves: 8

1. In a medium sized bowl, mix together 1- 10 oz. can of low sodium cream of chicken soup, ¼ cup of green enchilada sauce (you will need a 15 oz. can for this recipe), and 1/3 cup plus 1 tbsp. of plain Greek yogurt. Add to the mix, 2 cups of shredded, cooked chicken and a 4 oz. can of diced green chilies and mix until the ingredients are combined.
2. Evenly spread ¼ cup of the enchilada sauce in an 8x8 baking pan. Cut 12- 6 inch tortillas in half. Make two layers of the following: 6 halves of corn tortillas and top with 1/3 of the chicken mixture and 1/3 cup of the enchilada sauce.
3. Top the 2nd layer with 1 ½ cups of shredded cheddar cheese and then top with 6 tortilla halves and then the remaining chicken and 1/3 cup of enchilada sauce. Cover with the remaining tortillas and then the last of the enchilada sauce. Sprinkle with ½ cup of shredded cheese.

4. Bake for 25 minutes. The cheese should be melted and the casserole should be bubbling. Remove it from the oven and let it sit for 5 minutes before cutting.

5. Serve each plate with 1/8th of the casserole topped with baby spinach, diced tomato, and salsa (optional), alongside a serving of your favorite fruit.

Tips:

Substitute other leftover cooked meat for the chicken in this recipe.

Freeze the leftovers as individual servings to carry to the office for lunch.

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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