



## ... It's Worth the Trip!



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

### Grilled Fish Burgers with Cucumber Dill Sauce

The important role protein plays in supporting optimal health, body composition, and performance continues to take center stage; as it should. Protein is needed to sustain life. However, there is confusion regarding how much is needed. This is because the research on how much protein is the optimal amount for good health is ongoing, and is far from settled. Rather than setting a specific protein daily amount, the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends building an eating pattern that is comprised of plenty of healthier sources of foods that provide protein. The most recent Protein Summit, which was made of leading medical and nutrition experts, states that an eating pattern that results in 15-25% of the total calorie intake coming from protein is safe, and for the general population, assists with promoting optimal health.

The key to meeting this need rests in focusing on healthy protein sources, while not breaking the bank. In order to keep the intake of unhealthy fats and calories in check, while assuring adequate intake of key vitamins and minerals, the strategy for meeting your protein needs should be consuming a variety of foods. Although chicken, pork, lamb, dairy, etc. are great sources of protein, care needs to be taken to choose mostly lean cuts and low fat versions. Animal products shouldn't be your only source of protein. There is no harm in aiming for a fair amount of your protein coming from plant based foods (fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts and seeds, and legumes) and seafood. By doing so, it will be easier to keep your calories and saturated fat in check, while assuring you are consuming key vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals that are important to keep your body performing optimally, while also lowering your risk of certain diseases. If you aren't already doing so, you should aim to be consuming some form of seafood at least twice a week and adding some nuts and seeds to your diet to help you intake adequate Omega-3 fatty acids, which help lower the risk heart disease.

A key point to remember is you don't always have to look for foods that are in the fridge to meet your protein needs. There are plenty of economical foods in the pantry that also provide some protein like pasta, rice, ancient grains, canned vegetables, canned legumes, and canned fish. In fact canned fish, such as tuna and salmon, is a very good source of protein, offering levels equal or higher than meat or dairy.

Give this meal solution a try. Who knew that you could grill canned fish?



#### Ingredients: 4 Servings

##### Grilled Fish Burgers

- 14 - 15 oz. of canned salmon or canned tuna (drained)
- 3/4 - 1 cup of dried bread crumbs or panko
- 2 tbsp. sliced green onions (scallions)

- 1 large egg
- 1 minced garlic clove or 1/4 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tbsp. fresh cilantro (chopped)
- Dash of black pepper (optional)
- 4 whole wheat hamburger buns

##### Cucumber Dill Sauce

- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
- The zest of 1 lemon
- 1/2 - 1 garlic clove (minced) (If you like garlic, go with the whole clove)
- 1 1/2 tbsp. fresh dill (chopped)
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 of a small medium English cucumber (chopped very small)

#### Directions:

1. To make the fish patties, place all of the ingredients in a medium bowl in the order listed. If using salmon, remove and discard the large center bone prior to placing the fish in the bowl. Using a fork, gently mix the ingredients until well incorporated, being careful not to over mix causing the fish to turn to "mush."
2. Shape the fish into 4 equal sized patties, about 1/2 inch thick and place them in a single layer on a plate. Carefully place foil over the plate to cover the patties and then refrigerate them for about an hour. (This helps them hold up to grilling)
3. While waiting for the patties to chill, make the sauce by placing all the ingredients in a medium-sized bowl and gently mixing. Place the sauce in the refrigerator so the flavors can blend until ready to serve.
4. After about an hour of the patties chilling, spray a grill rack with

cooking spray. Heat the grill to medium heat. Place the patties on the grill and cover. Cook for 3 minutes on one side and then flip. Cover and cook for an additional 3-4 minutes. Remove from grill.

5. Serve each patty on top of a whole wheat hamburger bun alongside your favorite piece of seasonal fruit.

#### Tips:

- If the patty mix seems too "gooey" after mixing, add 1-2 tbsp. more of bread crumbs or panko.
- Consider using the patty to top your favorite bed of greens for a nice quick salad instead of putting it on a bun.
- Top the burger with your favorite toppings, such as a slice of cheddar cheese, lettuce, tomatoes and forget the sauce.
- These can also be pan fried.

DISCLAIMER:

THIS RECIPE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT BY DOD OF ANY INDIVIDUAL VENDOR. ANY PRODUCT OF SIMILAR SPECIFICATION MAY BE USED TO MAKE THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL.

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