

tastes like the weekend!

Whether hosting or hibernating, you can indulge in favorite comfort foods and stay slim with these delicious meals from Food Network star Ellie Krieger's new cookbook, *So Easy*. The best part? They really are easy.

Photographs by Kana Okada



Enjoy cheesy pasta without the fat—or weight gain.

MAKE SHOPPING A SNAP! Print out a grocery list at Self.com/fooddiet.

✓ tools that trim

We asked Krieger—a culinary expert and a registered dietitian—for five gadgets that save time and calories in the kitchen. Stock up on:

Garlic press "I love garlic, but dicing it gets old. A press minces with one squeeze."

Large grill pan "Excellent for flavor minus the fat, all year round. I love to grill unexpected foods such as bread, tomatoes or fruit."

Meat thermometer "Take your meat's temperature to determine doneness and eliminate guesswork."

Microplane zester "Citrus zest adds huge flavor and antioxidants to dishes like baked goods and marinades. I zest lemons and limes before juicing them."

Spray bottle "Fill one with your choice of flavorful, high-quality oil. Then spritz to coat without overdoing it."



AROMATIC BEEF STEW WITH BUTTERNUT SQUASH

Beef stew (right) gets a Moroccan makeover in this spicy and sweet dish. Warm up to a bowl to ward off a cold—it is chock-full of immune-strengthening iron. Serves 4

2 tsp olive oil	1½ cups low-sodium beef broth
1 lb stew beef, cut into cubes	1½ tsp ground cumin
1 large onion, chopped	1 tsp cinnamon
2 cloves garlic, minced	½ tsp red pepper flakes
1 tbsp peeled and minced fresh ginger	3 cups cooked whole-wheat couscous
1 lb butternut squash, peeled and cut into 1½-inch cubes (about 2½ cups)	¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted in a dry skillet over medium-high heat until golden brown, 2 minutes
1 can (14.5 oz) no-salt-added diced tomatoes	4 tsp minced fresh parsley
1 can (8 oz) no-salt-added tomato sauce	

Heat oil in a 4-qt saucepan over medium-high heat. Add beef and cook until browned on all sides, about 5 minutes. Transfer meat to a plate, leaving juices in saucepan. Add onion; cook, stirring, until translucent, about 6 minutes. Add garlic and ginger; cook, stirring, 1 minute more. Return beef to pot; stir in squash, tomatoes, sauce, broth, cumin, cinnamon and pepper flakes. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to low. Cover; simmer until beef is tender, 30 to 35 minutes. Divide couscous and stew among 4 bowls. Sprinkle with almonds and parsley.

THE DISH 480 calories per bowl, 13 g fat (3 g saturated), 56 g carbs, 8 g fiber, 34 g protein

get cookin'!

TGIF! You'll love every meal through Sunday with these tasty recipes for three filling dinners, a brunch, a lunch and a dessert.



FOUR-CHEESE BAKED PENNE WITH ROMAINE HEARTS MEDITERRANEAN

Feeding a crowd? Please them all with pasta! You can make this creamy, lowfat, calcium-rich meal (opposite) a day ahead—just chill and bake before serving. Serves 8

1½ cups small-curd lowfat cottage cheese	1 can (8 oz) no-salt-added tomato sauce
1¼ cups shredded part-skim mozzarella, divided	1 tsp dried oregano
1 cup part-skim ricotta	1 tsp dried rosemary
3 tbsp chopped fresh parsley	¾ tsp salt
1 lb whole-wheat penne	½ tsp red pepper flakes
2 tsp olive oil	¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper
1 medium onion, chopped	Vegetable oil cooking spray
4 cloves garlic, chopped	¼ cup shredded Parmesan
1 can (15 oz) crushed tomatoes	1 recipe Romaine Hearts Mediterranean (below)

Heat oven to 400°. Combine cottage cheese, ½ cup mozzarella, ricotta and parsley in a bowl. Cook pasta until tender but still firm; drain. Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, 5 minutes. Add garlic; cook, stirring, 30 seconds more. Add tomatoes, sauce, oregano, rosemary, salt, pepper flakes and pepper. Bring to a boil; reduce heat; simmer until sauce thickens slightly, about 10 minutes. Add pasta; turn off heat. Stir in cheese-parsley mixture. Coat a 9" x 13" glass baking dish with cooking spray; transfer pasta mixture to dish.

Top with remaining ¾ cup mozzarella and Parmesan. Bake until heated through and cheese melts, 30 minutes. Serve with Romaine Hearts Mediterranean.

THE DISH 500 calories for 2 cups pasta and 1 romaine heart, 20 g fat (6 g saturated), 58 g carbs, 8 g fiber, 24 g protein

Romaine Hearts Mediterranean

8 small hearts of romaine
½ medium red onion, thinly sliced into rings
1¼ cups kalamata olives
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
3 tbsp fresh lemon juice
1 tsp finely grated lemon zest
1 tsp dried oregano
¼ tsp salt
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper

Cut romaine hearts in half, leaving stem end intact. Top each with a few rings of onion; place 4 olives in a small pile on each plate. Whisk oil, juice, zest, oregano, salt and pepper in a bowl. Drizzle over each half.



SALMON FLORENTINE AND QUINOA PILAF WITH PINE NUTS

You'll be hooked on the scrumptious taste of this meal; plus, it provides a hefty 8 grams of ticker-protective polyunsaturated fats. **Serves 4**

- 2 packages (10 oz each) frozen spinach, thawed
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1/4 cup minced shallots
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 5 sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 tsp salt, plus more to taste
- 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes
- 1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
- 1/2 cup part-skim ricotta
- 4 skinless salmon fillets (6 oz each), rinsed and patted dry
- 1 recipe Quinoa Pilaf With Pine Nuts (below)

Heat oven to 350°. Squeeze spinach of all excess liquid. Set aside. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add shallots; cook, stirring, until soft, about 3 minutes. Add garlic; cook 1 minute more. Add spinach, tomatoes, salt, pepper flakes and pepper; cook, stirring, 2 minutes more. Remove from heat; let cool about 15 minutes. Add ricotta; stir to combine. Season with salt and pepper. Pack about 1/2 cup spinach mixture on top of each fillet, matching the shape of the fillet. Place fillets on a rimmed baking sheet or in a glass baking dish; bake until cooked through, 15 minutes. Serve with Quinoa Pilaf With Pine Nuts.

Quinoa Pilaf With Pine Nuts

- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1/2 large onion, chopped
- 2 tbsp pine nuts, toasted in a dry skillet over medium-high heat until golden brown, 2 minutes
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped

Bring quinoa and broth to a boil in a medium saucepan. Reduce heat to low; cover; simmer until quinoa absorbs liquid, about 15 minutes. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until onion begins to brown, about 6 minutes. When quinoa is done, fluff with a fork and transfer to a serving bowl. Stir in onion, pine nuts and parsley. Season with salt and pepper.

THE DISH 470 calories for 1 fillet and 1/2 cup pilaf, 20 g fat (4 g saturated), 27 g carbs, 6 g fiber, 48 g protein

LAMB AND FETA PITA PIZZAS WITH FENNEL-ARUGULA SALAD

Lunch on zinc-filled lamb when the chilly weather has you cozied up at home. This tangy pie also offers energizing magnesium. Serves 4

- 8 oz lean ground lamb
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 4 medium plum tomatoes, chopped
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 3/4 tsp cinnamon
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 4 whole-wheat pitas (6 inches each)
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1/3 cup crumbled feta
- 1 tbsp pine nuts
- 1 recipe Fennel-Arugula Salad (below)

Heat oven to 400°. Place lamb and onion in a large skillet over medium-high heat and cook, breaking up meat with a spoon and stirring occasionally, until onion is soft and meat is no longer pink, about 5 minutes. Transfer meat and onion to a plate lined with a paper towel to drain fat. Blot with another paper towel. Wipe pan, then return meat and onion to pan. Stir in tomatoes; cook over medium-high heat until they soften slightly, 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in parsley, cinnamon, salt and pepper. (The lamb mixture may be made up to 2 days ahead and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator.) Place pitas on a baking sheet; brush top of each pita with oil. Divide lamb mixture among pitas. Sprinkle with feta and pine nuts. Cook until cheese is warm and pita is toasted, 10 to 12 minutes. Serve with Fennel-Arugula Salad.

Fennel-Arugula Salad

- 5 cups arugula
- 1 medium bulb fennel, thinly sliced into half-moons
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp orange juice
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp finely chopped shallot
- 1/2 tsp finely grated orange zest
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper

Toss arugula and fennel in a salad bowl. Whisk oil, juice, vinegar, shallot, zest, salt and pepper in another bowl. Pour over fennel and arugula; toss to coat.

THE DISH 510 calories for 1 pizza and 1 1/2 cups salad, 29 g fat (9 g saturated), 47 g carbs, 8 g fiber, 20 g protein



GRILLED PORTOBELLO BENEDICT

Whip up this fresh take on classic eggs Benedict for a yummy postparty brunch. Portobellos deliver copper and pantothenic acid to help keep your metabolism humming, and potassium to beat bloat; ham supplies satisfying protein. Serves 4

- Vegetable oil cooking spray
- 4 portobello mushroom caps (about 4 oz each)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1/4 tsp salt, plus more to taste
- 4 slices Canadian bacon
- 4 large whole eggs
- 4 large egg whites
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 4 tsp prepared basil pesto
- 8 fresh basil leaves, cut into ribbons
- 4 tsp freshly grated Parmesan

Coat a grill or grill pan with cooking spray. With a spoon, gently scrape out the dark inside of each mushroom cap, being careful not to break cap. Brush both sides of caps with oil and sprinkle with 1/4 tsp salt. Grill mushrooms over medium-high heat until juices begin to release, about 7 minutes per side. Transfer each mushroom to a plate, top side down. On same grill or grill pan, cook bacon over medium-high heat until warm, about 30 seconds per side. Place 1 slice bacon onto each mushroom cap. Whisk eggs, egg whites and 2 tbsp water until well combined in a bowl. Coat a medium nonstick skillet with cooking spray and heat over medium-low heat. Add eggs and scramble until cooked through, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Divide eggs among mushroom caps. Drizzle 1 tsp pesto over each; top with basil and 1 tsp Parmesan.

THE DISH 240 calories per serving, 14 g fat (3.5 g saturated), 7 g carbs, 2 g fiber, 20 g protein



MINI ICE CREAM SANDWICHES

Treat yourself to three (yes, three!) of these treats to satisfy your sweet, crunchy and cocoa cravings all at once. The cherry on top: a disease-fighting antioxidant lift from the dark chocolate. Serves 4

1/2 cup light vanilla ice cream (or frozen yogurt), softened at room temperature
24 vanilla wafer cookies (1½ inches in diameter)
1 oz dark (or bittersweet) chocolate (60 to 70 percent cocoa solids), finely chopped

Line a shallow storage container with waxed paper. Put a small scoop of ice cream (about 2 tsp) on a cookie; top with another cookie. Roll sandwich in chocolate so chips adhere to ice cream. Place in container. Repeat with remaining ingredients until you have 12 mini ice cream sandwiches. Cover container and place in the freezer to set for at least 30 minutes, or freeze for up to 1 week.

THE DISH 220 calories for 3 sandwiches, 8 g fat (3 g saturated), 35 g carbs, 1 g fiber, 4 g protein

Excerpted from *So Easy: Luscious Healthy Recipes for Every Meal of the Week* by Ellie Krieger (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.). © 2009 by Ellie Krieger.

These bites
are a sweet,
happy ending
to any meal.