



SLIMMED-DOWN
SAND
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OUR LOVE AFFAIR WITH SANDWICHES SHOWS NO SIGNS OF SLOWING...

so sandwich fans are wise to be health conscious. A 12-inch po'boy bursting with fried shrimp, or a Reuben overflowing with juicy goodness, will delight the senses; but it gobbles up several days' allotment of calories. How can we enjoy these tasty creations with less guilt and greater nutrition? Here are some strategies to adapt familiar favorites.

The shrimp po'boy, a New Orleans classic, abounds with deep-fried goodness nestled in a crusty white hoagie-style roll. Enjoy

plenty of shrimp — they're low in fat and rich in B12 and omega-3 fatty acids — but instead of battering and deep-frying, simply dust them in seasoned cornmeal and bake them to tender perfection or grill them with Cajun seasoning. Plenty of lettuce and tomato add vitamins and fresh zing. Tuck it all into a whole-grain roll for more fiber and micronutrients like folic acid, magnesium and vitamin E.

The Reuben, a delightful mess of cheese, corned beef and Russian dressing on rye, can be made vegan with astonishingly good results. Substitute marinated, grilled tempeh for the corned beef, avocado for the cheese and concoct a Russian dressing based on vegan mayonnaise. Toast your assemblage in the oven, or brown it in olive oil instead of butter. To hew closer to tradition, substitute lean sliced turkey for the corned beef. Either way, raw unpasteurized sauerkraut will deliver the probiotic benefits of the living culture that gives sauerkraut its tang.





HEALTHY TWISTS FOR KIDS

"Peanut butter and jelly continues to be the No. 1 sandwich among children," says Susan Russo, author of *The Encyclopedia of Sandwiches*. "An easy way to make it healthier and still keep it tasty is to swap out peanut butter for almond butter, and use preserves that are low in sugar or all-fruit."

Almonds, hailed as a superfood for being nutritionally dense, are loaded with vitamin E, magnesium, fiber, heart-healthy monounsaturated fat, protein, potassium, calcium, phosphorous and iron. However, because experts agree that a variety of foods is essential to a healthful diet, keep kids interested with an assortment of nut butters.

Fruit delivers welcome kid appeal. Slices of apple, banana or strawberry liven up a nut butter sandwich and pair nicely with cream cheese or ricotta cheese, a lower-fat option. Raisins or dates, high in iron, are also delicious. Slip crisp, tart apple slices into grilled cheese sandwiches. For children as well as adults, sneaking in fruits and vegetables whenever possible ensures they eat more fiber, vitamins and antioxidants.

The muffuletta is perfectly suited to transform into a salad. Skip the enormous roll and toss a big salad of romaine, sliced salami, ham, mortadella and provolone cheese. Dress with zesty olive salad, homemade or from a jar. Add a little oil and red wine vinegar, and boost the vegetable component with julienned carrots, diced tomato and sliced cucumber. The simple carbohydrates that characterize white bread tend to make us tired, whereas this lively salad will nourish and revitalize. For more tips on transforming a favorite sandwich into a salad, see Tom Colicchio's book *Wichcraft*.

The delightful bánh mì brings fresh international flair to the sandwich arena. In its native state, it offers healthful components: fresh herbs, vegetables and chilies, all low in calories and packed with vitamins and phytochemicals, lend crunch and zing. While these sandwiches tend to be pork-based, they're also delicious — and traditional — with a filling of grilled marinated tofu or sardines. Tofu is full of protein, calcium and other minerals, and sardines are packed with a variety of vitamins, minerals and omega-3 fatty acids, as well as being recognized as sustainable seafood.

The Cuban, an irresistible torpedo of decadent proteins, is pressed and toasted to fragrant melting perfection. Roasted pork, sliced ham and Swiss cheese, lubricated with mayonnaise, livened with mustard and sparked with a few slabs of dill pickle and a dash or three of cayenne, compose this white-bread concoction that defines meaty indulgence. Try it on whole-grain bread for a healthful twist. Lightly spread olive oil-based mayonnaise (for fewer calories and heart-healthy fats) and plenty of mustard on two pieces of whole-wheat bread. Layer turkey ham on one piece and sliced roasted

chicken on the other. Slide on sliced pickle and modestly drape with grated Swiss and toast until the cheese is melted and the fillings are warm. Sprinkle cayenne to taste, assemble and eat.

The tuna melt, an iconic dish at lunch counters coast to coast, is typically unctuous with mayonnaise and melted cheese, and often fried in a generous pool of butter. Try a version inspired by Alison Lewis' *400 Best Sandwich Recipes*, where she switches mayonnaise for olive oil, Cheddar for Gruyere and bread for a toasted whole-wheat English muffin. High on protein, low on fat and carbohydrates, this tasty tuna melt swaps fatty goodness for the vibrant punch of fresh basil, red pepper, lemon juice and vinegar.

Smørrebrød is the celebrated Danish open-faced sandwich, topped with almost anything under the sun. The foundation — dense, thinly sliced whole-grain rye — is exemplary: low in calories and rich in fiber. While Danes customarily slather it in butter regardless of what filling will sprawl lavishly on top, the savvy sandwich-maker can eschew the butter and boost flavorful components like mustard and horseradish. Lean roast beef is a Danish favorite, topped with crispy onions. Marinated onions in vinegar and a bit of sugar allow for a healthier alternative. With minimal butter, maximum vegetable garnishes (think radishes, butter lettuce and fresh herbs), lean proteins and that fantastic bread, smørrebrød is a very healthful sandwich.

TIPS TO MAXIMIZE NUTRITION

When constructing a sandwich with a balanced diet in mind, consider these easy tips to maximize nutrition and enjoyment while minimizing fat and calories, compiled with the help of Susan Russo, author of *The Encyclopedia of Sandwiches*.

- "Pick better bread — whole grains are your healthiest option," says Russo. "If you don't like the taste of whole wheat, choose a multi-grain bread that has sprouts or sunflower seeds or nuts," ensuring a broad nutritional impact. Also, "a lot of breads are fortified with extra fiber," which contributes to digestive health, lower cholesterol and a sense of fullness.
- "Ramp up the veggies. There are a lot of vegetables you can add for flavor and texture. For example, I add diced fennel bulbs to tuna sandwiches for wonderfully fresh flavor and great crunch." Choose an assortment of colorful vegetables like red pepper, tomato and carrots for a rich variety of vitamins and antioxidants. "I also like fresh greens like arugula and spinach, or hearty greens like kale and mustard, finely chopped."
- "Learn to love hummus, because it's full of fiber and protein, which helps keep you full after you eat. Try olive, roasted pepper or sun-dried tomato hummus, which can really change the flavor profile of so many different sandwiches."
- "Use fruit spreads and chutneys. Fig marmalade is something I have in my kitchen all the time. It's really delicious on all kinds of vegetarian sandwiches, and it pairs well with pork, chicken and turkey."
- "Get pickles. Pickled onions, peppers, mushrooms, eggplant — any kind of pickled vegetable is low in calories and high in flavor." Although do check the sodium levels for store-bought pickles.
- Grill sandwiches in a thin film of olive oil instead of butter, toast them in the oven or toaster oven, or use a panini press.
- Keep a close eye on portion size. Many beloved sandwiches were concocted for hard-laboring men working long days. A typical Cuban, po'boy, muffuletta or deli sandwich is enough for two.
- Choose side dishes wisely. Round out your meal with a salad or fruit instead of chips or fries. Health-conscious restaurants serve air-baked fries with their burgers, so diners can enjoy the potassium and vitamin C abundant in potatoes without the extra fat.