

Compliments of Jodee Harris

essential living

511

Fry Up Fall's Best Fritters



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Let's make life a little better, starting with your home. We're sharing Fresh Living Room Looks to help transform your space into something extraordinary. Whether you want bold updates or cozy touches, these trends will breathe new life into your living room. After all, your home should reflect the same energy and style you bring to everything else.

Next, take a quick escape with 48 Hours in Albuquerque. From scenic hikes to centuries-old adobe landmarks, this desert gem is full of outdoor adventure and rich history. We'll guide you through must-see spots, local bites and Southwest charm you won't want to miss.

We're also keeping things delicious in the kitchen with recipes to serve up tasty meals in minutes. Enjoy quick, easy recipes that deliver big flavor without the fuss. No more rushing after a long day — just simple, tasty dishes that let you savor the moment.

We hope you find inspiration on every page.

— From the Publisher



**How many minutes do you
like to spend on dinner?**

Scan the QR code to cast your vote!



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3 QUESTIONS TO DECLUTTER YOUR LIFE

Ready to declutter your space? Ask yourself these three simple questions:

- 1. When was the last time I actually used this?**
If it's been collecting dust or living in the back of a drawer, it's time to let it go!
- 2. Does this make you happy or just take up space?**
If it doesn't bring you happiness or serve a purpose, it's probably time to say goodbye.
- 3. Do I have duplicates?**
Take a quick look for any multiples of the same item. Keep only what you truly need and love.



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Fritters for Fall

Fritters are the perfect way to turn simple ingredients into a crispy, golden delight. Whether you're craving a sweet treat or a savory snack, these fritter recipes bring comfort and flavor with every bite. From the classic apple fritter to a savory sweet potato fritter, each recipe is a satisfying indulgence that's easy to make and even easier to enjoy.

Apple Fritters

Fresh apples, warm spices and a perfectly crisp finish make these fritters an irresistible homemade delight.

INGREDIENTS

For the Fritters

- 1 ½ c. all-purpose flour
- ¼ c. cane sugar
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 c. milk
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 3 tbsp. applesauce
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 Honeycrisp apples, peeled and diced
- Vegetable oil, for frying

For the Glaze

- 2 c. powdered sugar
- ¼ c. milk
- ¾ tsp. vanilla extract

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, cinnamon, baking powder and salt. Then, set to the side.
2. In another bowl, whisk together the milk, eggs, applesauce and vanilla extract.
3. Create a well in the middle of the dry ingredients and pour the wet ingredients in. Stir to combine before adding the diced apples.
4. Heat 1 ½ inches of oil in a heavy skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat for roughly two minutes. Then, drop about ¼ cup of batter into the hot oil, spreading it out as you drop.
5. Cook the fritter for two minutes, then flip and cook for another two minutes, or until each side is golden brown. Use a spatula to transfer the fritter to a paper towel-lined plate. Repeat with the rest of the batter.
6. Transfer the fritters to a wire rack to cool, then make the glaze by whisking together the sugar, milk and vanilla extract in a small bowl. Once the fritters have cooled to room temperature, drizzle the glaze over the fritters.



Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 10 minutes
Yield: 8 fritters



Sweet Potato Fritters

with Avocado Crema

Paired with a delicious avocado crema sauce, this recipe is the perfect side dish or appetizer to serve up this season!

INGREDIENTS

For the Fritters

- 2 large sweet potatoes
- 18-oz. can of green chilis
- 1 egg, whisked
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ c. flour
- 1 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1 tsp. cumin
- ½ tsp. chili powder
- ½ tsp. salt, plus more for sprinkling


- ½ tsp. pepper
- Vegetable oil, for frying
- Chives, for garnish

For the Crema

- 1 avocado, peeled and pitted
- ¼ c. sour cream
- 2 tbsp. lime juice
- 1 garlic clove, grated
- ½ tsp. salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Line a large bowl with paper towels. Next, peel the sweet potatoes before using a cheese grater to shred the potatoes into the paper towel-lined bowl.
2. After you've grated the potatoes, sprinkle salt over the potatoes and allow to sit for five minutes before blotting with paper towels. This will help absorb any excess moisture and will prevent the fritters from falling apart while frying.
3. Remove the paper towels from the bowl and add the green chilis, egg, garlic, flour, paprika, cumin, chili powder, salt and pepper. Stir to combine.
4. Spread parchment paper over a large baking sheet. Next, use your hands to form 1-inch-thick fritter patties. Place the prepared patties on the lined baking sheet.
5. Add roughly ¼ cup of oil to a large pot or Dutch oven, then heat over medium heat.
6. Once hot, use a spatula to carefully transfer the sweet potato fritter patties to the oil. Cook until each side is golden brown, about two minutes per side.
7. Then, transfer the cooked fritter to a paper towel-lined baking sheet. Repeat this process with the rest of the fritter patties.



Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Yield: 10 fritters



Pumpkin Fritters

These fritters are full of flavor, surprisingly light and the perfect sweet treat to bring to your next fall party!

Prep Time: 25 minutes | Cook Time: 25 minutes
Yield: 15 fritters

INGREDIENTS

For the Fritters

- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 1/3 c. light brown sugar
- 1 egg, room temperature
- 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/2 c. pumpkin puree
- 1/4 c. milk
- 1 c. flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- Vegetable oil, for frying

For the Glaze

- 2 c. powdered sugar
- 1/4 c. milk
- 3/4 tsp. vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the melted butter, brown sugar, egg, vanilla extract, pumpkin puree and milk.
2. In a medium bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, baking powder, pumpkin pie spice and salt.
3. Then, slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, whisking as you go. Once combined, set to the side.
4. Heat 1 1/2 inches of oil in a heavy skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat for roughly two minutes before carefully using a cookie scoop or spoon to drop the fritter batter into the oil. Make sure not to crowd the skillet.
5. Cook each side until golden brown, about two minutes per side. Use a spatula to transfer the fritters to a paper towel-lined plate and repeat this process with the rest of the batter.
6. While the fritters are cooling, make the glaze by combining the powdered sugar, milk, vanilla extract and salt in a medium bowl.
7. Then, carefully dunk the fritters into the glaze to evenly coat the pumpkin fritters before serving.



Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cook Time: 25 minutes
Yield: 10 fritters

Cauliflower has never tasted so good! These cheesy bacon fritters use cauliflower as the base to create a delectable dish.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 c. cauliflower florets
- 1 c. cheddar cheese, freshly grated
- ½ c. bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 2 tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. pepper
- ½ tsp. salt
- Vegetable oil, for frying
- Green onions, for garnish
- Sour cream, for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add the cauliflower to a food processor to shred, then transfer to a bowl and steam in the microwave until tender.
2. Allow to cool, then add the cheese, bacon, eggs, flour, salt and pepper to the bowl. Mix to combine.
3. Use your hands to form cauliflower fritter patties that are a little less than one inch thick. Place the patties on a large baking tray lined with parchment paper.
4. Heat 1 ½ inches of oil in a heavy skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat. Once hot, use a spatula to carefully drop the patties into the oil. Cook for two minutes, then use the spatula to flip the fritter and cook for another two minutes.
5. Once the fritter is golden-brown, use the spatula to transfer the fritter to a paper towel-lined baking sheet. Repeat this process with all the patties.
6. Allow to cool, then serve with sour cream and green onions.

Cheesy Cauliflower Bacon Fritters



48

HOURS

in Albuquerque

New Mexico holds a hidden gem that's the perfect destination if you want to go somewhere off the beaten path. The vibrant city of Albuquerque offers a unique blend of history, culture and outdoor adventure. Whether you're drawn to its vibrant art scene, stunning desert landscapes or mouthwatering Southwestern cuisine, two days in this dynamic city offer an unforgettable experience.



DAY ONE

Start your journey in the historic Old Town, the cultural epicenter of Albuquerque. Stroll through its adobe-lined streets, where you'll find centuries-old architecture, charming boutiques and vibrant art galleries. Be sure to visit the San Felipe de Neri Church, one of the oldest surviving buildings in the city. It's an excellent spot to learn about the architectural heritage of New Mexico's largest city.

From there, head to the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, owned and operated by the 19 Indian Pueblos of New Mexico. Explore the rich heritage through interactive exhibits, traditional dances and locally crafted pottery. Stop for lunch at the onsite Indian Pueblo Kitchen, where you can savor authentic Pueblo-inspired dishes like blue corn waffles or a hearty stew.



The 15-minute ride offers a stunning 11,000 square mile panoramic view.

After lunch, hop on the Sandia Peak Aerial Tramway, one of the longest tramways in the world. The 15-minute ride offers a stunning 11,000 square mile panoramic view. For those seeking more adventure, the Sandia Mountains offer excellent hiking options like the eight-mile La Luz Trail. If hiking isn't your forte, relax in the café at the top while taking in the sweeping New Mexico landscape.





DAY TWO



Abuquerque is known as the Hot Air Ballooning Capital of the World, and there's no better way to start your second day than with a sunrise balloon ride. Soar over the Rio Grande Valley with breathtaking views of the Sandia Mountains as the sun paints the desert in golden hues. If you'd rather keep your feet on the ground, you can still head to Balloon Fiesta Park to watch hot air balloons take off and enjoy the sight of these colorful inflatables against the desert sky.

Then, get ready for an interactive and engaging experience at Explora, a hands-on science museum perfect for visitors of all ages. With over 250 exhibits, this museum makes learning fun through activities focused on physics, engineering and creativity.

If you have time, drive along the Historic Route 66. Head east on Central Avenue to see old motels, quirky shops and nostalgic landmarks that pay tribute to the city's place on America's most famous road.



Spend the afternoon surrounded by history and nature at Petroglyph National Monument.

This vast landscape features volcanic rock carvings dating back centuries, offering a glimpse into the lives of the region's early inhabitants. Hike one of the many trails to view the petroglyphs up close while enjoying the breathtaking desert scenery.



With its mix of rich history, outdoor beauty and local cuisine, Albuquerque is the perfect city for a quick weekend escape that will leave you with lasting memories of a unique Southwestern adventure.

HOME DECOR TRENDS

HOME DECOR IS EMBRACING A BOLD, EXPRESSIVE AND DEEPLY PERSONAL AESTHETIC.

Gone are the days of neutral-dominated spaces that play it safe. Instead, it's all about personality, texture and warmth. From statement-making patterns to cozy, cocoon-like spaces, these trends are shaping interiors in fresh and exciting ways.



DRAPERY

WINDOWS ARE NO LONGER JUST FUNCTIONAL ELEMENTS IN A ROOM — THEY'RE FOCAL POINTS, THANKS TO THE RETURN OF ELABORATE DRAPERY.

Lowering floor-to-ceiling curtains in luxurious fabrics like velvet, linen and silk add a sense of sophistication and depth to interiors. Sheer and layered designs allow for privacy while still letting in natural light, striking a perfect balance between elegance and practicality.



ANTIQUES MEET MODERN



THE CHARM OF ANTIQUES IS MAKING A COMEBACK, BLENDING BEAUTIFULLY WITH MODERN DECOR TO CREATE A UNIQUE AND PERSONALIZED SPACE.

Vintage furniture, classic artwork and timeworn pieces add character and history to contemporary interiors. Instead of creating a stark contrast, homeowners are mixing old and new seamlessly — pairing an ornate antique mirror with sleek minimalist furnishings or incorporating a weathered wooden table into a modern dining room. This trend celebrates the beauty of craftsmanship and storytelling, ensuring every space feels curated and inviting.

MIXED METALS

STYLE NO LONGER DEMANDS MATCHING METALS PERFECTLY. THE TREND NOW LEANS TOWARD MIXING DIFFERENT FINISHES FOR A LAYERED AND DYNAMIC LOOK.

Brass, nickel, matte black and gold can coexist beautifully when done with intention. Whether it's pairing brushed gold fixtures with black hardware or incorporating a mix of silver and bronze in lighting and decor, this approach adds depth and interest to a space. The key is to create harmony by repeating each finish in different areas of the room, ensuring a cohesive and stylish blend.



PATTERN DRENCHING

PATTERN DRENCHING IS MAKING WAVES IN HOME DECOR.

This approach involves layering the same pattern across multiple surfaces, from walls to upholstery and even drapery. The effect is immersive, creating a visually rich environment that feels both cohesive and daring. Expect to see floral, geometric and abstract motifs in a range of colors, with maximalism leading the way. Whether it's wallpaper extending onto the ceiling or a couch blending seamlessly with matching curtains, this trend doesn't shy away from being too much.

STATEMENT LIGHTING



LIGHTING IS NO LONGER JUST ABOUT FUNCTION—IT'S AN ART FORM.

Sculptural and oversized lighting fixtures are taking center stage, adding personality and drama to a space. From oversized pendant lights to intricate chandeliers, bold lighting choices transform the atmosphere of a room. Unique materials like smoked glass, brass and organic shapes serve to create stunning works of art, proving that a well-chosen light fixture can be the ultimate finishing touch to any design.

COMFORT FIRST



WITH THE CONTINUED IMPORTANCE OF HOME AS A RETREAT, COMFORT IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF DECORATING DECISIONS.

Plush, oversized furniture, soft textiles and cozy nooks are continuing to define spaces. Think deep sofas with sink-in cushions, cozy fabrics and inviting textures that make lounging irresistible. Layered rugs, throw blankets and curved furniture pieces contribute to a sense of

warmth and relaxation. This trend underscores the idea that beauty and comfort should go hand in hand, creating spaces where people want to truly unwind.

Home decor should feel both stylish and comfortable. Whether it's bold patterns, luxurious drapery or standout lighting, these trends make it easy to add personality to your space.



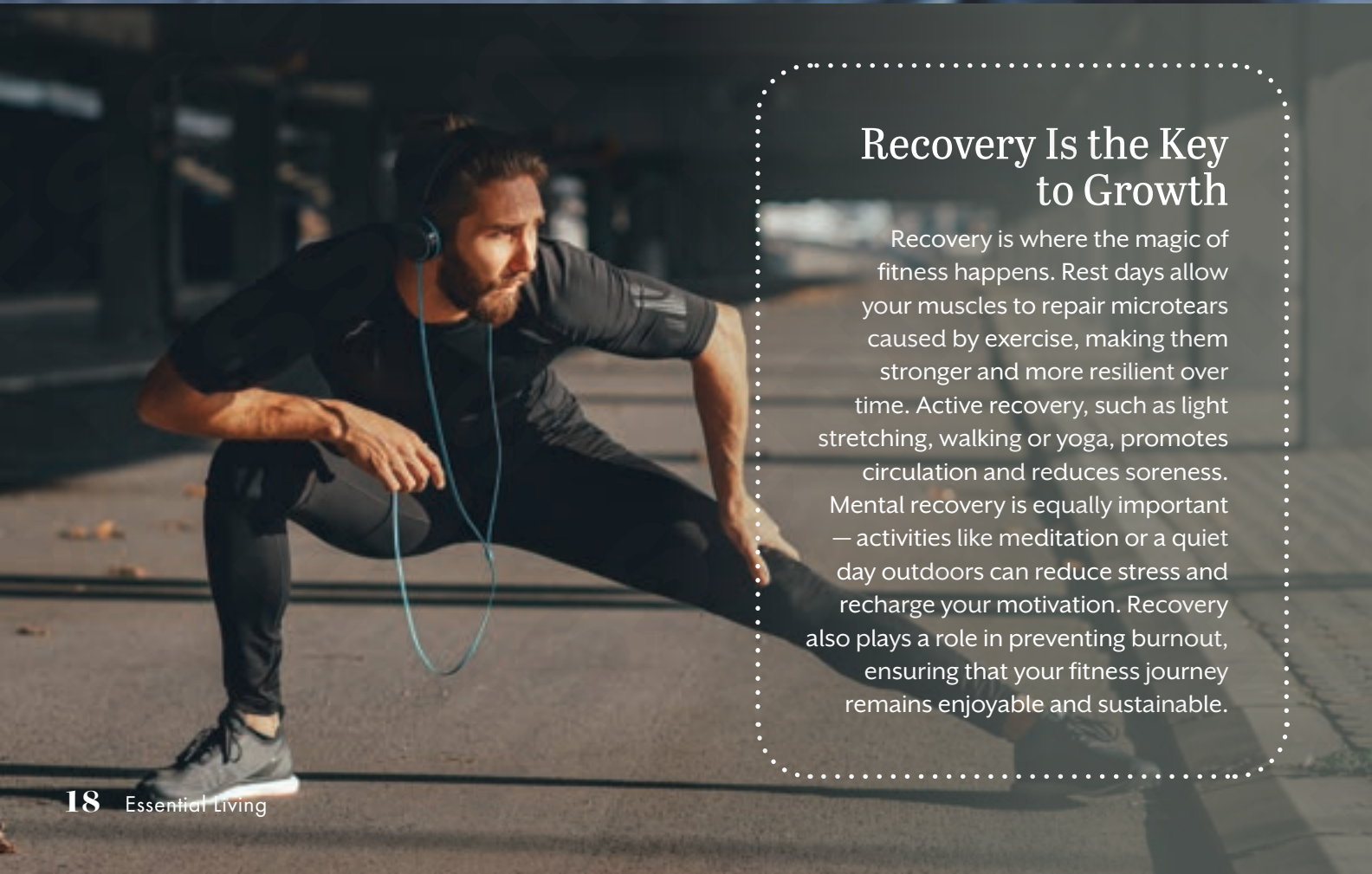
Sleep
your way to
Strength





Why Sleep Is Essential for Fitness

Sleep is when your body shifts into recovery mode, strengthening muscles, restoring energy and sharpening your mind. Deep sleep plays a crucial role in allowing your body to rebuild muscles worked during exercise, preparing you for the challenges of your next workout. Without enough rest, performance plateaus, motivation dips and injuries become more likely.



Recovery Is the Key to Growth

Recovery is where the magic of fitness happens. Rest days allow your muscles to repair microtears caused by exercise, making them stronger and more resilient over time. Active recovery, such as light stretching, walking or yoga, promotes circulation and reduces soreness. Mental recovery is equally important — activities like meditation or a quiet day outdoors can reduce stress and recharge your motivation. Recovery also plays a role in preventing burnout, ensuring that your fitness journey remains enjoyable and sustainable.



Tips to Maximize Rest and Recovery

Balancing activity and downtime ensures sustainable fitness progress. Consider these approaches:

- ⌚ **Prioritize Sleep:** Aim for 7-9 hours each night and stick to a consistent schedule to regulate your body's internal clock.
- ⌚ **Plan Rest Days:** Incorporate one or two rest days each week to allow your body time to heal and recharge.
- ⌚ **Listen to Your Body:** Pay attention to signals of fatigue, soreness or mental burnout, and adjust your routine to give yourself the rest you need.
- ⌚ **Create a Relaxing Sleep Environment:** Minimize light and noise, unplug from screens and ensure your bedding is comfortable.

Rest isn't a sign of weakness — it's a cornerstone of fitness success. Quality sleep and proper recovery improve your physical performance, protect against injury and keep you motivated for the long haul. Let the power of rest propel you toward your fitness goals with strength and resilience.



BATHROOM TRENDS

With an emphasis on comfort, style and innovative design, today's bathrooms focus on creating a serene and personalized environment. Whether through the use of natural materials or unique tiles, these updates bring a new level of style and functionality to any bathroom.



WALK-IN SHOWERS

for an open, airy feel

Frameless glass enclosures and curbless entrances create a seamless flow, making the space feel larger and more inviting. These showers combine functionality with a minimalist aesthetic, offering both a modern look and easy accessibility.

FLOATING VANITIES

for a minimalist touch

Pairing beautifully with modern showers, floating vanities create a clean and airy aesthetic. Mounted above the floor, they provide the illusion of more space while allowing for easy cleaning. Many designs include integrated lighting for a soft, ambient glow.

STATEMENT TILES

for a stylish look

Today's designs are all about bold, attention-grabbing tiles that add personality and flair. Whether used on a feature wall, within the shower or across the entire floor, statement tiles infuse the space with character, creating a dynamic and stylish atmosphere.





SMART TECHNOLOGY

for a customized experience

Take control of your shower with smart systems that let you adjust water temperature, pressure and even lighting with a touch or voice command. Pre-set your ideal shower experience, activate eco-friendly water-saving modes or sync with your favorite playlist for a fully immersive routine.

BIOPHILIC DESIGN

for a nature-inspired escape

Biophilic shower designs bring the outdoors inside, using natural materials and earthy textures to create a calming atmosphere. Reclaimed wood vanities, stone sinks and bamboo accents add warmth and a grounded feel to the space. Paired with a rainfall showerhead, these elements come together to transform your bathroom into a tranquil retreat.

WALLPAPER

for a bold impact

Wallpaper is making a stylish comeback in bathrooms, bringing vibrant patterns, florals and textures to the space. Whether it's bold tropical prints or subtle, sophisticated textures, wallpaper offers an easy way to experiment with daring designs without the permanence of tilework.



12-MINUTE DINNERS



Weeknights can feel like a race against the clock, but dinner does not have to suffer. These 12-minute meals bring big flavor without the long prep, making it easy to serve something satisfying even on the busiest evenings. From crispy French bread pizza to vibrant salmon with strawberry salsa, and from chicken and black bean quesadillas to bold chili chicken, these quick bites prove that speed and taste can go hand in hand. With these recipes, fast food takes on a whole new meaning.



FRENCH BREAD PIZZA

The easiest pizza you'll ever make! This delicious recipe uses simple ingredients to create the perfect comfort meal.

Prep Time: 3 minutes

Cook Time: 9 minutes

Yield: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 loaf of French bread
- ½ c. butter, softened
- 1 c. pizza sauce
- 16 oz. mozzarella cheese, shredded
- ½ c. pepperoni slices
- ½ c. Parmesan cheese, shredded, for garnish
- Dried oregano, for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375° F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Slice the loaf in half, then slice the pieces in half lengthwise and spread the butter evenly over the sliced bread. Place on the baking sheet.
3. Spread the pizza sauce evenly across the two loaves, then sprinkle the cheese over each half.
4. Distribute the pepperoni slices and garnish with dried oregano before transferring the baking sheet to the oven to cook for nine minutes.
5. Allow to cool, then enjoy!



SALMON WITH STRAWBERRY SALSA

Prep Time: 4 minutes
Cook Time: 8 minutes
Yield: 2 servings



Topped with a fresh strawberry-style salsa, this recipe is the perfect dish to serve up when you're looking for a simple salmon recipe that will also impress!

INGREDIENTS

For the Salmon

- 2 7-oz. salmon fillets
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. pepper

For the Strawberry Salsa

- ¼ c. strawberries, sliced
- ½ avocado, diced
- 2 tbsp. red onion, diced
- 2 tbsp. yellow corn
- ¼ c. microgreens
- ¼ c. feta cheese, crumbled
- 2 tsp. lemon juice

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the air fryer to 400° F and line a small baking sheet. Place the two salmon fillets on the baking sheet and pat dry with a paper towel.
2. Drizzle the olive oil over both fillets, then mix together the seasonings in a small bowl. Sprinkle the seasonings evenly over the top of both fillets.
3. Transfer the baking sheet to the air fryer and cook the salmon for eight minutes.
4. While the salmon is cooking, make the salsa by combining the strawberries, avocado, red onion, corn, microgreens and feta cheese in a bowl.
5. Add the lemon juice and gently stir to combine the ingredients.
6. Once cooked, remove the salmon from the air fryer. Garnish with the salsa and enjoy!

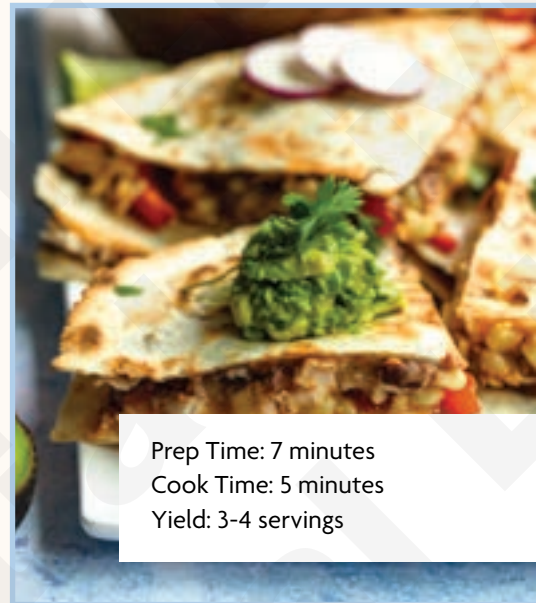


CHICKEN & BLACK BEAN QUESADILLAS

These cheesy chicken quesadillas are the perfect blend of savory goodness and melty perfection.

INGREDIENTS

- 6 flour tortillas
- ½ c. roasted chicken breast, shredded
- ⅓ c. corn
- ¼ c. black beans
- ¼ c. roasted red bell peppers, diced
- ¼ c. minced cilantro, plus more for serving
- 1 tbsp. lime juice
- 1 tbsp. cumin
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- 3 radishes, sliced, for serving
- ⅓ c. Colby-Jack cheese, shredded
- ⅓ c. Mexican-style cheese, shredded
- Guacamole, for serving
- Crema, for serving
- Lime slices, for serving



Prep Time: 7 minutes
Cook Time: 5 minutes
Yield: 3-4 servings

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large bowl combine the shredded chicken, corn, black beans, diced red bell peppers, minced cilantro, lime juice, cumin and chili powder.
2. Stir to combine, then set the filling to the side.
3. Grease a large skillet and heat over medium-high heat. Once hot, place a tortilla in the skillet. In a separate bowl, combine the two cheeses, then sprinkle a handful over the tortilla.
4. Spoon two to three scoops of the filling over the cheese, then top with more cheese and another tortilla. Let the quesadilla cook until the cheese melts, then use a large spatula to carefully flip it and cook the other side.
5. Reduce the heat to medium and remove the quesadilla once it is evenly golden and crisp. Repeat with the remaining tortillas.
6. Serve warm with guacamole, crema, lime slices and sliced radishes, if desired. Enjoy!

CHILI CHICKEN WINGS

Fiery, flavorful and fast — this chili chicken packs a punch.

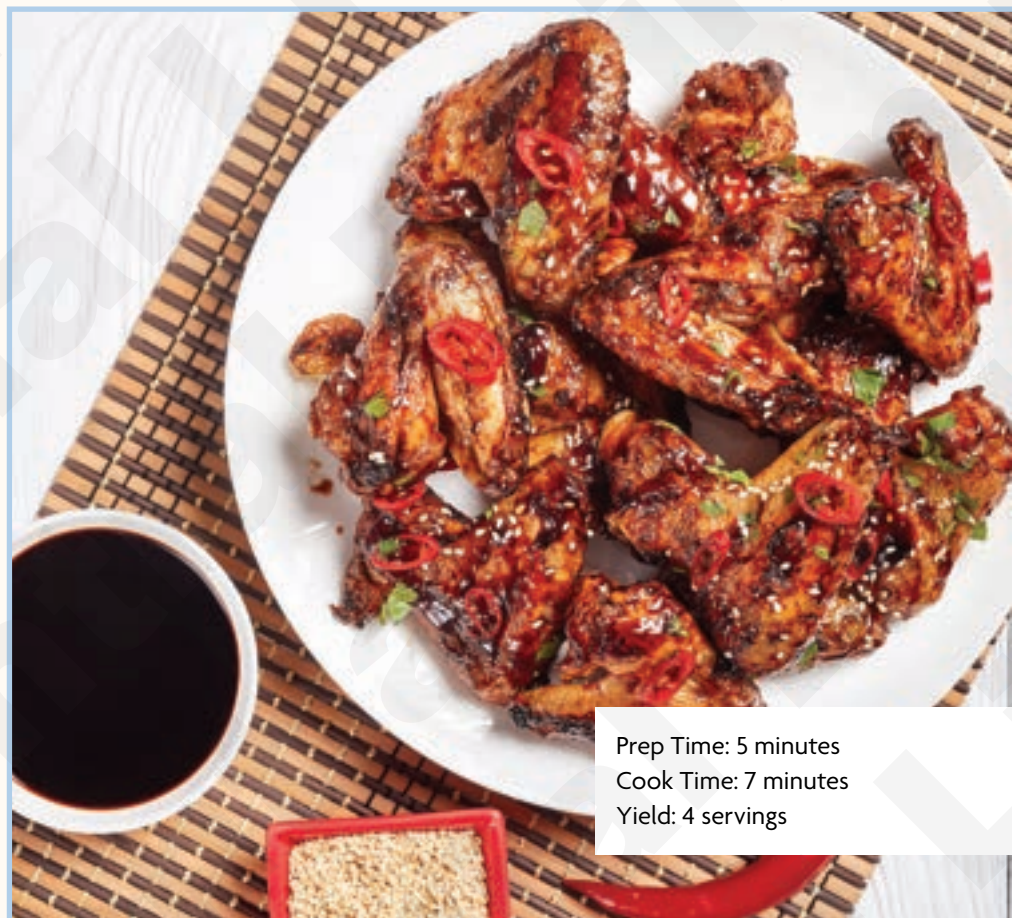
INGREDIENTS

For the Chicken

- 1 lb. boneless chicken breast
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- 1 ½ tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ tbsp. vegetable oil

For the Chili Sauce

- 2 tsp. sesame oil
- 2 garlic cloves, finely minced
- 2 tsp. ginger, finely minced
- 1 tsp. chili flakes
- ½ c. water
- 3 tbsp. sriracha
- 1 tbsp. soy sauce
- ¼ c. brown sugar
- 3 tbsp. lime juice



Prep Time: 5 minutes
Cook Time: 7 minutes
Yield: 4 servings

INSTRUCTIONS

For the Chicken

1. Slice each chicken breast in half horizontally to create four thin fillets. In a small bowl, mix the salt, pepper and flour. Lightly coat both sides of the chicken with the mixture.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet over high heat. Once hot, add the chicken and cook for 2-3 minutes per side until fully cooked. Transfer to a plate and set aside.

For the Chili Sauce

1. Reduce the heat and let the skillet cool slightly. Add sesame oil over medium heat.
2. Stir in garlic and ginger, cooking for 15 seconds before adding the chili flakes. Sauté until the garlic turns golden brown, about 30 seconds.
3. Increase heat to medium-high. Pour in water, sriracha, soy sauce and brown sugar, stirring to deglaze the pan and dissolve any browned bits. Let the sauce simmer until it thickens into a syrupy consistency.
4. Add lime juice and simmer for another 30 seconds until the sauce returns to a thick syrup. Turn off the heat and return the chicken to the pan, flipping to coat in the sauce.
5. Serve with remaining sauce spooned over the top. Garnish with green onions and sesame seeds, if desired.



The Joy of *Journaling*

Journaling has long been a cherished tool for self-discovery, reflection and creativity. In our fast-paced world, setting aside time to write offers a moment of calm and connection with yourself. Whether you're processing emotions, setting goals or documenting life's moments, journaling can help you cultivate mindfulness and find clarity.

The Benefits of *Journaling*

By putting pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard), you create space for insight and personal growth.

Boosts Mental Clarity: Writing down your thoughts helps untangle mental clutter, making it easier to focus on what truly matters.

Ignites Creativity: Exploring your thoughts on paper often sparks new ideas, helping you problem-solve and think outside the box.

Encourages Reflection: Journaling is a safe space to process emotions, celebrate wins and learn from setbacks.

Improves Mood: The act of writing itself can be therapeutic, boosting your mood and fostering a sense of calm and contentment.

Whether it's a brief daily entry or a deep dive into your feelings, journaling can help you feel more grounded and self-aware.



Tips for Starting a *Journal*

If you've ever felt unsure about where to begin, know that journaling doesn't need to be complicated. These tips can make it easier to get started and stick with the habit:

Set a Time: Dedicate 5-10 minutes each day, whether it's a quiet morning ritual or a relaxing evening routine.

Keep It Simple: Don't overthink it. Start with a few sentences or even a quick list to get your thoughts out.

Create a Habit: Pair journaling with an existing habit, like sipping coffee or winding down before bed, to make it an easy addition to your routine.

Make It Yours: There's no right or wrong way to journal. Whether you make lists, write paragraphs or draw sketches, the process should feel personal and enjoyable.

Consistency is key, but flexibility keeps it sustainable. Let the practice adapt to your mood and needs each day.



Prompts to Get You Started



What made me smile today?



What is one thing I want to focus on this week?



What is a challenge I'm facing and how can I approach it differently?



A VISUAL GUIDE TO Owls

Although there are exceptions, in general an owl's **eye color** indicates when they are most active.

BLACK/BROWN - Nocturnal

ORANGE - Dusk and dawn

YELLOW - Diurnal



Tallest Owl
Great Gray Owl
nearly 3'

Who Knew?

There are **254 owl species** worldwide.

An owl's **pupils** can expand to nearly the full size of their eyes, allowing them to gather as much light as possible for **excellent night vision**.

A group of owls is called a **parliament**.

While owls can't move their eyes, they can **rotate their heads** up to 270 degrees, thanks to a unique skeletal structure with **14 neck vertebrae**.

Ear tufts **are used for** communication and camouflage, **not for hearing**.

Many owl species have **asymmetrical ears** to help triangulate sounds coming from above and below.

Owls are **zygodactyl**, meaning their feet have two toes facing forward and two facing backward. What sets them apart from other zygodactyl birds is their ability to rotate one of the backward-facing toes forward, providing **better grip** and stability when walking.



Winged Wonders

Barn Owl

Their heart-shaped faces channel sound to their ears, allowing them to locate prey with pinpoint accuracy and detect even the faintest noises from over 1,000 feet away.

Range: *Worldwide, except in polar and desert regions.*



Burrowing Owl

Unlike most owls, these small, long-legged birds nest and live in underground burrows, often taking over tunnels dug by prairie dogs or other animals. They also run after prey.

Range: *North and South America*



Smallest Owl
Elf Owl
5-7"



Greatest Wingspan
Blakiston's Fish Owl
6' 3"





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THE TRICK TO GRATING *Semisoft Cheeses*

Grating semisoft cheeses can be a bit tricky, but with the right approach, it's easy! Here's the key:

1. **CHILL THE CHEESE** — Pop your semisoft cheese in the freezer for about 15-20 minutes before grating. This firms it up, making it easier to grate without it sticking or turning into a gooey mess.
2. **USE A FINE OR MEDIUM GRATER** — A fine or medium box grater works best. This allows for nice, even shreds without too much effort.
3. **GO SLOW** — Gently press the cheese against the grater to avoid smashing it. Keep a steady hand and work slowly to get the perfect texture.

Enjoy your perfectly shredded cheese!



“THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE
SUCCESS IN THE WORLD, ONLY
CONSTANT PROGRESS.”

— JONATHAN SWIFT



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BRUSCHETTA SANDWICH



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INGREDIENTS

- 2 slices Italian bread
- 2 fresh basil leaves, rinsed and patted dry
- 2 tbsp. pesto sauce
- 2 slices fresh mozzarella
- ½ c. cherry tomatoes, quartered

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Toast the slices of bread.
2. Spread pesto sauce on one slice of toasted bread.
3. Top with cherry tomatoes, mozzarella and basil leaves.

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