



# Freedom *for* Life

Healthy and Delicious Recipes for the Body and Soul



MISSISSIPPI STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**Nothing is as satisfying as delicious food made in the comfort of your own kitchen.** On the coming pages, we bring you an opportunity to fight back against diabetes with the power of flavorful, simple, and healthy food. Mississippi chefs, nutritionists, dietitians, and more share their quick, easy, and timeless recipes to enjoy. Bring your plates and your appetite, and let's start cooking.

## Table of Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>The Sweet Potato Life</b>	<b>22</b>
Foreword from the State Health Officer .....	3	Stuffed Sweet Potato with Veggies .....	23
<b>Opening Message</b>	<b>4</b>	Rosemary Sweet Potatoes .....	24
Message from the Director of the Office of Preventive Health.....	4	Candied Sweet Potatoes .....	25
<b>The Chefs</b>	<b>5</b>	Simple Oven-Roasted Sweet Potatoes .....	26
Dr. Cindy Ayers Elliott.....	5	<b>Sweet Treats</b>	<b>27</b>
Qula Madkin.....	5	Beet Lemonade .....	28
Charles Smith.....	6	Greek Yogurt Banana Pudding.....	29
Sadé Meeks.....	6	Zucchini Chocolate Brownies.....	30
<b>Greens and Things</b>	<b>7</b>	Strawberry Greek Yogurt Parfait.....	31
Southern Collard Greens Salad .....	8	Green Smoothie .....	32
Green Cabbage .....	9	Slightly Sweetened Tea.....	33
Kale Slaw.....	10	<b>The Pride of Mississippi</b>	<b>34</b>
Pick Your Greens Farm Salad .....	11	Blackened Catfish Tacos.....	35
<b>The Golden Hour</b>	<b>12</b>	Oven “Fried” Catfish.....	36
Easy Black Beans and Corn .....	13	<b>Facts and Tips</b>	<b>37</b>
Roasted Corn and Tomato Soup.....	14	Living with Diabetes .....	37
Plant-Based Cornbread .....	15	About Portion Size .....	38
Corn and Tomato Salad .....	16	Non-starchy and Starchy Vegetables.....	39
<b>The Secret Life of Beans</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Closing Message</b>	<b>40</b>
Crispy Roasted Black-Eyed Peas.....	18	Message from the Director of the Diabetes Prevention and Control Program .....	40
Pinto Bean Burger .....	19		
Real Beans.....	20		
Crispy Cajun Roasted Red Beans.....	21		

# Foreword

*from the* State Health Officer

Dear Cherished Reader,

It is with great pleasure and a sense of responsibility that I introduce this cookbook, crafted with the health and well-being of our community in mind. As the State Health Officer for the Mississippi State Department of Health, I am committed to promoting the importance of nutrition in fostering a healthier and happier population.

Our state is renowned for its rich cultural heritage, and food has always played a central role in our traditions and celebrations. However, as we celebrate our culinary diversity, it is crucial to recognize the impact our food choices have on our overall health. The recipes within these pages not only celebrate the flavors of Mississippi but also emphasize the importance of making nutritious choices that contribute to a healthier lifestyle.

This cookbook is more than just a collection of recipes; this tool empowers individuals and families to make informed decisions about the foods they consume. The carefully curated recipes focus on incorporating locally sourced, fresh ingredients to create delicious meals that nourish the body and soul. By embracing a balance of flavors, textures, and nutritional elements, these recipes serve as a roadmap to a healthier, more vibrant life.

In our ongoing efforts to improve the health of our communities, the Mississippi State Department of Health encourages everyone to explore the joy of cooking and discover the benefits of a well-balanced diet. From vibrant salads to a new take on catfish, each recipe reflects our commitment to promoting a culture of wellness that begins in our kitchens and resonates throughout our lives.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the dedicated team of chefs, nutritionists, and culinary experts who contributed their expertise to bring this cookbook to life. Their passion for promoting healthful eating shines through on every page, offering readers the opportunity to savor the best of Mississippi's culinary landscape while prioritizing their well-being.

May this cookbook inspire you to embrace the pleasures of cooking, celebrate the richness of our local ingredients, and embark on a journey toward a healthier and happier future.

Wishing you good health.

**Daniel Edney, M.D.**  
State Health Officer  
Mississippi State Department of Health

# Message

*from the* Director of the Office of Preventive Health

We hope this cookbook inspires you to create delicious and healthy meals as part of your lifestyle change journey. Our mission at the Office of Preventive Health is to provide tools that will enable the people of Mississippi to take charge of their health, especially when it comes to preventing and managing diabetes. Through education, advocacy, and ensuring access to top-tier care, we aim to empower individuals to take control of their well-being.

We understand the challenges of managing diabetes, but we also firmly believe in the power of resilience and the potential for positive change. Every small adjustment we make to our diet and lifestyle takes us closer to a healthier future, free from diabetes-related complications.

This cookbook has been a labor of love, born from the belief that a healthy lifestyle can be embraced without sacrificing the soulful essence of our cherished Southern cuisine. Each recipe within these pages has been thoughtfully curated, embodying the spirit of preventive health and inclusivity. Whether you're seeking comfort in a savory bowl of greens with a side of cornbread or exploring the refreshing crunch of fresh local produce, the Office of Preventive Health seeks to empower you with choices that fuel your well-being.

We encourage you to try out these recipes in your daily meal planning and allow them to serve as flavorful companions on your journey to wellness. Always remember that you are not alone. Through its programs, the Office of Preventive Health is here to provide support and guidance every step of the way.

Please explore our comprehensive lifestyle change and management programs. They can be invaluable resources in your quest for a healthy life. You will find more information regarding these programs at the end of this cookbook. Together, let us work towards a Mississippi that thrives with vitality.

**Cassandra Dove Brown**

Director, Office of Preventive Health  
Mississippi State Department of Health





## | The Chefs

# Dr. Cindy Ayers Elliott

CEO of Foot Print Farms, LLC

Dr. Cindy Ayers Elliott is the CEO of Foot Print Farms, LLC. While she depends on her farms for sustenance, she also wants to use it as an educational tool to teach people about healthy eating and sustainable farming. Using this mentality, Dr. Ayers has become a founder of the Mississippi Meat Goat Producers Cooperative, board member of the National Women in Agriculture and Mississippi Women in Agriculture, member of the Hinds County Board of Commissioners, Soil and Water Conservation District (USDA/NRCS), member of the Women for Progress, and former President of the National Alliance for Improvement in Higher Education. She has also been featured on the *Katie* show, and by comedian/actor Kevin Hart.

Dr. Ayers is the recipient of the *Mississippi Business Journal's* Top 50 Businesswomen in Mississippi, and has been honored as a member of Who's Who Among Black Americans. Dr. Ayers takes great pride in being an alumna of Jackson State University, is the proud mom of LaGrand and Eric Elliott, and grandmother of Christian, Erica, and Zoe Elliott.

# Qula Madkin

Owner at Qula Madkin Nutrition

Qula Madkin, MS, RDN, CDCES, is a registered dietitian, nutritionist, and certified diabetes care and education specialist with more than twenty years of experience. In her current role, she leads evidence-based nutrition, diabetes, and wellness education programs offered across Mississippi's eighty-two counties by local Extension agents. Qula is a Mississippi native passionate about engaging Mississippians to rethink how Southern foods are characterized and to illuminate the positive aspects and health benefits of Southern foods.

Qula is a busy mom of four pursuing a Ph.D. in functional foods, nutrition, and health. Qula has been mentioned in and has collaborated with nationally recognized media outlets like the *Washington Post*, Allrecipes.com, *The Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, WalletHub, Shuman Farms, and Healthy Family Project. She provides nutrition tips and recipes with a Southern twist and style on her personal platform @qulamadkinrd while managing the Mississippi State University Extension Service's Nutrition and Wellness Facebook group. In her spare time, Qula mentors and empowers the next generation of nutrition leaders. She is a self-proclaimed hardcore sports mom, and on most days, you'll catch her at a field or court going hard for one of the Madkin kids.





## Charles Smith

*Owner of My Health My Mississippi, Author*

Charles Smith is a Food for Life instructor, owns My Health My Mississippi, and is the author of the book *7 Steps to Raising Amazing Children*. Charles's love for cooking came from watching his mother cook. When she passed away at the young age of 58 because of underlying conditions of poor health and obesity, his journey of eating better began. After a month-long no-meat fast at his church twenty years ago, Charles experienced a new level of energy and never returned to eating meat. He is excited to be a Food for Life instructor to help others see the need, feel the energy, and be healthy with a plant-based lifestyle.

He believes that your health is your wealth, and his involvement with The Fighters, an organization built to help provide options for people to fight for their health, showcases his determination to help everyone make good choices when it comes to food. By teaching classes, Charles invests in the coming generation of cooks and dietitians, urging them to make healthy decisions for years to come.

## Sadé Meeks *Dietitian, Founder of GRITS Inc.*

Sadé Meeks, MS, RD, is a writer, food activist, and registered dietitian from Jackson, MS. Meeks has a bachelor's degree in culinary arts from Mississippi University for Women and a master's degree in nutritional science from California State University, Los Angeles. Meeks has self-published a food literacy cookbook, and her nutrition expertise has been featured in *Reader's Digest*, MSN, and Yahoo News. She is the founder and executive director of GRITS Inc (Growing Resilience In the South) and adjunct professor at Purchase College in New York. The biggest influence on Meeks' personal and professional point of view comes from her 101-year-old grandmother, Rosemary (Grandma Rose). Sadé recalls sitting at the table with her grandmother soon after becoming a registered dietitian. Over a bowl of grits, Grandma Rose recalled memories of her family garden. "I even had peanuts out there," said Grandma Rose. That story stuck with Meeks because it was such a contrast to the negative stories and stereotypes that circulated about black food culture. Meeks knows her mission is deeper than just preparing good food. It is about changing narratives and helping people connect with food in a way that is empowering and transformative, yet still authentic to one's identity. Food is just another tool that enables Meeks, a natural storyteller, to share her purpose. She hopes that these recipes will become part of your story, connecting you to food, family, and culture in some way.





The background features a stylized illustration of various green leaves and a red flower-like vegetable. The leaves are depicted in different shades of green, from light to dark, with white veins. The red vegetable is shown in two locations: one at the top center and one at the bottom center. The overall style is modern and graphic.

## Greens and Things

“Be sure to eat your greens!” It’s a phrase many of us dreaded to hear as children. But now, you know your mom was right about greens (and so many other things). Leafy greens like spinach, collards, and kale are full of fiber, iron, magnesium, potassium, calcium, and vitamins A, C, E, and K—and they have very little sodium, cholesterol, and carbohydrates. So for a healthy diet, follow mom’s advice and go green.



# Southern Collard Greens Salad



**Cook Time** 35-45 min. | **Serves** 4-6 or 1-1½ Cups each

**Calories** 175 **Fat** 11g **Cholesterol** 25mg **Sodium** 440mg **Carbohydrates** 11g **Sugars** 3g **Protein** 8g

## Ingredients

- 1 pound/bunch or bag of fresh collard greens, washed, cleaned, thinly sliced with the stems removed
- 1 can of roasted black-eyed peas  
(see *Roasted Black-Eyed Peas recipe*, pg. 18)
- ¼-½ cup toasted pecans
- ½-1 cup roasted sweet potatoes  
(see *Roasted Sweet Potatoes recipe*, pg. 26)
- 4 slices of cooked bacon, crispy
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes or your favorite type (*halved*)
- ½ cup chopped/sliced red onion
- ½ cup feta cheese
- 1 small apple, cored, diced, and tossed in lemon juice
- **Optional vegetables/toppings:**  
Red or yellow bell pepper or green onion

## Preparation

1. Put thinly sliced greens in a large bowl. Drizzle with olive oil and salt.
2. Massage greens for two to five minutes.
3. Cover greens and set aside or in the refrigerator while you prepare the other ingredients.
4. Toss all ingredients together and serve.

## Notes

- Did you know collard greens can be eaten raw? Yes, they can.
- If you need dressing, Dijon mustard dressing is a great option.

**8 Greens and Things**





# Green Cabbage

Cook Time 15 min. | Serves 6

Calories 57 Fat 0g Cholesterol 0mg Sodium 143mg Carbohydrates 13g Sugars 6g Protein 3g



## Ingredients

- 1 medium yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
- ½ red bell pepper
- ½ yellow bell pepper
- 1 medium head of green cabbage, chopped into shreds
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons water

## Preparation

1. Heat a large pan or pot on medium heat.
2. Add the onion, garlic, jalapeno pepper, and bell peppers. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion starts to brown.
3. Add the shredded cabbage, salt, and water. Cook for 10-15 minutes until the cabbage is soft, stirring occasionally.
4. Add water as needed.



# Kale Slaw

**Cook Time** 10 min. | **Serves** 2 or 4-6 as a topping

**Calories** 245 **Fat** 8g **Cholesterol** 3mg **Sodium** 213mg **Carbohydrates** 40g **Sugars** 7g **Protein** 13g



## Ingredients

### For the Slaw

- 2 cups kale, thinly sliced or chopped
- 3 tablespoons fresh parsley, finely chopped
- ¼ cup red onions, thinly sliced
- 1 cup shredded carrots

### For the Dressing

- ½ cup olive oil mayo
- 1 tablespoon Cajun mustard or Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup white wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- ¼ cup water
- ¾ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 2 teaspoons dried parsley
- ¾ teaspoon date sugar
- **Optional:** 1 teaspoon Louisiana hot sauce

## Preparation

1. Gently rub kale under cold running water and remove the tough stems. Slice or chop the kale into thin strips.
2. In a mason jar, combine lemon juice, white wine vinegar, olive oil mayo, water, garlic powder, dried parsley, date sugar, smoked paprika, mustard, and Louisiana hot sauce (if using) and shake until combined. Adjust the sweetness and spiciness to your liking.

3. In a large bowl, combine the sliced kale, chopped parsley, sliced red onions, and shredded carrots.
4. Pour the dressing over the kale mixture. Toss until well coated.
5. Cover the bowl and refrigerate the kale slaw for at least 30 minutes before serving. This allows the flavors to meld and the kale to soften slightly.

## Note

- Serve the kale slaw on its own as a refreshing side dish or use it to top catfish tacos.
- To remove some of the bitterness from the chopped kale, massage with a drizzle of olive oil for 2-3 minutes.





# Pick Your Greens Farm Salad

**Cook Time** 15 min. | **Serves** 2-3

**Calories** 105 **Fat** 5g **Cholesterol** 0mg **Sodium** 198mg **Carbohydrates** 12g **Sugars** 1g **Protein** 5g



## Ingredients

- 6 large leaves of collards or kale  
(or 1 cup spring mix or 1 ½ cups spinach greens)
- Sea salt
- Black pepper
- Any salad toppings of your choice  
(onions, tomatoes, carrots, etc.), including dressing or vinegar and oil

## Preparation

1. Chop greens, removing stems.
2. Wash greens in a large bowl and spin dry.
3. Sprinkle lightly with sea salt and black pepper.

## Notes

- If you add meat to your salad, grilled shrimp, grilled salmon, or grilled chicken without the skin are great options.





The background of the page is a light blue color. It features stylized illustrations of corn cobs and green leaves. The corn cobs are depicted with a halftone dot pattern and are filled with yellow, pink, and maroon kernels. The green leaves are simple, elongated shapes with white veins. The overall style is modern and graphic.

## The Golden Hour

The end of a long 9-5 needs a speedy dinner option. “Put me in, coach,” corn screams. Sweet corn, corn on the cob, and creamed corn are all easy to prepare and tantalizing to the senses. With a diversity of taste, texture, and benefits, corn is a memorable experience tailored around Southern hospitality. Now after a long hard day’s work, you can enjoy a dinner that quickly goes for the win.

# Easy Black Beans and Corn

**Cook Time** 50 min. | **Serves** 6-8

**Calories** 218 **Fat** 9g **Cholesterol** 11mg **Sodium** 470mg **Carbohydrates** 30g **Sugars** 4g **Protein** 10g

## Ingredients

- 8 oz can of black beans
- 2 cups fresh shucked/frozen corn kernels
- 1 small red bell pepper
- 1 small onion
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 lime, cut into wedges
- 1 tablespoon cilantro, chopped
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, butter, or vegetable oil
- ½ cup Cotija cheese

## Preparation

1. Melt butter/oil in pan and add chopped onion and red bell pepper.
2. Sauté until soft.
3. Add corn and black beans.
4. Stir in chili powder, cumin, and turmeric. Turn heat to low. Cook for 5 minutes or until desired tenderness. Season to taste.
5. Place corn and beans in a bowl. Top with crumbled Cotija cheese, cilantro, and lime wedges.





# Roasted Corn and Tomato Soup

**Cook Time** 30 min. | **Serves** 4-6

**Calories** 278 **Fat** 20g **Cholesterol** 0mg **Sodium** 474mg **Carbohydrates** 26g **Sugars** 9g **Protein** 5g

## Ingredients

- 10 tomatoes or 2 14.5 oz cans of roasted diced tomatoes
- 4 large ears of corn
- 1 small onion, minced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 8 tablespoons of olive oil
- 2 teaspoons black pepper
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 teaspoons celery seed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ cup soy milk
- 3 cups vegetable stock

## Preparation

1. Gently rub the tomatoes and corn under cold running water.
2. Toss corn and tomatoes in 4 tablespoons of olive oil and place them on an aluminum foil-lined baking sheet.
3. Roast corn and tomatoes in oven for 40 minutes on 400° F, then broil for 5 minutes.
4. Once the tomatoes have cooled, easily peel off the skins. Discard the skins and roughly chop the tomatoes. If using canned tomatoes, skip this step.
5. In a pan, add 4 tablespoons of olive oil. Once hot, add minced onion and cook over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, for about 5 minutes or until tender. Stir in minced garlic and cook for an additional 2 minutes.

6. Add the chopped tomatoes and roasted corn to the pan with onions and garlic. Stir in black pepper, cayenne pepper, celery seed, and salt.
7. Add the soy milk and vegetable stock. Simmer for 10 minutes to allow the flavors to meld. For thicker consistency, simmer longer.

## Notes

- Tomatoes taste better in season. If tomatoes are out of season, feel free to use canned tomatoes. For low-sodium options, look for cans labeled “no-salt-added.”
- You can substitute the soy milk for a different milk based on preference.
- Add half the mixture to a blender for a smoother, less chunky consistency.





# Plant-Based Cornbread

**Cook Time** 40 min. | **Serves** 8

Calories 261 Fat 12g Cholesterol 0mg Sodium 27mg Carbohydrates 41g Sugars 2g Protein 3g

## Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups cornmeal
- 1 cup whole wheat pastry flour or other flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 ½ cups almond milk
- ¼ cup apple juice mixed with 1 tablespoon cornstarch

## Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Sift cornmeal, flour, and baking powder together.
3. Add almond milk and apple juice and stir to mix. Add milk if needed.
4. Pour the batter into a nonstick pan or line it with parchment paper and bake for 30 minutes or until lightly browned.



# Corn and Tomato Salad

**Cook Time** 20 min. | **Serves** 6-8 cups

**Calories** 167 **Fat** 8g **Cholesterol** 0mg **Sodium** 321mg **Carbohydrates** 25g **Sugars** 5g **Protein** 5g

## Ingredients

- 6-8 ears fresh corn, shucked and removed from the cob or 3-4 cups canned corn, drained
- 1 ½ cups grape tomatoes, quartered
- 1 large handful chopped cilantro
- 1 lime (*zest and juice*)
- ¼-½ cup olive or avocado oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- **Optional:** finely chopped jalapeño or Scotch bonnet pepper, seeded

## Preparation

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Prep and wash produce.
3. Add corn, tomatoes, lime zest, salt, pepper, and optional ingredients to a bowl.
4. Add juice of one lime, olive oil, and ½ cilantro.
5. Mix gently.
6. Cover and let stand for at least 15 minutes to 2 hours.
7. Add the remaining cilantro, mix gently.

## Notes

- This recipe may need two limes.
- Add more nutrition with vegetables like bell peppers, red onion, etc.
- If you prefer to cook corn in this salad, try grilling the corn. Place the corn on a hot grill for 8-10 minutes, turning occasionally. The corn can also be wrapped in foil.

## Other options:

- Place a wet paper towel around the corn and microwave for 5-7 minutes.
- Boil the corn.
- Frozen corn can be used. Simply warm in a skillet with a little oil.







## The Secret Life of Beans

Green beans, red beans, limas, garbanzos... the list goes on but the point remains: every meal is improved with the magic of beans. With a high concentration of fiber protecting from high cholesterol, heart diseases, and high blood pressure, beans have versatile health benefits. No matter the occasion, beans are a great option. They are magic after all, so jump for joy as they jump off these pages and onto your plate.



# Crispy Roasted Black-Eyed Peas

**Cook Time** 40 min. | **Serves** 2-3, ½ cup

**Calories** 102 **Fat** 8g **Cholesterol** 0mg **Sodium** 90mg **Carbohydrates** 7g **Sugars** 0g **Protein** 3g



## Ingredients

- 1 can black-eyed peas, drained, rinsed, patted dry
- 1-2 tablespoons oil
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- Pinch of salt

## Preparation

1. Place rinsed and dried beans on a baking sheet.
2. Drizzle with oil.
3. Add seasonings and mix.
4. Roast in the oven at 400° F for 30-35 minutes or until your desired crispness.

## Notes

- Beans we eat in the South are packed with nutrients like calcium, protein, vitamins, iron, potassium, fiber, and folic acid.



# Pinto Bean Burger

**Cook Time** 30 min. | **Serves** 4

**Calories** 107 **Fat** 0g **Cholesterol** 0mg **Sodium** 34mg **Carbohydrates** 20g **Sugars** 1g **Protein** 6g

## Ingredients

- 14 oz can of pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- ¾ cup panko breadcrumbs
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- 1 ½ teaspoons Cajun spice

## Preparation

1. Start by rinsing and draining the canned pinto beans. Make sure they are well-drained to avoid excess moisture in your burger mixture.
2. Place the pinto beans in a large mixing bowl and use a fork or potato masher to mash them into a chunky paste. You want some texture in the burger mixture.
3. Add the panko breadcrumbs, pepper, garlic powder, chopped onion, and Cajun spice.
4. Mix until well combined.
5. Divide the mixture into four equal portions and shape them into burger patties. You can adjust the size of the patties based on the size of your burger buns.
6. Heat a skillet or frying pan over medium-high heat and add a little oil. Once the oil is hot, place the bean patties in the pan and cook for 4-5 minutes on each side or until they are golden brown and heated through.
7. Assemble the burgers with a lettuce wrap for a low-carb option. Add your favorite toppings like lettuce, tomato, or any condiments you like.

## Notes

- To reduce sodium content, rinse and drain canned beans or choose a no-salt-added canned bean.





# Real Beans

Cook Time 20 min. | Serves 10

Calories 190 Fat 2g Cholesterol 0mg Sodium 79mg Carbohydrates 46g Sugars 35g Protein 2g



## Ingredients

- ½ cup low-fat Italian salad dressing
- 1 15 oz can of kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 15 oz can of pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 15 oz can of black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed
- 1 10 oz package of frozen lima beans, cooked
- 1 cup canned or frozen corn, thawed completely
- 1 large red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- ½ medium purple onion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon black pepper, or to taste

## Preparation

1. Toss all ingredients together.
2. Serve cold or at room temperature.
3. Cover and store in the refrigerator for several days.



# Crispy Cajun Roasted Red Beans

**Cook Time** 30-40 min. | **Serves** 2-3, ½ cup

**Calories** 114 **Fat** 6g **Cholesterol** 0mg **Sodium** 72mg **Carbohydrates** 17g **Sugars** 3g **Protein** 4g



## Ingredients

- 1 can light or dark red/kidney beans, drained, rinsed, and patted dry
- 1-2 tablespoons oil
- 2 teaspoons Cajun seasoning (*see recipe below*)

### For Salt-Free Cajun Spice Blend

- 2 tablespoons paprika
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 2 teaspoons black pepper
- 2 teaspoons cayenne pepper
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon lemon zest

## Preparation

1. Place rinsed and drained beans on a baking sheet.
2. Drizzle with oil.
3. For the homemade Cajun spice blend, mix the ingredients in a jar or an airtight container.
4. Add spice blend to the beans and mix.
5. Roast in the oven at 400° F for 30-35 minutes or until your desired crispness.

## Notes

- Use 1-2 teaspoons or as much as you like of the salt-free Cajun spice blend.
- The longer you roast the beans, the crispier they will be.
- Try making these beans in an air fryer if you have one to save time. Air fry at 380° F for 15 minutes, shaking halfway through.
- The Cajun spice blend goes well with seafood, chicken, and your favorite vegetables. Eating a variety of herbs and spices offers flavor and health benefits.





The background of the page is a light teal color. It features several large, dark brown sweet potatoes with a textured, halftone-like pattern. Interspersed among these are several slices of sweet potatoes, showing a bright orange interior. The slices are arranged in a circular pattern around the central text, with some appearing to be floating or falling. The overall style is modern and artistic.

## The Sweet Potato Life

Church potluck, everyone is dressed in their “Sunday best.” The smell of a certain dish fills the air: baked sweet potatoes. With some butter you immediately experience heaven as the orange goodness melts in your mouth. The sweet potato is a delicacy of Mississippi fit for any occasion, and the vegetable is a great source of magnesium and fiber for regulating blood sugar and reducing insulin resistance. The sweet potato really is our “Sunday best.”

# Stuffed Sweet Potato with Veggies

**Cook Time** 30 min. | **Serves** 2

**Calories** 333 **Fat** 8g **Cholesterol** 0mg **Sodium** 36mg **Carbohydrates** 63g **Sugars** 4g **Protein** 5g



## Ingredients

- 1 small head of broccoli
- 1/2 red or green bell pepper
- 1/2 sweet onion
- 4 sweet potatoes
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

## Preparation

1. Slice all ingredients except for the sweet potatoes, then sauté in olive oil or vegetable oil for 5 minutes.
2. Bake the sweet potatoes in the oven for 20 minutes at 350° F or in the microwave for 8 minutes or until soft.
3. Remove the baked sweet potatoes and add the sautéed veggies.





# Rosemary Sweet Potatoes

Cook Time 25 min. | Serves 4-6

Calories 244 Fat 19g Cholesterol 0mg Sodium 204mg Carbohydrates 20g Sugars 1g Protein 3g



## Ingredients

- 2 cups sweet potatoes
- 4 tablespoons olive oil or browned butter
- ¼ cup almond milk
- 3 sprigs of rosemary
- 1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- ½ cup chopped pecans
- ½ teaspoon salt or to taste
- **Optional:** 1 tablespoon date sugar

## Preparation

1. Scrub sweet potatoes with a clean vegetable brush under running water.
2. Peel the sweet potatoes. Cut them into even-sized chunks to ensure they cook uniformly.
3. Cover the sweet potato chunks in a large pot with cold water. Add a pinch of salt.
4. Bring the water to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce the heat to maintain a gentle boil. Cook the sweet potatoes for 15-20 minutes or until tender.
5. Drain the cooked sweet potatoes and place them in a large mixing bowl.
6. In a small saucepan, simmer milk and two rosemary sprigs for about 5 minutes on very low heat.
7. Combine oil, milk, cinnamon, and citrus.
8. Pour mixture over potatoes and mash until smooth.

9. Finely chop one sprig of rosemary.

10. Top mashed sweet potatoes with chopped rosemary and pecans.

## Notes

- Browned butter gives the rosemary a nutty caramel flavor. However, if you are aiming to increase your intake of heart-healthy fat, swap out for olive oil.
- Directions to brown butter: Place melted butter in a pan over medium heat. Once butter has melted, stir occasionally. When the butter develops a nutty aroma and turns a light brown color (about five minutes), remove it from the heat immediately. Be cautious not to let it burn, which can happen quickly.



# Candied Sweet Potatoes

**Cook Time** 45 min. | **Serves** 6

**Calories** 113 **Fat** 2g **Cholesterol** 0mg **Sodium** 70mg **Carbohydrates** 25g **Sugars** 16g **Protein** 1g



## Ingredients

- 4 medium sweet potatoes
- 2 tablespoons coconut cream
- ½ cup orange juice
- ¼ cup agave nectar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ginger
- ¼ teaspoon salt

## Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. Peel sweet potatoes and cut into slices about ¼-inch round.
3. Lightly grease a 9x13 casserole dish with coconut cream and arrange the sweet potato slices.
4. In a saucepan over medium heat, add coconut cream, agave nectar, ginger, and orange juice and stir. Stir in vanilla extract, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt.
5. Cover the casserole dish with parchment paper, then foil paper and bake for 45 minutes, basting with the agave mixture at least once.
6. Remove foil, baste with agave mixture, and allow to bake for 20 minutes uncovered.





# Simple Oven-Roasted Sweet Potatoes

**Cook Time** 20-30 min. | **Serves** 6

**Calories** 164 **Fat** 5g **Cholesterol** 0mg **Sodium** 208mg **Carbohydrates** 29g **Sugars** 1g **Protein** 2g

## Ingredients

- 4-6 peeled, evenly cubed sweet potatoes or 4 cups (*optional: leave the skin on*)
- 2-3 tablespoons oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- Or your favorite spices and herbs for seasoning

## Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 425° F.
2. Wash and prepare the sweet potatoes and cut into ½-inch cubes. Cut them all the same size so they roast evenly.
3. Place potatoes on a sheet pan lined with foil or parchment paper (do not crowd them).
4. Drizzle with oil, add seasonings, and mix.
5. Place in preheated oven. Roast for 20-25 minutes or until tender, turning halfway through.

## Notes

- Peeling is a personal preference. Leaving the skin on the potatoes provides extra fiber.
- White potatoes are an excellent option for roasting.

- For a sweet and savory option, mix oil and spices in a bowl, and add 1-2 tablespoons of honey and drizzle over sweet potatoes. Toss to coat, then cook.
- For a sweet option, mix oil, one teaspoon of cinnamon, and ½ teaspoon of nutmeg in a bowl; add 1-2 tablespoons of honey and drizzle over sweet potatoes. Toss to coat, then cook. This is an excellent alternative to traditional candied yams.





## Sweet Treats

It's the end of a delicious meal, and your pants are about to blow a button. Then someone says, "Who's ready for dessert?" Suddenly, you care a lot less about that button. Everyone should enjoy the finale to an amazing meal. With the help of the recipes to come, healthy options for desserts and sweet treats are at your fingertips. Like life, dessert is sweet—so let's have some and enjoy it all.



# Beet Lemonade

**Cook Time** 5 min. | **Serves** 2 (16-ounce serving size)

Calories 255 Fat 1g Cholesterol 0mg Sodium 117mg Carbohydrates 69g Sugars 59g Protein 3g



## Ingredients

- 15 Granny Smith apples
- 3 large beets
- 3 lemons

## Preparation

1. Wash and slice fruits and vegetables.
2. Juice all fruits and vegetables.
3. Prep juice bottles with label and date.  
Bottle juice and refrigerate.



# Greek Yogurt Banana Pudding

Cook Time 5 min. | Serves 2

Calories 462 Fat 22g Cholesterol 0mg Sodium 371mg Carbohydrates 58g Sugars 2g Protein 6g



## Ingredients

- 1 cup nonfat Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons sugar-free banana cream pudding mix
- 3 tablespoons unsweetened almond milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 banana, sliced
- 6 HighKey wafers

## Preparation

1. In a mixing bowl, combine the non-fat Greek yogurt, pudding mix, vanilla extract, and almond milk. Mix well until the pudding mix is fully incorporated into the yogurt.
2. Allow the mixture to sit for a few minutes to let the flavors meld.
3. In a serving glass, start layering the dessert.
4. Begin with crumbled cookies at the bottom, or you can keep them whole if you prefer.
5. Layer with a few slices of banana and one more layer of pudding.
6. Garnish with one HighKey cookie.

## Notes

- For an even lower carb option, exclude the bananas and enjoy the banana cream flavor from the pudding mix alone.





# Zucchini Chocolate Brownies

Cook Time 25 min. | Serves 8

Calories 99 Fat 4g Cholesterol 0mg Sodium 12mg Carbohydrates 15g Sugars 5g Protein 3g

## Ingredients

- ½ cup all-natural almond butter or peanut butter
- ¼ cup agave nectar or pure maple syrup
- ½ cup unsweetened all-natural applesauce
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- ⅓ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ½ cup barley flour or wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ⅛ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 cup finely shredded zucchini (*skin left on*)
- ¼ cup dark chocolate chips
- ¼ cup walnuts

## Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Use an 8x8 nonstick pan or line with parchment paper.
3. Mix almond butter, applesauce, agave nectar, and vanilla until smooth.
4. Add zucchini, cocoa powder, barley flour, baking powder, and sea salt and mix until combined.
5. Stir in half of the chocolate chips. Pour batter into a baking pan and sprinkle remaining chips and walnuts on top.
6. Bake for 23-25 minutes. Let cool before slicing into squares.



# Strawberry Greek Yogurt Parfait

**Cook Time** 5 min. | **Serves** 4, 4-oz

**Calories** 350 **Fat** 17g **Cholesterol** 11mg **Sodium** 42mg **Carbohydrates** 37g **Sugars** 28g **Protein** 17g



## Ingredients

- 16 ounces of full-fat plain Greek yogurt  
(or 2 8-ounce containers)
- 2 cups chopped strawberries, stems removed  
(if using frozen strawberries, let them thaw some for mixing)
- ¼ - ½ cup honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Squeeze of lemon
- 4 ounces unsalted nuts
- **Optional:** ½ cup high-protein granola

## Preparation

1. Add yogurt, strawberries, honey, vanilla and lemon to a bowl and mix.
2. Divide yogurt into cups or bowls.
3. Top each parfait with 1 ounce of unsalted nuts and/or 2 tablespoons of high protein granola.

## Notes

- Greek yogurt is protein rich and high in nutrients like calcium, selenium, and vitamin B-12. When shopping for Greek yogurt, look for brands with no added sugar.
- Try a mixture of fruit in this recipe. A berry blend is a great option.
- Enhance the flavor and nutrition of this recipe by adding nutmeg, cinnamon, or a hint of cayenne pepper if you'd like.







# Green Smoothie

**Cook Time** 3 min. | **Serves** 3

**Calories** 15 **Fat** 0g **Cholesterol** 0mg **Sodium** 42mg **Carbohydrates** 39g **Sugars** 23g **Protein** 4g

## Ingredients

- 4 cups fresh kale or baby spinach
- 1 cup fresh or drained canned pears or pineapple chunks
- 2 cups green grapes
- ½-¾ banana, fresh or frozen
- 1 ½ cups water
- ¼ cup agave nectar or maple syrup (*optional*)
- ¾ cup ice (*optional*)

## Preparation

1. Blend all ingredients together on the lowest speed and slowly increase the speed as the smoothie starts to puree.
2. Add more ice or water as necessary to achieve the desired consistency and blend for about 2 minutes.

## Notes

- Best if served cold. Make sure fruit chunks are packed in juice, not syrup.



# Slightly Sweetened Tea

**Cook Time** 15 min. | **Serves** about 8 (8 ounce serving size)

Calories 42 Fat 0g Cholesterol 0mg Sodium 4mg Carbohydrates 11g Sugars 10g Protein 0g



## Ingredients

- 4 cups water
- 7 green tea bags (plain or flavored)
- ¼ cup honey
- 4 cups cold water
- 1 orange, cut into wedges
- 1 lime, cut into wedges

## Preparation

1. Wash your hands.
2. Bring 4 cups of water to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add tea bags.
3. Boil for 1 minute, then remove from heat. Cover and steep for 10 minutes. Remove tea bags.
4. Stir in honey.
5. Pour into a pitcher; add in 4 cups cold water and orange and lime wedges.
6. To enhance the flavor, let the tea sit in the refrigerator for 2-4 hours.
7. Serve over ice.

## Notes

- Add your favorite fruit.
- Try this tea warm.
- Sweet tea is a traditional Southern beverage. Did you know some teas are good for overall health? This recipe offers unique health benefits.

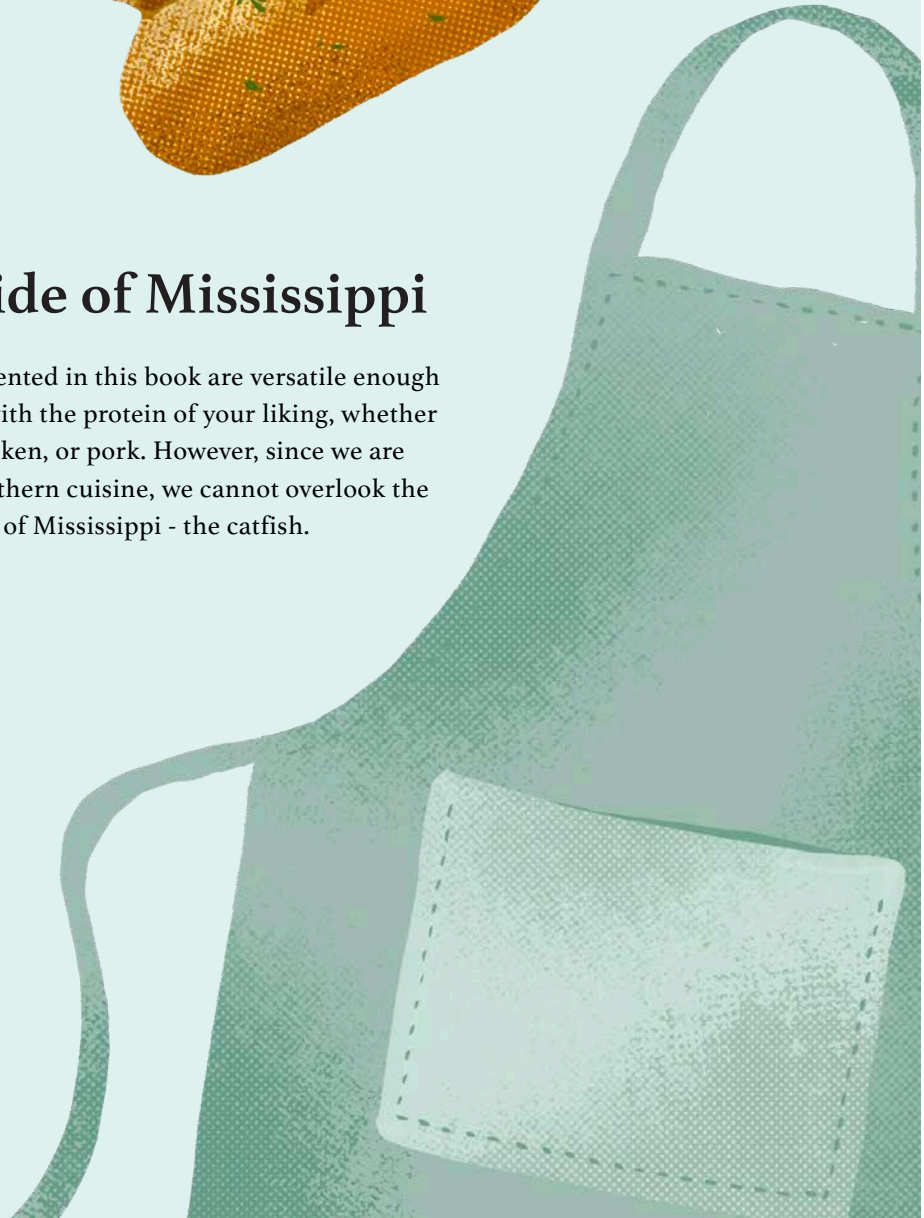
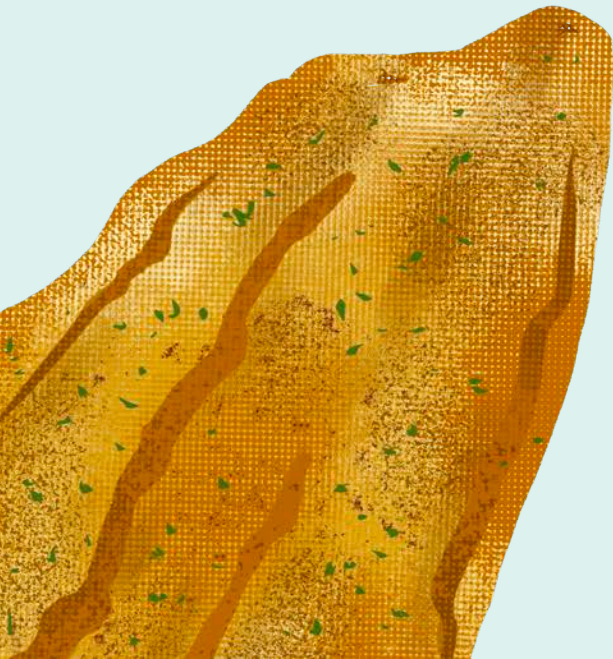






## The Pride of Mississippi

The recipes presented in this book are versatile enough to be prepared with the protein of your liking, whether it be fish, chicken, or pork. However, since we are celebrating Southern cuisine, we cannot overlook the pride of Mississippi - the catfish.



# Blackened Catfish Tacos

Cook Time 10 min. | Serves 4

Calories 323 Fat 25g Cholesterol 70mg Sodium 250mg Carbohydrates 7g Sugars 0g Protein 16g



## Ingredients

- 4 catfish filets
- Cajun seasoning or homemade blend with 2 tablespoons smoked paprika, 1 teaspoon celery seed, 1 teaspoon onion powder, 1 tablespoon garlic powder, 1 tablespoon dried thyme, and 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons canola oil or avocado oil

## Preparation

1. In a small bowl, mix smoked paprika, celery seed, onion powder, garlic powder, dried thyme, and salt. Set aside. Skip this step if you are using a Cajun blend.
2. Wash the catfish and pat dry with a paper towel.
3. Drizzle the fish with oil and coat with seasonings. Set aside for 10 minutes to let the seasonings marinate.
4. In a skillet over medium-high heat, add 4 tablespoons of canola oil or avocado oil.
5. Once the oil is hot, carefully add the seasoned catfish filets to the skillet. Cook for 3-4 minutes per side or until the catfish is cooked through and has a blackened crust.
6. Follow the instructions for the kale slaw on pg. 10.
7. Heat the tortillas in a dry skillet or in the oven until warm.
8. Place a blackened catfish filet on each tortilla. Cut if using smaller tortillas. Top with a generous portion of the kale slaw.

## Notes

- Serve with low-carb tortillas.





# Oven “Fried” Catfish

**Cook Time** 20-30 min. | **Serves** 4, 3-4 oz serving

**Calories** 293 **Fat** 7g **Cholesterol** 110mg **Sodium** 833mg **Carbohydrates** 43g **Sugars** 7g **Protein** 16g



## Ingredients

- 1 pound catfish filets, cut into smaller pieces or halved
- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- ¼-½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon lemon pepper
- 2 teaspoons hot sauce
- 1 ½ cups low-fat buttermilk, plant-based milk, or cow's milk
- 1-2 large eggs

## Preparation

1. Pat the catfish dry and cut into smaller pieces or halves.
2. Preheat the oven to 425° F.
3. Line a sheet pan with a baking/cooling rack or foil or spray it with nonstick cooking spray.
4. Add cornmeal, flour, and seasonings to a plastic bag and shake gently.
5. Mix milk, eggs, and hot sauce in a shallow pan.
6. Place the fish in the liquid mixture and coat both sides.
7. Add fish to cornmeal mixture and coat. Shake gently to remove excess cornmeal.
8. Place fish on the prepared sheet pan. Ensure proper spacing and no overlap.

9. Generously spray the fish with nonstick cooking spray.
10. Place in the oven and bake for 25-30 minutes until golden brown and an internal temperature of 145° F.

## Notes

- Optionally, follow your air fryer directions for cooking the fish.
- It's best to cook this fish on a baking or cooling rack to increase the crispiness. Cooking this fish on a baking sheet alone can cause the fish to be soggy.
- If you only have a sheet pan, once this fish is done, broil the fish. To enhance crispiness, place the oven on broil for 3-5 minutes, watching the fish closely.
- Any white fish is a great option. Catfish is low in mercury and contains vitamins, minerals, lean protein, and healthy fats.
- If you prefer fewer seasonings on your fish, use salt and pepper.



## | Facts and Tips

# Living with Diabetes

Managing blood sugar is the key to living well with diabetes, and healthy eating habits are the best line of defense. But what does it mean to eat well? Simply put, it means prioritizing certain types of food in a measured portion size within a good schedule—so your blood sugar stays in your target range.

Following these three rules—eating the healthiest foods, consuming them in moderate amounts, and sticking to regular mealtime—is essential to controlling your diabetes. A healthy eating plan that's naturally rich in nutrients and low in fat and calories results in substantial life changes. Key elements like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains go a long way to achieving the well-being of any consumer.

It is important to note that you are not alone. Eating healthy can be challenging, but options are available. Ask your healthcare provider to refer you to a diabetes educator, and check out the resources in this section for tips, strategies, and ideas to make eating well a priority.

A meal plan is your guide for when, what, and how much to eat for your nutrition in order to keep your blood sugar levels in your target range. A good meal plan will consider your goals, tastes, and lifestyle, as well as any medicines you're taking.

### A good meal plan will also:

- Include more non-starchy vegetables, such as broccoli, greens, spinach, kale, and green beans.
- Include fewer added sugars and refined grains, such as white bread, rice, and pasta with less than 2 grams of fiber per serving.
- Focus on whole foods instead of highly processed foods as much as possible.

Carbohydrates raise your blood sugar levels. How fast carbs do this depends on what food you consume. For example, drinking fruit juice raises blood sugar faster than eating whole fruit. **Eating carbs with foods that have protein, fat, or fiber slows down how quickly your blood sugar rises.**





# About Portion Size

Portion size and serving size aren't always the same. A portion is the amount of food you choose to eat at one time, while a serving is a specific amount of food, such as one slice of bread or 8 ounces (1 cup) of milk.

These days, portions at restaurants are quite a bit larger than they were several years ago. One entrée can equal three or four servings! Studies show that people tend to eat more when they're served more food, so getting portions under control is really important for managing weight and blood sugar.

If you're eating out, have half of your meal wrapped up to go so you can enjoy it later. At home, measure out snacks; don't eat straight from the bag or box. At dinnertime, reduce the temptation to go back for seconds by keeping the serving bowls out of reach. And with this "handy" guide, you'll always have a way to estimate portion size at your fingertips:



3 ounces of meat, fish, or poultry  
**Palm of hand (no fingers)**



1 ounce of meat or cheese  
**Thumb (tip to base)**



1 cup or 1 medium fruit  
**Fist**



1–2 ounces of nuts or pretzels  
**Cupped hand**



1 tablespoon  
**Thumb tip (tip to first joint)**



1 teaspoon  
**Fingertip (tip to first joint)**

# Non-starchy and Starchy Vegetables

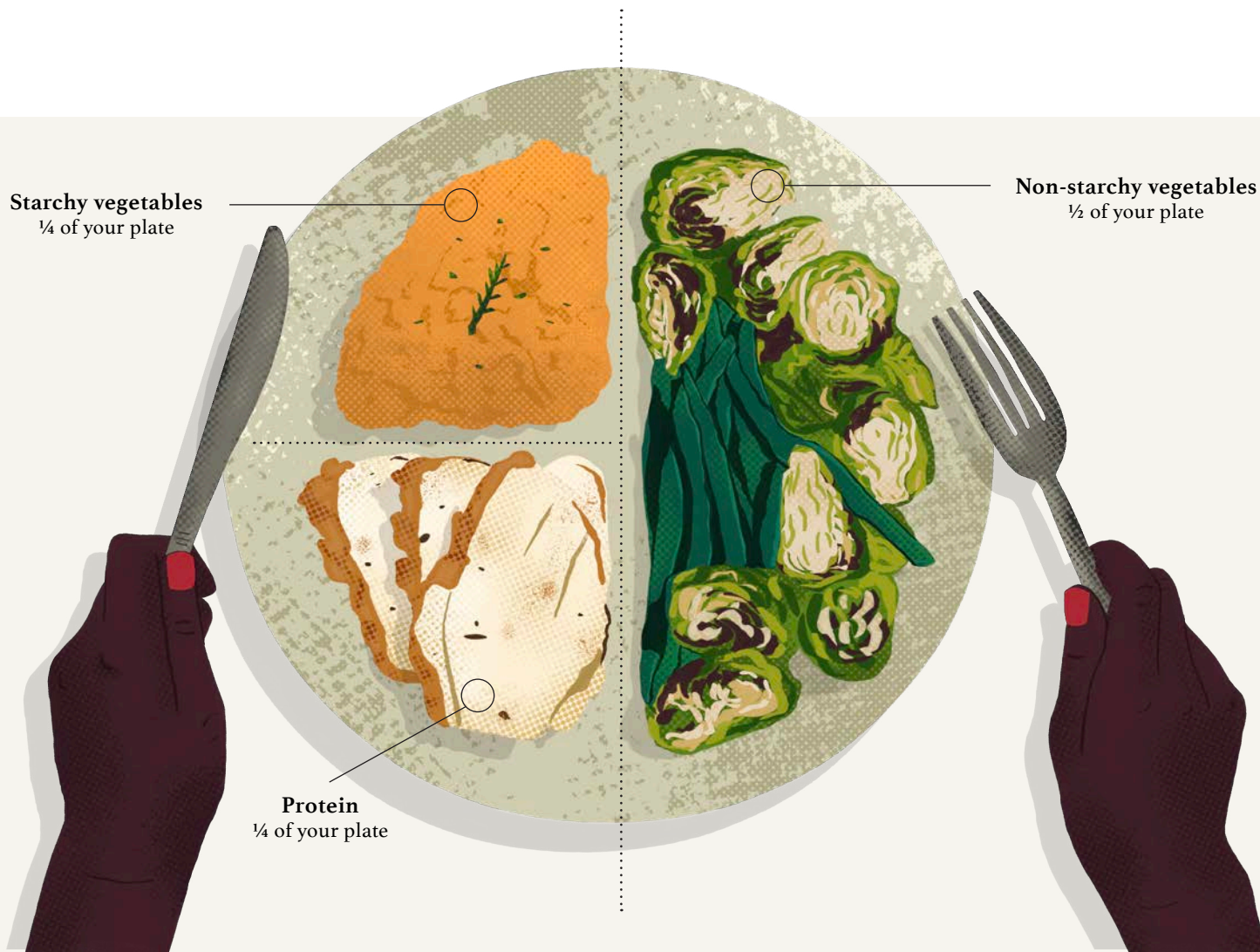
**Did you know there are two main types of vegetables: non-starchy and starchy?**

**Non-starchy veggies** include cabbage, cucumber, carrots, cauliflower, asparagus, spinach, lettuce greens, beets, green beans, broccoli, eggplant, peppers, mushrooms, summer squash such as zucchini, tomatoes, turnips, artichoke hearts, Brussels sprouts, celery, radishes, onions, herbs such as parsley and basil.

These veggies are high in fiber and low in carbohydrates, which makes them filling and great for weight loss. They also have little impact on blood sugar, which is great for those managing diabetes.

**Starchy veggies** include corn, potatoes, green peas, winter squash such as butternut, and mixed frozen veggies. These veggies are lower in fiber and higher in carbohydrates, which means they contain more calories and have a much greater impact on blood glucose.

It is recommended to fill half of your plate with non-starchy veggies and limit starchy veggies to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your plate.





# Message

*from the* Director of the Diabetes Prevention  
and Control Program

This cookbook is not just a collection of recipes. Each dish was carefully selected to help Mississippians make informed food choices while still enjoying delicious meals. My hope is that this cookbook helps you incorporate nutritious ingredients and mindful cooking into your daily life.

By bridging the gap between necessary dietary changes and healthy wellbeing, this cookbook offers a unique connection between you and a supportive community. The efforts on display in this book are a complement to the Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) program offered by the Diabetes Prevention and Control Program at the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH).

The DSMES program provides valuable resources, education, and support for individuals with diabetes, helping them make lifestyle changes that positively impact their health. With the guidance of trained healthcare professionals and helpful tips from this cookbook, participants can gain the knowledge and skills needed to manage their condition and improve their quality of life.

In addition, the National Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) is a valuable resource for those at risk of developing type 2 diabetes. The National DPP is a year-long program that educates individuals on how to make long-term changes to their diet and exercise habits through evidence-based actions. By promoting healthier lifestyles and providing ongoing support, the National DPP plays an important role in preventing the onset of this chronic disease.

You are invited to take the first step towards better health by registering for classes with the provided QR code. Whether you're seeking support in managing your diabetes or looking to prevent its onset, the Diabetes Prevention and Control Program is here to support you on your journey to a healthier life.

As a state, let's take charge of our health and embrace a future free from the burden of diabetes.

You can find out more about the programs offered by the Mississippi State Department of Health by visiting our website, [www.msdh.ms.gov/diabetes](http://www.msdh.ms.gov/diabetes).

We express our sincere gratitude to the MSDH Office of Community Health Workers for their support, which has made the production of this diabetes cookbook possible.

**Jayda L. Lee**

Director, Diabetes Prevention and Control Program  
Mississippi State Department of Health

