

Rainbow Plate Recipes for Happy Healthy Kids

Rainbow Salad Platter

What better way to get kids of all ages to dig into a huge plate of veggies than to put them in charge of making their own 'Rainbow Salad' platter. The most important ingredient in this recipe is hunger! Believe it or not, hungry kids (after school time) make for excellent vegetable eaters.

Ingredients

- Sweet corn
- Red sweet peppers
- Cucumbers
- Peas
- Beans
- Avocado
- Carrots
- Cherry tomatoes
- Purple cabbage
- Lettuces
- Sprouts

Directions

1. Buy a variety of different coloured vegetables. Include some familiar favourites and one or two new and interesting varieties. (Have you ever tried purple cabbage? –it's beautiful!! fennel? –kids think it's crazy that it tastes like licorice!)
2. Encourage your child to help you wash, chop, spiralize (check these nifty tools out on the web), peel and prepare all of their salad ingredients onto one main plate.
3. Give them their own serving plate to arrange and let their imaginations go wild. You will be amazed at how creative they get.
4. Make a dressing or a dip (or pull one out of the fridge) to serve on the side, or serve the platter plain.
5. Don't focus on what they eat and what they don't eat, just leave them to create. The eating will take care of itself!

Fruit Adventure Platter

Food can be a nutritious art activity when kids create their own rainbow fruit platter. This works great with or without a dipping sauce. We suggest giving kids a fun looking plate and a bunch of different fruits to work with. By giving them a few familiar fruits and some new ones they have never tried before you are gently nudging their palates along in a pressure-free setting.

Directions

1. Help your child wash and prepare the various fruits. Aim for a variety of colours, shapes and textures (top tip: have them help you shop for them too!) Gather all the prepared fruits onto one main plate.
2. Make an easy yogurt dip, or any other fun dip for the fruit, to put in a small bowl on their plate.
3. Give them the plate and ask them to arrange all of the fruit on it. Ask them questions about what they want it to look like. Give them suggestions: make a face, make an animal or arrange a pattern. They will take it to a whole other level and end up gobbling it up faster than you can say Rainbow Plate!

Easy yogurt dip for fruit

Ingredients

Stir together:

- 1/4 cup plain yogurt or sour cream
- 1 teaspoon maple syrup, honey or brown sugar
- a sprinkle of cinnamon

Orange and Green (Pumpkin Zucchini) Muffins

Quantity: 12 mini muffins or 6 large ones (recipe doubles easily)

Make these colourful muffins in a dash using leftover cooked veggies from last night's dinner. Pack them in lunches, bring them to sports games or have them stored in your freezer for a hunger emergency. They are guaranteed to please.

Kids of any age can help with this recipe. Let them jump in and help with mashing, grating, spooning, measuring, dumping and stirring. Little ones will love to sprinkle the pumpkin seeds on top of the muffins before they are baked. Let them peek in the oven window as they bake, so see the domes rise like magic!

Ingredients

- 1 cup whole wheat pastry flour (or 1/2 cup regular whole wheat and 1/2 cup white flour)
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 cup pumpkin puree (or mashed cooked squash or sweet potato)
- 1/2 cup grated zucchini
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts or raisins(optional)
- raw pumpkin seeds for decorating the tops

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350.
2. In a medium bowl, combine eggs, oil, sugar, vanilla, pumpkin and zucchini. Mix well.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, baking powder and spices.
4. Add dry ingredients to wet and stir gently until combined. Add in nuts or raisins if desired.
5. Spoon into greased muffin tins and top with a few pumpkin seeds for decoration.

**For mini muffins: bake 8-10 minutes. For regular muffins: bake 15-20 minutes. Tops will turn golden.

Use this as a basic muffin recipe, and get creative with your own colourful combo of mashed and grated fruit and/or veggies. Try bananas, applesauce, pears, apples, carrots, even parsnips!

Red Tomato Soup With Alphabet Noodles & “Sprinkles”

Quantity: Feeds 6

We encourage parents to make soup for very young children. It's a flavourful way to expose them to the fabulous flavours of a variety of vegetables. The alphabet noodles (you can find all types) are a good bridge for encouraging kids to try soups. Ask them to find the letters of their name and they will quickly forget the soup is unfamiliar.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed or chopped fine
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and sliced thinly
- 1 (28oz) 796ml can whole plum tomatoes
- 1 (28oz) 796ml can crushed plum tomatoes
- 2 cups sodium reduced chicken stock (or water or vegetable stock)
- 1 cup cooked alphabet noodles (or any other cooked grain – try quinoa, rice, corn kernels or barley)
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 tablespoon sugar (or honey if you prefer)
- pinch of ground cloves (optional)

Directions:

1. Heat the oil on medium heat in a medium-sized, heavy saucepan, Add the onion, carrot and celery and sauté for a few minutes, until softened.
2. Add garlic, basil and cloves and sauté for a few minutes, until fragrant.
3. Add tomatoes, stock and sugar and bring to the boil.
4. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 15-20 minutes (longer, if you have the time).
5. Leave as is, or puree to desired consistency using a hand blender or regular blender –suit yourself!
6. Add the cooked noodles or grains and stir.
7. Season with fresh ground pepper and top each serving with “sprinkles” of chopped fresh parsley or other herbs, and grated parmesan cheese.

I like to serve this with yogurt or sour cream, or stir in some pesto. Give your kids a variety of options to sprinkle on top or stir in.

Chocolate Pumpkin Oat Granola Bars

We affectionately call these the 'kitchen sink granola snacks' as we dig through our pantry to fill a bowl of goodies to make into bars. Feel free to try different cereals, or add dry fruits, nuts, chia seeds or whatever else you have kicking around in the pantry.

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup honey
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 4 tablespoons (1/4 cup) unsalted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- pinch of cinnamon
- 2 cups large flake oats
- 1 1/2 cups crispy rice cereal or other puffed whole grain cereal
- 1/2 cup raw pumpkin seeds (or use sliced nuts, sunflower seeds or coconut)
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup mini chocolate chips

Directions

- In a large bowl, stir the oats, seeds, chocolate chips and rice cereal together; set aside.
- Melt the brown sugar, honey, salt, cinnamon and butter together over medium heat until it begins to bubble. Reduce the heat to low and cook for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the vanilla extract.
- Pour the melted mixture over the dry ingredients and mix well to melt chocolate and moisten all ingredients. Pour the oat mixture into a greased 8 inch square pan and press down evenly with the back of a spoon.

Cool in the fridge for at least 1 hour before cutting into bars. Wrap bars individually and store in the fridge.

“Kitchen Sink” Seedy Snack Cookies

Quantity: 8-10 jumbo cookies or 20-30 kid-sized ones

These cookies have everything but the kitchen sink! They're a great way to use up ripe bananas, they're low in added sugar, and they're packed with protein, fibre and heart-healthy fats from all the nuts and seeds. You can really make them from whatever you've got on hand. Feel free to substitute crispy rice or other puffed cereal for some of the oats to give them an extra crunch.

Kids love to help make these by mashing the bananas, dumping and stirring together all the ingredients, and even scooping the batter onto the pan. Make these kid-sized for lunchboxes and after school snacks, or monster-sized for your briefcase or power snack.

Ingredients

- 1 large or 2 small bananas, mashed
- ½ cup peanut butter or seed butter if desired
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- ¼ cup hemp seeds
- ¼ cup chia seeds
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- ¼ cup raw pumpkin seeds
- ¼ cup flaked unsweetened coconut
- ¼ cup mini chocolate chips
- 1 ½ cups large flake oats
- 2 tablespoons whole wheat flour
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350
- Mash the bananas in a large bowl. Stir in peanut butter, eggs, and maple syrup until well blended.
- Dump in all the seeds, coconut and chocolate chips and stir until combined.
- Mix in the oats.
- Stir the baking powder, salt and cinnamon into the flour and mix into the batter until evenly distributed.
- Spoon onto a parchment-lined baking sheet in whatever size suits your family. (This recipe makes about 8-10 jumbo cookies or 20-30 small ones.) Flatten with the back of a spoon, until they are “cookie-shaped” – they don’t rise or spread much during baking.
- Bake for 15-20 minutes, until nicely browned. Cool on a rack.
- These freeze well.

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