

Thinking Outside the Box!



Stretch the Food Dollar "Crab Cake" Salad

By now, most know that the best way to improve the nutrition quality of the diet is to cook more meals at home and to limit the amount of processed foods. The first part of this message is entirely true when care is taken to choose high nutrition quality products, while keeping portion sizes in check.

When cooking at home, focus on healthy protein sources, while not breaking the bank. In order to keep the intake of unhealthy fats and calories in check, while assuring adequate intake of key vitamins and minerals, the strategy for meeting your protein needs should be consuming a variety of foods. Although chicken, pork, lamb, dairy, etc. are great sources of protein, care needs to be taken to choose mostly lean cuts and low fat versions. Animal products shouldn't be your only source of protein.

There is no harm in aiming for a fair amount of your protein coming from plant based foods (fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts and seeds, and legumes) and seafood. By doing so, it will be easier to keep your calories and saturated fat in check, while assuring you are consuming key vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals that are important to keep your body performing optimally, while also lowering your risk of certain diseases.

When making a diet change aiming toward optimal nutrition, many experts will advise focusing on lean meats. Many recipes that support this will default to chicken breasts or plant based proteins. Consider taking some of those recipes and swap the chicken with fish. Shellfish, like the crab meat in this recipe, is a good source of protein, low in fat and carbs, and rich in Omega-3 fatty acids, which help lowers the risk of heart disease.



Ingredients: 4 servings

- 12 oz. canned crab
- 6 oz. canned albacore tuna in water
- ½ cup celery, diced
- ½ small yellow onion, diced
- 2 tbsp. yellow, red or green bell pepper, diced
- ⅓ cup of mashed avocado (consistency of mayo)
- 2 tbsp. freshly chopped cilantro
- 2 tbsp. nonfat, plain Greek yogurt
- 1 large egg
- 1 ½ tsp. hot sauce
- 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 3 tbsp. Dijon mustard, divided
- ¾ cup panko crumbs (preferably whole wheat)
- 4 tbsp. canola oil, divided
- 1 tsp. lemon or lime juice
- 12-16 oz. fresh mixed salad greens or baby spinach
- 1 mango, peeled and diced
- ¼ cup crushed walnuts (optional)
- Black ground pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Place the diced celery, onions and bell pepper in a microwave safe dish. Add the hot Worcestershire sauce and an additional 1 tbsp. of water. Cover and microwave for 3 minutes. Set aside to cool when done.
2. In a large bowl, mix the mashed avocado with the spices, egg, yogurt and 1 tbsp. of Dijon mustard until completely blended. Add the cooked and cooled vegetables.
3. Gently fold in the tuna, crab and panko until well mixed.
4. Form 4 even sized patties with the mixture.
5. In a large skillet bring 2 tbsp. canola oil to temperature of medium-high heat.
6. Place the formed patties in the skillet and quickly brown each side (about one minute per side). Turn down the heat to medium and cook until heated through, carefully flipping occasionally to prevent burning.
7. While the cakes are cooking, in a mason jar or a container that has a lid, add the remaining oil, Dijon mustard and lime or lemon juice. Cover and shake well and then lightly salt and pepper to taste.
8. Serve each crab cake on a top of ¼ of the greens, top with ¼ of the mango. Sprinkle ¼ of the nuts (optional) over the greens. Drizzle ¼ of the dressing over the salad and use a little to top the crab cake.

Notes:

- This crab cake goes well with a whole grain pasta salad and a steamed vegetable. The Dijon dressing is optional.
- Consider forgoing making the crab mixture into cakes and just gently fry in a pan; then place it in a tortilla wrap with the greens, mangos and dressing. Can be served warm or cold, but the crab mixture does need to be cooked.

DISCLAIMER:

THIS RECIPE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT BY DOD OF ANY INDIVIDUAL VENDOR. ANY PRODUCT OF SIMILAR SPECIFICATION MAY BE USED TO MAKE THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL.

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