

# THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

## CHILI CHICKEN NACHOS



When you think about nachos, what image comes to mind? Stadium or restaurant food? When the average plate of restaurant nachos can contain anywhere between 1,500-2,000 calories and is usually loaded with fat and sodium, it can be hard to imagine making this dish at home to help maintain a healthy eating pattern. But believe it or not, a plate of nachos can be nutritious and can actually be a quick go-to meal that actually contains nutritious foods from each food group, if built correctly. In this meal we have each food group covered and for the large majority of them, it's high quality nutrition.

By making this meal at home, you have more control over the amount of unhealthy fat and empty calories you add to this dish. The term "empty calories" means the calories that come from the added solid fats and/or added sugars in foods which makes the food high in calories, but low in nutritional value. The USDA advises, "A small amount of empty calories is okay, but most people eat far more than is healthy." A main reason for the excess is the consumption of more meals and foods away from home.

Plus, when you make it yourself you get to control all the spices. Sprinkle some cayenne pepper on them to make them spicy nachos or a little cumin for some savory flavors. This meal helps enforce three habits that can assist in maintaining a healthy eating pattern: filling half their plate with fruits and vegetables, eating foods from all food groups, and paying attention to the proportions of food groups on the plate.

Some people enjoy sour cream topping their nachos but try plain nonfat Greek yogurt instead to increase the protein and calcium levels and avoid empty calories. While you might be initially resistant to swapping nonfat Greek yogurt in place of sour cream, just try it one time and you'll be surprised. Many of the ingredients of this dish could already be in your pantry. Next time you're grocery shopping, pick up the remainder and try out this meal to see if it has the potential to become a regular week night meal.

### MACROS / SERVING SIZE:

Protein: 33 g Fat: 17 g Carbs: 56 g

### % CALORIES OF MACROS / SERVING SIZE:

Calories: 508

### NUTRIENTS / SERVING SIZE:

Fiber: 7 g Sodium: 565 mg Sat. Fat: 4 g

### INGREDIENTS (Serves 6)

- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 1 can chopped jalapeños, drained and reserved
- 1 half can whole kernel (no added salt), drained and rinsed
- 1 half can pinto/red beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 tablespoons freshly chopped cilantro
- 10 oz. tortilla chips
- 4 oz. shredded cheddar cheese (1/2 cup)
- 2 cups fresh baby spinach leaves, torn into smaller pieces
- 1 5.3 oz cup of nonfat Greek yogurt
- Salsa

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Slice the chicken in half, lengthwise. Begin cooking the chicken in a frying pan. Pour the reserved jalapeno juice on the chicken while cooking.
3. As the chicken is cooking, line a baking sheet with tin foil and evenly distribute the chips then top with a layer of spinach.
4. Once the chicken is fully cooked, put it on a plate and use two forks to shred the chicken.
5. Layer with the beans and corn, the chicken, jalapeños, and top with the cheese.
6. Sprinkle the cheese with the cayenne pepper, red pepper flakes and chopped cilantro.
7. Put the nachos in the oven and bake for 10 minutes.
8. Garnish with the Greek yogurt and salsa.