

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

TUNA BAHN MI (VIETNAMESE SANDWICH)



There are three main types of omega-3 fatty acids. One type, alpha linolenic acid (ALA) is an essential nutrient, which means your body cannot make it so you must consume it in your diet. The other two types can be made by being converted from ALA but only in small amounts. Regardless, many people don't consume enough of omega-3 fatty acids to reach optimal nutrition goals. When working toward a healthy eating pattern with a goal for optimal nutrition, the best course is not worry about which one is essential, but to aim to eat a variety of food that are sources of all three.

The health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids include potential reduced risks of certain types of cancers, may help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, may improve eye health, may decrease risk factors for heart disease while potentially fighting inflammation.

Since many types of fish (cold water) and seafood are good sources of omega-3 fatty acids, it is a good general recommendation to consume these foods at least twice per week. Generally, fish and seafood have the potential to contain mercury with the degree varying amongst types so if you have a health condition or are pregnant, check with your doctor before relying on fish and seafood for some of omega-3 fatty acids source. Other sources include chia and flaxseeds, walnuts, wheat germ and to a lesser degree, kale and brussels sprouts. Many foods are also now being fortified with omega-3 like some brands of eggs, milk, and juice. Just check the label to see if that product is fortified or not.

In working to get more omega-3 fatty acid food sources into your diet, challenge yourself in pairing them with meals that are made with no sugar added. When cooking fish, instead of using a glaze that contains sugar, consider a breading of whole wheat flour, garlic and paprika. If you choose to prepare it by frying use an oil rich in omega-3 fatty acids like walnut, flaxseed or canola oil.

This dish uses canned tuna, which is a good source of omega-3 fatty acids and likens a version of a popular Vietnamese sandwich. Canned tuna is an inexpensive, low calorie source of protein and other important nutrients, and some brands can last for 2-5 years in your pantry. Canned tuna is easy to have on hand for a quick meal solution or when prepping to have a snack.

MACROS / SERVING SIZE:

Protein 34 g | Fat 29 g | Carbs 71 g

% CALORIES OF MACROS / SERVING SIZE:

Calories 677 | Protein 20 % | Fat 38 % | Carbs 42 %

NUTRIENT / SERVING SIZE:

Fiber 7 g | Sodium 2,277 mg | Sat. Fat 4 g

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

- 4 oz. package of shredded carrots
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 2 tbsp. vinegar
- 2 tbsp. canned chipotle peppers, minced
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 3 5 oz. cans of tuna, drained and flaked
- ¼ cup lime juice
- 4 oz. can diced green chilies, drained
- 2½ tbsp. Asian fish sauce
- 12-in. French baguette (preferably whole wheat/grain)
- 12 oz. nonfat evaporated skim milk, cold
- 1 tbsp. fresh cilantro, chopped (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place the carrots in a medium-sized bowl. Dissolve the sugar in the vinegar and then pour over the carrots. Mix well and set aside so the flavors can blend.
2. Mince the chipotle peppers and place them in small bowl. Add the mayonnaise and then mix.
3. In a medium bowl, mix the tuna, lime juice, and green chilies with the Asian fish sauce.
4. Cut the baguette in half lengthwise. Spread the chipotle mayonnaise on both sides. Top one side with the tuna mixture and then lightly pepper. Sprinkle the chopped fresh cilantro, if desired, over the tuna and then top with the carrot mixture. Place the other half of the baguette back on top.
5. Serve each plate with ¼ of the sandwich alongside a large piece of melon or a fresh peach (sliced) topped with ½ cup of nonfat vanilla Greek yogurt.

DIETITIAN TIP

Aim to consume at least 3 foods a day that contain omega-3 fatty acids while finding ways to incorporate 2 servings of fish or seafood a week in your meal plan if okayed by your doctor.



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