

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

CHICKEN ENCHILADA CASSEROLE



Although there is a heightened key focus on improving the nutrition quality of our diets, and this is highly important, the consumption of excess calories, no matter how 'nutritious the diet is' will still result in weight gain. It is just as important to balance calories with your weight goals as it is to eat nutritious food. Both go hand in hand. The number one strategy is to limit the number of "empty calories you consume."

Empty calories are defined as calories from foods and drinks that provide little to no nutritional value. This can be from added sugars, oils, unhealthy fats, etc. Often, these empty calories can add flavor but are not necessary and can be hidden in prepared foods from restaurants and overly process foods such as baked goods and mixed dishes from the grocery stores. Aim to keep consumption of these items to less than 20 percent of your diet.

A great strategy to meet this goal is to cook more of your meals at home as you have the ultimate control on what to add to your food so as to better control for those empty calories. Sometimes just by making the meal yourself you can cut the number of calories in half, from a dish you'd find in a restaurant by choosing different ingredients and keep the portion size in check. Our registered trademark Dietitian Approved Thumbs UP logo appearing with our recipes in our flyer or on our websites, in-store displays, and at the shelves in the aisles help you make the best choices in avoiding empty calories.

This Chicken Enchilada Casserole uses multiple heat sources and steps to create a tasty dish and is a good step into dishes that seem hard but are easy to make and will build your confidence in the kitchen.

Consider balancing this meal with fat free items throughout the day like fruits and vegetables as a snack. The USDA recommends that healthy adults consume no more than 30 percent of calories from total fat and less than 10 percent of calories of saturated fat. Nonfat Greek yogurt can be a good substitute for the higher in fat sour cream, give this substitution a try with this meal.

MACROS / SERVING SIZE:

Protein 24 g | Fat 18 g | Carbs 32 g

% CALORIES OF MACROS / SERVING SIZE:

Calories 373 | Protein 25 % | Fat 41 % | Carbs 33 %

NUTRIENT / SERVING SIZE:

Fiber 4 g | Sodium 415 mg | Sat. Fat 8 g

INGREDIENTS (Serves 10)

- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- ½ medium onion, diced
- 1 large red bell pepper, cored and diced
- 1 15 oz. can pinto or black beans, rinsed and drained
- ½ cup of frozen sweet corn
- 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breast or thighs
- 12 oz. red enchilada sauce
- 12 8-12" corn or flour tortillas
- 12 oz. Mexican blend or Colby shredded cheese
- 6-8 oz. green enchilada sauce
- 8 oz. mixed field greens or fresh baby spinach
- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
- ½ cup salsa

DIRECTIONS:

1. Heat oven to 375 degrees F. Lightly spray a 9x13-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Cut the tortillas in half. Set aside.
2. Cut the chicken into ½ inch strips. Add oil to large skillet and heat over medium-high heat. Add the diced onion and sauté for about 3 minutes and then add the chicken. Continue cooking until the chicken turns white.
3. Add 1 cup of the red enchilada sauce to the pan along with the corn and turn the heat down to medium. Cook for an additional 7 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the beans and cook for about 3 more minutes or until the beans have come to temperature. Remove from the heat.
4. Pour the green enchilada sauce in the baking dish, and spread until the bottom of the dish is evenly coated. Top with a layer of about 8 tortilla halves, so that the entire dish is covered. Top evenly with 1/3 of the chicken mixture, followed by 1/3 of the cheese. Repeat with another layer of tortillas, chicken mixture, and cheese. Followed by a final layer of tortillas, chicken mixture, the remaining red enchilada sauce, and cheese.
5. Cover the pan with aluminum foil, then bake for 20 minutes.
6. Remove aluminum foil and bake uncovered until the cheese is melted (about 7-10 minutes).
7. Remove from the oven and divide into 8-10 equal portions. Serve a portion on each plate and then top with greens or spinach, a dollop each of plain Greek yogurt and salsa.

DIETITIAN TIP

Building a healthy eating pattern should focus on high-quality nutritious food and keeping the number of calories consumed in check. Consumption of too many calories (even if the diet is mostly "healthy foods") will likely lead to gaining unwanted pounds. Aim to limit the amount of "empty calories" from unhealthy fat and added sugar in your diet and consume reasonable portions.



A list of recipes on [commissaries.com/healthy living](https://www.commissaries.com/healthy-living) also has nutrition education.