



Cooking Healthy Comfort Food

As a dietitian, I'm reminded of past celebrations and the comfort foods associated with them. So, I thought this would be a great time to present some of our favorite foods, simplified or made-over.

Maudene Nelson, RDN



Something savory to start the day ...

Homemade Turkey Sausage

Here's a way to have that sassy flavor with your morning toast. It's low fat, rich in sage, as hot or as salty as you'd like, and with a bit of fiber.



Something warm & comforting for lunch ...

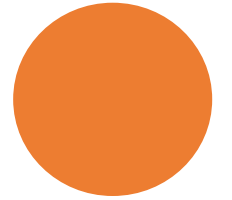
Vegetable & Tortellini Soup

Always warm and comforting, nothing beats a bowl of soup. With only a few simple ingredients and a little time on the stove you will have new favorite.

Something surprising for the dinner menu ...

Lemon Thyme Roasted Carrots

Everyone knows how healthy carrots are but they don't receive the love that potatoes get. Here is a dish that practically makes itself.



Something sweet for dessert ... Black Bean Brownies

Although you'll have to resist licking the spoon, the flavor of these brownies will be surprisingly rich.



Homemade Turkey Apple Sausage

<https://therealfooddietitians.com/turkey-apple-sausage-patties/>

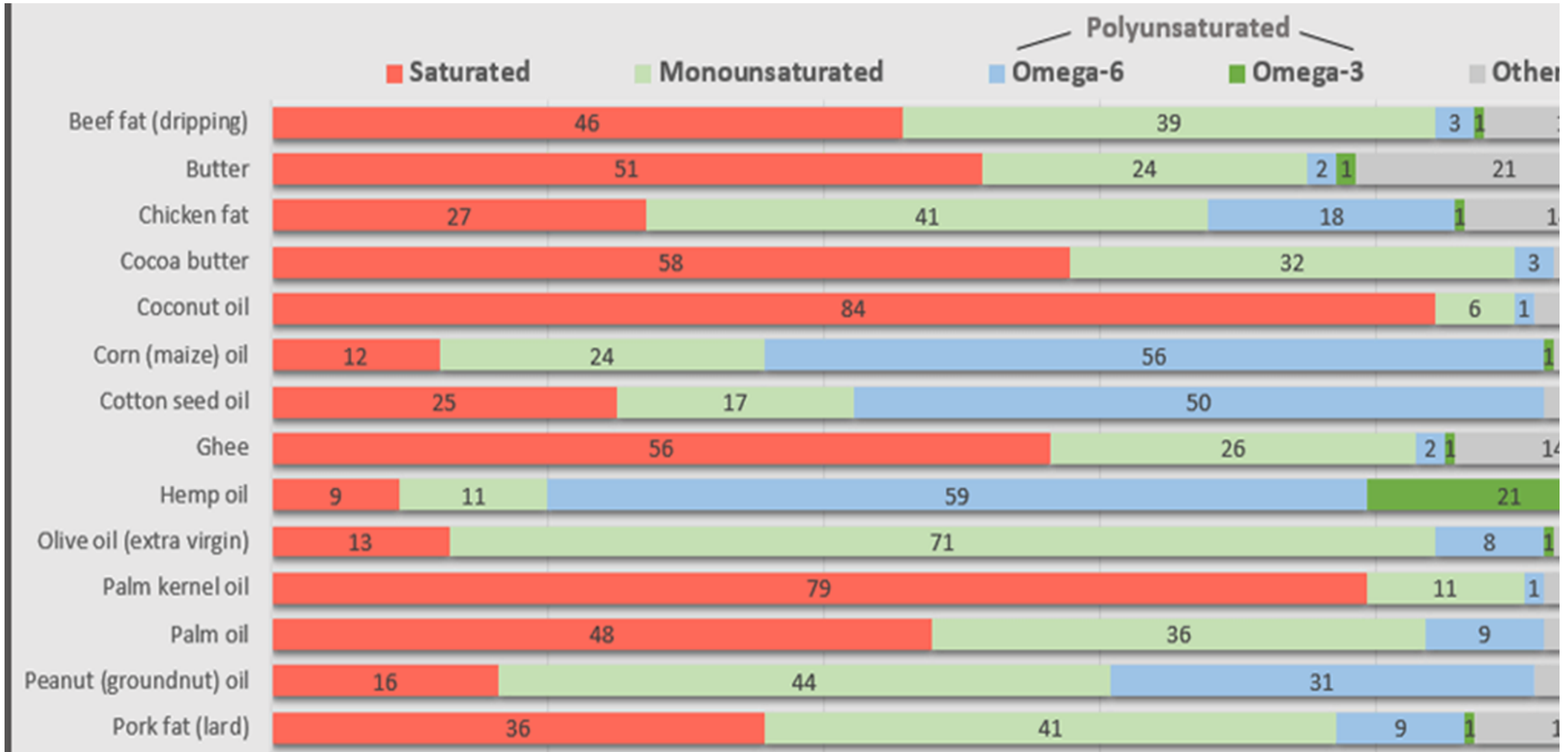
Ingredients:

1 lb. 90-93% lean ground turkey	½ to 1 cup finely minced apples
½ tsp. garlic powder	½ tsp. Italian seasoning
1 teaspoon dried sage or 5 leaves fresh sage	½ tsp. paprika
¼ tsp. crushed fennel seed	½ to 1 tsp. salt
½ to 1 tsp. black pepper	1–2 Tbsp. cooking fat of choice
2 tablespoons wheat bran (optional)	

Instructions

1. Combine turkey (or chicken), diced apple, spices, salt, and pepper in a mixing bowl. Mix thoroughly with a large spoon or your hands.
2. Using wet hands, form meat mixture into 12 small patties (Thin is good because they will shrink and fatten up in the pan a bit).
3. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. When the skillet is hot, add oil/fat (about ½ Tbsp. per batch of patties, depending on the size of your pan and whether or not it's non-stick).

Compared to pork or beef, turkey fat is less saturated.



Simple Vegetable Tortellini Soup

<https://addapinch.com/vegetable-tortellini-soup-recipe/>

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil optional
- 2 cloves garlic minced (optional) or ½ tsp. garlic powder
- 1 ½ medium onion diced (optional)
- 2 cups carrots, sliced or 1 (15-ounce) can carrots, drained
- 1 pound peeled and diced whole tomatoes or 1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 4 cups vegetable broth or water
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 1 medium zucchini chopped (optional)
- 1 (9-ounce) package refrigerated cheese tortellini
- 2 cups chopped fresh spinach or 1 package frozen and thawed spinach
- grated Parmesan cheese for serving

Instructions

1. Add olive oil, onions, garlic, and carrots to a Dutch oven set over medium heat. Cook until just tender, about 3 minutes. Stir in tomatoes, vegetable broth and Italian seasoning.
2. Stir in the zucchini (if using), tortellini and cook until the tortellini is cooked through, about 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the spinach. Let the spinach soften from the heat of the soup. Add seasonings to taste.
3. Serve warm with grated Parmesan cheese, if using.

Homemade Italian Seasoning

Garlic Powder



Rosemary



Thyme



Red Pepper



Oregano



Basil



cincyshopper.co

CRAFTYMORNING.COM

basil

oregano

thyme

marjoram

rosemary

red pepper flakes

granulated garlic



Lemon & Thyme Roasted Carrots

<https://thewholecook.com/lemon-thyme-roasted-carrots/>

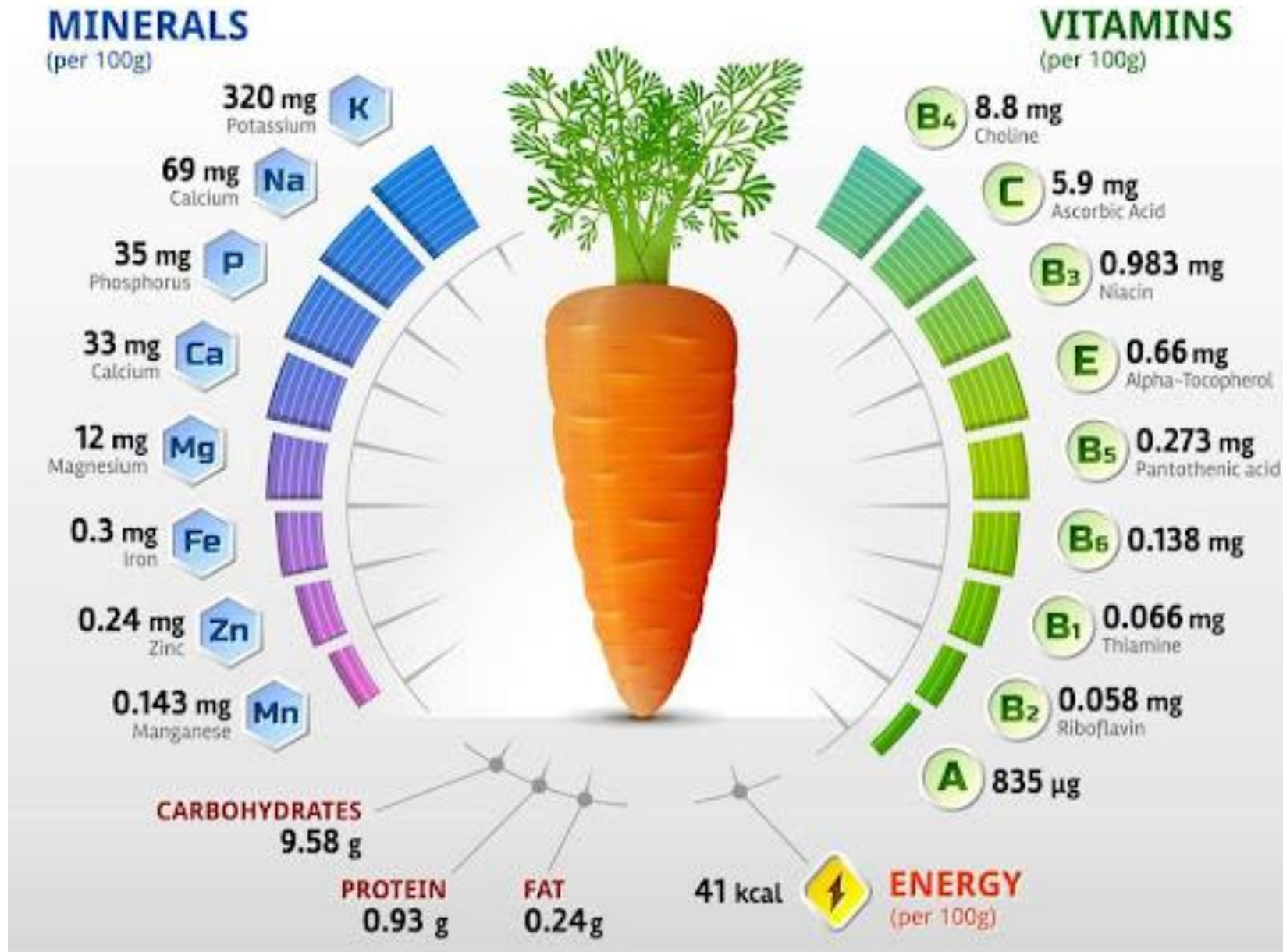
Ingredients

- 1 lb. fresh whole carrots
- 2 tbsp olive oil, extra virgin
- 2 tbsp lemon juice, equals juice from 1/2 a lemon
- several stems of fresh thyme
- salt & pepper to taste

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

1. Peel your carrots. Cut into sticks approximately 2 1/2 - 3 inches long and 1/2 - 1 inch wide.
2. Place your carrots in a single layer on a baking sheet.
3. Drizzle olive oil and lemon juice on top of carrots.
4. Sprinkle salt and pepper.
5. Remove the leaves from your sprigs of thyme. To do this just hold each sprig at the top and gently slide your fingers down it to remove leaves. Sprinkle on top of your carrots.
6. Bake for 25 - 30 minutes. Flip half way through so both sides get nice and glossy. Carrots are done when they're tender. Remove from oven and serve!



<http://www.carrotmuseum.co.uk/nutrition.html>

Black Bean Brownies

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/black-bean-brownies/>

Ingredients

- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans, rinsed & drained 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips, divided
- 3 tablespoons canola oil 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 2/3 cup packed brown sugar 1/2 cup baking cocoa
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

Instructions

Place the beans, 1/4 cup chocolate chips and oil in a food processor; cover and process until blended. Add eggs, brown sugar, cocoa, vanilla, baking powder and salt; cover and process until smooth.

Transfer to a parchment-lined 8-in. square baking pan. Sprinkle with remaining chocolate chips. Bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack. Cut into bars.

Protects Skin From Sun Damage



Reduces Heart Risk



Improves Brain function



Eases Constipation



<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4696435/> - **Cocoa and Chocolate in Human Health and Disease**

[David L. Katz](#), [Kim Doughty](#), and [Ather Ali](#)

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/dark-chocolate-weight-loss>

<https://jeevaorganic.com/10-surprising-health-benefits-of-cocoa/>