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Quick Diabetic Recipes For Dummies®

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Introduction

A diabetes diagnosis can be surprising and incredibly intimidating. If you or a loved one has just been diagnosed with diabetes, you may be feeling overwhelmed. You're not alone! Many Americans are affected by diabetes, either directly or through friends and/or family members who have this chronic disease. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 23.1 million Americans were living with a diagnosis of diabetes in 2015. The good news is that diabetes can be managed. There is a lot you can do to keep yourself healthy, including building a healthcare team, balancing the food you eat with exercise and diabetes medications (if prescribed), and taking care of your mental well-being.

When you have diabetes, you're responsible for your own care. But you may be wondering where to begin. First things first: Learn everything you can about diabetes and the different aspects of diabetes care. Find reliable information about diabetes online or in self-care guides, ask questions at your next doctor's appointment, or request a referral to a diabetes education program. Knowledge is power, so make sure you're prepared with all the information you need.

You'll also need to make some changes to what and how much you eat. This can be a big adjustment for most people, but good nutrition is essential to successful diabetes management. Understanding what, how much, and when to eat with diabetes can be challenging in the beginning, especially if you're not familiar with diabetes nutrition. Fortunately, resources and experts — doctors, dietitians, and diabetes educators — are available to help you. By selecting this guide to diabetes cooking and meal planning, you've already taken your first step toward eating and living well with diabetes.

About This Book

Think of your diabetes diagnosis as an opportunity to live a healthier lifestyle. This book is the perfect guide to help you begin making healthier food choices and cooking delicious diabetes-friendly recipes at home. This book may have the word *recipes* in the title, but it's so much more than your average cookbook. You find out about the best food choices for diabetes, the basics of diabetes nutrition, how to find a meal plan that works for you, and how to shop for and prepare healthier recipes.

This book primarily covers type 2 diabetes, but people with type 1 diabetes and gestational diabetes can also benefit from the tips and techniques in the pages ahead and enjoy these easy-to-prepare recipes. We hope this guide will become a trusted resource for you to turn to when you have questions about diabetes nutrition or are looking for a satisfying meal for any occasion.

Each easy-to-follow recipe in this book features a serving size and prep and cooking times so you know exactly what to expect before you begin cooking. Complete nutrition information is provided for each recipe as well, so you know exactly how a dish will fit into your meal plan. You'll also find some tips in the recipe chapters that will make the cooking process even easier; some recipes include possible variations so you can put your own spin on them.

As you make the recipes, keep the following points in mind:

- » All herbs are fresh unless dried herbs are specified.
- » All temperatures are Fahrenheit.
- » Read through a recipe completely before you begin cooking to make sure you have all of the ingredients and equipment you need.
- 🍅 The tomato icon highlights vegetarian recipes in the Recipes in This Chapter section on the opening page of each chapter, as well as in the Recipes at a Glance.

The nutrition and meal planning information in this book is not intended to serve as a replacement for meeting with a dietitian or diabetes educator. Instead, think of it as a primer to prepare you for your appointment with a professional and a reference to help you make healthy food choices. Use this guide to discover the variety of meal-planning approaches that can work for people with diabetes and then meet with a dietitian or another diabetes care provider to discuss which option will work best for you.

Foolish Assumptions

If you're reading this book, you probably have diabetes or are close to someone who does. Maybe you have just been diagnosed and need to figure out what to eat with diabetes. You may not have had a chance to meet with a dietitian or diabetes educator yet. Or perhaps you're caring for a spouse, parent, or child who has diabetes and you want to get a better understanding of this disease and how to cook for them. You don't need to be familiar with diabetes nutrition to benefit from this book. We cover the basics for you!

Maybe you already have an understanding of what to eat with diabetes but you're interested in learning how to cook diabetes-friendly meals at home, or you're looking for new dishes to spice up your meal plan. The recipes in this book are great for beginner and experienced cooks alike. And if you think you don't have time to prepare healthy meals from scratch, think again. Some recipes take longer to prepare than others, but the recipes in this book were created for the busy person with diabetes. We understand that spending hours in the kitchen isn't practical for everyone, but cooking at home can be a much healthier (and tastier) alternative to ordering takeout or relying on prepackaged meals. Whatever your schedule or skill level in the kitchen may be, you'll find recipes in this book that are perfect for you!

Icons Used in This Book

You'll find icons throughout this book that alert you to helpful information, facts to remember, and technical information that may help if you're looking for a more advanced understanding of the topic.



TIP

The Tip icon marks important information that can save you time and energy as you're planning, shopping for, and preparing diabetes-friendly meals.



REMEMBER

When you see the Remember icon, it means the information is essential and you should be aware of it.



WARNING

The Warning icon warns about potential problems that you may want to consider. It's often used to alert you to how certain foods may impact your body or meal plan.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

The Technical Stuff icon gives you technical information that may be helpful, but is not necessary, to your understanding of the topic at hand. You can skip over this information, if you want.

Beyond the Book

In addition to the book you're reading right now, be sure to check out the free online Cheat Sheet for details on the best food choices for people with diabetes, tips for smart grocery shopping, and a list of ways to prepare before you

start cooking. To get this Cheat Sheet, simply go to www.dummies.com and type **Quick Diabetic Recipes For Dummies Cheat Sheet** in the Search box.

Where to Go from Here

It's time to get started planning and preparing incredible, healthy meals! Take a moment to read through the Table of Contents and explore all the topics that this book has to offer. Where you start is up to you. If managing diabetes is new for you, Chapter 1 provides a great overview of the best food choices for people with diabetes. Interested in the meal planning, carbohydrate counting, or portion control techniques? Turn to the chapters in Part 5 for an introduction to these topics. Looking for tips on shopping for healthy foods or stocking your pantry? Chapters 2 and 3 have you covered. The information in Parts 1, 4, and 5 can give you the knowledge you need to choose tasty and nutritious foods, understand how to manage your diabetes with your diet, and feel confident in the kitchen. If you're using this book as a guide to meal planning with diabetes, remember to consult with a dietitian or another diabetes care expert to determine which meal-planning approach is right for you.

If you already have a good grasp on what to eat with diabetes, have a meal plan in place, or have some experience cooking at home, then grab an apron and dive right in to the recipe chapters! Find a recipe that sounds appealing to you and start cooking. If you're looking for a hearty breakfast option, for example, check out the recipes in Chapter 4. Want to impress your friends with a fun and healthy appetizer for your next get-together? Jump ahead to Chapter 10. There's a recipe in this book to fit every mood, palate, and occasion!

You don't need to read this book from cover to cover or visit the chapters in any particular order to benefit from the information in this book. Instead, use it as a reference to get more information about the topics that are important to you and find recipes that suit your tastes and get you excited about eating well with diabetes.

Whether you're just learning about diabetes or you've been successfully managing your diabetes for years, this book is your go-to reference for all your food-related diabetes questions. This collection of straightforward and delicious recipes is sure to become a favorite in your home. We hope you'll return to it again and again throughout your journey with diabetes and that it brings some comfort and joy to your kitchen.

1 Getting Started with Diabetic Cooking

IN THIS PART . . .

Discover the best food choices for people with diabetes.

Take inventory of your kitchen and build a pantry of healthy essentials.

Explore tips and tricks for making your grocery cart and your favorite recipes healthier and your attitude more upbeat.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Embracing fruits and vegetables
- » Seeing how whole grains make a difference
- » Getting the skinny on proteins
- » Identifying healthy fats versus unhealthy fats
- » Choosing beverages wisely

Chapter **1**

What Can I Eat?

One of the most common questions that people with diabetes ask is, “What can I eat?” Being aware of what you eat when you have diabetes is important for keeping blood glucose levels in your target ranges and reducing the risk of complications. This task can be overwhelming, especially for people who have just been diagnosed. But living with diabetes doesn’t mean you have to feel deprived, overhaul your whole diet, or stop eating the foods you love. It’s about choosing nutritious foods and preparing them in a way that is healthy and enjoyable. When you know the basics of healthy eating, it gets easier! You’ll be cooking flavorful, satisfying, nutrient-rich meals in no time.

The great news for people with diabetes is that a huge variety of healthy and delicious food options are available. Having diabetes can be an opportunity to embrace healthy eating.

In this chapter, we explore six food categories — vegetables, fruits, whole grains, protein, fat, and dairy — and identify the best food options within these categories for people with diabetes.

Introducing the Importance of Carbohydrates

Knowing what to eat when you have diabetes can be very confusing, especially in today's world where fad diets, food trends, and “miracle” foods are advertised everywhere you look. You're bombarded with ever changing and often conflicting information about what you “should” and “shouldn't” eat. Don't let all this information overwhelm you! Many nutrition basics for people with diabetes have withstood the test of time.

Before we take a look at some of the foods that will set you up for diabetes management success, we need to give you a brief introduction to a nutrient that is very important for people with diabetes: carbohydrate. Three main nutrients (or macronutrients) — carbohydrate, protein, and fat — make up all the foods we eat. *Carbohydrate* is a nutrient found in fruits, vegetables, grains, milk and yogurt, and starchy and sugary foods and drinks. Carbohydrate is the nutrient that raises blood glucose levels, so it's important for people with diabetes to be aware of their carbohydrate intake. But carbohydrate should not be completely removed from your diet; your body needs a certain amount of carbohydrate to function properly.

As you work your way through this chapter, you'll see that many of the best food choices for people with diabetes contain carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are not the enemy! The important thing is to choose nutrient-rich sources of carbohydrate rather than refined, sugary carbohydrates. For more information on carbohydrate and other macronutrients, see Chapter 16.

Eat Your Vegetables!

You may remember your parents making sure you ate all the vegetables on your plate when you were young. That's because vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other nutrients, and they're often relatively low in calories and carbohydrate (the primary nutrient in foods that affect blood glucose — see Chapter 16 for more information); this makes them great for people with diabetes — and everyone else!

But not all vegetables are created equal. Vegetables can be divided into two main groups: nonstarchy and starchy. Starchy vegetables contain more starch and, therefore, more calories and carbohydrate than nonstarchy vegetables. Both kinds of vegetables are an important part of a well-balanced diet, but starchy vegetables have an impact on blood glucose. So, if you have diabetes, moderation is important when it comes to starchy vegetables.

Nonstarchy vegetables

Nonstarchy vegetables are a great way to satisfy your appetite. Enjoy these vegetables often! When it comes to nonstarchy vegetables, more is better (which is not something you hear very often when you have diabetes). Try to eat three to five servings of nonstarchy vegetables per day; this will help you get the vitamins, minerals, and fiber you need to stay healthy. Some common nonstarchy vegetables include the following:

Artichokes and artichoke hearts	Leeks
Asparagus	Mushrooms
Beets	Okra
Bok choy	Onions
Brussels sprouts	Pea pods
Broccoli	Peppers
Cabbage (all varieties)	Radishes
Carrots	Salad greens (arugula, endive, escarole, lettuce, radicchio, romaine, spinach, watercress)
Cauliflower	Sprouts
Celery	Squash (crookneck, spaghetti, summer, zucchini)
Cucumber	Tomatoes
Eggplant	
Greens (all varieties)	
Green beans	



TIP

You can enjoy fresh, frozen, or canned varieties of any nonstarchy vegetable. When it comes to canned or frozen vegetables, the best choices for people with diabetes are varieties without added sodium, sugar, or fat. Purchase canned vegetables that say “low sodium” or “no salt added” on the label. If you have to use canned vegetables with sodium, drain and rinse them before cooking to reduce the amount of sodium. Try to limit or avoid frozen or canned vegetables that come in sauces; they tend to be higher in fat and sodium.

Starchy vegetables

When you have diabetes and want to eat starchy foods, try to choose the most nutritious starches available instead of eating processed, refined starches. Starchy vegetables are a great option. They contain fiber and nutrients that are good for your body. They’ll raise your blood glucose due to their carbohydrate content, so moderation is important.

The best starchy vegetable choices for people with diabetes are those without any added salt, sugar, or fat. Common examples of starchy vegetables include the following:

Acorn squash	Parsnips
Butternut squash	Potatoes and sweet potatoes
Corn	Pumpkin
Green peas	

An Apple a Day . . .

Fruits are another healthy food choice for people with diabetes. Fruits contain carbohydrate and affect your blood glucose, so be sure to account for them in your meal plan (see Part 4). But they're also full of fiber and nutrients that a health body needs. If you have a sweet tooth, great news: A serving of fruit is a wonderful alternative to heavier desserts and sugary treats.

The best fruit choices for people with diabetes are fresh, canned, and frozen fruits without added sugars. When shopping for canned fruits, look for options that are packed in juice or light syrup. Here are just a few examples of the many fruits you can enjoy:

Apples	Melon (cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon)
Apricots	Oranges
Avocados	Papaya
Bananas	Peaches
Blackberries	Pears
Blueberries	Pineapple
Cherries	Plums
Grapefruit	Raspberries
Grapes	Strawberries
Kiwi	
Mangoes	



TIP

Dried fruits such as cranberries, dates, figs, and raisins are another option for people with diabetes. They make a handy and tasty snack. But dried fruits are usually high in sugar, so the serving sizes are small. Dried fruits are just concentrated versions of fresh fruits — think about the size of a raisin compared to a grape, or a prune compared to a plum. So watch your portions if you choose to add dried fruits to your diet.

Making Your Grains Count

Wondering if people with diabetes can eat starchy foods like grains and pasta? Yes, they can! The key to including starches into your diet is to make them count. This means choosing the most nutritious starches available instead of filling up on processed starches with little to no nutritional value. So, ditch the refined grains, sugary starches, and white-flour-based products! The better bet is to choose whole grains and whole-grain products.

A *whole grain* is an entire, unrefined grain. Whole grains are made up of the bran, germ, and endosperm of the grain, which contain a lot of nutrients. Refined grains have been processed to remove parts of the grain, and are missing many of the nutrients of their whole-grain counterparts. So, for a fiber and nutrient boost, try replacing the processed grain products on your plate with whole grains or whole-grain products. Switch out that white rice for brown or wild rice. Look for breads and pastas that are made with 100 percent whole-wheat flour. Or experiment with whole grains like quinoa, barley, or farro.

Some popular whole grains to try include the following:

Brown rice	Quinoa
Bulgur or cracked wheat	Sorghum
Buckwheat or buckwheat flour	Whole farro
Corn meal and whole corn	Whole-grain barley
Millet	Whole rye
Oatmeal and whole oats	Whole-wheat flour
Popcorn	Wild rice



TIP

When shopping for whole-grain foods, make sure you check the food labels. You'll see many products in your grocery store that claim to be made with or contain whole grains. But don't let clever packaging fool you; some products that make these claims actually contain only a small amount of whole grains. Check the ingredient list and choose foods that have a whole grain or whole-grain flour listed as the first ingredient.



TIP

The Oldways Whole Grain Council has created a Whole Grain Stamp to make it easier for consumers to spot products that contain at least half a serving of whole grains. This stamp features a sheaf of grain on a golden-yellow background, and there are three varieties of the stamp that indicate different amounts of whole grain. For more information on the Whole Grain Stamp, visit www.wholegrainscouncil.org/whole-grain-stamp.

Choosing Lean Protein

Protein foods are another important part of a well-balanced, diabetes-friendly diet. A wide variety of protein options — from poultry to seafood to plant-based proteins like tofu, beans, and lentils — are great for people with diabetes.

The important things to consider when choosing protein foods are the fat content of animal-based proteins and the carbohydrate content of plant-based proteins. When it comes to protein, keep it lean; people with diabetes should avoid too much fat in their diets because eating too much fat, especially saturated fat and trans fat, can lead to weight gain and increase the risk of heart disease. The best protein choices for people with diabetes are poultry, fish, and other seafood that is not fried, as well as plant-based proteins. Eggs, egg whites, and egg substitutes are other good options.

Poultry

Poultry is a relatively lean source of animal-based protein, but it still contains saturated fat and cholesterol. To cut down on some of the excess fat, choose skinless cuts of poultry when shopping or remove the skin before cooking and try to choose white meat cuts (breasts and tenderloins) instead of the slightly fattier dark meat. Chicken, turkey, and Cornish game hens are all good poultry options. Duck contains more fat than chicken and turkey, so if you enjoy duck, keep that in mind.

Fish and seafood

Seafood is another type of lean protein that is great for people with diabetes. Fish containing omega-3 fatty acids (a beneficial type of fat) are especially good options. Types of fish that are high in omega-3 fatty acids include albacore tuna, herring, mackerel, rainbow trout, salmon, and sardines. (For more information on omega-3 fatty acids, see Chapter 16.) Other fish and seafood options to enjoy include the following:

Catfish	Halibut
Clams	Lobster
Cod	Oysters
Crab	Scallops
Flounder	Shrimp
Haddock	Tilapia



WARNING

Keep in mind that some fish are high in mercury and should be enjoyed in moderation or in some cases avoided all together. This is especially important for pregnant and breastfeeding women and small children. If you're concerned about the mercury content of a certain fish, you can check the Food and Drug Administration and Environmental Protection Agency's consumer advisory about fish. Visit www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/Metals/UCM537120.pdf. Fish choices that have the highest mercury content and should be avoided include the following:

Bigeye tuna (sometimes labeled as "ahi")	Orange roughy
King mackerel	Shark
Marlin	Swordfish
	Tilefish

Plant-based proteins

If you're not very familiar with plant-based proteins, it's time to explore this wonderful protein option. In addition to providing protein, the foods in this category also provide fiber (which you don't get from animal-based proteins), and many contain healthy fats. These added nutritional benefits are a great reason to incorporate plant sources of protein into your diet. However, just like fruits, vegetables, and grains, plant-based proteins do contain carbohydrate and will affect your blood glucose; make sure you read nutrition labels for these products and account for the carbohydrate in your diabetes meal plan (see Part 4).

So, what are plant-based proteins? This type of protein includes beans, lentils, peas, soy, and nuts, as well as products made from these foods. Here are a few delicious plant-based proteins you can try:

Beans (black, kidney, pinto, and so on)	Meat replacement products (meatless chicken, bacon, beef, burgers, hotdogs, and so on)
Bean products (baked beans, bean burgers, refried beans)	Nuts and nut spreads and butters
Chickpeas	Peas (black-eyed peas, split peas)
Edamame	Soy nuts
Hummus	Tempeh and tofu
Lentils (all varieties)	



TIP

Meat substitutes, such as meatless burgers, soy “chicken,” and other foods, have become more popular in recent years, especially with vegetarians. You’ll see a wide variety of meat substitutes available in your local grocery store, and many of these meatless proteins are tasty and easy to prepare. Feel free to try these products, but keep in mind that they may be higher in carbohydrate than their meat counterparts and may contain sodium and unhealthy saturated fats. It’s a good idea to check the nutrition labels on these products before making a purchase.

Plant-based proteins are an excellent choice for people with diabetes, so dig in! Just remember that unlike other forms of protein, plant-based proteins contain carbohydrate and will affect your blood glucose. Checking food labels will help you learn the serving sizes of plant-based proteins and understand how they fit into your diet.

Red meats

What about red meat? Are beef, pork, and lamb okay to eat for people with diabetes? The short answer is yes. But red meats and pork are generally higher in saturated fat than other forms of protein. So, enjoy these meats in moderation and try to choose the leanest options available. Look for high-quality grades of meat and try to purchase cuts that have been trimmed of fat. Some of the better choices when it comes to red meats include the following:

- » **Beef:** Chuck steaks, cubed beef, flank steaks, porterhouse steaks, rib, round, rump roast, sirloin, and T-bone steaks
- » **Game:** Bison, rabbit, venison
- » **Lamb:** Chop, leg, or roast
- » **Veal:** Loin chops or roast