Three Great Recipes for Diabetics

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Recipes for Diabetics: Eating Well With Diabetes

It can be hard to keep on the straight and narrow as a diabetic. You don't have the option to go on a short-term diet — with diabetes it's vital to change your eating habits for life.

This is because a healthy eating plan for a diabetic is not just intended to maintain a healthy weight, but also to keep blood glucose steady and in the ideal range, and to cut down the risk of complications like blindness, amputation, heart attack, and stroke.

It all sounds a bit grim, and those issues are examples of the worst case scenario, but the fact remains that a diabetic diet should not be sporadic and faddy but a realistic permanent change in eating habits for life. Many dieticians who specialize in working with diabetics recommend a diet low in carbohydrates.

Luckily there are a few simple changes you can make that will probably make your previous diet more diabetes-friendly. Swapping refined and white bread, flour, pasta and rice for whole wheat and whole grain is a great start.

It can be hard at first to find alternatives to potato, bread, rice or pasta without permanently eating salad, but here's a great alternative which goes especially well with Asian-inspired dishes.

Cauliflower Rice

You will need:

- 1 medium cauliflower — serves 6 or can be refrigerated raw for a couple of days
- Grater with larger holes OR food processor with a grater disc
- Frying pan OR microwave and microwaveable bowl

Method

1. Use the food processor or grater to create "rice" from the raw cauliflower florets. Discard stalk and leaves.
2. Cover the "rice" and microwave for seven minutes (no need to add water) or fry (1tsp oil optional) for seven minutes.

You can add chopped coriander or other herbs and spices to the "rice" to add flavor. It is not as "cauliflowery" as you might expect!

This goes extremely well with sweet potato — another low carb food — which you can spice up to make a healthy and tasty alternative to the Indian dish chicken tikka. (To be fair chicken tikka is already pretty healthy compared to creamy curries!)

Indian-Style Sweet Potato

You will need:

- 1–3 sweet potatoes per person
- Tikka paste or dry tikka powder (available from most larger supermarkets and specialty stores)
- 2 tbsps oil (if using powder mix)
- A bowl and a baking tray

Method

1. Peel and chop sweet potatoes into large chunks. Place into a large bowl. Coat liberally in tikka paste, or tikka powder and oil.
2. Turn the potatoes onto a baking tray and roast in the oven at 190C for 25-35 minutes.
3. Serve with cauliflower rice, low-carb whole wheat roti or chappati, and a creamy homemade dip made with natural yogurt, mint and lemon juice.

If you are not keen on Indian flavors you can make oven-baked sweet potato wedges, which make a healthy and low carb alternative to fries. Serve with some grilled or roast chicken or fish and a crunchy green salad and award yourself many healthy-eating brownie points!

Sweet potatoes are incredibly versatile — you can boil and mash for a tasty and colorful alternative to mashed potato, or throw them into homemade soups or stews.

So that's a few ideas for tasty main courses, but often it's dessert time when diabetics feel the most temptation to not just fall off the wagon but leap off it face-first into a big chocolate cake.

Good news — there are some less naughty sweet treats diabetics can enjoy alongside their non-diabetic friends and family members.

Sugar-Free Banana Cake

You will need:

- 125g self-raising wholemeal flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 75g sultanas
- 50g butter, melted
- 2 tsp vanilla essence
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp milk
- 3 ripe mashed bananas

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180C and grease and line a 450g/1lb loaf tin.
2. Mix the dry ingredients together in one bowl and whisk the wet ingredients together in another bowl. Then pour the wet mix into the dry mix and combine thoroughly.
3. Pour the mix into your tin and bake for 30–40 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean.
4. Allow to cool before serving — if you can wait that long! For special occasions or if you have a real sweet tooth you can drizzle a small amount of agave syrup over the top.

A quick search online will reveal many diabetic-friendly or completely sugar-free cake and dessert options, but

often you can convert your own favorite recipes to make them more suitable for a diabetic-friendly eating plan.

Try swapping white flour for wholemeal, or going half and half on lighter cakes. Switch sugar for one of the many new sugar-substitutes that come in granulated form especially for use in baking. You can even get caster or icing sugar style versions of some sugar substitutes.

However, beware of including too many sugar substitutes in your diet. Firstly many of these products can cause (sometimes extreme) upset stomach reactions, especially if the product builds up during the day.

It won’t take much — a diet soda, some sugar-free sweets, and a sugar-free yogurt could see you spending more time than you’d like in the restroom!

Secondly, it’s much healthier to retrain your taste-buds towards craving less sweet treats. Soon fruit will seem sweeter and candy floss will be too sickly to bear!