

Get back to healthy eating with a mixed grain bowl

Gretchen McKay
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Did you overindulge over the holidays? Me, too. Which is why like so many others whose pants are just a little too tight, I have vowed to eat a little more mindfully in this new year.

I'm in pretty good company. The just-released Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025, published jointly by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Health and Human Services every five years, recommends a daily diet full of fresh fruits and vegetables, along with lean meats and whole grains. It also limits foods and beverages that are higher in added sugars, saturated fat and sodium and advises drinking less alcohol.

The bottom line of the 164-page report is that every bite (and sip) should count if you want to stay healthy and ward off chronic diseases.

To that end, I'm starting 2021 with an easy-to-make dish that's visually appealing and packed with nutrition. It's a grain bowl made up of a hearty and nourishing blend of cooked whole grains, low-fat feta cheese, heart-healthy avocado and a zesty lemon yogurt sauce. It's finished with a handful of antioxidant-rich broccoli microgreens.

I used a bagged "ancient grain" medley that includes amaranth, buckwheat and sprouted quinoa. But any whole-grain or combination of them will taste great — options include barley, brown or wild rice, bulgar, sorghum or even millet if you want to try something new.

If you make the grains a day or so ahead of time, the bowl will take just minutes to whip together. So too with the yogurt sauce, which can be kept in an airtight container in the fridge for up to three days; stir before using.

The grains can be served warm, at room temperature or even cold out of the fridge, although the cashews won't be as crunchy once the bowl has been chilled.

MIXED GRAIN BOWL

- For bowl**
- 1 1/2 cups cooked mixed ancient grains, still warm**
 - 1 cup broccoli microgreens or bean sprouts, divided**
 - 1/2 cup crumbled feta**
 - 1/2 cup chopped salted cashews**
 - Salt and pepper to taste**
 - 1 ripe avocado, diced**

- For lemon yogurt sauce**
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt**
 - Grated lemon zest from 1/2 lemon**
 - Juice of 1/2 lemon**
 - 1 tablespoon finely minced green onion or chives**
 - Pinch or two of kosher salt**
 - Freshly ground black pepper**

In a small bowl, gently stir together warm grains, half of the microgreens or sprouts, feta and nuts. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

In a second small bowl, whisk together yogurt, lemon zest and juice and green onion or chives. Season to taste with salt and pepper. If it's too thick, add water by the teaspoon until you reach the desired consistency (it should be thin enough to drizzle).

Divide grain mixture between four bowls, and top with diced avocado and remaining microgreens. Drizzle lemon yogurt sauce on top, and top with a pinch of flaky salt.

Serves 4.

— Gretchen McKay

POPCORN

Continued from Page 1B

Heather Gims, senior communication specialist there, says Flavacol's been around since the 1960s (hence the packaging aesthetic). The company assures that nearly all the major movie chains use it, furthermore claiming that more popcorn is popped with Flavacol than any other seasoning salt worldwide — that is, the entire known popcorn-popping universe. Flavacol is as bad for you as regular salt but worse, as it doesn't even contain iodine, regular salt's redeeming nutritional feature; it is, however, vegan and gluten-free (as salt tends to be), as well as kosher and halal certified. Gims, laughing a bit, politely declined to give any details about Flavacol's proprietary process and artificial flavor. However, she was very nice, and Gold Medal is third-generation family-owned, so there's that.

The popping medium here is a soybean oil concoction that, like Flavacol, is recommended by the manufacturer of my friends' fancy new popcorn machine, and it is better than the numerous oils I tested that were artificial-butter-flavor-free. Movie-theater-style popcorn is science. Science also gives us vaccines. Thank you, science.

Gold Medal also sells proper popcorn poppers (92% made in the USA!), including home-use ones, which start at \$494 and take up a fair amount of space. Gold Medal's Gims thought it was funny that I had come up with a stovetop popcorn method using Flavacol, but my film critic friend Moira called it something else: genius. All I know is that if

this helps make anyone else's COVID-19 pandemic a little more bearable, that makes me very happy.

HOW TO MAKE MOVIE POPCORN AT HOME THE INEXPENSIVE, SPEEDY AND DRAMATICALLY LIFE-IMPROVING WAY

A note on procuring supplies: Gold Medal Products Co. does sell Flavacol direct-to-popcorn-consumer, but their scale of operation is distributor-oriented, so you may find it cheaper on Amazon, where you'll also find At The Movies Popcorn Butter Flavored Popcorn Topping. A note on salt-level: The method here approximates average movie theater popcorn, maybe a tiny bit on the yellower/saltier side; feel free, obviously, to adjust the amount of Flavacol to taste (though if you increase it, you may want to consult a physician). And on corn: Jolly Time has the best name and now also offers organic/non-GMO kernels.

— Bethany Jean Clement

- 1 teaspoon Flavacol**
- 3 tablespoons At The Movies Popcom Butter Flavored Popcom Topping**
- 1/3 cup popcorn kernels**
- Optional: Additional A.T.M.P.B.F.P.T., warmed (if you like "butter" on your movie popcorn), or melted butter (if you like actual butter)**

1. Measure the Flavacol and the lengthily named Popcorn Topping into a heavier-bottomed, 3-quart or larger pot that has a lid. Stir them together thoroughly to make an alarmingly artificial-orange-colored slurry.
2. Add the popcorn and

place over medium-high heat. As the pan heats up and sizzling begins, shake and whirl it occasionally to coat kernels in flavor-country glory and spread them in one layer. Watch for the first pop, feel the excitement, then slam on the lid.

3. Shake your pan back and forth gently, still on heat, while popping happens, then remove from heat immediately just as it stops — usually less than a minute.
4. Pour it into a large bowl right away and toss with your eager hands to mix, drizzling on optional "butter" or butter as you wish.
5. Eat as soon as possible in a darkened room in front of a good (or good-bad) movie (maybe "Contagion"?). Be sure to have a beverage, for this is the beautifully yellow, very salty popcorn you remember from before the global pandemic when going to the movies was still a thing (maybe make that beverage wine?).



For All your Meat processing needs



Baker County CUSTOM MEATS

541-523-5345

2390 11th Street
Baker City OR.
Owners Del & Jana Woodcock



Linda Gassenheimer/TNS

Chicken orzo soup

Fresh take on a favorite: chicken noodle soup

Linda Gassenheimer
Tribune News Service

Here's a warm, comforting and easy take on an old favorite, chicken noodle soup. Using cooked chicken, either rotisserie or from the deli, cuts down on the cooking time. Parsnips add a hint of sweetness

and fresh basil and grated Parmesan cheese add a flavorful touch. This is a one-pot meal that's perfect for a winter's evening.

Orzo is rice-shaped pasta, but you can use any small pasta such as small macaroni, pastina or acini di pepe.

- Helpful Hints**
- Chopped fresh onion can be used instead of frozen. Saute it a few minutes longer.
 - Any type of cooked chicken or turkey can be used.

See **Favorite** / Page 3B



Dreamstime/TNS

The new federal dietary guidelines represent the most current science-based advice on what and how to eat and drink for our best health.

NUTRITION

Continued from Page 1B

Not everyone is jumping for joy over the revised DGAs, however. Some say they haven't changed much and question why we are still fat and unhealthy in spite of previous recommendations.

That's like blaming traffic signs on a rise in car accidents. There is good evidence that — if we would practice what the guidelines preach — our reward could be a wide range of health benefits. Unfortunately, most Americans are not even close.

It does give us a place to start, however. Check how you're doing with each of these core elements of a healthful dietary pattern: Vegetables of all colors and types, including beans and lentils. Fruits, especially whole fruits. Grains, half which are whole grains. Dairy, including fat-free or

low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese, or lactose-free versions and fortified soy alternatives. Protein foods, including lean meats, poultry, and eggs; seafood; beans, peas, and lentils; nuts, seeds, and soy products. Oils, including vegetable oils and oils in seafood, avocados and nuts.

With the science must come practice, say experts. Guess I'll reach for a banana instead of chips. Mix up my protein foods to include beans, lentils and peanut butter as well as poultry, lean meat and cheese. Choose a fish-based meal at least a couple times a week. And enjoy my wine in moderation.

Your goals may be different. Find the dietary pattern that fits your needs and calorie limit in this 9th edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. DietaryGuidelines.gov. Let's make every bite count!



WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Hours
Mon-Fri: 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Sat: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

2306 Adams Ave
La Grande, OR 97850
(541) 963-8411

We're just west of I-84 (exit 261)
on Adams Ave at 20th St.



lesschwab.com



What are your floors wearing?

LA GRANDE
541-963-6033

BAKER CITY
541-523-1533

ENTERPRISE
541-426-9228

www.CarpetoneEO.com