

## Simple Breakfast Ideas

*How often do you skip breakfast due to lack of time or just not feeling like eating in the morning? Do you ever have just coffee, or coffee with a muffin or donut? Some people say they eat breakfast, then feel hungry an hour or two later. People who eat breakfast tend to make better food choices and eat fewer calories throughout the day, experience more energy and sharper brain functioning, and are less likely to be overweight.*

### What makes up a healthy breakfast?

A well-balanced breakfast should include whole grains, fruit, a significant protein source of about 10 grams or more, and for those who do not have dairy intolerance, a low-fat dairy product or substitute. Be careful with the size of the grain portion of your breakfast as many popular choices, such as bagels, can be a few hundred calories each. Try to keep the grain choice you eat for breakfast around 125 calories because you will also be getting calories from fruit, protein and possibly dairy. Some great options include mini bagels or whole wheat bagel thins. Smoothies can be easy and delicious.

### Why is protein important?

Carbohydrates (“carbs”) such as grains, fruit, and dairy break down into sugar in your bloodstream, which jump-starts your metabolism by raising your blood sugar and giving you more energy. Eating protein and carbs together results in carbs breaking down more slowly, and so you feel fuller for longer. Fiber in whole grain carbs slows down how fast your blood sugar rises and fills you up more. When you eat carbs only (example, toast and butter), you experience a fast rise and also rapid drop in your blood sugar, so may get hungry again more quickly. It is ideal to eat within the first hour of waking up.

### What are some good morning protein choices?

Many people enjoy cheeses (like cheddar, cottage, or ricotta), peanut butter, eggs, nuts, yogurt, or ham or turkey. You can keep hard-boiled eggs handy in the fridge. Greek yogurt contains 12 gm protein per 5 oz, twice as much as regular yogurt. Other suggested combinations: 1 cup oatmeal with 3 Tbsp nuts or sunflower seeds and ½ cup fruit; an English muffin, bagel, or pita bread with melted cheese, egg, or peanut butter; a ham or turkey and cheese sandwich; 2 toasted frozen waffles with peanut or soy nut butter; or a high-protein cold cereal like Special K Protein Plus or Kashi GoLean.

### What if I don't like “breakfast” foods?

Any type of food is fine; try leftover lunch or dinner leftovers or pizza. Make a microwave bean and cheese quesadilla and add any leftover veggies you have around. The important thing is to eat *something* in the morning to “break the fast”. Try the recipe below that is quick to put together and filling — and could be prepared for breakfast OR dinner.

## Breakfast Burrito

4 servings

- 2 tsp canola oil
- ½ onion, yellow or red, diced
- 1 c black beans, drained and rinsed
- 8 eggs
- ¼ c shredded cheese
- 4 (10 inch) flour tortillas
- ½ c salsa
- 1 tomato, about 4 ounces, seeded and diced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- *Optional:* Hot sauce, ¼ red pepper flakes

*Nutrition Facts: Calories 470, Fat 21 gm, Saturated Fat 8 gm, Sodium 590 mg, Carbohydrate 46 gm, Fiber 5 gm, Sugars 2 gm, Protein 23 gm*

Directions: Heat the canola oil in a large nonstick pan over medium-high heat. Cook the onions until they are softened, about 4 minutes. Add black beans and red pepper flakes (if using) and cook until warmed through, another 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and transfer to a dish. Whisk together eggs. Grease the pan with a small amount of oil, and reheat skillet over medium heat. Reduce heat to low and add eggs, scrambling until cooked through, about 3 minutes. Spread each tortilla with one tablespoon salsa, then layer ¼ of the black bean mixture, ¼ of the scrambled eggs, some diced tomato, and sprinkle each with shredded cheese. Season to taste. Roll up burrito style and serve.

*See next page for more breakfast ideas and recipes*

# What can breakfast do for me?

## Weight Maintenance

When many people step on the scale, they find their weight slowly rising, even if they have not changed their diet or activity level. Excess weight is more than an appearance-related issue; it can also contribute to many health problems — from joint pain and breathing or sleeping difficulties to an increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, and some forms of cancer. Studies have shown that simply taking the time to eat a well balanced breakfast each morning can help maintain your current weight, or even lead to weight loss. Eating breakfast often leads to reduced hunger levels throughout the remainder of the day, which helps prevent over-eating and impulse snacking on high calorie convenience items that are often cheap and easily within reach. Individuals who don't eat breakfast regularly have been found to eat fewer servings of fruits and vegetables for the rest of the day. Those who eat breakfast also tend to be more active overall, due to the boost that breakfast provides.

## Help Children Succeed

Breakfast is equally, if not more important, for children. Along with improving the quality of their overall diet and aiding with weight control, breakfast has been found to help children perform better academically. Breakfast helps children feel more awake, improves mood, reduces visits to the school nurse and lessens behavioral issues. If you qualify for SNAP, your child also qualifies for free or reduced rate school lunches. Check to see if your school offers a school breakfast program which also is available at a free or reduced rate.

Check out the easy microwave recipes below to help you get motivated to eat in the morning.

Sources: [Mayo Clinic](#), [Kids Health](#)

## Microwave French Toast in a Mug

1 serving

Source: [foodnetwork.com](#)

- 1 large egg
- ¼ c 1% milk
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- Salt
- 1 tsp butter, room temperature
- 1 slice whole wheat bread (stale bread works)
- *Optional: ¼ tsp vanilla plus 1 tsp sugar*
- *Optional: 1 Tbsp raisins or blueberries*

**Directions:** Whisk together the egg, milk, cinnamon, and a pinch of salt in a large mug until combined. Evenly spread the butter on one side of the bread. Cut bread into bite-sized pieces and add them to mug, pressing down slightly so all the bread is submerged. Stir in raisins if using. Microwave bread mixture on high power for 2 minutes, pausing every 30 seconds. Let it cool in the mug about 1 minute before serving.

**Nutrition Facts:** *Calories 160, Fat 6 gm, Saturated Fat 3 gm, Sodium 220 mg, Carbohydrate 19 gm, Fiber 5 gm, Sugars gm, Protein 10 gm*

## Quick Peanut Butter-Banana Oat Muffin

1 serving

- 1 banana
- 1 egg
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- ⅓ c quick or old fashioned style oats
- Dash of cinnamon
- ¼ tsp baking powder
- 1 Tbsp chocolate chips (optional)
- 1 Tbsp creamy peanut butter

**Directions:** In a microwavable cereal bowl, mash the banana with a fork and then mix in the egg. Whip it well. Stir in the vanilla extract. Add the oats, baking powder, and a dash of cinnamon. Stir until fully incorporated. Stir in the chocolate chips. Microwave for 1 minute and 45 seconds. (CAUTION: the bowl will be very hot when removed from the microwave). Spread the peanut butter on top and enjoy while warm.

**Nutrition Facts:** *Calories 460, Fat 19 gm, Saturated Fat 6 gm, Sodium 220 mg, Carbohydrate 59 gm, Fiber 7 gm, Sugars 25 gm, Protein 16 gm. (Without chocolate chips: Calories 390, Fat 15 gm, Sat Fat 4 gm, Carbs 50 gm, Sugars 17 gm)*