

# Eating Pretty: A Nutrition Guide for Eating to Look Your Best

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May 2006

San Diego, California  
USA



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# A Nutrition Guide to Youthful Skin, Hair and Nails

Is your skin prone to acne, eczema and wrinkles? Does your hair feel dry and brittle? Do your nails chip easily? This simply means your nutritional needs are not being met and your body is crying out for help. Your skin, hair and nails are a barometer of what's going on inside your body.

Much of the problems regarding good skin, hair and nails crop up because we are led to believe that beauty can be purchased in a jar. What is really required is sensible eating coupled with adequate exercise.

A good diet consisting of carbohydrate, proteins, vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids ensures that you do not need to pop those supplements promising great hair and skin. But, how would just eating a proper diet help?

Vitamins are metabolic regulators and are needed in optimum quantities for the normal functioning of body. They also determine the looks of your skin and hair.

Vitamin A needs to be taken in the right balance, since an excess or deficiency of this nutrient can cause dry and rough skin. It also reduces excessive sebum (oil) production in the skin. Vitamin B complex delays premature graying of the hair and is a basic need for clear, luminous skin.

Vitamins C and E function as antioxidants that inactivate free radicals generated in the body that would otherwise damage body tissues. Vitamin C also helps the body to make collagen, a protein necessary to synthesize fresh connective tissues and keeps skin looking youthful and taut. With age, the amount of collagen decreases, and a diet with adequate Vitamin C becomes pivotal for healthy skin.

Combined with bio-flavonoids, Vitamin C prevents pigment clumping which later turn into age spots on the skin. It strengthens capillaries that might otherwise become spider veins. Vitamin E is valuable not only as an antioxidant, but also a healing agent. It also prevents the occurrence of falling hair and dandruff. Vitamin D is essential for healthy teeth, bones and nails as well as for the assimilation of calcium and phosphorus.

Minerals like Calcium and Phosphorous are absolutely essential to maintain our life processes. They work in conjunction to give healthy hair, nails, teeth and bones. Calcium also helps clear blemished skin. Chromium improves circulation for healthy hair and skin. Copper helps retain elasticity of skin.

Zinc helps vitamin C make collagen and prevents wrinkles and stretch marks. It also aids the tissue-rebuilding action of vitamin A. Selenium maintains skin elasticity and prevents formation of dandruff. Minerals also serve as electrolytes, which carry water to the cells of the body and keep it hydrated. Iodine, iron, magnesium, manganese and sulphur are the other indispensable minerals.

Fat is not always bad. Essential fatty acids or the good fats perform an important function by assisting assimilation of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, and E. These unsaturated fats help in ironing out fine lines leading to youthful skin.

Protein forms the predominant part of skin, hair and nails. When you start losing the firmness of skin, it means there is inadequate protein in the body.

A balanced diet has indeed, stood the test of time and it makes sense to make it a part of your life.

# Eat Well and Look Like a Million Bucks

A visit to the salon can make you look good for a day, but what's inside your refrigerator may well decide how good you look when you wake up in the morning. To look good day after day, year after year, we need to work from the inside.

If you are on a diet of pizzas and aerated drinks, then you are in serious need of some dietary advice.

This is because what you eat flows in your arteries feeding your skin, hair and nails. So for that glowing skin, healthy crowning glory and 'tough as nails' nails, the thumb rule is to eat a regular balanced diet, which is freshly cooked and complies with the food pyramid.

A poor diet increases the chances of damage caused by free radicals and decreases enzyme activity in the body, leading to ageing of the skin and increased incidence of skin ailments.

Remember just like your heart and liver, your skin is an organ. So take care of it as it houses the rest of you inside.

So what constitutes a balanced diet? A simple way to look like a million bucks is to include as many colors of nature in your diet. This will make sure you get all the vitamins and antioxidants to keep your skin young and elastic.

Go for whole grain breads and cereals rather than refined food. They are rich in Vitamin B: an essential nutrient for skin, hair and nails. Green leafy vegetables are a good source of Vitamin K and C.

Include adequate greens in your diet and see your pimple prone skin getting clearer. The anti-oxidants in greens such as spinach and broccoli will help fight inflammation of the skin.

Go bananas! It is fat free, cholesterol free, and a good source of vitamins C and B6. Include fruits like blackberries, blueberries, strawberries and plums in your diet.

Research shows that these have the highest “total antioxidant capacity” of any food material. Oranges are good to eat and a rich source of Vitamin C, which is crucial for collagen production needed for good skin, hair and nails.

A cheerful colorful salad consisting of bell peppers, carrots, cucumber will give you the daily dose of vitamins needed for great looking skin. Search for all the deep yellow fruits and vegetables at your grocery and fill your basket with them. Drinking a glass of fresh carrot juice will provide you the calcium and phosphorus for strong nails.

Yoghurt, made from skimmed milk, is not only rich in Vitamin A and D, but also in acidophilus, the ‘live’ bacteria which keeps the intestines in great shape. This in turn keeps the skin in the ‘pink’ of health.

Include dairy, fish and tofu in the diet that will ensure enough protein, calcium and silica for a healthy hair and nail growth. The copper in shell fish, whole grains, leafy vegetables and eggs prevents hair loss and promotes its growth.

A supplement of Spirulina may be a good idea to make your nails strong. Lastly, let’s not forget the importance of good hydration. Drink plenty of water to flush out toxins and voila, here’s to a pretty YOU!

# Fish Vera Cruz

Every single day there's some or the other research or study that shows how beneficial fish is for the body and how much fish-eaters are more immune to disease and distress as compared to non-fish eaters.

For those who devour fish, Fish Vera Cruz is not just a healthy dish but also a creative and delectable recipe. It has Mexican origins and surprisingly, it's a quick dish that can be easily prepared in practically no time. Here's a peek into Fish Veracruz:

### **Ingredients:**

- Bass Fish Fillets
- Chopped Onions
- Chopped tomatoes
- Fresh Colored Peppers
- Salt to taste
- Garlic Powder
- Pepper
- Olive Oil
- Lemon Slices to garnish

## **Method:**

1. Marinate and flavor the fish with salt, pepper and garlic.
2. Take a pan and pour some olive oil into it. Heat it enough and later add the onions, tomatoes, colored Peppers.
3. Sauté this on high flame for around 10 minutes.
4. Finally add the seasoned fish into this vegetable mix and cook until the fish is peeling.
5. Serve with rice or toast or tacos depending on your taste.

And voila! Fish Vera Cruz is ready to be devoured! The total preparation time for this exotic dish is around 15-30 minutes only.

## **Eating Pretty Points**

Contrary to popular perception about international dishes, this one's not just high on flavor but also rich in nutrition. It's a universally known fact that fish is great for the skin, hair and body.

Fish Vera Cruz not just gives you the great health benefits of fish but also lets you enjoy the added gains of nutritious co-ingredients like pepper, olive oil, garlic and onions.

It's essentially a low fat, low carbohydrate recipe that is high in fiber, proteins, and minerals that give your skin an unimaginable glow and radiance. It's a fantastic dish for the diet and health conscious person who wants both taste as well as health and that too in 30 minutes flat!

## Friday Fish Dish

Any fish lover will go “ummm” at the sight of fish no matter what style you serve it. Friday Fish Dish is one of the simplest, quickest and yet tastiest dishes that can be cooked in a matter of minutes.

To satisfy a really hungry fish-eater, Friday Fish Dish is the best bet! It involves the use of simple and “at home” ingredients that help the fish to retain its nutritional qualities. It’s named so to denote that it can be made in a jiffy, quite literally without giving the process a thought. It’s that easy!

### Ingredients:

Olive Oil

Pepper

Fish Fillet (cod, sole etc.)

Chopped Tomatoes

Sliced Onions

Rice

Lemon

Salt to taste

## Method:

1. Take a frying pan and pour some healthy and nutritious olive oil into it. Heat this for around a minute.
2. In another vessel, cook rice as per the required quantity.
3. Add the chopped tomatoes and sliced onions into the oil. Sauté till the onions are golden brown in color.
4. Now simply put the fish fillets into this mix and cook thoroughly for around 10-15 minutes till the fish starts cracking. Season with salt, pepper and cumin seeds as per your taste.
5. Now take the cooked rice on a serving dish. You may add a layer of salsa sauce or ketchup to the rice.
6. Top it with the cooked fish in the tomato and onion mix.

## Eating Pretty Points

Quite clearly, Friday Fish Dish is a non-complicated, homely, and yet extremely delicious recipe that can be prepared without the usual cooking ado.

For a calm and relaxed day, when you just want to laze around your pad without really doing any real 'work', Friday Fish Dish is perfect meal. The cooking style being easy and cooking time being relatively short, it helps to maintain the nutritional qualities of every ingredient.

It's really high on proteins and vitamins and negligibly low on fats. Unlike complex recipes that involve the use of rare herbs and ingredients for taste and flavor, this one gives you all of it without that entire hullabaloo.

So if it's a Friday and if you are lazy and hungry, remember, Friday Fish Dish it is.

## Chicken Fiesta

Want a mini-feast in the comfort of your home?  
And that too within an hour?

Brace yourself for Chicken Fiesta! As the name suggests, Chicken Fiesta is flavorsome, exquisite and oh-so delicious!

It is perfect for times when friends and acquaintances drop into your home to give you a “surprise” visit and when you haven’t really prepared enough for the “quite understood” feast that follows!

At such times, Chicken Fiesta is not only a quick alternative but also a scrumptious and nutritious one! Here goes.

### Ingredients:

- Chicken Breasts
- Cream of Mushroom Soup
- Cream of Tomato Soup
- Salsa
- Milk
- Jack Cheese
- Cheddar Cheese
- Corn Tortillas

## Method

1. Take a medium-sized bowl and pour the flavorsome salsa, soups and milk into it. Mix them thoroughly. Put the chicken breasts into this mix and stir well so that the chicken absorbs the rich flavor of the salsa and soups. You can sprinkle some fresh, ground pepper as well, if you like it spicy.
2. Take a medium-sized rectangular baking pan and start making layers of tortillas, marinated chicken and cheeses in succession (yummy!!).
3. Bake this dish for around for around 30-40 minutes. Finally, what you get is an extremely appetizing, healthy and exquisite dish that will leave your guests asking for more!

## Eating Pretty Points

The ingredients used in Chicken Fiesta are easy to find, varied and extremely nutritious. You can further increase its nutritional quality by adding into it a veggie of your choice (preferably some salad veggie like broccoli or lettuce!).

Chicken Fiesta is high in protein and low in fat, so you don't have to feel guilty at all while you are gorging on it! The soups don't just add to the tang and taste of the dish but also increase its vitamin, mineral and iron content.

So it doesn't just keep you in shape but also nourishes your skin and hair. All in all, Chicken Fiesta is wholesome and enjoyable package in terms of taste as well as health!

## Chicken Bake

Consider this. You are stuck in the midst of a very tight work schedule that leaves you with very little time to satiate your pangs of hunger.

What do you do? Any one of us in such a situation would typically grab an oily, cheesy and rather unhealthy hotdog that does little good to his body and health in general.

Here's a healthy alternative to all that junk food. This one's for all those chicken lovers who cannot imagine a meal without the white meat. It's not just quick but also fun to cook!

### Ingredients:

- Chicken
- Onions
- Olive Oil
- Pepper
- Corn Flour
- Milk

## Method:

1. Take chicken (as much as required) and boil it well in salt water.
2. On another pan, pour some olive oil and add two finely chopped onions to it. Sauté well till the onions are slightly golden in color.
3. Sprinkle some ground pepper into the fried onions.
4. Now, shred the boiled chicken and add the pepper and onion mix into it. Keep aside.
5. Pour some milk into a small bowl and add one and a half teaspoon corn flour to it. Stir it well to form a thick paste and pour it evenly over the shredded chicken.
6. Top it up with grated cheese and bake this chicken for around 15-20 minutes.

The result is a mouthwatering, lip-smacking snack that's not just tasty but also extremely healthy.

## Eating Pretty Points

Chicken Bake is perfect for those who want to grab a quick bite and also want to maintain a healthy diet. The estimated time of cooking for this dish is around 25-30 minutes, which means that you can cook it at any time of the day and that too in a jiffy.

Besides keeping you healthy, the olive oil used in cooking helps to keep the skin glowing. The high protein content in chicken promotes hair growth and helps to keep your mane healthy and strong. Pepper not only adds flavor to the dish but also has certain fat-burning qualities.

Taste, nutrition and fun - this dish has it all. So the next time you are starving and wondering what to eat, remember that Chicken Bake is one of the tastiest as well as healthiest choices!

# Chick Pea and Vegetable Salad

This is an interesting salad which could be a meal in itself. It consists of chick peas and an assortment of crisp greens and bell peppers.

The garlic croutons tossed with the dressing makes the salad an unusual and hearty accompaniment to the main meal. The Eating Pretty Points of this salad is immense. Just what the doctor prescribed for healthy skin, hair and nails!

## Ingredients

### For the salad

½ cup chick peas  
2 cups lettuce, torn into pieces  
1 ½ cups cucumber, peeled and diced  
¼ cup celery, chopped  
½ cup green capsicum, diced  
½ cup yellow and red bell pepper, diced  
1 cup chopped spinach

### For the garlic croutons

4 bread slices  
1 ½ tablespoons butter  
½ teaspoon grated garlic

### For the dressing

1 teaspoon grated lemon rind  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
Juice of 1 lemon  
½ teaspoon mustard powder  
1 tablespoon chopped parsley or coriander  
Add salt and pepper to taste

## Method

For the salad

1. Wash and soak the chick peas overnight.
2. Drain and pressure cook along with added salt till they are very soft.
3. Mix all the salad ingredients together in a large bowl and refrigerate.

For the garlic croutons

1. Make ½” cubes from the bread slices
2. Heat the butter in a pan and add grated garlic
3. Sauté the bread cubes in the pan till they are light brown and crisp.
4. Leave it to cool.

How to serve

Just before serving, combine the salad, garlic croutons, salad dressing and toss lightly. Serve immediately.

## Eating Pretty Points

Chick peas are a rich source of protein and have negligible quantities of fat. As protein forms the major part of human skin, hair and nails, chick pea is a good source of nourishment.

They also contain slow-burning complex carbohydrates, fiber, Vitamin B, flavonoids, and minerals. Vitamin B delays premature graying and bioflavonoids are important entities which work with Vitamin C to prevent ugly pigment clumping on the skin.

The trace of garlic will act as a shield against fungal and bacterial infections of the skin and hair, besides regulating your cholesterol levels! Red and yellow peppers have three times as much vitamin C as citrus fruit. They are quite a good source of beta-carotene and vitamin B6.

Olive oil is food to the skin as it contains monounsaturated fats, high levels of antioxidants such as Vitamin E and phenols. It helps in increasing the absorption of several vitamins including A, D, E, and K and helps reduce the effects of ageing. The spinach in this salad will give you nutrition rich in carotenoids, including beta-carotene and lutein. It also contains quercetin, a phytochemical with antioxidant properties. Spinach is rich in vitamins and minerals, particularly folate (folic acid), vitamin K, magnesium, and manganese.

## Savory Rice

This spicy, cheesy, rice dish full of goodness of vegetables is high on nutrition, easy to cook and simply delicious. You will have the family asking for more. Plus, it will also be a hit with friends at a party.

### Ingredients (serves 10)

- 1 ½ teacups uncooked rice
- 100 gms (4 oz.) french beans
- 100 gms (4 oz.) potatoes
- 100 gms (4 oz.) carrot
- 100 gms (4oz.) green peas
- 1 chopped onion
- 1 chopped large tomato
- 1 chopped large capsicum
- 2 tablespoons yoghurt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground spices  
(3 cloves, 3 peppercorns, 3 cinnamon)
- 5-8 red chilies
- 10 cloves garlic
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt to taste
- Slices of tomato and grated cooking cheese for decoration

## Method

1. Cut the beans, potatoes and carrots into small pieces and boil with green peas.
2. Boil the rice so that each grain is separate and keep aside.
3. Roast the chilies in a pan for few minutes and then pound with the garlic
4. Fry the onions in hot oil and then add the chilly, garlic mix.
5. Add the capsicum, tomatoes, yoghurt and cook for 5 minutes
6. Add the cooked rice, vegetables, spices and salt and mix well.
7. In a greased baking dish, pack the mix into it.
8. Cover with tomato slices and grated cheese and bake in an oven at 400 F for 10 minutes.

## Eating Pretty Points

This dish is proof that nutrition and taste can go together. And what's more you also get to have great skin, hair, nails, twinkling eyes and a satisfied palette!

The dish is a balanced meal in itself as it gives your daily dosage of vitamin A (in carrots, yoghurt), vitamin C (in tomatoes, potatoes and capsicum), potassium and iron (in potatoes), selenium (in onions and tomatoes).

Green peas are storehouse of nourishment and 1 cup serving contains more protein than a whole egg.

French beans by themselves contain protein, fat, calcium, phosphorus, vitamins A, B, D and starch. Garlic contains the chemical allicin, which has natural antibiotic properties and protects against skin and hair infections.

Tomatoes when cooked with olive oil (a great cooking medium with mono-unsaturated fats, high levels of antioxidants such as Vitamin E and phenols) also enhance the absorption of lycopene, a carotenoid essential for healthy skin.

## Closing Remarks

Looking your best is no accident. It takes planning. Eating nutritious skin nourishing foods is the best thing you can do for yourself and your skin. We hope we've it a little easier for you to eat beautifully.

From a Circle of Love,  
Noixia