
Building a Balanced Smoothie

Smoothies can be a delicious, fast, and nutritious meal or snack. It is important to remember that meals, whether served on a plate or in a glass, should be nutritionally balanced. So, while an all-fruit smoothie may make your taste buds happy, the lack of protein and fat will leave your body unsatisfied.

Luckily, making a nutritionally balanced smoothie is simple – just follow these five steps. Amounts below will make 2 servings:

1. Choose a Base (1/2 cup):

Milk, almond or oat milk, brewed tea, coconut water, coconut milk, rice beverage, soymilk, kefir, water, 100% fruit juice, low-sodium vegetable juice

2. Choose a Fruit (fresh or frozen) (1 cup):

Apple, avocado, banana, blackberries, blueberries, cherries, grapes, kiwi, mango, melon, oranges, papaya, peach, pear, pineapple, raspberries, or strawberries

3. Choose a Vegetable (1/2 cup):

- **Raw:** Arugula, beet greens, celery, chard, collard greens, cucumbers, dandelion greens, kale, or spinach (greens can be raw or cooked). Raw vegetables will require a powerful blender to fully grind them up.
- **Cooked:** butternut squash, beets, carrots, pumpkin, or sweet potato

4. Add Protein, Healthy Fats, and/or Fiber (choose 1 or 2):

- 1/2 cup cottage cheese or Greek yogurt
- 1/4-1/2 cup silken tofu, cooked lentils or beans
- 1-2 tablespoons peanut butter, almond butter, or sun butter
- 1-2 tablespoons dry milk powder or protein powder
- 1/4 Avocado
- 1 tablespoon flaxseed oil
- 1 tablespoon fiber supplement powder
- 1-2 tablespoons oat bran or wheat bran
- 2 tablespoons whole oats
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds or ground flax seeds
- 2 tablespoons chopped nuts
- 1-2 tablespoons pumpkin or sunflower seeds
- 1-2 tablespoons hemp seeds or hearts
- 1-2 tablespoons wheat germ

5. Give it a Boost (choose up to 3):

- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder or cacao nibs
- 1-2 tablespoons powdered greens or seaweed
- 2 drops flavor extracts (vanilla, almond, or mint)
- 1 teaspoon agave or honey
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh herbs (mint or basil)
- Pinch of spices (cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, or cayenne)

Extra Tips:

- If you use frozen fruit, look for varieties with no added sugar.
- If using canned beans, lentils, or vegetables, look for no-salt-added varieties and drain and rinse them first.
- You can adjust the consistency of the smoothie by adding more liquid or using less dense fruits and vegetables.
- Add a few ice cubes if you are not using frozen fruits and vegetables.
- You can make a larger batch and it will last for up to 3 days in the fridge.

Blender Tips: All blenders are not created equal. They vary in size, strength, and ease of cleaning.

- Standing Blender: large standing blenders hold 5-8 cups, vary in strength to crush ice and grind vegetables. To clean, rinse out the pitcher then fill it a third of the way full with warm water. Add a splash of dish soap. Cover with the lid and blend on high for 1 minute, then rinse and air dry.
- Single Serving Blenders: good for making 1-2 servings. Hold 2-4 cups.
- Handheld Immersion Blender: good for making 1-2 servings. Easy to clean.

Sample Recipes:

Strawberry-Banana Smoothie: 1/2 cup plain yogurt, 1/2 banana, 1/4 cup orange juice, 1/4 cup water, 1/2 cup frozen strawberries, 1/2 cup cooked butternut squash

Orange Creamsicle: 1/2 cup plain yogurt, 1 orange (peeled), 1/4 tsp vanilla extract, 1/4 cup orange juice, 1/2 Tbsp chia seeds, 1/4 cup water, 3 ice cubes

Peachy Keen: 1/2 cup milk, 1/4 cup plain yogurt, 1 cup frozen peaches and strawberries, 1/4 of an avocado, pinch powdered ginger or 1 tsp grated fresh ginger

Peanut Butter Dream: 1 ripe banana, 1/2 cup milk, 1 Tbsp creamy peanut butter, 1/2 Tbsp cocoa powder, 1/2 cup baby spinach leaves