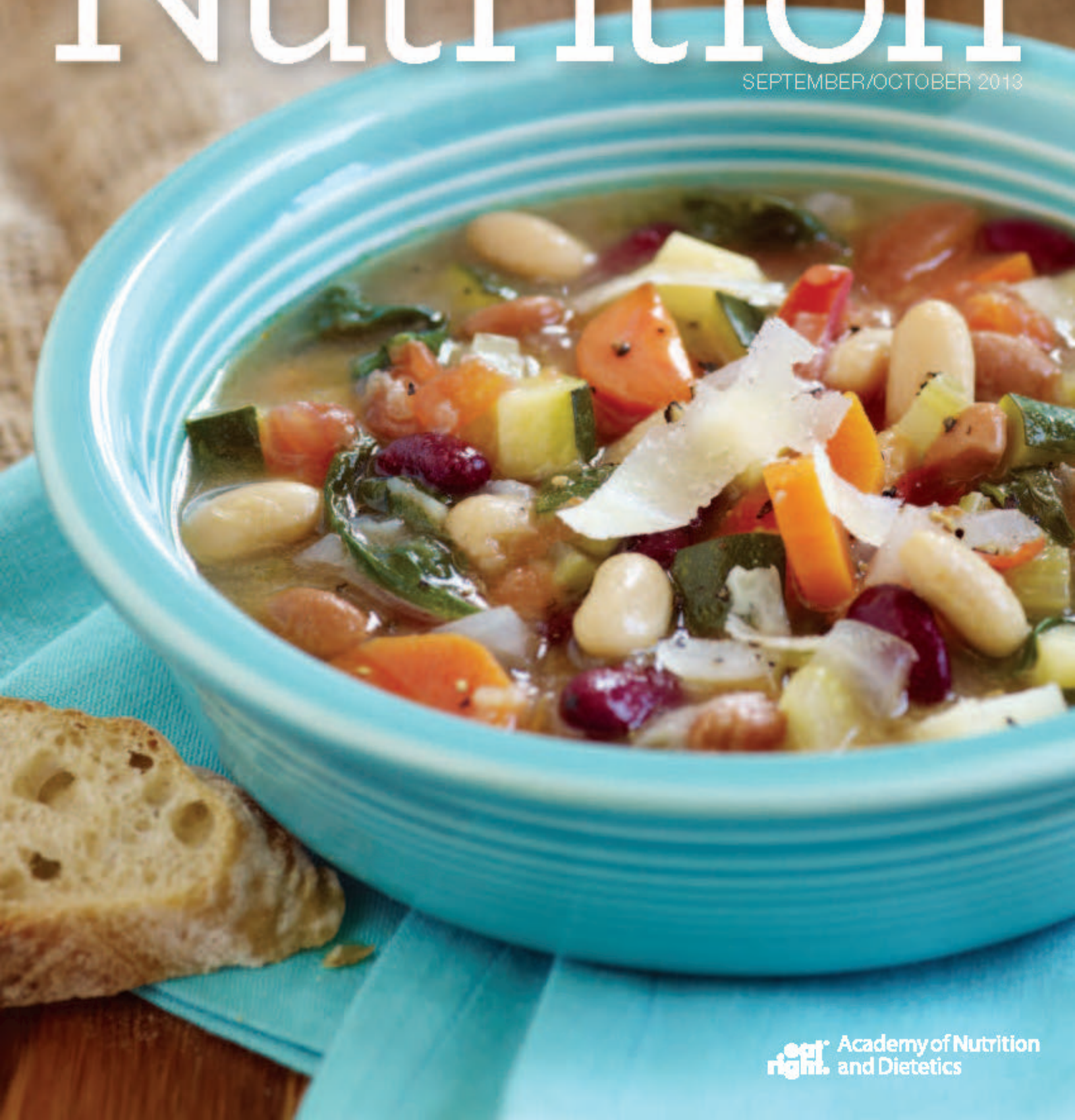


Food & Nutrition

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Oats

A TRENDY, BUDGET-FRIENDLY FOOD STAPLE

By Mindy Hermann | Photography by Tyllie Barbosa

Oats in the Clinic: Cultivated for medicinal purposes thousands of years ago, today, oats are a delicious, trendy and budget-friendly food staple. A one-cup cooked serving costs less than 20 cents to make at home.

At 150 calories per one-cup cooked serving, oats resemble other cooked whole grains in their energy density. The soluble fiber in oats (β -glucan) consistently has been shown to lower the heart disease risk factors of total and low-density-lipoprotein cholesterol. In 1997, the Food and Drug Administration approved a health claim for the role of β -glucan soluble fiber, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, in reducing risk of heart disease. One cup of cooked oatmeal supplies 2 of the daily 3 grams of β -glucan soluble fiber necessary for these heart health benefits.

The portfolio approach to dietary management of hyperlipidemia risk incorporates oats and other foods high in soluble fiber, along with plant sterols, soy protein and almonds.

Oats in the Kitchen: The least processed oats come in the form of groats — the husked whole oat kernel — and require the longest cooking time (approximately 40 minutes). **Oat groats** can be substituted for brown rice, wheat berries or other whole grains in a dinner side dish. **Steel-cut oats** are toasted oat groats that have been cut into small pieces with a metal blade. Ready in 10 to 20 minutes (or less for quick-cooking varieties), steel-cut oats have a firm texture and nutty flavor. **Rolled oats**, also

known as “old-fashioned” or “5-minute” oats, are groats that have been steamed, flattened and dried, and are typically less expensive and more readily available than whole and steel-cut oats. **Quick oats** are rolled oats that have been cut into smaller pieces to reduce cooking time down to about one minute, while **instant oats** resemble quick oats in texture but have been partially cooked before drying so that they can be reconstituted with boiling water. Some varieties of instant oats contain flavorings and salt to speed up cooking and are sometimes sold in single-serve portions.

Oats in Quantity: Oats are available for quantity purchase by the case of individual packets, ready-to-heat cups, 18- and 42-ounce cartons and in boxes and bags up to 50 pounds. Store oats in a moisture-proof, food-grade container in a cool room.

Simmer bulk quantities of oats in a steam-jacketed kettle or steamer with little stirring to avoid gumminess. Cover cooked oatmeal for service and hold in a warmer. Cool and refrigerate leftovers in a covered container for up to five days or freeze for up to three months. Beyond the boundaries of breakfast, rolled and quick oats can be used to thicken soups and stews, dissolving with barely a trace. Add oats to meatloaf and meatballs in place of bread crumbs and incorporate into a crumbly topping for fish and chicken, vegetable casseroles and fruit desserts.

Mindy Hermann, MBA, RD, is a nutrition communications specialist and cookbook consultant.

RECIPES

SPICY OAT CRUSTED CHICKEN WITH SUNSHINE SALSA

Developed by Quaker Oats

Sunshine Salsa

- ¼ cup prepared salsa
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped orange sections

Chicken

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 tablespoon margarine, melted
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1 ½ cups quick oats, uncooked
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon water
- 4 boned and skinned chicken breast halves (about 5 to 6 ounces each)
- chopped cilantro (optional)

In a small bowl, combine salsa and orange sections. Refrigerate, covered, until serving time.

Heat oven to 375°F. In a flat, shallow dish, stir together oil, melted margarine, chili powder, garlic powder, cumin and salt. Add oats, stirring until evenly moistened.

In another flat, shallow dish, beat egg and water with fork until frothy. Dip chicken into combined egg and water. Then coat completely in seasoned oats. Place chicken on a foil-lined baking sheet. Pat any extra oat mixture onto top of chicken.

Bake 30 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and oat coating is golden brown. Serve with Sunshine Salsa. Garnish with chopped cilantro, if desired. Serves 4.

Nutritional Info: 1 5-ounce breast and 6 tablespoons salsa.

Calories: 421; Total fat: 18g; Sat. fat: 2g; Chol.: 125mg; Sodium: 744mg; Carb.: 30g; Fiber: 5g; Sugars: 6g; Protein: 35g; Potassium: 432mg; Phosphorus: 247mg

Recipe courtesy of Quaker Oats. For more oat recipes, visit quakeroats.com/cooking-and-recipes.aspx. Used with permission.

OATMEAL AND LEEK RISOTTO

Developed by Shara Aaron and Monica Bearden

- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup quick oats
- 2 tablespoons grape seed oil
- 1 cup leeks, diced
- 1 to 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 10 cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 5 fresh basil leaves, torn
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons low-sodium Parmesan cheese, grated

Bring chicken broth to a boil and add oats. Return to a

boil and simmer for 5 minutes until cooked and creamy.

Meanwhile heat grape seed oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add leeks and garlic and sauté until soft. Add cherry tomatoes and basil and cook for 1 minute.

Add oatmeal and Parmesan cheese to sautéed ingredients and season with pepper. Mix the ingredients over medium heat for 2 minutes and serve.

Serves 4 as a side dish.

Nutritional Info: 1 cup.

Calories: 193; Total fat: 9g; Sat. fat: 1g; Chol.: 2mg; Sodium: 61mg; Carb.: 21g; Fiber: 3g; Sugars: 3g; Protein: 7g; Potassium: 157mg; Phosphorus: 46mg

From the Don't Break Your Heart Cookbook (Race Point Publishing 2013) by Shara Aaron, MS, RD, and Monica Bearden, RD. Used with permission.