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6 Best Summer Foods for Weight Loss



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The secret to weight loss is to choose healthy foods and take in fewer calories than you burn. And it's just easier to make better food choices in summertime, when heavy, high-calorie dishes seem less appealing. The best foods for weight loss in summer are light, refreshing and, most important, keep you out of the hot kitchen.

The single easiest way to trim calories from your summer diet, experts say, is to load up on nature's bounty. Produce is at its peak in summer. Delicious fruits and vegetables abound at farmers' markets and in your local grocery. Besides being low in calories, produce is loaded with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fiber.

"Enjoy fresh produce in season. You will be thrilled at how fresh, delicious, and satisfying it tastes," says Susan Moores, RD, a St. Paul, Minn., nutrition consultant. "Save the oranges and apples for fall, and load up on fresh berries, melons, greens, tomatoes, cucumbers, leafy green pods, and all the super-nutritious and low-calorie fruits, greens and vegetables that grow in the garden this time of year."

As a bonus, you can forget about portion control when it comes to fresh fruit and vegetables, Moores say.

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"Go for it, because it is hard to do much damage to your waistline with these super-nutritious edibles," says Moores

To keep your cool and cut your time in the kitchen, start with prepared produce, such as cut-up fruit and washed greens. Add rotisserie chicken, prepared soups, and pre-threaded kabobs when you need something a bit heartier. Pre-prepped foods may cost a little extra, but they save time in the kitchen.

Here are dietitian's picks for some of the best foods to help with weight loss during the summer.

Best Summer Weight Loss Food No. 1: Chilled Soups

Moores loves all kind of produce but says cold soups are among her favorite low-calorie dishes. Chilled soups like gazpacho or cucumber-dill that contain lots of chunky vegetables are a great way to start a meal.

"Research shows that a low-calorie, broth-based soup at the beginning of the meal will fill you so you eat less at the meal," Moores says.

Best Summer Weight Loss Food No. 2: Watermelon

Who doesn't love diving into a crisp, juicy slice of watermelon when it's hot outside?

"Half of the watermelon comes from water," Moores says. "It's a wonderful way to satisfy thirst and a yen for something sweet."

Best Summer Weight Loss Food No. 3: Grilled Veggies

For Dawn Jackson Blatner, RD, a plate of grilled vegetables is a summertime must-have. She recommends keeping a plate of grilled onions, bell peppers, zucchini, carrots, eggplant, asparagus, and garlic in your fridge. You can use them to make dishes like:

- Grilled vegetable and goat cheese salads
- Grilled vegetable pitas
- Grilled vegetable, ricotta, and fresh herb pasta and frittatas

Best Summer Weight Loss Food No. 4: Salads

Salads make for quick, healthy meals – with no recipes required.

"Just give the produce a quick rinse; slice, dice, toss fruits, vegetables, low-fat cheese, a handful of toasted nuts with some salad greens and a light raspberry or ginger vinaigrette, along with a whole-grain roll, and you have a meal in minutes," Moores says.

Or try bean or whole-grain salads, such as wheatberry and tabouli.

Moore suggests flavoring your salads with herbs from the garden so you can go light on the dressing. And when adding meats or fish to your salad, she says, "think of them as an accessory to the greens, vegetables, and grains."

Best Summer Weight Loss Food No. 5: Low- and No-Calorie Beverages

Smoothies, sweetened specialty coffee drinks, sweetened teas, and sodas – they all go down so easily, especially when it's hot outside. But the calories add up just as easily.

"Beverages can be the Achilles heel during summertime because we need to drink lots of liquids to stay cool, but liquids quench thirst and don't usually impact our hunger," Blatner says.

She recommends these refreshing drinks and treats to enjoy this summer without blowing your diet:

- Root Beer or Orange Dream Float. 1/2 cup vanilla frozen yogurt in 12 ounces of diet root beer or orange soda (100 calories)
- Tart Lemon Pom Spritzer. 12 ounces of lemon sparkling water mixed with the juice of 1 lemon and 1/4 cup pomegranate juice, served over ice (35 calories)
- Large (24-oz.) Ice Skim Latte from Starbucks (110 calories)
- White Wine Spritzer. 5 ounces white wine mixed with 3 ounces lemon/lime seltzer water (120 calories)

Best Summer Weight Loss Food No. 6: Fruit-Based Desserts

"Cravings don't take a summer vacation and your hot-weather sweet tooth can wreak havoc on your weight loss efforts," Blatner says. "Ditch high-calorie desserts and opt for these naturally sweet treats that can tame the most ferocious sweet tooth."

She suggests:

- Grilled banana sundaes made with low-fat ice cream
- Grilled pineapple with rum and pecans
- Grilled white peaches with blackberries and honey
- Frozen, dark, sweet cherries
- A chocolate-covered frozen banana
- Frozen grapes

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