



Doctor Riner does not like sucralose/splenda

APPENDIX A

Looking for Wheat in All the Wrong Places

WHILE THE FOLLOWING lists may be daunting, sticking to wheat- and gluten-free foods can be as easy as restricting yourself to foods that don't require a label.

Foods such as cucumbers, kale, cod, salmon, olive oil, walnuts, eggs, and avocados have nothing to do with wheat or gluten. They are naturally free of such things, natural and healthy without benefit of some "gluten-free" label.

But if you venture outside of familiar natural whole foods, eat in social situations, go to restaurants, or travel, then there is potential for inadvertent wheat and gluten exposure.

For some people, this is not just a game. Someone with celiac disease, for instance, may have to endure days to weeks of abdominal cramping, diarrhea, even intestinal bleeding from an inadvertent encounter with some wheat gluten mixed into the batter used to bread chicken. Even after the nasty rash of dermatitis herpetiformis heals, it can flare with just a dash of wheat-containing soy sauce. Or someone who experiences inflammatory neurological symptoms can experience abrupt decline in coordination because the gluten-free beer really wasn't. For many others who don't have immune- or inflammation-mediated gluten sensitivity, accidental exposure to wheat can bring on diarrhea, asthma, mental fog, joint

pains or swelling, leg edema, behavioral outbursts in people with ADHD, autism, bipolar illness, and schizophrenia.

Many people therefore have to be vigilant about exposure to wheat. Those with autoimmune conditions such as celiac, dermatitis herpetiformis, and cerebellar ataxia also need to avoid other gluten-containing grains: rye, barley, spelt, triticale, kamut, and bulgur.

Wheat and gluten come in a dizzying variety of forms. Couscous, matzo, orzo, graham, and bran are all wheat. So are faro, panko, and rusk. Appearances can be misleading. For instance, the majority of breakfast cereals contain wheat flour, wheat-derived ingredients, or gluten despite names such as Corn Flakes or Rice Krispies.

Oats remain a topic of controversy, especially since oat products are often processed in the same equipment or facility as wheat products. Most celiac sufferers therefore avoid oats as well.

To qualify as gluten-free by FDA criteria, manufactured products (not restaurant-produced products) must be both free of gluten and produced in a gluten-free facility to prevent cross-contamination. (Some people are so gluten-sensitive that even the small amount you are exposed to by sharing a cutting device can bring on symptoms.) This means that, for the seriously sensitive, even an ingredient label that does not list wheat or any buzzwords for wheat such as “modified food starch” can *still* contain some measure of gluten. If in doubt, a call or e-mail to the customer service department may be necessary to inquire whether a gluten-free facility was used. Also, more manufacturers are starting to specify whether products are gluten-free or not gluten-free on their Web sites.

Note that wheat-free does *not* equate with gluten-free in food labeling. Wheat-free can mean, for instance, that barley malt or rye is used in place of wheat, but both also contain gluten. For the very gluten-sensitive, such as those with celiac, do not assume that wheat-free is necessarily gluten-free.

You already know that wheat and gluten can be found in abundance in obvious foods such as breads, pastas, and pastries. But there are some not-so-obvious foods that can contain wheat, as listed below.

Baguette	Modified food starch
Barley	Orzo
Beignet	Panko (a bread crumb mixture used in Japanese cooking)
Bran	Ramen
Brioche	Roux (wheat-based sauce or thickener)
Bulgur	Rusk
Burrito	Rye
Couscous	Seitan (nearly pure gluten used in place of meat)
Crepe	Semolina
Croutons	Soba (mostly buckwheat but usually also includes wheat)
Durum	Spelt
Einkorn	Strudel
Emmer	Tart
Farina	Textured vegetable protein
Faro (several wheat varieties are often loosely called "faro" in Italy)	Triticale
Focaccia	Udon
Gnocchi	Wheat germ
Graham flour	Wraps
Hydrolyzed vegetable protein	
Kamut	
Matzo	

WHEAT-CONTAINING PRODUCTS

W heat reflects the incredible inventiveness of the human species, as we've transformed this grain into an incredible multitude

of shapes and forms. Beyond the many configurations that wheat can take listed above, there is an even greater variety of foods that contain some measure of wheat or gluten. These are listed below.

Please keep in mind that, due to the extraordinary number and variety of products on the market, this list cannot include every possible wheat- and gluten-containing item. The key is to remain vigilant and ask (or walk away) whenever in doubt.

Many foods listed below also come in gluten-free versions. Some gluten-free versions are both tasty and healthy, e.g., vinaigrette salad dressing without hydrolyzed vegetable protein. But bear in mind that the growing world of gluten-free breads, breakfast cereals, and flours, which are typically made with rice starch, cornstarch, potato starch, or tapioca starch, are not healthy substitutes. Nothing that generates diabetic-range blood sugar responses should be labeled “healthy,” gluten-free or otherwise. They serve best as an occasional indulgence, not staples.

There is also an entire world of stealth sources of wheat and gluten that cannot be deciphered from the label. If the listed ingredients include nonspecific terms such as “starch,” “emulsifiers,” or “leavening agents,” then the food contains gluten until proven otherwise.

There is doubt surrounding the gluten content of some foods and ingredients, such as caramel coloring. Caramel coloring is the caramelized product of heated sugars that is nearly always made from corn syrup, but some manufacturers make it from a wheat-derived source. Such uncertainties are expressed with a question mark beside the listing.

Not everybody needs to be extra-vigilant about the most minute exposure to gluten. The listings that follow are simply meant to raise your awareness of just how ubiquitous wheat and gluten are, and provide a starting place for people who really *do* need to be extremely vigilant about their gluten exposure.

Here's a list of unexpected sources of wheat and gluten:

BEVERAGES

Ales, beers, lagers (though there is an increasing number of gluten-free beers)	Teas, flavored
Bloody Mary mixes	Vodkas distilled from wheat (Absolut, Grey Goose, Stolichnaya)
Coffees, flavored	Wine coolers (containing barley malt)
Herbal teas made with wheat, barley, or malt	Whiskey distilled from wheat or barley
Malt liquor	

BREAKFAST CEREALS—I trust you can tell that cereals such as Shredded Wheat and Wheaties contain wheat. However, there are those that appear wheat-free that most decidedly are not.

Bran cereals (All Bran, Bran Buds, Raisin Bran)	Muesli, Mueslix
Corn flakes (Corn Flakes, Frosted Flakes, Crunchy Corn Bran)	Oat cereals (Cheerios, Cracklin' Oat Bran, Honey Bunches of Oats)
Granola cereals	Popped corn cereals (Corn Pops)
"Healthy" cereals (Smart Start, Special K, Grape Nuts, Trail Mix Crunch)	Puffed rice cereals (Rice Krispies)

CHEESE—Because the cultures used to ferment some cheeses come in contact with bread (bread mold), they potentially present a gluten exposure risk.

Blue cheese	Gorgonzola cheese
Cottage cheese (not all)	Roquefort

COLORING/FILLERS/TEXTURIZERS/THICKENERS—These hidden sources can be among the most problematic, since they are often buried deep in the ingredient list or sound like they have nothing to do with wheat or gluten. Unfortunately, there is often no way to tell from the label, nor will the manufacturer be able to tell you, since these ingredients are often produced by a supplier.

Artificial colors	Emulsifiers
Artificial flavors	Maltodextrin (?)
Caramel coloring (?)	Modified food starch
Caramel flavoring (?)	Stabilizers
Dextrimaltose	Textured vegetable protein

ENERGY, PROTEIN, AND MEAL REPLACEMENT BARS

Clif Bars	Kashi GoLean bars
Gatorade Pre-Game Fuel	Power Bars
Nutrition bars	Slim-Fast meal bars
GNC Pro Performance bars	

FAST FOOD—At many fast food restaurants, the oil used to fry French fries may be the same oil used to fry bread crumb-coated chicken patties. Likewise, cooking surfaces may be shared. Foods you wouldn't ordinarily regard as wheat-containing often do contain wheat, such as scrambled eggs made with pancake batter or Taco Bell nacho chips and potato bites. Sauces, sausages, and burritos typically contain wheat or wheat-derived ingredients.

Foods that don't contain wheat or gluten are, in fact, the exception at fast food restaurants. It is therefore difficult, some say near impossible, to confidently obtain wheat- and gluten-free foods at these places. (You shouldn't be eating there anyway!) However,

some chains, such as Subway, Arby's, Wendy's, and Chipotle Mexican Grill, confidently claim that many of their products are gluten-free and/or offer a gluten-free menu.

HOT CEREALS

Cream of Wheat	Oatmeal
Farina	Oat bran
Malt-O-Meal	

MEATS

Breaded meats	Imitation crabmeat
Canned meats	Hamburger (if bread crumbs are added)
Deli meats (luncheon meats, salami)	Sausage
Hot dogs	Turkey, self-basting
Imitation bacon	

MISCELLANEOUS—This can be a real problem area, since identifiable wheat- or gluten-containing ingredients may not be listed on product labels. A call to the manufacturer may be necessary.

Envelopes (glue)	listing maintained by a pharmacist.)
Gloss and lip balms	
Play-Doh	Nutritional supplements (Many manufacturers will specify "gluten-free" on the label.)
Prescription and over-the- counter medications (A useful online resource can be found at www. glutenfreedrugs.com , a	Lipstick
	Stamps (glue)

SAUCES, SALAD DRESSINGS, CONDIMENTS

Gravies thickened with wheat flour	Miso
Ketchup	Mustards containing wheat
Malt syrup	Salad dressings
Malt vinegar	Soy sauce
Marinades	Teriyaki sauce

SEASONINGS

Curry powder	Seasoning mixes	Taco seasoning
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SNACKS AND DESSERTS—Cookies, crackers, and pretzels are obvious wheat-containing snacks. But there are plenty of not-so-obvious items.

Cake frosting	cream, Oreo Cookie,
Candy bars	cookie dough, cheese-
Chewing gum (powdered coating)	cake, chocolate malt)
Chex mixes	Ice cream cones
Corn chips	Licorice
Dried fruit (lightly coated with flour)	Nut bars
Dry roasted peanuts	Pies
Fruit fillings with thickeners	Potato chips (including Pringles)
Jelly beans (not including Jelly Bellies and Starburst)	Roasted nuts
Granola bars	Tiramisu
Ice cream (cookies and	Tortilla chips, flavored
	Trail mixes

SOUPS

Bisques

Broths, bouillon

Canned soups

Soup mixes

Soup stocks and bases

SOY AND VEGETARIAN PRODUCTS

Veggie burgers (Boca

Burgers, Gardenburgers,

Morningstar Farms)

Vegetarian "chicken" strips

Vegetarian chili

Vegetarian hot dogs and
sausages

Vegetarian "scallops"

Vegetarian "steaks"

SWEETENERS

Barley malt, barley extract

Dextrin and maltodextrin (?)

Malt, malt syrup, malt
flavoring



APPENDIX B

Healthy Wheat Belly–Shrinking Recipes

ELIMINATING WHEAT FROM your diet is not insurmountably difficult, but it does require some creativity in the kitchen, as many of your standbys and family favorites will now be on the verboten list. I've come up with relatively simple, healthy recipes, including some that can serve to replace familiar wheat-containing dishes.

These recipes were created with several ground rules in place:

Wheat is replaced with healthy alternatives. This may seem obvious, but the majority of wheat-free foods on the market or gluten-free recipes do *not* yield truly healthy foods. Substituting wheat with cornstarch, brown rice starch, potato starch, or tapioca starch, for example, as is often done in gluten-free recipes, will make you fat and diabetic. In the recipes listed here, wheat flour is replaced with nut meals, ground flaxseed, and coconut flour, foods that are nutritious and do not share any of the abnormal responses triggered by wheat or other common wheat substitutes.

Unhealthy fats like hydrogenated, polyunsaturated, and oxidized oils are avoided. The fats used in these recipes tend to be richer in monounsaturates and saturates, especially olive oil and neutral lauric acid–rich coconut oil.

Low-carbohydrate exposure is maintained. Because a low-carb effort is healthier for a long list of reasons, such as losing

visceral fat, suppressing inflammatory phenomena, reducing expression of small LDL particles, and minimizing or reversing exceptionally common diabetic tendencies, these recipes are all low in carbohydrate content. The only recipe listed below that contains a more generous amount of carbohydrates is the granola; however, the granola recipe is easily modified to suit your needs.

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Artificial sweeteners are used. The compromise I draw in order to re-create several familiar dishes sans sugar is to use the artificial or non-nutritive sweeteners that I believe are the most benign and well tolerated by the majority. Erythritol, xylitol, sucralose, and stevia are among the sweeteners that will not impact blood sugar levels, nor cause gastrointestinal distress as mannitol or sorbitol can. They are also safe, lacking the adverse potential health consequences of aspartame and saccharin. One widely available erythritol/stevia mix (which actually contains a *component* of stevia called rebiana) is Truvia, the sweetener I used in testing most of these recipes.

The quantity of sweeteners specified may also seem low and the quantity may need to be adjusted to your preference. Because most people who eliminate wheat from their diet have a reawakened sensitivity to sweetness, they find most conventional sweet foods *sickeningly* sweet. This has been addressed by reducing the dose of sweetener in the recipes. If you are just starting out on your wheat-free journey, however, and still desire sweetness, then feel free to increase the quantity of artificial sweetener over that specified.

Also note that the potency of various sweeteners, especially stevia powdered extracts, varies in sweetness, since some are combined with fillers like maltodextrin or inulin. Consult the label of the sweetener you purchase or use the following conversions to determine the sucrose equivalent of your sweetener.

1 cup sucrose =

1 cup Stevia Extract in the Raw (and other stevia extracts mixed with maltodextrin meant to match sucrose ounce for ounce)

1 cup granulated Stevia

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup stevia extract powder (e.g., Trader Joe's); however, more so than other sweeteners, stevia extract powders differ widely in sweetness. It is best to consult the label for sucrose equivalent of the specific brand you purchase.

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup + $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons (or approximately 7 tablespoons)

Truvia

2 tablespoons liquid stevia extract

$1\frac{1}{3}$ cups erythritol

1 cup xylitol

Lastly, these recipes were created with a busy schedule and limited time in mind and are therefore reasonably easy to prepare. Most ingredients used are widely available.

To be safe, please note that anyone with celiac disease or its nonintestinal equivalents should also choose ingredients that are gluten-free. All ingredients I've listed in the recipes were chosen to be readily available as gluten-free, but obviously, you can never control the behavior of every food manufacturer and what they put in their products. Check to be sure.

BERRY-COCONUT SMOOTHIE

This smoothie is perfect for a breakfast on the run or as a quick snack. You will find it more filling than most smoothies thanks to the coconut milk. Berries are the only sweetener, which keeps the sugar to a minimum.

Makes 1 serving

- ½ cup coconut milk
- ½ cup low-fat plain yogurt
- ¼ cup blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, or other berries
- ½ cup unflavored or vanilla whey protein powder
- 1 tablespoon ground flaxseeds (can be purchased pre-ground)
- ½ teaspoon coconut extract
- 4 ice cubes

Combine the coconut milk, yogurt, berries, whey protein, flaxseed, coconut extract, and ice cubes. Blend until smooth. Serve immediately.

GRANOLA

This granola will satisfy most people's desire for a sweet, crunchy snack, though its taste and look are different from those of conventional granola. You can also have the granola as a cereal with milk, coconut milk, soymilk, or unsweetened almond milk. The oats (or quinoa) and dried fruit included in this mix can have blood sugar consequences, but the quantities are modest and therefore likely to have limited blood sugar effects in most people.

Makes 6 servings

- ½ cup quinoa flakes or old-fashioned rolled oats
- ½ cup ground flaxseeds (can be purchased pre-ground)
- ¼ cup raw hulled pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
- 1 cup chopped raw cashews
- ½ cup sugar-free vanilla syrup (e.g., Torani or DaVinci)
- ¼ cup walnut oil
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- ½ cup sliced almonds
- ¼ cup raisins, dried cherries, or unsweetened dried cranberries

Preheat the oven to 325°F.

Combine the quinoa or oats, ground flaxseeds, pumpkin seeds, ½ cup of the cashews, the vanilla syrup, and walnut oil in a large bowl and toss to coat. Spread the mixture in 8 x 8-inch baking pan and press to make an even layer about ½ inch thick. Bake until nearly dry and crispy, about 30 minutes. Let the mixture cool in the pan for at least 1 hour.

Meanwhile, combine the pecans, almonds, dried fruit, and remaining ½ cup cashews in a large bowl.

Break the cooled quinoa-flax mixture into little pieces. Stir into the nut-fruit bowl.

HOT COCONUT FLAXSEED CEREAL

You will be surprised how filling this simple hot breakfast cereal can be, especially if coconut milk is used.

Makes 1 to 2 servings

- ½ cup coconut milk, whole dairy milk, full-fat soymilk, or unsweetened almond milk
- ½ cup ground flaxseeds (can be purchased pre-ground)
- ¼ cup unsweetened coconut flakes
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts, walnut halves, or raw hulled sunflower seeds
- Ground cinnamon
- ¼ cup sliced strawberries, blueberries, or other berries (optional)

Combine the milk, ground flaxseeds, coconut flakes, and walnuts or sunflower seeds in a microwaveable bowl and microwave for 1 minute. Serve topped with a sprinkle of cinnamon and a few berries if desired.

EGG AND PESTO BREAKFAST WRAP

This delicious wrap can be prepared the evening before and refrigerated overnight as a convenient and filling breakfast.

Makes 1 serving

- 1 Flaxseed Wrap (page 244)
- 1 tablespoon basil pesto or sun-dried tomato pesto
- 1 hard-boiled egg, peeled and sliced thinly
- 2 thin slices tomato
- Handful of baby spinach or shredded lettuce

If the wrap is freshly made, allow it to cool for 5 minutes. Then spread the pesto in a 2-inch strip down the center of the wrap. Place sliced egg on the pesto strip, followed by tomato slices. Top with spinach or lettuce. Roll up.

FLAXSEED WRAP

Wraps made with flaxseed and egg are surprisingly tasty. Once you get the hang of it, you can whip up a wrap or two in just a few minutes. If you have two pie pans, you can make two wraps at a time and accelerate the process (though they will need to be microwaved one at a time). Flaxseed wraps can be refrigerated and will keep for a few days. Healthy variations are possible simply by using various vegetable juices (such as spinach or carrot) in place of the water called for.

Makes 1 serving

3 tablespoons ground flaxseeds (can be purchased pre-ground)	Mix together the ground flaxseeds, baking powder, onion powder, paprika, and salt in a small bowl. Stir in the 1 tablespoon coconut oil. Beat in the egg and 1 tablespoon water until blended.
¼ teaspoon baking powder	
¼ teaspoon onion powder	Grease a microwave-safe glass or plastic pie pan with coconut oil. Pour in the batter and spread evenly over the bottom. Microwave on high for 2 to 3 minutes until cooked. Let cool about 5 minutes.
¼ teaspoon paprika	
Pinch of fine sea salt or celery salt	To remove, lift up an edge with a spatula. If it sticks, use a pancake turner to gently loosen from the pan. Flip the wrap over and top with desired ingredients.
1 tablespoon coconut oil, melted, plus more for greasing the pans	
1 tablespoon water	
1 large egg	

TURKEY-AVOCADO WRAPS

Here's one of hundreds of ways to use my flaxseed wraps for a tasty and filling breakfast, lunch, or dinner. As an alternative to making this with a sauce, spread a thin layer of hummus or pesto on the wrap before adding the other ingredients.

Makes 1 serving

Flaxseed Wrap (opposite),
cooled if freshly made

3 or 4 deli slices roast turkey

2 thin slices Swiss cheese

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup bean sprouts

$\frac{1}{2}$ Hass avocado, thinly sliced

Handful of baby spinach leaves
or shredded lettuce

1 tablespoon mayonnaise,
mustard, wasabi mayonnaise,
or sugar-free salad dressing

Place the turkey and Swiss cheese in the center of the wrap. Spread the bean sprouts, avocado, and spinach or lettuce on top. Top with a dollop of mayo, mustard, or other favorite condiment. Roll up.

MEXICAN TORTILLA SOUP

There's no tortilla in this Mexican tortilla soup, just the idea of something to accompany foods that go with tortillas. I made this recipe for my family and it was one I regretted not doubling up on, as everybody asked for seconds.

Makes 4 servings

4 cups low-sodium chicken broth	Bring the broth to a boil in a large saucepan over medium heat; keep warm.
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil	
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into ½-inch chunks	Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the chicken and garlic and cook until the chicken is nicely browned, 5 to 6 minutes.
2 to 3 garlic cloves, minced	
1 large Spanish onion, finely chopped	
1 red bell pepper, finely chopped	Add the cooked chicken, onion, bell pepper, tomatoes, and jalapeños to the stock. Return the broth to a boil. Reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook for 30 minutes. Add salt and black pepper to taste.
2 tomatoes, finely chopped	
3 to 4 jalapeño chile peppers, seeded and finely chopped	
Fine sea salt and ground black pepper	
2 Hass avocados	Halve the avocados lengthwise, remove the pits, and peel. Cut lengthwise into 1/4-inch-thick slices.
1 cup shredded Monterey Jack or Cheddar cheese (4 ounces)	
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro	Ladle the soup into shallow soup bowls. Top each bowl with sliced avocado, cheese, cilantro, and a spoonful of sour cream.
4 tablespoons sour cream	

TUNA-AVOCADO SALAD

Few combinations burst with as much flavor and zest as this mixture of avocado with lime and fresh cilantro. If being prepared for later, the avocado and lime are best added just before serving. The salad can be served as is or with added salad dressing. Avocado salad dressings match particularly well.

Makes 2 servings

- 4 cups mixed greens or baby spinach
- 1 carrot, shredded
- 4 ounces tuna (pouch or canned)
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 avocado, pitted, peeled, and cubed
- 2 lime wedges

Combine the greens and carrot in a salad bowl (or storage bowl). Add the tuna and cilantro and toss to combine. Just before serving, add the avocado and squeeze the lime wedges over the salad. Toss and serve immediately.

WHEAT-FREE PIZZA

While the “crust” of this wheat-free pizza is not sturdy enough to hold in your hand, it will certainly satisfy your nostalgic craving for pizza—with none of the undesirable consequences. Just a slice or two will leave you positively stuffed, and kids love it. Pick a bottled pizza sauce without high-fructose corn syrup or sucrose.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

- 1 head cauliflower, cut into 1- to 2-inch pieces
About $\frac{3}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 large eggs
- 3 cups shredded mozzarella cheese (12 ounces)
Choice of meat toppings:
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pound sausage (preferably uncured), sliced pepperoni (preferably uncured); ground beef, turkey, or pork
- 12 ounces pizza sauce or 2 cans (6 ounces each) tomato paste
Choice of vegetable toppings:
chopped bell peppers (green, red, or yellow); sun-dried tomatoes; chopped onions or scallions; minced garlic; fresh spinach; sliced olives; chopped or sliced portobello mushrooms; diced broccoli or asparagus
Fresh or dried basil
Fresh or dried oregano
Black pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese

In a large pot of boiling water or in a vegetable steamer, cook the cauliflower until soft, about 20 minutes. Drain the cauliflower and transfer to a large bowl. Mash until the consistency of mashed potatoes with minimal “chunks.” Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the oil, the eggs, and 1 cup of the mozzarella cheese and mix well.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly coat a pizza pan or large rimmed baking sheet with about 1 tablespoon olive oil.

Pour the cauliflower mixture onto the pizza pan and press the “dough” into a flat, pizzalike shape no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, mounding it up higher at the edges. Bake for 20 minutes.

If using ground meat, cook in a skillet until browned and cooked through.

Remove the pizza “crust” from the oven (leave the oven on) and spread it with pizza sauce or tomato paste, the remaining 2 cups mozzarella, vegetable and meat toppings, basil, oregano, and pepper. Drizzle with the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil and sprinkle with the Parmesan. Bake until the mozzarella melts, 10 to 15 minutes.

Cut the pizza into wedges and use a spatula to transfer to plates.

ZUCCHINI “PASTA” WITH BABY BELLA MUSHROOMS

Using zucchini in place of conventional wheat pasta provides a different taste and texture, but is quite delicious in its own right. Because the zucchini is less assertive in taste than wheat pasta, the more interesting the sauce and toppings, the more interesting the “pasta” will be.

Makes 2 servings

- 1 pound zucchini
- 8 ounces uncured (nitrite-free) sausage, ground beef, turkey, chicken, or pork (optional)
- 3 to 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 to 10 baby bella or cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 2 to 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 1 cup tomato sauce or 4 ounces pesto
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Using a vegetable peeler, peel the zucchini. Cut the zucchini lengthwise into ribbons using the vegetable peeler until you reach the seed core. (Reserve the seed core and peel for another use, such as a salad.)

If using meat: Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large skillet. Cook the meat, breaking it up with a spoon, until cooked through. Drain off the fat. Add 2 tablespoons of the oil to the skillet along with the mushrooms and garlic. Cook until the mushrooms soften, 2 to 3 minutes.

If not using meat: Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the mushrooms and garlic and cook for 2 to 3 minutes.

In either case: Add the zucchini strands to the skillet and cook until the zucchini softens, no more than 5 minutes. Add the chopped basil and salt and pepper to taste.

Serve topped with tomato sauce or pesto and sprinkled with the Parmesan.

SHIRATAKI NOODLE STIR-FRY

Shirataki noodles are a versatile pasta or noodle replacement, nonwheat of course, made from the konjac root. They exert virtually no effect on blood sugar, since shirataki noodles are low-carbohydrate (3 grams or less per 8-ounce package). Some shirataki noodles have added tofu and have a less chewy, more wheat pasta-like texture. To me they taste uncannily like the ramen noodles of my youth. Like tofu, shirataki noodles will absorb the tastes and smells of the foods they accompany, having little to no taste of their own.

While this recipe is a simple Asian-type use of the noodles, shirataki noodles can also be readily adapted to Italian or other dishes, used in place of conventional wheat pasta. (One manufacturer also makes the noodles in fettuccine, penne rigate, and angel hair styles.)

Makes 2 servings

3 tablespoons toasted sesame oil	Heat 2 tablespoons of the sesame oil in a wok or large skillet over medium heat. Add the meat or tofu, garlic, shiitake mushrooms, and soy sauce and cook until the meat is fully cooked or the tofu is lightly browned on all sides. (Add a touch of water if the pan becomes too dry.)
½ pound boneless chicken breast, pork loin, or firm tofu, cut into ¾-inch cubes	
2 to 3 garlic cloves, minced	
¼ pound fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems discarded, caps sliced	
2 to 3 tablespoons soy sauce (wheat-free)	Add the broccoli, bamboo shoots, ginger, sesame seeds, pepper flakes, and remaining 1 tablespoon sesame oil to the wok and stir over medium heat until the broccoli is crisp-tender, 4 to 5 minutes.
½ pound fresh or frozen broccoli, cut into small florets	
4 ounces sliced bamboo shoots	
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger	While the broccoli cooks, bring 4 cups water to a boil in a large saucepan. Rinse the shirataki noodles in a colander under cold running water for about 15 seconds and drain. Pour the noodles into the boiling water and cook for 3 minutes. Drain the noodles and transfer to the wok with the vegetables. Cook and stir over medium-high heat for 2 minutes to heat through.
2 teaspoons sesame seeds	
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes	
2 packages (8 ounces each) shirataki noodles	

CRAB CAKES

These “breaded” wheat-free crab cakes are incredibly easy to prepare. If served with tartar sauce or other compatible sauce and spinach or green leafy lettuce, this dish can easily serve as a main course.

Makes 4 servings

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil	Preheat the oven to 325°F. Line a baking sheet with foil.
½ red bell pepper, finely diced	
¼ yellow onion, finely chopped	Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the bell pepper, onion, and chile pepper and cook until tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Set aside to cool slightly.
2 tablespoons finely minced fresh green chile pepper or to taste	
¼ cup ground walnuts	Transfer the vegetables to large bowl. Stir in the walnuts, egg, curry powder, cumin, and a dash of sea salt. Mix the crabmeat into the mixture and stir well. Form into four patties and transfer to the baking sheet.
1 large egg	
1½ teaspoons curry powder	Stir together the ground flaxseed, onion powder, and garlic powder in a small bowl. Sprinkle the “breading” over the crab cakes. Bake the crab cakes until browned and heated through, about 25 minutes.
½ teaspoon ground cumin	
Fine sea salt	
1 six-ounce can crabmeat, drained and flaked	Serve on a bed of spinach or salad greens with a dollop of tartar sauce if desired.
¼ cup ground flaxseeds (can be purchased pre-ground)	
1 teaspoon onion powder	
½ teaspoon garlic powder	
Baby spinach or mixed salad greens	
Tartar sauce (optional)	

PECAN-ENCRUSTED CHICKEN WITH TAPENADE

This dish makes a great dinner entrée or a portable dish for lunch or another meal. And it can be whipped up in a hurry, especially if you have leftover chicken—just set aside a breast or two from last night's dinner. If you'd like, top the chicken with pesto (basil or sun-dried tomato) or eggplant caponata instead of the tapenade.

Makes 2 servings

2 four-ounce chicken breasts, boneless, skin removed	Preheat the oven to 350°F. Bake the chicken until cooked through, about 30 minutes.
1 large egg	
¼ cup coconut milk or dairy milk	Lightly beat the egg with a fork in a shallow bowl. Beat in the milk.
½ cup ground pecans (can be purchased pre-ground)	Stir together the ground pecans, Parmesan, onion powder, oregano, and salt and pepper to taste.
3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese	
2 teaspoons onion powder	Roll the chicken in the egg, then in the pecan mixture. Place on a microwaveable plate and microwave on high power for 2 minutes.
1 teaspoon dried oregano	
Fine sea salt and ground black pepper	
4 tablespoons store-bought tapenade, caponata, or pesto	Top with tapenade, caponata, or pesto and serve hot.

PARMESAN-BREADED PORK CHOPS WITH BALSAMIC-ROASTED VEGETABLES

Ground nuts can be used as a stand-in for bread crumbs to make a tasty “breading” crust that can be easily herbed or spiced up any way you like.

Makes 4 servings

- 1 white onion, thinly sliced
- 1 small eggplant, unpeeled, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 1 green bell pepper, sliced
- 1 yellow or red bell pepper, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil or more as needed
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- Sea salt (fine or coarse) and ground black pepper
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon coconut milk
- ½ cup ground almonds or pecans (can be purchased pre-ground)
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 4 bone-in pork chops (about 6 ounces each)
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Combine the onion, eggplant, bell pepper, and garlic in a large baking pan. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of the oil and the vinegar. Sprinkle with salt and black pepper to taste and toss to coat the vegetables. Cover the pan with foil and bake for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, whisk together the egg and coconut milk in a shallow bowl. Combine the almond or pecan meal, Parmesan, garlic powder, and onion powder in another shallow bowl. Season with pepper and salt. Dip each pork chop into the egg, coating both sides. Then dredge both sides in the ground almond–Parmesan mix.

Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the pork chops and cook just until nicely browned, 2 to 3 minutes per side.

After the vegetables have been roasting for 30 minutes, remove the baking pan and place the pork chops on top. Top the pork chops with the lemon slices.

Return to the oven and baked, uncovered, until the pork chops are just cooked through (they should be very slightly pink at the center) and the vegetables are very soft, about 30 minutes.

SPINACH AND MUSHROOM SALAD

This simple salad is easily prepared in larger quantities (using multiples of the specified quantities) or beforehand, to use in the near future (e.g., for tomorrow's breakfast). The dressing is best added just prior to serving. If you choose to use a store-bought salad dressing, read the label: They are often made with high-fructose corn syrup and/or sucrose. Low-fat or fat-free salad dressings, in particular, should be avoided like the plague. If a store-bought dressing is made with healthy oil and contains little or no sugar, use as much as you like: drizzle, pour, or drown your salad with dressing to your heart's content.

Makes 2 servings

- 8 cups baby spinach leaves
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms, your choice of variety
- ½ red or yellow bell pepper, chopped
- ½ cup chopped scallions or red onion
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
- ½ cup walnut halves
- 6 ounces cubed feta cheese
- Homemade vinaigrette (extra-virgin olive oil plus your choice of vinegar) or store-bought dressing

Toss together the spinach, mushrooms, bell pepper, scallions, eggs, walnuts, and feta in a large bowl. Add the dressing and toss again, or divide the undressed salad between two airtight containers and refrigerate. Toss with dressing just before serving.

Variations: Play around with this salad formula by adding herbs, such as basil or cilantro; substituting goat cheese, creamy Gouda, or Swiss for the feta; adding whole pitted kalamata olives, or using a creamy dressing (with no added sugars or high-fructose corn syrup) such as the Worry-Free Ranch Dressing on page 266.

ASPARAGUS WITH ROASTED GARLIC AND OLIVE OIL

Asparagus packs a lot of health benefits into a little package. The little bit of extra effort required to roast the garlic will be more than worth it to liven up a batch.

Makes 2 servings

- 1 head garlic
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ pound asparagus, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon ground pecans or almonds
- ½ teaspoon onion powder

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Peel off the papery layers from the garlic head, then slice off the top ¼ inch to expose the garlic cloves. Place in the center of a square of foil and drizzle with olive oil. Seal the garlic in the foil and place in a shallow pan. Bake for 30 minutes. Remove from the foil and let cool.

Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the asparagus and cook, stirring, until bright green, 3 to 4 minutes. Sprinkle with the ground pecans or almonds and then the onion powder.

Squeeze the roasted garlic out of the skins into the pan. Continue to cook the asparagus, stirring, until the asparagus is crisp-tender, 1 to 2 minutes.

THREE-CHEESE EGGPLANT BAKE

If you love cheese, you'll love the combination of flavors in this three-cheese casserole. It is substantial enough to serve as an entrée, or in smaller portions as a side dish with a simple grilled steak or fish fillet. Leftovers are great for breakfast.

Makes 6 servings

- 1 eggplant, cut crosswise into ½-inch-thick slices
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 yellow or Spanish onion, chopped
- 2 to 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 to 4 tablespoons sun-dried tomatoes
- 4 to 6 cups spinach leaves
- 2 tomatoes, cut into wedges
- 2 cups tomato sauce
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- 1 cup shredded whole-milk mozzarella cheese (4 ounces)
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese (2 ounces)
- 4 to 5 fresh basil leaves, chopped

Preheat the oven to 325°F.

Place the eggplant slices in a baking pan. Brush both sides of the slices with most of the oil, reserving about 2 tablespoons. Bake for 20 minutes. Remove the eggplant but leave the oven on.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, sun-dried tomatoes, and spinach and cook until onion softens.

Scatter the tomato wedges over the eggplant. Spread the spinach mixture on top. Top the spinach with the tomato sauce.

Mix together the ricotta and mozzarella cheeses in a bowl. Spread the cheese mixture over the tomato sauce and sprinkle with the basil. Sprinkle the Parmesan cheese over the top.

Bake uncovered until bubbling and the cheese is melted, about 30 minutes.

APPLE WALNUT “BREAD”

Many people who embark on a wheat-free journey occasionally need to indulge a craving for bread, and this fragrant, high-protein loaf is just the ticket. Apple walnut bread is absolutely wonderful spread with cream cheese; peanut, sunflower seed, cashew, or almond butters; or regular, old-fashioned dairy butter (unsalted if you are salt sensitive). It will not, however, work well for a sandwich, due to its gluten-free tendency to crumble.

Despite the inclusion of carbohydrate sources like applesauce, the total carbohydrate gram count of a slice or two amounts to a modest exposure of around 5 grams per slice. Applesauce can be easily left out without sacrificing the quality of the bread.

Makes 10 to 12 servings

2 cups ground almonds (can be purchased pre-ground)	Preheat the oven to 325°F. Coat a 9 x 5-inch loaf pan liberally with oil. (Coconut oil is ideal for this purpose.)
1 cup chopped walnuts	
2 tablespoons ground flaxseeds (can be purchased pre-ground)	Combine the ground almonds, walnuts, ground flaxseeds, cinnamon, baking powder, and salt in a bowl and stir until thoroughly mixed.
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon	
2 teaspoons baking powder	
½ teaspoon fine sea salt	Combine the eggs, applesauce, oil, and sour cream or coconut milk in a measuring cup. Pour the mixture into the dry ingredients and stir just until incorporated. If the mixture is very stiff, add 1 to 2 tablespoons of coconut milk. Press the “dough” into the pan and bake until a toothpick comes out dry, about 45 minutes. Allow to cool in the pan for 20 minutes, then turn out. Slice and serve.
2 large eggs	
1 cup unsweetened applesauce	
½ cup walnut oil, extra-light olive oil, melted coconut oil, or melted butter	
¼ cup sour cream or coconut milk	

Variations: Think of this recipe as a template for quick breads and loaves, such as banana bread, zucchini carrot bread, and so on. Replace applesauce, for instance, with 1½ cups canned pumpkin puree and add 1½ teaspoons nutmeg to make pumpkin bread, great for winter holidays.

BANANA-BLUEBERRY MUFFINS

Like most recipes made with healthy nonwheat ingredients, these muffins will be a bit coarser in texture than those made with wheat flour. Banana, a fruit known for its high carbohydrate content, gives the muffins some of its sweetness, but because it is distributed among 10 muffins, your carbohydrate exposure is kept to a minimum. Blueberries can be replaced by equivalent quantities of raspberries, cranberries, or other berries.

Makes 10 to 12 muffins

2 cups ground almonds (can be purchased pre-ground)	Preheat the oven to 325°F. Grease a 12-cup muffin tin with oil.
¼ cup ground flaxseeds (can be purchased pre-ground)	Combine the ground almonds, ground flaxseeds, sweetener, baking powder, and salt in a bowl and mix with a spoon.
Sweetener such as Truvia, stevia extract, or Splenda equivalent to ¾ cup sucrose	In another bowl, mash the banana until smooth. Stir in the eggs, sour cream or coconut milk, and oil. Add the banana mixture to the almond meal mixture and mix thoroughly. Fold in the blueberries.
1 teaspoon baking powder	Spoon the batter into the muffin cups, filling them halfway. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of a muffin comes out dry, about 45 minutes. Cool in the pans for 10 to 15 minutes, then turn out of the pan and transfer to a rack to cool completely.
Dash of fine sea salt	
1 ripe banana	
2 large eggs	
½ cup sour cream or coconut milk	
¼ cup walnut oil, coconut oil, or extra-light olive oil	
1 cup blueberries, fresh or frozen	

PUMPKIN SPICE MUFFINS

I love having these muffins for breakfast in the fall and winter. Spread one with cream cheese and you will need little else to fill you up on a cold morning.

Makes 12 small muffins

- 2 cups ground almonds (can be purchased pre-ground)
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- ¼ cup ground flaxseeds (can be purchased pre-ground)
Sweetener such as Truvia, stevia extract, or Splenda equivalent to ¾ cup sucrose
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
Dash of fine sea salt
- 1 can (15 ounces) unsweetened pumpkin puree
- ½ cup sour cream or coconut milk
- 2 large eggs
- ¼ cup walnut oil, melted coconut oil, or extra-light olive oil

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Grease a 12-cup muffin tin with oil.

Stir together the almond meal, walnuts, ground flaxseeds, sweetener, cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Stir together the pumpkin, sour cream or coconut milk, eggs, and oil in another large bowl.

Stir the pumpkin mixture into the almond meal mixture and mix thoroughly. Spoon the batter into the muffin cups, filling them about half full. Bake until a toothpick inserted in a muffin comes out dry, about 45 minutes.

Cool the muffins in the pans for 10 to 15 minutes, then turn out onto a rack to cool completely.

DARK CHOCOLATE TOFU MOUSSE

You will be hard-pressed to tell this dessert from a conventional mousse *and* it provides a generous quantity of the healthy flavonoids that cocoa products are coming to be recognized for. For anyone with a soy sensitivity, substitute 2 cups (16 ounces) plain Greek yogurt for both the tofu and soymilk.

Makes 4 servings

- 16 ounces firm tofu
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ¼ cup unsweetened almond milk, full-fat soymilk, or whole dairy milk
- Sweetener such as Truvia, stevia extract, or Splenda equivalent to ½ cup sucrose
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon pure almond extract
- Whipped cream
- 3 to 4 strawberries, sliced, or 10 to 12 raspberries

Combine the tofu, cocoa, almond milk, sweetener, and vanilla and almond extracts in a blender and blend until smooth and creamy. Spoon the mixture into serving dishes.

Top with whipped cream and berries.

GINGER SPICE COOKIES

These wheat-free cookies will satisfy your occasional craving. Replacing wheat flour with coconut flour yields a somewhat heavier, less cohesive cookie. But once your friends and family get familiar with the somewhat unusual texture, they will ask for more. Like several of the other recipes here, this is a basic cookie recipe that can be modified in any number of delicious ways. Chocolate lovers, for instance, can add semisweet chocolate chips and leave out the allspice, nutmeg, and ginger to make a healthy wheat-free equivalent to chocolate chip cookies.

Makes about 25 (2½-inch) cookies

- 2 cups coconut flour
- 1 cup finely chopped walnuts
- 3 tablespoons desiccated coconut
- 2 tablespoons Truvia, ½ teaspoon stevia extract powder, or ½ cup granulated Splenda
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup sour cream or coconut milk
- 1 cup walnut oil, extra-light olive oil, melted coconut oil, or melted butter
- ½ cup sugar-free vanilla syrup (DaVinci and Torani make good ones)
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon pure almond extract
- Milk, unsweetened almond milk, or soymilk (optional)

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Grease a baking sheet or line sheet with parchment paper.

Stir together the coconut flour, walnuts, shredded coconut, sweetener, cinnamon, allspice, ginger, nutmeg, and baking soda in a large bowl.

Whisk together the sour cream or coconut milk, oil or butter, vanilla syrup, eggs, lemon zest, and almond extract in a 4-cup measuring cup.

Add the egg mixture to the coconut flour mixture and stir just until incorporated. (If the mixture is too thick to stir easily, add the milk, unsweetened almond milk, or soymilk 1 tablespoon at a time until the consistency of cake batter.)

Drop 1-inch mounds onto the baking sheet and flatten. Bake for 20 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool on racks.

CARROT CAKE

Of all the recipes here, this one comes closest in taste to the wheat-containing original to satisfy even the most demanding wheat-lover's craving.

Makes 8 to 10 servings

CAKE

- 1 cup coconut flour
Sweetener such as Truvia,
stevia extract, or Splenda
equivalent to 1 cup sucrose
- 2 tablespoons grated orange zest
- 1 tablespoon ground flaxseeds
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
Dash of fine sea salt
- 4 large eggs
- ½ cup coconut oil, melted
- 1 cup sour cream
- ½ cup coconut milk
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 2 cups finely grated carrots
- 1 cup chopped pecans

ICING

- 8 ounces ⅓-less-fat cream
cheese (Neufchâtel), at room
temperature
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon Truvia, ⅓ teaspoon
stevia extract powder, or ¼ cup
granulated Splenda

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Grease a 9 x 9-inch or 10 x 10-inch baking pan.

To make the cake: Combine the coconut flour, sweetener, orange zest, ground flaxseed, cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl and mix by hand.

Beat together the eggs, melted butter or coconut oil, sour cream, coconut milk, and vanilla in a medium bowl. Pour the egg mixture into the coconut flour mixture. Using an electric mixer, beat until thoroughly mixed. Stir in the carrots and pecans by hand. Pour the mixture into the baking pan.

Bake for 1 hour, or until toothpick comes out clean. Let cool.

To make the icing, combine the cream cheese, lemon juice, and sweetener in a bowl and blend thoroughly.

Spread the icing over the cooled cake.

CLASSIC CHEESECAKE WITH WHEATLESS CRUST

This is a cause for celebration: cheesecake without undesirable health or weight consequences! Ground pecans serve as the wheatless base for this decadent cheesecake, though you could use ground walnuts or almonds instead.

Makes 6 to 8 servings

CRUST

- 1½ cups ground pecans
 - Sweetener such as Truvia, stevia extract, or Splenda equivalent to ½ cup sucrose
- 1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

FILLING

- 16 ounces ⅓-less-fat cream cheese, at room temperature
- ¾ cup sour cream
 - Sweetener such as Truvia, stevia extract, or Splenda equivalent to ½ cup sucrose
 - Dash of fine sea salt
- 3 large eggs
 - Juice of 1 small lemon and 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 325°F.

To make the crust: Combine the ground pecans, sweetener, and cinnamon in a large bowl. Stir in the melted butter, egg, and vanilla and mix thoroughly.

Press the crumb mixture into the bottom and 1½ to 2 inches up the sides of a 10-inch pie pan.

To make the filling: Combine the cream cheese, sour cream, sweetener, and salt in a bowl. Using an electric mixer, beat at low speed to blend. Beat in the eggs, lemon juice, lemon zest, and vanilla. Beat at medium speed for 1 minute.

Pour the filling into the crust. Bake until nearly firm in the center, about 50 minutes. Cool the cheesecake on a rack. Refrigerate to chill before serving.

Variations: The filling can be modified in dozens of ways. Try adding ½ cup cocoa powder and topping with shaved dark chocolate; or substitute lime juice and zest for the lemon; or top with berries, mint leaves, and whipped cream.

CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER FUDGE

There is probably no such thing as truly healthy fudge, but this is about as close as it gets. Keep a supply of this decadent dessert handy to satisfy those occasional cravings for chocolate or sweets.

Makes 12 servings

FUDGE

- 2 teaspoons coconut oil, melted
- 8 ounces unsweetened chocolate
- 1 cup natural peanut butter, at room temperature
- 4 ounces $\frac{1}{3}$ -less-fat cream cheese, at room temperature
- Sweetener such as Truvia, stevia extract, or Splenda equivalent to 1 cup sucrose
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped unsalted dry-roasted peanuts or walnuts

TOPPING (OPTIONAL)

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup natural peanut butter, at room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped unsalted dry-roasted peanuts

Coat 8 x 8-inch pan with the melted coconut oil.

To make the fudge: Place the chocolate in a microwaveable bowl and microwave $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 minutes in 30-second intervals until just melted. (Stir after 1 minute to check since the chocolate will hold its shape even when melted.)

In a separate microwaveable bowl, combine the peanut butter, cream cheese, sweetener, vanilla, and salt. Microwave about 1 minute to soften, then stir to thoroughly blend. Stir the peanut butter mixture into the melted chocolate and stir well. (If the mix becomes too stiff, microwave another 30 to 40 seconds.)

Spread the fudge into the prepared pan and set aside to cool. If desired, spread the fudge with a layer of peanut butter and sprinkle with the chopped peanuts.

WASABI SAUCE

If you haven't yet tried wasabi, be warned: It can be awfully pungent, but in a unique, indescribable way. The "heat" of the sauce can be tempered by decreasing the amount of wasabi powder used. (Err on the side of caution and use 1 teaspoon at first until you have a chance to gauge the hotness of your wasabi, as well as your tolerance.) Wasabi sauce makes a great accompaniment to fish and chicken. It can also be used as a sauce in wheat-free wraps (page 244). For a more Asian variation, substitute 2 tablespoons sesame oil and 1 tablespoon (wheat-free) soy sauce for the mayonnaise.

Makes 2 servings

3 tablespoons mayonnaise	Mix all the ingredients in a small bowl. Store tightly covered in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.
1 to 2 teaspoons wasabi powder	
1 teaspoon finely minced fresh or dried ginger	
1 teaspoon rice vinegar or water	

VINAIGRETTE DRESSING

This recipe for a basic vinaigrette is extremely versatile and can be modified in dozens of ways by adding such ingredients as Dijon mustard, chopped herbs (basil, oregano, parsley), or finely chopped sun-dried tomatoes. If you choose balsamic vinegar for this dressing, read the label carefully, as many have added sugar. Distilled white, rice, white wine, red wine, and apple cider vinegars are other good choices.

Makes 1 cup

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil	Combine the ingredients in a 12-ounce jar with a lid. Cover the jar tightly and shake to combine. Store in the refrigerator for up to 1 week; shake well before using.
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup vinegar, your choice	
1 garlic clove, finely minced	
1 teaspoon onion powder	
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground white or black pepper	
Pinch of sea salt	

WORRY-FREE RANCH DRESSING

When you make your own salad dressing, even using some prepared ingredients like mayonnaise, you have more control over what goes into it. Here's a quick ranch dressing that contains no unhealthy ingredients, provided you choose a mayonnaise that includes no wheat, cornstarch, high-fructose corn syrup, sucrose, or hydrogenated oils. (Most do not.)

Makes about 2 cups

1 cup sour cream	Mix the sour cream, mayonnaise, vinegar, and 1 tablespoon water in bowl. Stir in the Parmesan, garlic powder, onion powder, and salt. Add up to another tablespoon of water if you want a thinner dressing. Store in the refrigerator.
½ cup mayonnaise	
1 tablespoon distilled white vinegar	
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese (2 ounces)	
1 teaspoon garlic powder or finely minced garlic	
1½ teaspoons onion powder	
Pinch of sea salt	