

low carb, low fat, low salt, tips to change recipes to healthy eating

Kitchen Magic - Including Tips, Hints and Tricks

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Chapter 1 – Snacks



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SUNFLOWER PARMESAN CRACKERS

I run across this recipe as I was looking for low carbohydrate cooking. This book titled 500 Low-Carb Recipes by Dana Carpender was full of useful recipes. I will only give you a sample as you can purchase this book on www.amazon.com. These crackers really caught my eye and I have added some of my own seasonings to spice them up. She gives several varieties so will explain and include some suggestions.

1 cup raw shelled sunflower seeds (I used the salted kind at the grocery store)
½ cup grated Parmesan Cheese
¼ cup water

Tip: I added ½ teaspoon Mrs. Dash seasoning and ¼ teaspoon red pepper spice.

Preheat the oven at 325 degrees (I set it at 300 – as they can burn easily)

Put the sunflower seeds and Parmesan cheese in a food processor and process until sunflower seeds are a fine meal. Add water and pulse until dough is well blended, soft and sticky.

Cover a cookie sheet with a piece of parchment paper. Tear off another piece of parchment paper to place on top of the dough.

Trick: I crease the bottom paper to get the form of the pan then take the paper to a table and cover with second sheet for pressing dough into a thin layer. I use my rolling pin and palms of my hand to get the dough as thin as possible. Remove the top parchment paper and then trim the dough to fit cookie sheet and make straight sides but save this extra dough for extra crackers. I use a pizza cutter to score the dough into any size cracker you prefer.

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Place scored dough with bottom parchment paper attached into your cookie sheet and place in oven for about 20-30 minutes or until evenly browned. I place the parchment baked crackers on my counter to cool then break them on the scored lines and store in plastic containers with tight lids...

The author of this book states that the amount of Carbohydrates in each cracker is small and you could eat the whole batch with only 13 grams of carbohydrates. I really enjoy these crackers the only hard part is the time and trouble of rolling out into thin layers between two parchment papers. I found these crackers a great addition when serving soups and salads for that crunchy taste.

Tips: The other recipes for Crackers follow the same pattern but different ingredients other than the sunflower seeds. Use the same amount of sunflower seeds but add ½ cup sesame seeds and ¼ cup water plus other seasonings if you prefer. Prepare the same way but grind sunflower seed first then add sesame seeds and water. The next recipe is adding 1 cup sunflower seeds to 1 cup grated cheddar cheese and ¼ cup water. I also add more spicy seasonings with this one as well. I found cheddar cheese powder blend on line at www.bulkfoods.com. The cheddar cracker gives an added bonus of calcium so they are good for you and low carbohydrates. Our grocery store does not carry grated cheddar cheese only parmesan regular and low-fat and Romano and all work fine.

The Food Processor is a life saver in making these Sunflower Seed Crackers. Many other foods can be made to create magic in the kitchen with this food processor.



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SOUR CREAM HORSERADISH DIP

¼ of a Red Pepper
¼ of a Green Pepper
½ of a medium size onion
2 cloves of garlic

Cut vegetables in chunks and place in a food processor and pulse for few time to chop the ingredients. Place in a medium size bowl and add remaining ingredients.

2-8 ounce packages of Cream Cheese (I use low-fat variety)
1 cup sour cream (may use low fat)
½ cup mayonnaise (may use low fat)
2 tablespoon horseradish
1 teaspoon Mrs. Dash extra spicy
1 teaspoon dill weed
¼ teaspoon each of salt and pepper (more if you prefer)
1 envelope Splenda
½ teaspoon balsamic vinegar

Soften cream cheese to room temperature then stir all ingredients together to blend flavors. Store in covered container in refrigerator, the dip will improve as it ages.

Tricks: I use this dip with an assortment of vegetables and sunflower seed crackers as a snack. The dip also goes with any kind of prepared meats and vegetables during your meal. I also find

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it works well to add to my cream soups or other recipes instead of the regular sour cream, it adds much more to the flavor.

FRESH FLAKED SALMON DIP

(Served in Parmesan bowl with parmesan chips-recipe follows)

- 1 – 5-6 ounce fresh wedge of salmon
- 2-tablespoon unsalted butter
- ¼-cup lemon juice
- 1-8 ounce package of low-fat Cream Cheese
- ½-cup low fat sour cream
- 1-tablespoon lemon juice
- ¼-cup chopped pecans

Place butter and lemon juice in small skillet with fresh salmon over medium heat. Cover skillet with lid and poach until salmon begins to flake about ten minutes. Remove lid and continue simmering salmon to reduce liquid, remove skin and flake salmon while you continue to stir and flake into small shredded pieces to absorb all liquid. Remove from heat and cool while you prepare remaining ingredients for dip.

Place all in medium bowl and bring to room temperature for easy mixing. Add the cooled flaked salmon and chopped pecans. Mix these ingredients thoroughly into cream cheese and store in refrigerator for few hours or overnight to blend the flavors. If dip becomes too stiff more sour cream or lemon juice may be used to thin the dip. This recipe serves 4-6 people using Parmesan Cheese bowls and chips.

Make Magic-try something new you may surprise yourself and create a winner.



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SHREDDED PARMESAN CHEESE BOWL AND CHIPS

1-8 ounce package Shredded Parmesan cheese
1 small skillet approximately 8" in diameter-larger size for bowls

Heat skillet to medium hot and cover bottom with an even layer of shredded parmesan cheese not too thick. Watch closely as cheese browns, lift carefully with a spatula when it reaches a good golden brown flip to brown on top side.

Tip: I sometimes use a weight such as a glass or flat bottom bowl to hold the circle down to brown evenly on the bottom.

Inverted a Pyrex glass dish cover with foil and set on newspapers as a base for your bowl. Flip browned cheese over this inverted bowl. Mold with your hands carefully to form a parmesan bowl.

Hint: Try different size dishes to get smaller shaped bowls.

When cheese cools and hardens remove your Parmesan cheese bowl. With the remaining shredded cheese, continue making more circles in your skillet. Turn each one flat unto your newspaper to cool. When you make the next circle of Parmesan cheese cut finished circle into six or eight triangles to be used as chips for a good snack. Store these bowls and chips in the refrigerator in plastic bags for when you are ready to serve your guests.

Arrange your party dip and chips on a serving plate for your guests, any vegetable works as a relish with dips. I try to stay away from using too much salt so season with citrus juices. These parmesan chips are just right instead of using salty potato or corn chips and crackers.

Tip: I loved making this recipe and the parmesan cheese chips and bowl. This is an excellent combination for people on the low-carbohydrates diets. Those parmesan cheese chips are a good substitute for crackers with soups or salads or just to snack on when you have that urge for something different.

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SHRIMP BREAK

It is always a treat to get fresh shrimp with its many uses in cooking tasty recipes. The way I like fresh shrimp is just plain with a good spicy horseradish dipping sauce adding a few relishes and sunflower seed crackers. This works when getting some snacks ready to have during a football game or other sports event on television. It was always a favorite of my husband and me during the many football games on New Years Day. Now these New Years games drag out over many days it doesn't seem like a treat anymore. Now I can have fresh shrimp any time I feel like it. Our grocery stores now stock fresh and frozen ready to eat shrimp so it isn't such a special treat but still remains a tasty event.



SHRIMP HORSERADISH SAUCE

½ cup sugar free ketchup (check out recipe in Main Meal section)
1 tablespoon bottled horseradish
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1 envelope of Splenda
¼ teaspoon Mrs. Dash extra spicy

Stir these ingredients together and serve in a small container for dipping. Thaw or rinse your shrimp and place on cup of crushed ice. The shrimp I buy are fully cooked with tails on so just rinse and get ready to enjoy. This will serve only one so double up when serving more guests.

Hint: Plan to include some relishes such as celery, onion, green and red peppers, mushrooms radishes or whatever you have on hand.

Tip: I include some of the sunflower seed crackers or the cheddar crackers it always add an extra flavor to your appetizers. It can be used as a small meal as well.

SPICED PICKLED EGGS

12-eggs, hard-cooked and peeled
1 small onion, thinly sliced
2-minced clove of garlic
3-cups cider vinegar
1-small cinnamon sticks
1-tablespoon honey
1-teaspoon whole allspice
1-teaspoon whole cloves
½-teaspoon whole coriander seeds
1-small slice fresh ginger

Place eggs, onion and garlic in a wide mouth jar with close fitting lid. Combine remaining ingredients in a pan and bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Pour over eggs mixture, cover and store in refrigerator for a week to blend flavors. Will keep for over a month, you can replace fresh boiled hard boiled eggs making sure they reach the bottom layer.

Tip: To keep eggs from cracking when boiling them is to place them in a large pan and cover with warm water. Place on stove burner at a low setting and bring to a boil slowly. Move the eggs around in the water as they come to a boil. Simmer slowly for 8-10 minutes then drain water and rinse in cool water.

Hint: These spiced eggs are great to add to a toss salad or a good snack when the hungers hit you. They also make great tasting deviled eggs to use as an appetizer. Moisten the yolks with some of my recipe for sour cream horseradish dip.

HOT AND SPICY MUSTARDS

I found this fresh ground hot and spicy mustard a great way to spice up meats or on a sandwich. I use a coffee grinder for this purpose. This makes a finely ground spread that I store in the refrigerator.

HOT MUSTARD

¼-cup black mustard seeds
¼-cup yellow mustard seeds
¼-cup balsamic vinegar
1-clove garlic minced

¼-cup onion minced
½-teaspoon red pepper flakes

Letta Meinen

½-teaspoon salt

Soak mustard seeds in vinegar using a plastic covered bowl for at least 24 hours. I use my mini-chopper to mince the garlic and onion and add to the mustard after soaking with red pepper flakes and salt. Place this mixture a small amount at a time in the coffee grinder, scraping sides and whirl until desired smoothness store in covered containers in the refrigerator.

DIJON MUSTARD

½-cup yellow mustard seeds

¼-cup cider vinegar

1-clove garlic

¼-cup onion

1-teaspoon Splenda

¼-teaspoon salt

1-teaspoon horseradish

I divide the above ingredients in small batches into my coffee grinder and whip until smooth. Stir all ingredients well and place in a covered container. May be stored in the refrigerator and is a treat with ham, roast beef, hamburgers or just about anything.

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DEHYDRATOR FOR DRYING FOOD

In using this product for drying foods my favorite for drying fruits are apples, bananas, nectarines, plums, cantaloupes, and apricots. I seem to get the urge in the summer with the plentiful supply of good fruits in the market. I found grapes and cranberries are not worth the effort as they are quite reasonable to buy already dried. Turn on the dehydrator so it will warm up before putting in the food.

My direction for drying fruit is to take any type of fresh fruit peel and core such as apples, remove pits from other fruits. Prepare slices of cantaloupe by removing the rind and cut into thin slices. I slice all fruits fairly thin except bananas and cut these about ½-inch thick. Place them all in lemon water to soak for brief time. Place the fruit slices on a towels to drain and blot with paper towels. I place the fruit on a cookie sheet covered with foil and sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar. Lay the fruit slices close together on the cookie sheet and sprinkle more cinnamon sugar on top of fruit. Place slices on dehydrator tray do not overlap fruit. Continue with fruit on as many trays as needed, close lid and let dehydrator run for at least 10-24 hours. Remove fruit from trays that have dried and arrange remaining slices around trays.

Tip: You can dry fruit slices in your oven at 200 degrees on cookies sheets covered with foil using a drying rack like the rack used to cool your baked goods. Place the cookie sheets in the oven but keep the door slightly ajar so the moisture will evaporate as the fruit is drying. After a time check and remove any fruit that has become leather hard.

Place all dried fruits in a container with tight fitting lid. You can use the dried fruits for adding to baked goods, granola and trail mix.

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DRIED FRUIT TRAIL MIX

- 1-cup dried apples
- 1-cup dried banana slices
- 1-cup dried nectarine slices
- 1-cup dried plums
- 1-cup dried apricots
- 1-cup dried cantaloupe
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1-cup raisins
- 1-cup flaked coconut
- 1-can mixed nuts

Add all the above ingredients in a large mixing bowl and stir with wooden spoon to mix all fruits and nuts until blended. Place in large mouth jars and seal. Divide the mixture in small plastic bags for children's lunch at school, going on a picnic or a hike. It is great for eating right out of the jar when the hungers hit you.

JERKY

Dried meat was a common staple for our ancestors on their long journeys. Using the sun with spices to dry their jerky was a good source of protein on those long trips. The following are recipes that one can use to



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marinate your meat and dry in your oven or you can use a food dehydrator. To prepare meat, cut off all fat then cut lean meat in long strips, then marinade in desired sauce. Place in refrigerator for a day to marinade the meat. Remove from refrigerator and prepare the meat by draining off excess marinade.

Prepare pans for oven drying by taking one or two large cookie sheets line with foil and top with a wire rack. Lay your strips of meat on the rack and place in oven with door slightly ajar set oven temperature at 200 degrees. If you are using an electrical dehydrator plug unit in to preheat then line the trays with your meat. A fan and low heat is used in the dehydrator to dry the meat. The drying time for oven or dehydrator will take from 10 to 20 hours.

MY FAVORITE MARINADE

½-cup Soy Sauce
1-clove garlic mashed
2-tablespoon onion finely diced
2-tablespoon honey or molasses
2-tablespoon tomato puree
½-cup Worcestershire Sauce
1-teaspoon salt
½-teaspoon cinnamon
½-teaspoon pepper
2-3-pounds of lean beef cut in strips.

Mix ingredients and marinate at least an hour. Place meat on a wire rack on a cookie sheet lined with foil place in oven to dry at 200 degrees. Bake in this slow oven until desired dryness is obtained. Turn strips often while drying.

SWEET-SOUR MARINADE

½-cup red wine vinegar or balsamic vinegar
½-cup brown sugar
1-teaspoon garlic powder
1-teaspoon onion powder
½-teaspoon cinnamon
¼-teaspoon ground ginger
1-teaspoon salt
½-cup Soy Sauce
½-cup Pineapple Juice
3-3 ½-pounds of lean beef cut in strips.
Follow direction as stated above.

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Hint: One can use this recipe for Jerky as a snack or to take along on a hike or as a treat on a long car trip. This was one of my husband favorite treats to have as a snack. He loved the spicy salty flavor. This recipe is a time consuming endeavor so if you are going to take the time, just make sure you make enough to last for quite awhile. I sometimes had to hide some so they wouldn't be all gone in one sitting.

Tip: I preferred beef but have tried chicken and turkey. Buy a lean roast some of the cheaper cuts of beef works fine and cut meat in long thin strips. Use the same method for a chicken or turkey breast. The thinner the strips the better and remove all fat.

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