

HEALTHFUL TIPS

HEALTH AND FITNESS TIPS FOR YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY



If you live anywhere north of the Mason-Dixon Line you've probably noticed that the nights are getting colder, which means it's the season for hot mugs of deliciousness. Yes, these drinks are exciting, delicious and intoxicatingly delightful, but they usually also spell instant doom to any diet-conscious customers. A grande pumpkin spice frappe cr me at Starbucks is easily 470 calories, 13 grams of fat, and 63 grams of sugar. Yikes! What's a person to do to enjoy these rich and flavorful hot beverages?

Thankfully there are plenty of delicious drinks we can choose that are either sugar-free or low-fat; we just need to follow through on making the healthiest/smartest choice. Conveniently, several traditional drinks even serve a purpose beyond pure comfort—they're actually good for you! Chocolate, coffee, and tea are all noted for having powerful antioxidants that are good for your body.

The healthiest option out there is tea. It is a pure and guilt-free experience and is good at any point in the day. In and of itself, tea is a calorie-free drink—a rare claim in the world of hot beverages. The perfect cup of tea is disarmingly simple. All you need is a mug, hot water and a tea bag. The ideal brewing time is one to three minutes before you enter the bitter zone. Explore the hundreds of different flavors to see what you enjoy most. I suggest giving freshly brewed chai tea a try. Just be careful; many coffeehouses use a sugar syrup as the base for their chai; ask that yours be made with real tea and no added sugar.

Explore these healthy options to keep you warm this season

It's Warm-Up Time!

The most dangerous fall drinks are coffee-based. While plain coffee is low-cal, seasonal lattes and drinks contain a lot of sugar, and most boast a heavy dose of cream, too. Obviously, the best thing is to drink regular coffee, putting a small amount of milk or sweetener in it. Or you can try a different roast, like blue mountain (\$50/lb because it's that good), or order a plain espresso, caf  Americano or Macchiato which are good alternatives. If you want something fancier, cappuccinos have the fewest added carbs, and you can even add a sugar-free syrup for more flavor. Warning: the soy milk in coffee shops is almost always sweetened. If you must try the flavor of the week, order a small and lighten the load by requesting fat-free milk. Skip any whipped topping. Once you start adding things like sugar, whipped cream, and regular syrups, you're also adding calories and carbohydrates.

Now, if your cravings steer you toward chocolate, the key is to reach for the dark stuff. A store-bought mix should list it as the first ingredient. You can also simply melt a bar of dark chocolate that contains at least 70% cocoa. Use low-fat milk to cut fat and calories. You can actually lower your blood pressure and improve your serotonin levels by going dark.

Perhaps the most important thing you can do this season is get to know how they make the drinks at your favorite coffee haunt. Make friends with the barista, and find out how they do things and how you can minimize your "sugar exposure" while enjoying coffee drinks. Just remember, moderation is key, as with everything. There is a world of sugar-free and low-fat choices out there, so enjoy the fall season!

HOT CRANBERRY APPLE CIDER

- 1 cup SPLENDA® No Calorie Sweetener, Granulated
- 64 fluid ounces unsweetened apple cider
- 1 cup unsweetened cranberry juice
- 1/2 teaspoon whole cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon whole allspice
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 1/2 cup unsweetened, dried cranberries
- 1/3 cup fresh orange juice
- 1 medium orange, zested

1. Place ingredients in large pot. Over low heat, bring to a simmer.
 2. Simmer for 20 minutes stirring occasionally. Strain and serve.
- Makes 12 servings. Preparation Time: 5 Minutes Total Time: 25 Minutes

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION PER SERVING (1/12 of recipe): Calories 110 | Calories from Fat 0 | Fat 0g (sat 0g) | Cholesterol 0mg | Sodium 15mg | Carbohydrates 26g | Fiber 1g | Sugars 23g | Protein 0g

VANILLA CHAI LATTE

- 1 cup 1% milk
- 2 spiced chai tea bags
- 2 packets SPLENDA® Flavors for Coffee, French Vanilla
- 1 pinch ground cinnamon

1. Pour milk into microwave safe mug. Add tea bags. Heat until hot. Allow tea bags to steep for 4 minutes and then remove.
2. Stir in SPLENDA® Flavors for Coffee, French Vanilla and sprinkle ground cinnamon on top if desired.

Makes 1 serving.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION PER SERVING (1 recipe): Calories 110 | Calories from Fat 25 | Fat 2.5g (sat 1.5g) | Cholesterol 10mg | Sodium 125mg | Carbohydrates 16g | Fiber 1g | Sugars 12g | Protein 8g