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FOODS  
THAT BEAT  
DEPRESSION  
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## Relax & Recharge

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# Mean Good Moments

From stress eating to holiday imbibing, we're finding it hard to keep the weight in check and the body and mind feeling their best this winter. You too? **Here's the solution: high-satisfaction, low-cal recipes from the world's top wellness spa.**

STORY BY SANDRA S. SORIA

PHOTOGRAPHS AND STYLING BY RIKKI SNYDER



**FOR A DECADE NOW**, The Ranch Malibu has lured celebs, moguls, and health-obsessed guests from all over the world to fork over \$10,000 a week to, among other things, eat a totally plant-based, low-calorie diet—one that has to fuel them through grueling workouts *and* make them feel like they're indulging in fine dining.

Our own Danny Seo was put to their test, and came away a few pounds down, his energy level up, and hooked on their delicious low-cal menu. It's one that somehow provides enough power for climbing mountains and pushing through intensive workouts without feeling deprived. And let's face it, these have to be well-thought-out dishes—deprivation plus a \$10K ding to the wallet just never add up.

So, we thought, how about we steal a few recipes and some of the chef's wisdom for you to bring to your own kitchen? It's all from The Ranch's new cookbook, *Food, Food, Food*. Ranch Malibu Chef Meredith Haaz let us in on a little secret that explains her strategy for developing delicious recipes that don't leave guests wanting more. "One of the biggest concerns I hear at the beginning of the week is 'Will this be enough food?'" she says. "But by the end of the week, I hear 'I was never hungry!'" The food we serve is filling—full of fiber and protein—and it's satisfying. Part of the goal is changing the idea of feeling full. Guests do not leave these meals feeling stuffed, they leave feeling satiated."

And how do we get that satiated feeling? "The key to these recipes is striking the right balance between grains, legumes, and vegetables," Chef Meredith says. "In addition, using herbs and spices makes the dishes more flavorful so people don't miss the animal products."

Read on for a few of our favorite recipes from the book, and more tips from Chef Meredith.



# Carrot Nut Breakfast Bars

**Prep time:** 15 minutes or less // **Cook time:** 15 minutes or less  
**Yield:** 10 to 12 bars

## GATHER

- 1½ cup raw cashews
- 1 cup pecans
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup banana, mashed
- 1 large carrot, peeled and grated
- ⅓ cup dates, pitted and chopped
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon salt

## MAKE IT

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Add all of the ingredients to a food processor and mix. The mixture should stick together easily.
3. Press the mixture into an 8-inch-square baking dish. Bake for 15 minutes.
4. Cool completely and cut into 10 to 12 bars.

## Calorie Bombs to Avoid

Even the healthiest foods have hidden calorie traps that can sabotage a diet. Here are Chef Meredith's top five:

### Nuts + Seeds

These protein sources are good for you, but in moderation. A serving size is a ¼ cup, so keep that in mind when eating.

### Dried Fruit

Dried fruit is high in antioxidants and fiber, but high in sugar and calories as well. Think of dried fruit as an accessory, a treat. A serving is about 1 ounce.

### Nut Butters

A serving size is 2 tablespoons, so be mindful when spreading these on your toast. Choosing salt- and sugar-free versions is even better.

### Smoothies

Make your own smoothies to control what goes in them and to get the right balance of vegetables, fruit, fat, and protein. Choose or make versions that have more veggies than fruit.

### Store-bought Salad Dressings

These dressings are full of hidden sugar, empty calories, and huge amounts of sodium. Read the label and be aware of what you are putting in your body.



# Beach Soup

**Prep time:** 30 minutes or less



**Cook time:** 45 minutes or less



**Yield:** 6 to 8 servings

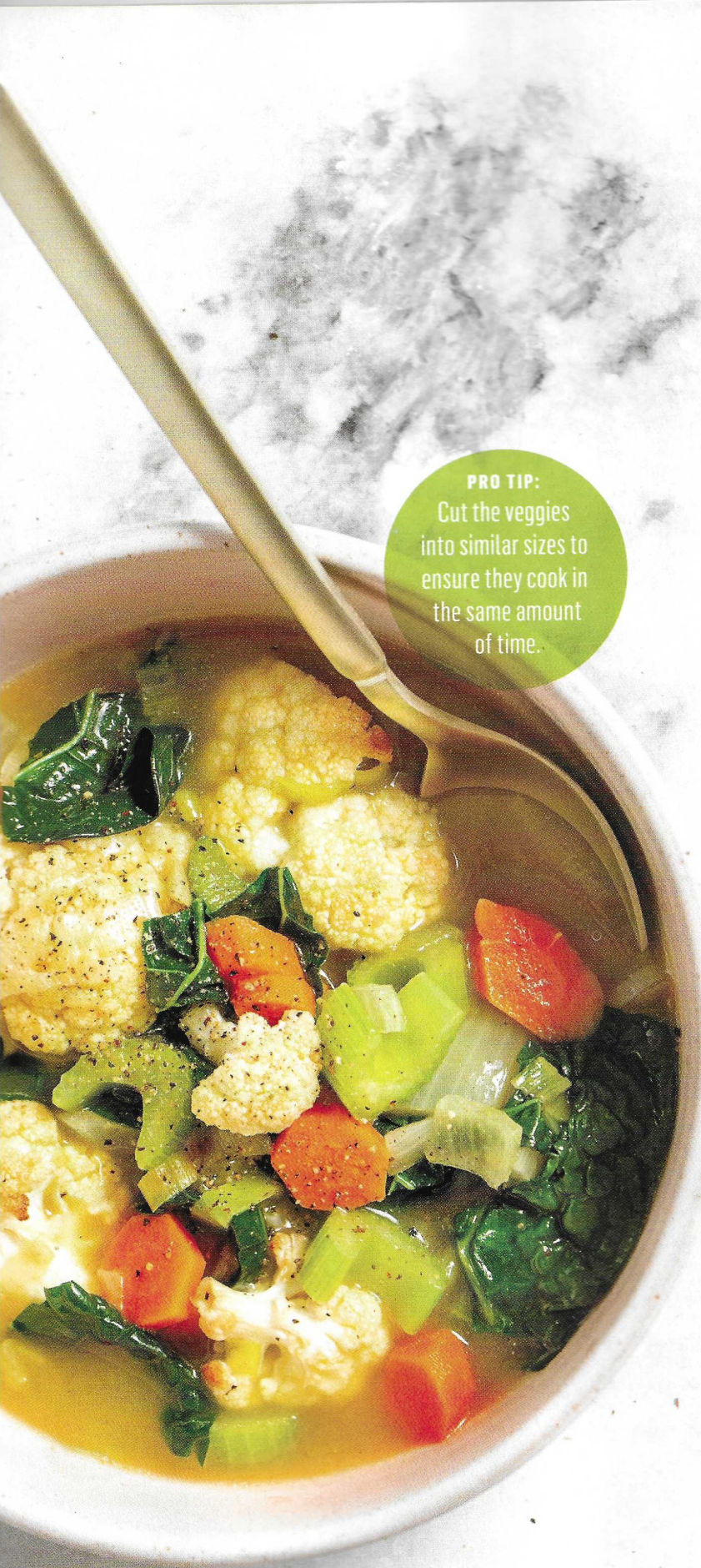
**PRO TIP:**  
Cut the veggies  
into similar sizes to  
ensure they cook in  
the same amount  
of time.

## GATHER

- 2 cups broccoli or cauliflower florets
- 1 teaspoon + 1 tablespoon rice bran oil
- 1 leek, thinly sliced
- 2 cups onion, small dice
- 2 cups carrot, small dice
- 1 cup celery, small dice
- 6-8 cups vegetable stock
- 1 bunch kale, stems removed and roughly chopped
- Salt & pepper to taste
- White pepper to taste (optional)

## MAKE IT

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Place the broccoli or cauliflower florets on a sheet pan lined with a Silpat or parchment paper. Using 1 teaspoon of the oil, lightly oil and salt them. Roast for 15 minutes or until slightly charred. Set aside once finished.
3. While the broccoli and cauliflower are roasting, thinly slice the leeks and let them soak in water for 15 minutes to remove any excess soil.
4. Using a large pot, add 1 tablespoon of the oil over medium heat and sauté the leek and onion until tender. Next, add in the carrots and cook until tender. Finally, add the celery and salt to taste and cook until tender.
5. Once the vegetables are cooked, add the stock until desired consistency is reached, and reduce heat to low.
6. Add the roasted broccoli and cauliflower florets. Add the chopped kale to any amount desired. Add the peppers to taste.
7. Cook until simmering and enjoy.





**PRO TIP:**  
A "zoodler" is essential here—and kind of fun! Also, when making pesto, put the nuts in the blender first to grind them up, then add the rest of the ingredients.



# Zucchini Noodles With Basil Arugula Pesto

Prep time: 30 minutes or less // Cook time: 15 minutes or less // Yield: 3 to 5 servings

**For the Basil Arugula Pesto:**

- GATHER**
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves
  - 1 cup arugula
  - 1 garlic clove
  - ½ cup pistachios
  - ½ cup pumpkin seeds
  - 1½ teaspoon lemon juice
  - 1½ teaspoon nutritional yeast
  - ¼ cup water
  - Salt and pepper to taste

- MAKE IT**
1. Place all of the ingredients into a Vitamix or food processor and blend until creamy.
  2. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

**For the Noodles:**

- GATHER**
- 1 package brown rice Pad Thai noodles
  - 2 zucchini spiralized into spaghetti form
  - 2 cups arugula
  - 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
  - Pepitas (for garnish)

- MAKE IT**
1. Cook the rice noodles according to the package instructions. When al dente, drain and combine with the zucchini noodles in a bowl. Toss with the pesto sauce. Coat well.
  2. Add the arugula, then toss in the cherry tomatoes. Garnish with pepitas.

# Winter Banana Nog


Prep time: 15 minutes or less // Yield: 4 servings

## GATHER

- 2 large ripe bananas
- 2 cups vanilla coconut yogurt
- 8-10 Medjool dates, halved and pitted
- 2 generous pinches of whole nutmeg, freshly grated
- 2 pinches of sea salt, plus additional to taste
- 2 cups ice

## MAKE IT

Place all of the ingredients into a blender. Blend on high, adding the ice cubes until completely smooth. Add 1 to 2 tablespoons of cold water if needed to adjust consistency and an additional pinch of salt to taste, if desired.



**GOOD TO KNOW:** Dates are rich in antioxidants that support the brain, eyes, and heart.

## Good to Know

Snacking is a trap for dieters. Avoid it with seeds. Here are some seeds and their benefits.

### Sunflower Seeds

- ✓ Benefit the nervous and immune systems
- ✓ Rich in Vitamin E
- ✓ Anti-inflammatory

### Pepitas (Pumpkin Seeds)

- ✓ Rich in amino acids
- ✓ Support prostate health and fertility
- ✓ Boost energy
- ✓ Abundant in antioxidants
- ✓ Natural source of tryptophan to promote good sleep

### Chia—the Super Seed

- ✓ Just 2 tablespoons of this 'endurance' seed offer 8 grams of dietary fiber, 4 grams of protein, 4.8 grams of omega-3 fatty acids, and 10 to 20% of daily calcium.
- ✓ The nutrient-dense seeds also support digestion, heart health—and fill you up.



## Four-Seed Crackers

Prep time: 30 minutes or less // Cook time: 1 hour or less  
Yield: 24 crackers

### GATHER

#### For the Dry Ingredients:

- 1 cup pumpkin seeds
- 1 cup sunflower seeds
- 1 cup sesame seeds
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chia seeds or flaxseed meal
- 1 tablespoon dulse
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon salt

#### For the Wet Ingredients:

- $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups cold water
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon coconut aminos

### MAKE IT

1. Preheat oven to 300°F.
2. Place all of the dry ingredients in a

large bowl and mix. Place all of the wet ingredients in a separate bowl and mix.

3. Then, thoroughly mix the dry and wet ingredients together in a large mixing bowl. Allow the chia seeds or flaxseed meal to absorb the liquid component for approximately 20 minutes.

4. Once the mixture has thickened, take a half sheet pan and line it with a Silpat or parchment paper. Spread the seed batter over the non-stick surface with an even thickness of about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch.

5. Bake for 25 minutes.

6. Once cooled, flip the seed-cracker mixture over onto a second lined half sheet pan. Score the softer underside of the crackers by a count of 24. The crackers should be about  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch squares.

7. Bake again for 25 minutes.

8. Once cooled, break the crackers at the score and serve.





# Lentil Walnut "Meat" Tacos

Prep time: 15 minutes or less // Cook time: 30 minutes or less // Yield: 4 servings



## For the Taco 'Meat':

### GATHER

- 1 cup dry brown lentils
- 2 cups water
- 2 cups walnuts, toasted
- 2 tablespoons cumin
- 2 tablespoons dried oregano
- 2 tablespoons onion powder
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons chipotle powder
- Pinch of salt

## For the Taco Shell:

### GATHER

- Corn or gluten-free taco shells, pan-fried soft
- Romaine or endive leaves

## For the Toppings:

### GATHER

- Follow Your Heart cheddar cheese
- Red cabbage, shredded
- Tomato, diced
- Scallions, thinly sliced
- Hot sauce

## MAKE IT

1. Combine the lentils, water and a pinch of salt in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes until the lentils are just soft. Remove from heat and drain any excess water. Set aside and allow to cool.
2. Then, pulse all of the 'meat' ingredients, including the lentils, in a food processor until it looks like ground taco meat.
3. Over low heat, warm the 'meat' in a skillet. Assemble the tacos by placing the lentil 'meat' mixture into a taco shell or lettuce leaves.
4. Add the 'cheddar' cheese layer, then the shredded red cabbage and top with the diced tomato and scallions.
5. Serve with one of our signature hot sauces or your favorite bottled, slightly thick hot sauce in a ramekin.