



... It's Worth the Trip!



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Quick Stovetop Tuna Mac

By now, we all know cooking more meals at home is a key habit necessary for building a healthy eating pattern. Yet, the very thought of planning meals, being sure that the needed ingredients are on hand, and then executing on a regular basis seems too daunting for many. Let's face it, there are many items in the grocery store that can derail any healthy eating goal; so, truth be told, health experts truly do understand that it's a bit more complicated than just cooking at home.

It also matters what you put in your grocery basket! An easy way to get a health message out to the public and change the behavior of the masses is to sometimes make a blanket statement. This is why you may have heard, "**Shop the perimeter of the store and avoid the center!**" This is because most of the highly nutrient dense and "good for you foods" like fresh produce, eggs, lean meat, and dairy are located on the perimeter, while the center of the store houses the large majority of empty calorie, poor nutrition items. Although this guidance was well intentioned, for the general person/family, avoiding the center of the store coupled with also cooking meals at home just isn't practical. We all have lives!

More importantly, the center of the store also has many nutritionally dense, high performance "dietitian approved" foods like legumes, canned fruits and vegetables with no added salt or sugar, whole grain products, nonfat evaporated milk, heart healthy nuts and oils, canned fish like tuna and salmon, canned broths, etc. Their value should not be missed or excluded from the diet. Ideally, a good "balance" related to workload of meal preparation, cost, and nutrition is to use a combination of perimeter store items with good nutrition quality foods from the center of the store. One way to do this is to be sure your pantry has these "center" of the store "healthy" foods and frozen vegetables at-the-ready. Knowing that you can quickly make a quick, healthy meal, even when you are tired and nothing has gone as planned for the day, will truly empower you to cook more meals at home—even on the days you don't want to.

This meal features key pantry staple, healthy foods to make a quick comfort dish that will make adults remember their childhood and make kids smile.



Directions:

1. Bring one large pot of water with ¼ tsp. of salt to a boil and then add ½ lb. of whole wheat pasta (elbow, rotini, or rigati). Cook until the pasta is tender (8-10 minutes) and then drain.
2. Quickly return the drained pasta to the pot, add 2 tbsp. of butter and gently mix until the butter is melted.
3. Begin microwaving a 12-16 oz. bag of frozen broccoli according to the package directions.
4. Whisk together 2 eggs, 6 oz. of nonfat evaporated milk, ½ tsp. of salt, a dash of pepper, and ¾ tsp. of dry mustard; stir this mixture into the cooked pasta.
5. Add 8 oz. of shredded sharp cheddar cheese to the pasta; on

Serves: 4

low heat, continue to stir until the cheese melts and the pasta is creamy (about 3 minutes).

6. Remove the heat and add 5 oz. of tuna (drained) to the cheesy pasta. Gently mix.

7. Serve each plate with ¼th of the pasta and ¼th of the broccoli.

Notes:

For a little spice, add some hot sauce.

Try adding drained mushrooms and canned green peas for truly a one pot meal, if broccoli isn't your thing.

DISCLAIMER: YOU MAY USE ANY LIKE PRODUCTS OF ANY BRAND IN MAKING THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL. THE PICTURES HERE ARE NOT AN ENDORSEMENT OF THESE PRODUCTS.

FOR ADDITIONAL MEAL SOLUTIONS, PLEASE [CLICK HERE](#) OR VISIT COMMISSARIES.COM/HEALTHY-LIVING/HEALTHY-EATS.CFM.