

# Thinking Outside the Box!



## Chile Chicken Nachos

Because the average plate of restaurant nachos can contain anywhere between 1,500-2,000 calories and is usually loaded with fat and sodium, this tasty dish is often thought of as one to avoid in order to keep health and wellness goals on track. This does not have to be the case! Believe it or not, a plate of nachos can be nutritious, and can actually be a quick go-to, healthy meal that can help you in aiming for eight.

Food items and meals that are prepared by restaurants (from fast-food to fine dining) and supermarkets typically are higher in empty calories and lower in nutrients than foods that are cooked at home. The term empty calories means the calories that come from the added solid fats and/or added sugars in foods which makes the food high in calories, but low in nutritional value. The USDA advises, a small amount of empty calories is okay, but most people eat far more than is healthy. A main reason for the excess is the consumption of more meals and foods away from home.

The three key habits Americans should practice are filling half their plate with fruits and vegetables, eating foods from all food groups, and paying attention to the proportions of food groups on the plate. Another important habit is to aim to cook more meals at home because the quality of ingredients, portion size, and levels of sodium and fat can be controlled.

This meal includes all food groups, uses whole grain chips, and substitutes plain Greek yogurt for sour cream to increase the nutritional value and avoid empty calories. Cayenne pepper and red pepper flakes are used for seasoning to help keep the sodium level in check. Be sure to keep these items on hand so the next time life is too hectic to think about cooking, you can whip up a plate of nachos. Be sure to use plain Greek yogurt instead of sour cream to increase the protein and calcium levels and avoid empty calories.



### Ingredients: 6 - 8 servings

- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 1 can chopped jalapeños, juice drained and reserved
- 1 half can corn, drained
- 1 half can pinto/red beans, drained
- 1 tbsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 tbsp. red pepper flakes
- 2 tablespoons freshly chopped cilantro (optional)
- 20 whole grain tortilla chips
- 1/3 cup shredded cheese
- Handful fresh baby spinach leaves, torn into smaller pieces
- 1/2 cup non-fat Greek yogurt
- Salsa

### Directions: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

1. Slice the chicken in half, lengthwise. Begin cooking the chicken in a frying pan. Pour the reserved jalapeño juice on the chicken while cooking.
2. As the chicken is cooking, line a baking sheet with tin foil and evenly distribute the chips, then top with a layer of spinach.
3. Once the chicken is fully cooked, put it on a plate and use two forks to shred the chicken.
4. Layer with the beans and corn, the chicken, jalapeños, and top with the cheese.
5. Sprinkle the cheese with the cayenne pepper, red pepper flakes and chopped cilantro.
6. Put the nachos in the oven and bake for 10 minutes.
7. Garnish with the Greek yogurt and salsa.

DISCLAIMER:

THIS RECIPE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT BY DOD OF ANY INDIVIDUAL VENDOR. ANY PRODUCT OF SIMILAR SPECIFICATION MAY BE USED TO MAKE THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL.

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