



Devin Alexander's
Lose Before You Gain Holiday Challenge™

Win a kitchen/fitness makeover...close to \$5000 in prizes up for grabs!

Good luck with this year's Challenge!
As a thank you: some holiday recipes!

Everyone needs an extra elf during the holidays – hopefully these recipes will help keep you & your loved ones from looking like Santa & Mrs. Claus!

May you have a very happy holiday season & the best healthy, decadent new year ever!

yo Devin

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Pumped-Up Pumpkin Pie Bites

These delicious little bites are real crowd pleasers and are the perfect size for individual servings at a buffet table (instead of asking your guests to cut their own wedge of pie!)

Butter-flavored cooking spray
¾ cup whole grain, high-fiber, low-sugar cereal (I used Kashi 7 Whole Grain Nuggets)
2 tablespoons 100% pure maple syrup
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
8 large egg whites
1 can (15 ounces) solid pumpkin puree
¾ cup agave nectar
2 tablespoons whole wheat pastry flour
2-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1-1/4 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
½ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
2/3 cup light, natural whipped topping, optional

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Lightly mist an 11" x 7" glass or ceramic baking dish with spray.

Add the cereal to the bowl of a food processor fitted with a chopping blade. Process for 15 to 20 seconds, or until the cereal is crushed. Transfer it to a small mixing bowl and add the maple syrup and cinnamon. Mix them until well combined. Spoon the mixture into the prepared baking dish. Gently press down on the cereal mixture, spreading it evenly across the bottom of the baking dish. Bake for 7 to 9 minutes, or until slightly browned. Set aside.

Meanwhile, add the egg whites to a large mixing bowl. Using a sturdy whisk, lightly beat them until they bubble very slightly. Still using the whisk, stir in the pumpkin, agave, and flour until well combined. Stir in the vanilla, pumpkin pie spice, baking powder, and salt and continue mixing until well combined. Pour the filling over the baked crust. Using a rubber spatula, spread it into an even layer.

Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out dry (a few crumbs are okay). Transfer the dish to a wire cooking rack, allowing it to cool to room temperature. Carefully cut 32 pumpkin "bites" (3 cuts along the width of the pan, 7 cuts along the length, creating 4 x 8 bites). Just before serving, top each bite with 1 teaspoon whipped topping, if desired. Serve immediately or store in an airtight container and refrigerate for up to 5 days.

Makes 16 servings (32 bites)

Per serving (2 bites): 94 calories, 3 g protein, 21 g carbohydrates (15 g sugar), trace fat, trace saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 102 mg sodium

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Photo Credit: Mitch Mandel





Tiny Tacos

These miniaturized versions of tacos are one of my all-time favorite, party-perfect snacks. When Frito-Lay introduced Baked! Scoops, I was so excited that I instantly went to work on creating dishes to fill these little morsels. I just find them so festive. When I conjured these tacos, I couldn't wait to show them to friends and clients. They're so much fun. Not only can you eat ten of them (how often do you get to eat ten whole anything when you're eating healthy?) for only 200 calories. Plus your friends will be excited to dig into your "diet food."

10 Tostitos Baked! Scoops

1/4 cup finely shredded romaine lettuce

2 tablespoons finely chopped tomatoes

1/2 ounce (about 2-1/2 tablespoons) finely shredded Cabot's 75%

Light Cheddar cheese, or your favorite low-fat Cheddar

1 teaspoon lower-sodium taco seasoning

2 ounces 96% lean ground beef

1 tablespoon mild or hot red taco sauce

Arrange the Scoops side by side on a plate.

Mix the lettuce, tomatoes, and cheese in a medium bowl until well combined. Divide evenly among the Scoops (about 1-1/2 teaspoons per Scoop).

Stir 2 teaspoons water into the taco seasoning in a small bowl until it has no lumps. Set aside.

Preheat a small nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Put in the beef. Use a wooden spoon to coarsely crumble the meat as it cooks. When the beef is no longer pink, after 1 to 2 minutes, stir in the seasoning mixture. When no liquid remains, after about 1 minute, remove from the heat.

Divide the meat evenly among the Scoops, atop the lettuce mixture (about 1 teaspoon in each). Dollop the top of each with taco sauce. Serve immediately.

MAKES 10 TINY TACOS; 1 SERVING OR 2 PORTIONS

Each portion (5 tacos) has: 101 calories, 9 g protein, 9 g carbohydrates, 3 g fat, <1 g saturated fat, 18 mg cholesterol, <1 g fiber, 223 mg sodium

Each serving (10 tacos) has: 202 calories, 17 g protein, 19 g carbohydrates, 6 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 35 mg cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 446 mg sodium

Recipe taken from Devin Alexander's THE MOST DECADENT DIET EVER!
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Photo Credit: Theresa Raffetto

Mom's New Beef Stew

Don't worry, this stew isn't for only moms, but it's sure to taste as good as the one you grew up with. This is a great recipe for a Sunday afternoon while you're home doing the laundry. You'll have a great dinner and plenty of leftovers, which are just as good, if not better.

- 1 tablespoon whole-grain oat flour
- 1/6 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/6 teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
- Pinch of ground black pepper, plus more to taste
- 1 pound top round steak, cut into 1" cubes
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 ounces button mushrooms, each halved
- 1 onion, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 cans (14 ounces each) lower-sodium, fat-free beef broth
- 2 large carrots, peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 pound sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1" cubes

In a medium re-sealable plastic bag, combine the flour, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Add the beef and shake the bag until all the cubes are coated. Refrigerate for at least 15 minutes.

Set a large nonstick soup pot over medium-high heat until it is hot enough for a spritz of water to sizzle on it. Add the oil. Add the reserved beef cubes to the pot in a single layer. Cook for about 1 minute per side, or until browned. Reduce the heat to medium. Add the mushrooms, onion, garlic and thyme. Cook, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon and scraping any browned bits from the pan bottom, for about 10 minutes, or until the onion is tender.

Add the broth and carrots. Increase the heat to high. When the broth comes to a boil, reduce the heat to low so the mixture simmers gently.

Cover and cook for 45 minutes.

Add the potatoes. Cook for 45 minutes, or until the beef is fork tender.

Season with additional salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

***Somewhere between 1-1/2 and 2 hours of simmering, the meat will become extremely tender. If it is still tough, simmer it a bit longer.*

Makes 4 (2-1/4 cup) servings.

Per serving: 275 calories, 31 g protein, 29 g carbohydrates, 6 g fat (2 g saturated), 50 mg cholesterol, 6 g fiber, 583 mg sodium



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Photo Credit: Mitch Mandel



Gingerbread Truffles

This truffle mixture is sticky, so I recommend you remove any rings from your fingers before shaping the truffles. Though the process is messy, the end result is so delicious, you'll quickly agree it's worth it!

- 1 cup pitted dates
- 2 tablespoons molasses
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground ginger
- Two pinches ground cloves
- Two pinches ground nutmeg
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup + 2- $\frac{1}{3}$ tablespoons old-fashioned oats

Place the dates in the bowl of a food processor fitted with a chopping blade. Process them until they are very finely chopped and stick together. Add the molasses, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and nutmeg and process until well combined, stopping the processor to scrape down the sides of the bowl with a spatula, if necessary. Add $\frac{2}{3}$ cup oats and process until the oats are slightly chopped and the mixture sticks together (do not overprocess the mixture at this point or it will become extremely sticky and very difficult to work with). With a spatula, transfer the mixture to a small mixing bowl.

Place the remaining 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons oats on a large plate.

Divide the truffle mixture into 12 equal amounts (about 1 tablespoon each). Shape each into a ball. Gently roll the truffles, one at a time, in the oats, making sure the outside is coated. Serve immediately or store in an airtight plastic container for up to 3 days.

Makes 12 truffles

Per serving (2 truffles): 151 calories, 3 g protein, 34 g carbohydrates (4 g sugar), <1 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 3 g fiber, 3 mg sodium

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Photo Credit: Mitch Mandel

Devin's Eggs

Every time we had overnight guests when I was growing up, my mom served a dish called Jenny's Eggs. It was from a recipe she had gotten from my aunt JoAnne for what was basically a crustless quiche. It had a pound of cheese, at least a stick or two of butter, tons of whole eggs and plenty of ham. It was delicious, but virtually lethal. My mom particularly loved to serve it to company because you prepare the dish the night before, then look like the perfect hostess in the morning when your guests wake up to the smell of the delicious casserole and walk into a spotless kitchen. I, of course, loved the concept, because I also entertain often. But you'd never catch me eating those ingredients these days. So here is my version, aptly renamed Devin's Eggs.

If you can't find lean ham steak at your grocery store, go to the deli counter and ask them to slice a 1/4-in-thin slice of the leanest ham they have. Also try for a low-sodium variety if they have it. Then simply chop 5-1/2 ounces of that into cubes.

Olive oil spray

1-1/2 cups finely chopped red or yellow onion

1 cup finely chopped red or green bell pepper, or a combination

6 slices whole wheat bread, cubed (from a light, fluffy loaf, not a dense one; about 70 calories per slice)

5 ounces (about 2 cups) finely shredded Cabot's 75% Light Cheddar cheese, or your favorite low-fat Cheddar

5-1/2 ounces (about 1-1/4 cups) 98% lean ham steak, cut into 1/2-inch cubes

2-1/2 cups egg substitute

1/2 cup fat-free milk

2 teaspoons dry mustard

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

1/8 teaspoon salt

Lightly mist a medium nonstick skillet with spray and place it over medium heat. Put in the onion and bell pepper. Cook until the veggies are tender and the excess liquid has evaporated, about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, lightly mist an 11 x 7-inch ovenproof glass or ceramic baking dish with spray. Spread half of the bread evenly in the dish to form a layer. Then evenly layer half of the cheese, followed by half of the onion mixture, then half of the ham. Repeat with the remaining ingredients, making sure that they are evenly distributed all the way to the edges of the dish and are not mounded in the center. Set aside.

Combine the egg substitute, milk, mustard, black pepper, and salt in a large measuring cup or medium bowl. Whisk until thoroughly mixed. Pour the egg mixture over the bread, cheese, veggies, and ham. Use a fork to very gently press the ingredients into the liquid without mashing them. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Remove the plastic wrap and bake for 40 to 45 minutes, until the egg is set in the center. Remove from the oven and let stand for 5 to 10 minutes. Cut the casserole into 6 pieces and serve immediately.



Makes 1 casserole (6 servings)

Per serving (1/6 casserole): 209 calories, 23 g protein, 22 g carbohydrates, 4 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 18 mg fiber, 740 mg sodium

Recipe taken from Devin Alexander's THE MOST DECADENT DIET EVER!
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Ravio-sagne

This dish is insanely great for potlucks. Instead of other lasagnas that you can slave over for hours, you can now spend just 10 minutes throwing this together. And the best news is that it can be assembled up to 1 day in advance. After preparing it, simply cover it with plastic wrap and store it in the refrigerator (be sure to remove the plastic wrap before baking!) so it can be baked just before serving.

Make sure you find a brand of ravioli with as little fat as possible. Some are laden with tons of fat and calories, yet they don't taste any better than those that are lower in fat and calories. Rosetto also makes a whole-wheat ravioli that's delicious and just as low in fat and calories but packs 6 grams of fiber per serving (I buy it at Whole Foods). Though the bag is slightly smaller (22 ounces instead of 25), so you'll need a bag plus a few more ravioli to make the recipe as written, it's worth buying.

2 cups low-fat, preferably lower-sodium marinara sauce
25-ounce package frozen rectangle cheese ravioli (about 1 inch by 1-1/2 inches; no more than 4 g of fat per 9-piece serving; I used Rosetto)
6 ounces (about 2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) reduced-fat, finely shredded mozzarella cheese (no more than 3 g of fat per ounce; I used Lucerne, found at Safeway chains), divided
1/3 cup finely slivered basil leaves, divided

Preheat the oven to 400° F.

Spoon ½ cup sauce evenly into the bottom of an 11 x 7-inch ceramic or glass baking dish. Lay one-third of the ravioli (about 18 pieces) side by side in a single layer to cover the bottom of the dish. Spoon another ½ cup sauce evenly over top. Sprinkle one-third of the cheese and one-third of the basil evenly over that. Repeat the layering 2 more times beginning with the ravioli. Cover the dish with foil. Bake for 40 minutes. Remove the foil and continue baking an additional 10 minutes, or until the pasta is heated through and the cheese is melted. Let stand 10 minutes, and then slice into 6 equal pieces and serve immediately.

Makes 6 servings.

Per serving (1/6 casserole): 301 calories, 18 g protein, 43 g carbohydrates, 7 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 26 mg cholesterol, 4 g fiber, 689 mg sodium



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Asian Crab Salad Topped Brown Rice Crisps

I love the elegance and uniqueness of this appetizer. You can serve this at the fanciest of events (trust me, I know because I have!) and people will never suspect that they're eating a Biggest Loser approved recipe. In fact, they're more likely to think it's really fattening, as most crab salad is. This one is just as decadent!

The super-crisp brown rice crackers are such an excellent choice because they almost seem like they could have been fried. Though they offer some varieties of them in most major grocery stores, I've found that they don't always have the tamari seasoned variety. If that is the case, opt for one with sesame or any other flavor that compliments this yummy dish with an Asian flare.

2 whole, medium green onions, trimmed and finely chopped (about 1/3 cup)

2 tablespoons all-natural light sandwich spread (I used Spectrum Naturals Light Canola Mayo)

1 teaspoon hot sesame oil

¼ red bell pepper, finely chopped (about 1/3 cup)

8 ounces lump crab meat, drained if necessary

24 brown rice crackers preferably tamari-seasoned (I used Edward and Sons Baked Brown Rice Snaps with Tamari and Sesame)

In a small mixing bowl, stir the onion, mayo, oil and pepper until well combined. Gently stir in the crab just until combined. Divide the crab among the crackers (about 1 tablespoon mounded on each). Serve immediately.

Makes 6 appetizer-sized servings.

Each (4 crackers with ¼ cup crab) serving has: 87 calories, 8 g protein, 8 g carbohydrates (trace sugar), 2 g fat, trace saturated fat, 49 mg cholesterol, <1 g fiber, 223 mg sodium

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