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"BY CUTTING BACK [ON CALORIES] HERE AND THERE, YOU'LL FIND A LOT MORE LONG-TERM SUCCESS THAN WITH AN EXTREME DIET THAT YOU'RE LIKELY TO FALL OFF."

DEVIN ALEXANDER, New York Times best-selling author; chef, NBC's *The Biggest Loser*

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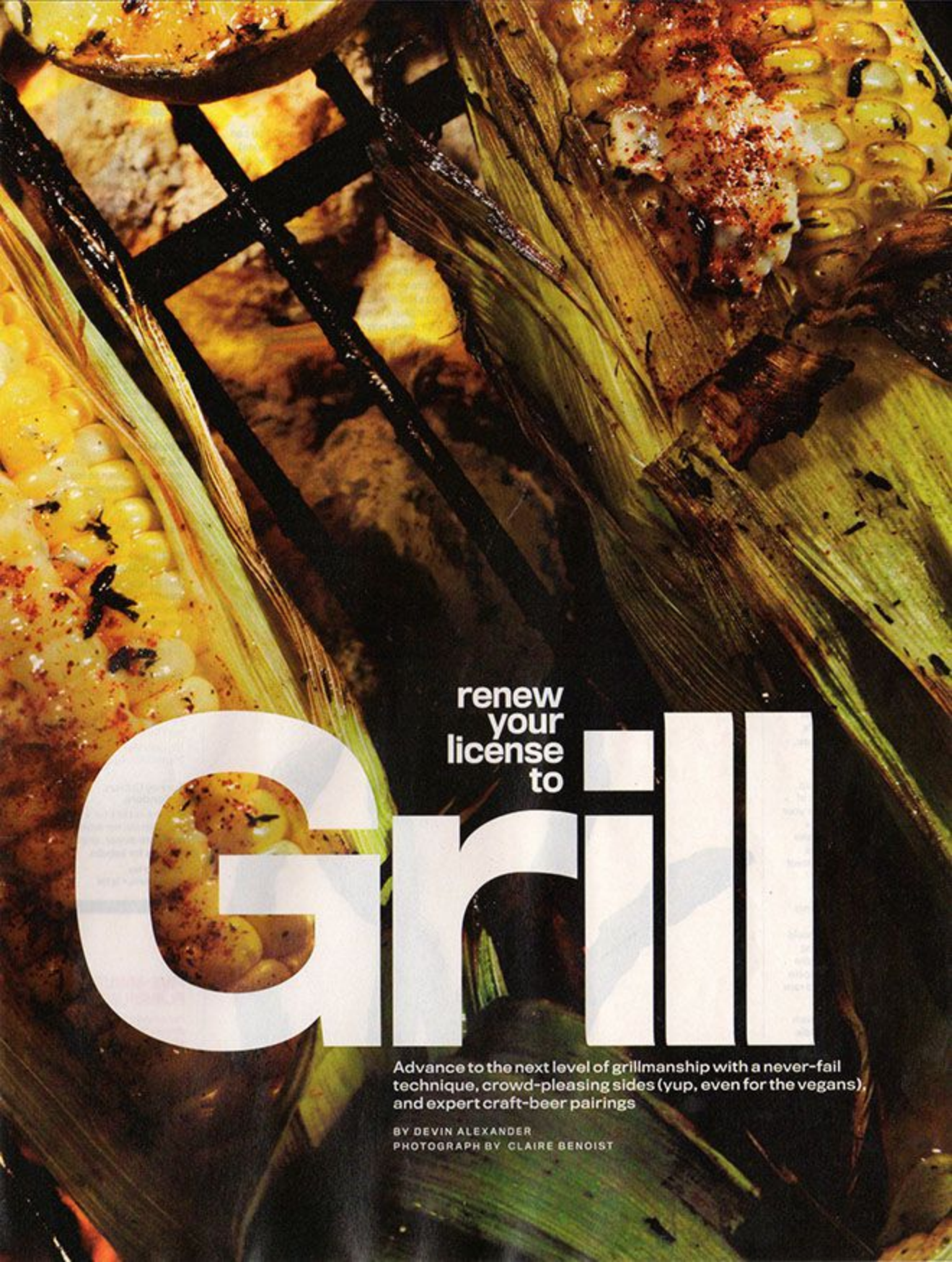
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A close-up photograph of several ears of corn on the cob, partially husked, grilling over a charcoal fire. The corn is charred and seasoned with spices. The grill grates are visible, and the background is dark and smoky.

renew
your
license
to

Grill

Advance to the next level of grillmanship with a never-fail technique, crowd-pleasing sides (yup, even for the vegans), and expert craft-beer pairings

BY DEVIN ALEXANDER
PHOTOGRAPH BY CLAIRE BENOIST



Walk the plank!

Go with the grain on the hottest grilling trend for 2014

■ Ever had mesquite or cedar salmon? If not, you're missing out. You can add a ton of flavor and smokiness by cooking salmon (or other proteins) on a slab of wood or "plank." Just pick one up at the grocery store, soak it in water (you don't want it—or your entire backyard—going up in flames), then throw it on the grill with your meat on top.

Grill planks are easy to find (check out stores like Williams-Sonoma and Sur La Table and sometimes even Target, Bed Bath & Beyond, Walmart, or Kmart) and available in different types of wood (cedar is most common), which can alter the flavor of your food.

The basic gist is this: Place your plank on the grill at around medium heat (unless your grill doesn't have variable settings, in which case place it away from direct heat), and cover the grill. Rub half a teaspoon of extra-virgin olive oil over two 4 oz skinless salmon fillets, then season with salt and pepper. You'll know your plank is ready for cooking when it's smoking as you open the grill. The plank may crackle or warp—if this occurs, flip it over and allow it to reset. Place salmon fillets on the plank, not touching each other, and grill for roughly 4-5 minutes per side.

Perfect every time

Never burn or undercook a steak again

There are two ways to tell if meat is done. The first is the temperature test, which is good for large roasts but not for steaks; poking steak with a thermometer lets juices escape, making it less tender. The touch test, on the other hand, is what professional chefs most commonly use.

Raw Hold out your relaxed hand, palm up. Poke the fleshy part of your palm just under your thumb with the index finger of your opposite hand. That should be similar to what raw meat feels like.

Rare Touch your index finger and thumb together. The fleshy part of your palm should tense up a bit. Feeling this with your opposite index finger will indicate what a steak cooked rare should feel like.

Medium Rare Touch your thumb and middle finger together. This approximates what medium-rare meat feels like. Continue touching your thumb to remaining fingers to understand the gradient of what your meat should feel like. By the time you touch your thumb to your pinkie, your meat is well done.

VEGETA-GRILLS

■ Grilling vegetables is a smart way to add diversity to your meal along with a healthy dose of nutrients. Try some of our favorites at right: Just toss in about a tablespoon of olive oil per pound (use a little less if you have a nonstick grill), then season with salt and pepper or your favorite grill seasoning.

BELL PEPPER Cut the four sides, or "faces," from the pepper and grill each for 3-5 minutes per side.

ZUCCHINI OR EGGPLANT Cut into long strips, about 1/2-inch thick if you're placing them directly on the grill, or rounds if you're skewering them.

ASPARAGUS Grilling times vary significantly depending on thickness. Really thin spears could be done in as little as two minutes; thicker ones could take up to eight minutes.

SWEET POTATO Grill peeled or unpeeled. (Scrub them well if unpeeled.) Slice into 1/2-inch-thick pieces or rounds and grill until tender through. Time will vary depending on size of potato.



ASPARAGUS TIPS COOK QUICKLY. MONITOR CLOSELY YOUR FIRST TIME AROUND.

The leanest meats

Pick up these abs-friendly cuts

ALL NUTRITION PER 8 OZ SERVING

London Broil

Grill this 1/2-inch-thick cut on Sunday and you'll have deli meat all week long. Slice thinly and across the grain.
165 calories,
36g protein, 5g fat

Top Sirloin Steak

The "fattiest" of the lean cuts holds its own with outstanding tenderness.
240 calories,
30g protein, 12g fat

Chicken Breast

Toss in olive oil (use 1 tsp per pound), then season with salt and pepper before grilling.
187 calories,
40g protein, 2g fat

96% Lean Ground Beef

Salt it, sear it—but don't smash it! (You're just removing juice and guaranteeing a dry burger.)
195 calories,
33g protein, 7g fat

Pork Tenderloin

Choose this versatile, quick-cooking cut when you want to experiment with new seasonings.
185 calories,
36g protein, 4g fat

Turkey Cutlets or Tenders

Use the cutlets for a last-minute, no-need-to-marinate dinner, or cube tenders for kebabs.
160 calories,
42g protein, <1g fat

FIVE-MINUTE FLAVOR BOOST

For an even juicier steak, always "tent" your meat after you take it off the grill: Place the steak on a cutting board or plate and drape aluminum foil loosely over the top, not wrapping it tightly to the plate, and leave it for five minutes. This will allow the juices to redistribute within the steak so your first slice doesn't bleed the whole thing dry.

Photo: Chris Benoit/istockphoto.com; Food styling: Karen Evans/Snapshots; Asparagus: Food styling by Suzanne Langer



CORN: 4 WAYS

■ Top with a touch of butter and a squeeze of fresh lime juice. Then sprinkle with chili powder and cayenne pepper.

■ For cheesy flavor, top with Parmesan and garlic powder, or use garlic-bread seasoning.

■ Spread corn with basil or cilantro pesto. Just be careful to drain off some of the oil first.

■ Wrap cob in lean, nitrate-free turkey bacon for added flavor and protein.

To grill great corn, first remove the husks and silk, and then soak the cobs in cold water for 20 minutes. (This helps the corn retain moisture while it's being cooked.) Brush or spray the cobs with olive oil, add any extras, then place on the grill over medium heat. Cook for 10-15 minutes, turning every 5 minutes, until the kernels are tender and golden-brown spots begin to appear.

A large sirloin steak is shown grilling on a black metal grill. The steak is positioned diagonally, with its top edge towards the upper right. It has a rich, browned exterior with visible grill marks and some charring. The surface is glistening, likely from oil or natural juices. Below the grill, glowing orange and red charcoal briquettes are visible, providing the heat source. The overall lighting is warm, emphasizing the textures of the meat and the fire.

"SPRING FOR
SIRLOIN—THE
'FATTIEST' LEAN
CUT PACKS THE
MOST FLAVOR."



Crack a cold one

John Holl, author of *The American Craft Beer Cookbook*, suggests the six best craft beer types to pair with whatever's on your grill this summer and gives us his top picks in each category

1

Porter

Caramel, chocolate, and coffee notes complement grilled steak. "It can be refreshing, like dessert in a glass," says Holl, who recommends serving porter ice-cold.

PICK UP: Slumbrew Porter Square Porter (Somerville Brewing Co.) or Edmund Fitzgerald Porter (Great Lakes Brewing Co.)

2

Kölsch

"Fruity and effervescent, it's great on a hot day," says Holl. This German beer-style should be your new summer session beer—sweet and subtle with a dry finish.

PICK UP: Full Circle (New Holland Brewing Co.) or Captain's Kölsch (Captain Lawrence Brewing Co.)

3

American Pale Ale

If you're looking for a single versatile brew that will satisfy all your guests, rely on American pale ale. Classic, citrusy, and not overly hoppy, you can serve it up alongside everything from chicken to burgers.

PICK UP: Sierra Nevada Pale Ale or Grateful Pale Ale (Starr Hill)

4

Saison

Serving up a meatless meal? Go ahead and pair it with a saison, whose spicy, floral, and honey-like notes go excellently with cooked or raw vegetables. "It's refreshing, even though it's a bit heavy," says Holl.

PICK UP: Tank 7 Farmhouse Ale (Boulevard Brewing Co.) or Sorachi Ace (Brooklyn Brewery)

5

American Wheat Beer

"Its earthy, floral notes complement a savory seafood dish," says Holl. Serve a wheat beer like you would a piece of fish—with a lemon wedge on the side.

PICK UP: Hop Sun (Southern Tier Brewing Co.) or Oberon (Bell's Brewery)

6

Amber Ale/Lager

The perfect complement to the sugars in vegetables that caramelize when tossed over the grill, these beers are on the sweeter side and will land well with the female guests at your gathering.

PICK UP: Censored (Lagunitas Brewing Co.) or Ragin' Bull (Bolero Snort Brewery)



Hot New Sauce

Sriracha lovers, don't despair! We had a close call last year when Huy Fong Foods was told to stop shipping sriracha for 30 days (long story: litigation is still pending), but in the event anything like that should ever happen again (or happened between the time of our writing this and your reading it), you need a backup. Best bet: Organically Sky Valley Sriracha Sauce—it adds heat without the fish extract, sulfites, and preservatives you'll find in most other sriracha sauces, and it's just as versatile. It's also gluten-free!

Trusty sidekicks

Blow away the vegans at your backyard barbecue with a side of seasonal flavor

GRILLED PESTO ZUCCHINI TOMATO SKEWERS

INGREDIENTS

- MAKES 2 SERVINGS
- 1/2 cup packed fresh basil leaves
 - 1 medium garlic clove
 - 1/2 tsp sea salt
 - 1/2 tsp balsamic vinegar
 - 1/2 tsp olive oil
 - 2 medium zucchini, cut into 1/2-inch-thick rounds
 - 14 cherry tomatoes
 - 2 metal or wooden skewers

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Preheat grill to high.
- 2) Process basil, garlic, and salt in a food processor fitted with a chopping blade until well combined. Add

balsamic vinegar. Process, scraping down sides as needed. Add olive oil and process until combined.

- 3) In a medium bowl, toss zucchini and tomatoes in basil mixture until well coated. Place zucchini rounds and tomatoes on skewer, alternating zucchini, then tomato, etc. Repeat to create a second skewer.
- 4) Turn grill to low (if possible). Place skewers side by side on grill (away from direct flame if grill isn't set to low). Grill, rotating once, until zucchini is tender, 5–6 minutes. Serve immediately.

NUTRITION

91 calories, 4g protein, 13g carbs, 7g fat, 4g fiber

TANDOORI CAULIFLOWER

INGREDIENTS

- MAKES 2 SERVINGS
- 1 head cauliflower (at least 8 oz)
 - 1 tsp olive oil
 - 1 tbsp red curry paste

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Preheat grill to medium heat.
- 2) Trim cauliflower, removing any leaves. Place on cutting board so stem is down. Starting at one side, cut cauliflower into 1/2-inch-thick "steaks," cutting from the top of the head to bottom of the stalk. Carefully cut away any stem that's attached. Using a pastry brush, lightly brush both sides of each piece with the oil and curry.
- 3) Grill until crisp-tender, about 3–4 minutes per side. Serve immediately.

NUTRITION

50 calories, 2g protein, 6g carbs, 2g fat, 3g fiber

SZECHUAN GRILLED PEPPERS

INGREDIENTS

- MAKES 2 SERVINGS
- 1 tsp toasted sesame oil
 - 1/2 tsp low-sodium soy sauce
 - 2 red bell peppers
 - Szechuan seasoning (preferably salt-free), to taste

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Preheat grill to medium heat (if possible).
- 2) Mix sesame oil and soy sauce in small bowl.
- 3) Slice faces (whole sides) off peppers so you have 4 pieces from each pepper. Using a pastry brush, brush pepper faces with sesame oil mixture. Sprinkle seasoning on both sides of peppers. Grill until tender, flipping half way through, about 3 minutes per side. Serve immediately.

NUTRITION

73 calories, 2g protein, 10g carbs, 3g fat, 3g fiber



IF USING WOODEN SKEWERS, SOAK THEM IN WATER FOR AT LEAST A HALF HOUR PRIOR TO USING.

MUSCLE CHOP SHOP

These power salads will hold down any man's table By Devin Alexander

Unless it's plated next to a 12-ounce steak, most men wouldn't categorize salad as a muscle-building meal. You might consider it as a side, at best—but even then you're probably still opting for the fries, because sometimes ordering a salad is even harder than eating one.

Well, we're not here to sell you on iceberg lettuce and croutons—or vegetarianism, for that matter. On the contrary, we wouldn't have even run this story had it not featured at least one recipe containing bacon (that one, by the way—the Chopped Spinach Cobb Salad—packs a whopping 60 grams of protein). These are muscle meals, built around salmon, beef, chicken, and shrimp. And with fewer calories and carbs than a sandwich, you don't have to worry when you dish up seconds.

Mix it up.
The more colors in your salad, the more diverse its nutrient variety.

Food styling by Brian Frazier-Campbell



DIY bacon.
To make your own
bacon bits, use
kitchen shears
to cut strips into
1/4-inch pieces.
Add pepper, and
fry over medium
heat until brown.

GUYS' GREEK SALAD

PREVIOUS PAGE

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups romaine lettuce
- 6 oz grilled chicken breast
- 1 red bell pepper, cored and seeded
- 1 green bell pepper, cored and seeded
- 1/2 medium cucumber
- 2 stalks celery, ends trimmed
- 6 Kalamata olives, pitted
- 2 tbsp bottled reduced-fat Greek or Mediterranean dressing
- 3 tbsp reduced-fat feta cheese

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Chop lettuce, chicken, peppers, cucumber, celery, and olives. Add to large bowl. Just before serving, add dressing and toss using salad tongs, two forks, or two wooden spoons. Top with feta.

NUTRITION

456 calories, 52g protein, 30g carbs, 16g fat, 11g fiber

CHOPPED SPINACH COBB SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- 5 cups chopped baby spinach*
- 6 oz lean grilled turkey breast (or turkey deli meat), chopped
- 1 tbsp real bacon bits
- 2 tbsp reduced-fat crumbled blue cheese
- 2 hard-boiled egg whites, chopped
- 1 small tomato, cored and chopped
- 4 black olives, chopped
- 2 tbsp reduced-fat blue cheese dressing

*IF YOU CAN'T FIND BABY SPINACH, USE REGULAR SPINACH WITH THE STEMS REMOVED.

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Put all ingredients except dressing in a large bowl. Just before eating, add dressing and toss using salad tongs, two forks, or two wooden spoons.

NUTRITION

474 calories, 60g protein, 21g carbs, 17g fat, 7g fiber

THAI SHRIMP SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups napa cabbage, finely sliced
- 1 cup red cabbage, finely sliced
- 2 green onions (green and white parts), ends trimmed, finely chopped
- ½ cup mung bean sprouts
- 3 tbsp reduced-fat Thai, peanut, or ginger salad dressing
- 6 oz medium or large grilled or steamed shrimp (steamed, or "cooked," shrimp can be found at the seafood counter or in the

freezer section of most grocery stores)

- 1 tbsp dry-roasted peanuts

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Mix cabbages, onions, and sprouts in a large bowl. Just before serving, add dressing and toss using salad tongs, two forks, or two wooden spoons. Top with shrimp and peanuts. Serve immediately.

NUTRITION

355 calories, 44g protein, 25g carbs, 8g fat, 7g fiber

Special K: Mung bean sprouts are high in vitamin K, which strengthens bones and lowers risk of cardiovascular disease.

MEXICAN KALE SALAD

SEE PAGE 12

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp salt-free Mexican or Southwest seasoning, or to taste
- 6 oz 96% lean ground beef
- 3 cups kale leaves, finely sliced
- ½ cup canned no-salt-added black beans, rinsed and drained
- 3 tbsp fresh or no-salt-added canned corn, rinsed and drained
- ½ green bell pepper, cut into bite-size pieces
- ½ small avocado (optional)
- ½ cup fresh pico de gallo, or salsa, drained
- 2 tbsp reduced-fat Southwest or ranch salad dressing
- 1 oz low-fat cheddar cheese
- 6 baked tortilla chips, broken

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Mix seasoning with beef. Toss kale, beans, corn, bell pepper, and avocado in a bowl.
- 2) Place a frying pan over medium heat and "crumble" the beef into it. Cook until no longer pink, about 5 minutes.
- 3) Add pico de gallo and dressing to the vegetable bowl and toss. Top with cheddar, chips, and beef. Serve immediately.

NUTRITION

574 calories, 57g protein, 50g carbs, 20g fat, 12g fiber

THROW IN EXTRAS LIKE CHIA AND HEMP SEEDS TO ADD OMEGA-3 FATS AND PROTEIN.



TUSCAN SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- 6 sun-dried tomatoes (be sure not to buy sun-dried tomatoes packed in oil)
- 4 cups arugula
- 1 cup asparagus pieces
- 1 oz low-fat mozzarella cheese, cubed
- 1 roasted red pepper, cut into bite-size strips (roast it yourself or find it in a jar near the pickles in most grocery stores)
- 2 tbsp reduced-fat roasted red pepper, balsamic, or Italian dressing
- 6 oz grilled salmon (either fresh or pre-prepared)

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Rehydrate sun-dried tomatoes, if necessary, by placing them in a small soup pan and covering with water. Place pan over high heat. Boil until soft, approximately 6 minutes. Drain and run tomatoes under cold water.
- 2) Meanwhile, mix the arugula, asparagus, mozzarella, and roasted red pepper in a large bowl. Chop the sun-dried tomatoes and add them.
- 3) Just before serving, add dressing and toss using salad tongs, two forks, or two wooden spoons. Top with salmon. Serve immediately.

NUTRITION

521 calories, 46g protein, 24g carbs, 27g fat, 7g fiber

Soften it up.
If you like your asparagus less stiff, steam it before adding.



**AFTER
WASHING, DRY
ALL YOUR
INGREDIENTS
BEFORE USE.**