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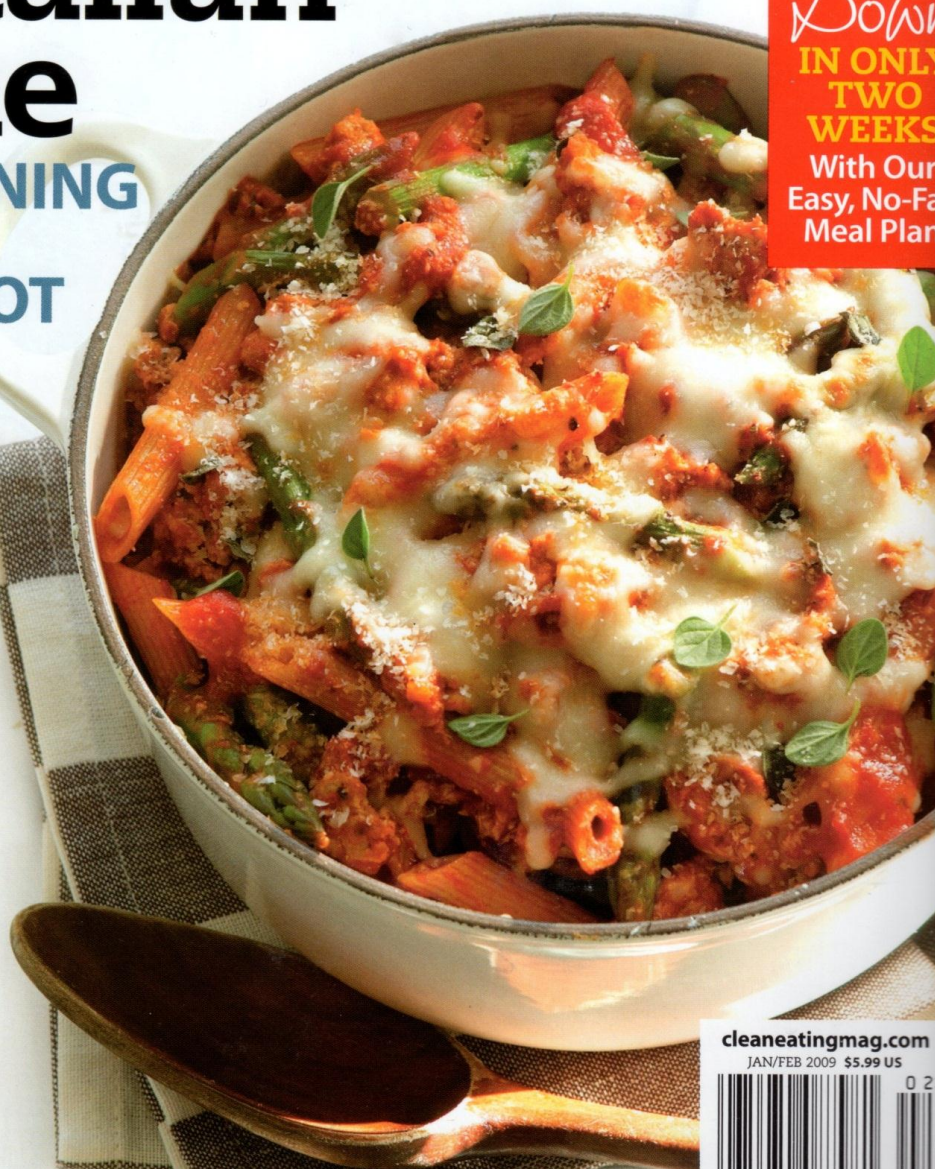
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Tex-Mex Makeover

Devin Alexander, celebrity chef, author and host of *Healthy Decadence*, serves up a restaurant-style Mexican meal without the usual fat and sodium.



Devin Alexander's Fajita Kit:



MRS. DASH SOUTHWEST CHIPOTLE SEASONING BLEND: This seasoning is a great option because it contains no sodium and adds an authentic flavor to Mexican dishes.



TUMARO'S LOW FAT HONEY WHEAT FLOUR TORTILLAS: Low in fat and sodium, these yummy tortillas are widely available at most grocery chains.



WHOLLY GUACAMOLE: Though avocados are high in fat, they do contain good, heart-healthy fats. This one only packs two grams per tablespoon.



TRADER JOE'S PICO DE GALLO: With no fat and just a few calories per serving, pico de gallo is sure to make a great

addition to your clean-eating arsenal. Trader Joe's brand combines the perfect blend of ingredients and tends to be less expensive than other brands.

KNUDSEN LIGHT SOUR CREAM: Some low-fat sour cream brands contain as much as four grams of fat per two-tablespoon serving, but you can count on Knudsen's, which only has two grams of fat for two tablespoons.

Fajitas are one of those classic Mexican dishes we all love – what could be better than a warm flour tortilla filled with sizzling meat and vegetables, topped with goodies like guacamole, sour cream and salsa? Unfortunately, restaurants typically use fatty cuts of meat, then smother them (along with the veggies) in oil, and serve the filling alongside globs of full-fat sour cream and guacamole. Lastly, restaurants use tortillas that are often made with lard, leaving us with no choice but to wrap up the already bad-for-you filling in an even worse-for-you tortilla! But fear not, it's possible to create a guiltless version of this restaurant favorite at home using lean protein, reduced-fat tortillas, low-fat sour cream and a touch of guacamole, which contains “good” fat. Along with these simple substitutions and a couple of the following tricks, you'll be on your way to an easy and healthy Mexican meal makeover.

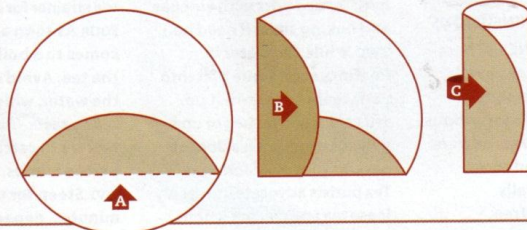
If your idea of the perfect fajita doesn't involve chicken, don't be afraid to mix things up a bit and try this recipe using shrimp or lean beef. For fajitas, I like to use 21 to 25 count shrimp or larger so they're nice and plump, and I always use top round steak when I'm looking for a tasty, lean cut of beef. Just make sure to slice it into strips against the grain for a softer texture.

One of the main reasons we love restaurant-style fajitas is because of the meat – hot and seared on the outside, moist and juicy on the inside. Believe it or not, this technique is very easy to imitate at home without adding fat. To get perfectly cooked, sizzling chicken, shrimp or steak, just make sure your nonstick pan is very hot (but not smoking) before you add the meat. Also, make sure that the pieces of meat are in a single layer and not touching. Crowding the pan brings down the temperature; and the pieces of meat will steam, not sear. Overcrowding or cooking in a pan that isn't hot makes meat chewy, and won't give it that great color and flavor you see in restaurants.

Lastly, when it comes to condiments, make sure to read labels and look for light sour cream, a guacamole that is low in fat and whole-wheat tortillas that aren't too high in sodium. And don't forget to serve the fajitas as soon as they're done and sizzling hot to recreate an authentic restaurant experience right at home. ☪

TO SERVE:

Add chicken mixture to center of each tortilla. Add desired fajita toppings. Fold bottom edge up (A), then fold one side toward middle (B) and, using a rolling motion, continue until fully enclosed (C). Repeat for all fajitas.



Chicken Fajitas

You save: 524 calories, 32 g fat, 2,086 mg sodium
Makes 4 fajitas.

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 low-fat, whole-wheat flour tortillas (8-inch diameter each)
- 2 tsp Mrs. Dash Southwest Chipotle Seasoning Blend or salt-free Mexican rub
- 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts, visible fat removed, cut into strips
- Sea salt, to taste
- Olive oil cooking spray
- 2 green or red bell peppers (or a combination), cut into ¼-inch strips
- ½ medium sweet onion, cut into ¼-inch strips
- ¼ cup prepared guacamole (2 grams fat or less per tbsp), divided
- ¼ cup light sour cream (2 grams fat or less per 2 tbsp), divided
- ½ cup fresh pico de gallo or salsa, divided

INSTRUCTIONS:

ONE Preheat oven to 400°F. Stack tortillas on a large piece of foil. Roll into a tube to encase tortillas. Seal ends. Set aside.

TWO Sprinkle Mrs. Dash evenly over chicken strips. Season with salt, to taste, and toss well.

THREE Place a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Lightly mist skillet with cooking spray. Add peppers and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, or until peppers begin to soften. Add onion and continue cooking for about 5 minutes, or until tender and just starting to brown. Remove and place in a covered dish to keep warm.

FOUR Place tortillas in oven.

FIVE Re-spray pan and place over medium-high heat. Add chicken in a single layer, working in batches if necessary,

and cook for 4 to 6 minutes or until chicken is lightly browned and no longer pink inside. Transfer peppers and onions back into pan and toss with chicken until everything is warmed through.

SIX Remove tortillas from oven and unroll. Place 1 on a plate. Spoon ¼ of chicken and vegetable mixture on top, followed by 1 tbsp guacamole, 1 tbsp sour cream and 2 tbsp pico de gallo. Repeat with remaining tortillas and accompaniments. Serve immediately.

Nutrients Per 2-Fajita Serving

Compared with 2 traditional fajitas:

	BEFORE	AFTER
CALORIES	984	460
TOTAL FAT (g)	46	14
CARBS (g)	84	30
FIBER (g)	6	6
PROTEIN (g)	54	52
SODIUM (mg)	2,746	660
CHOLESTEROL (mg)	132	140

**The traditional chicken fajitas used for comparison are Taco Mayo's Grilled Burrito Chicken Fajitas.*

Nutritional Bonus:

The avocados in the guacamole are a rich source of potassium and contain oleic acid, a healthy fat that may help lower your cholesterol.

