

Healthy eating, Gujarati Cuisine



HEART &
STROKE
FOUNDATION



Gujarati cuisine contains an assortment of appetizers known as farshans: vegetables, lentils, rice, flatbreads, yogurt and desserts, all served on an enormous platter. As you eat your way through this feast your palate encounters spicy, salty, sweet and sour flavours, often

simultaneously. Many of these preparations are often fried or have excessive amounts of oil, which is not good for the heart.

Eating a healthy diet that is lower in fat, especially saturated and trans fat, and being active most days is the best way to protect your heart health. Follow these guidelines to eat a healthy diet.



Eat more vegetables and fruit

- Sprinkle shredded carrots over dhoklas (steamed rice and lentil squares) or pandoli (steamed lentil dumplings) before steaming them.
- Mince greens such as spinach, bok choy, rapini, beet or radish greens along with the traditional methi (fresh fenugreek leaves) in food processor to add to thepla (pan-fried flatbread) or muthia (dumpling) dough.
- Khichdi (rice cooked with lentils) or poha (rice dish) are delicious when cooked with carrots, cauliflower, fava beans, yellow or green zucchini.
- Try adding assorted finely diced vegetables to Kadhi (yogurt and chickpea flour curry).



Choose whole grains Make at least half your grain servings as whole grain.

- Cook with whole grains such as barley, millet, quinoa, brown basmati rice and oats. Use multi-grain combinations when preparing khichdi for a change of flavour. Barley, millet and dalia (cracked wheat or bulghur) all taste delicious when paired with brown basmati rice, dahl and vegetables in khichdi.
- Use whole-grain flours such as whole-wheat, quinoa, or oat flour for making khakra (crisp pan fried flatbread), thepla, rotli or parotha.

Choose lower fat milk and alternatives

- Use fat free or low fat yogurt to make chaas, piyush or komal (spicy yogurt drinks) or dhokla (steamed rice and lentil squares).
- Use low fat milk in desserts such as lapsi (cracked wheat cooked with milk and sugar), sheera (lentil halwa), basundi (milk pudding) or doodh pak (rice and milk pudding).
- Make your own yogurt at home with low fat milk for raitas or srikhand.



Meat and alternatives Choose lean cuts of meat and trim all visible fat before cooking.

- Include meat alternatives such as beans, dahl, lentils and tofu often in your meals. Try substituting tofu for paneer in dishes such as chaner dalna, chaner kalia, shahi chaner.
- Eat at least two servings of fish each week prepared in a low fat manner such as baking or grilling. Cold water fish (such as char, herring, mackerel, rainbow trout, salmon or sardines) are especially high in heart-healthy omega-3 fats.

Choose healthy fats and cooking methods Use a small amount of oil, such as canola, olive or soybean each day. Include only 2 - 3 tablespoons (30 - 45 mL) of unsaturated fats each day, including cooking oil, salad dressing, margarine and mayonnaise.

- Limit your use of coconut milk to an occasional choice. If the use of coconut milk is essential to a recipe, use light coconut milk for similar flavour and less fat.
- Cut out ghee altogether as it is high in saturated fat (and vegetable ghee is often made using trans fat).
- Cook food simply by steaming, roasting, sautéing lightly or baking instead of deep-frying.
- Pan fry or bake potato patties in a small amount of oil instead of deep-frying when making ragda patties (potato croquettes served with spicy white peas).
- Bake samosas, kachoris (spicy lentil stuffed bread) and bhajias (vegetable fritters) by spraying them lightly with cooking spray before putting them in the oven.
- Steam dumplings instead of deep-frying them.
- Avoid adding vaghaar (fried spicy seasoning) to finish off every dish. The flavour in the food is already there from the spices and other ingredients it is cooked with.



Make healthy choices when eating out

- Avoid snacks such as ghughra, chakli, sev gphantia or muthri, which are deep-fried.
- Eat steamed farshans (snacks or appetizers) such as dhokla, khandvi or patra instead of deep-fried samosas, bhajias, fried patra, lilva kachoris and batata vadas.
- Choose fresh fruit instead of rich sweets such as malpua, halva, sohan papdi, ghevar, penda, laddoo, burfi and jalebi.

Dalia Khichdi

Makes 6 servings

This everyday dish gets a heart healthy makeover with cracked wheat, skin on dal and lots of vegetables. Try stuffing leftover khichdi in vegetables like eggplant, zucchini or sweet peppers, before baking them.

- 125 ml (½ cup) each: dalia (cracked wheat) and whole green moong dal (Mung beans)
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) vegetable oil
- 2 ml (½ tsp) cumin seeds
- 5 ml (1 tsp) grated ginger
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 500 ml (2 cups) small diced assorted vegetables such as cauliflower, beans, carrots, peas or zucchini
- 2 plum tomatoes, diced
- 2 ml (½ tsp) each: turmeric, cayenne pepper, garam masala
- 5 ml (1 tsp) each: ground coriander, ground cumin seeds
- 750 ml (3 cups) water

1. Wash dalia and dal together in large mixing bowl. Cover with water, soak 15 minutes. Drain and reserve.
2. Warm oil in deep heavy saucepan over medium high heat. Add cumin seeds, sizzle 30 seconds. Add grated ginger, onions and vegetables. Sauté 5 minutes until lightly browned. Add tomatoes, drained dalia and dal and spices. Add water, mix well. Cover, bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium low and cook 45-50 minutes or until dal is tender.
3. Let rest 10 minutes, mix gently and serve.

Nutritional Information per serving (250 ml/1 cup)

Calories 155, Protein 7g, Fat 3g, Saturated Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrate 27g, Fibre 8g, Sodium 24mg, Potassium 385mg

Ghughra pinwheels

Makes 4 servings

This heart healthy version omits the shredded coconut and uses whole-wheat tortillas instead of the pastry. Baking instead of deep-frying gives them the same crispness without all the oil.

- 500 ml (2 cups) frozen peas, thawed
- 2.5 cm (1 inch) piece ginger
- 2 green chillies
- 125 ml (½ cup) fresh coriander
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) + 5 ml (1 tsp) oil, divided
- 5 ml (1 tsp) cumin seeds
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) sesame seeds
- 5 ml (1 tsp) brown sugar
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) lemon juice
- 2 large 25 cm (10 inch) whole-wheat tortillas

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Process first four ingredients in food processor until well minced. Transfer to a bowl, reserve.
3. Warm 1 tbsp oil in non-stick skillet over medium high heat. Add cumin and sesame seeds, sauté 1 minute until lightly browned. Add reserved green pea mixture and brown sugar, sauté 5 minute. Add lemon juice and transfer to a bowl; cool to room temperature.
4. Working with one tortilla at a time. Evenly spread half the reserved green pea mixture over the tortilla, leaving a ¼ inch border all around. Starting from one end, roll up tortilla tightly, jelly roll style. Repeat with remaining tortilla and pea mixture. Brush tops with 1 tsp oil. Cut each tortilla crosswise into 10, 2.5 cm (1 inch) pinwheels. Place pinwheels on parchment lined baking sheet.
5. Bake 20 min. or until crisp and golden. Transfer to a platter and serve.

Nutritional Information per serving (5 pinwheels)

Calories 226, Protein 7g, Fat 8g, Saturated Fat 1g, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrate 30g, Fibre 5g, Sodium 278mg, Potassium 210mg