Summer evenings are synonymous with outdoor cooking, grilled fare, and BBQ sauce. Before you dust off the grill, let NutriCat help you keep your outdoor treats as lean and healthy as can be.

Try a bold marinade or sauce without adding too many calories or fat grams. This also helps tenderize the meat and make it less susceptible to forming carcinogens. These cancer-causing substances are made when meat is grilled, but can be reduced if a marinade is used first. Flavor enhancers include Worcestershire sauce, chili sauce, tomato paste, molasses, and low-sodium soy sauce.

Jamaican-Jerk Marinade: Cover protein with the juice of 4 limes and 1 cup water. Set aside. Blend together 2 tsp. allspice, 1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg, 1 tsp. salt, 1 tsp. brown sugar, 2 tsp. dried thyme, 1 tsp. ground ginger, 2 tsp. black pepper, and 2 tbs. oil. Mix well and add 1 cup chopped green onions, 6 cloves chopped garlic, and 2 chopped habanero peppers.

Don’t forget the vegetables

Make a grilled meal! Marinating vegetables will help them caramelize better when grilled, the longer the better up to an hour. Or sprinkle some paprika on a lightly buttered ear of corn and grill 15-20 minutes until done. Make kebobs! Layer cubed extra-firm tofu with cut red pepper, mango, and onion and marinade in a chili-lime sauce.

Grilled Caesar Salad: Drizzle 1 tsp. olive oil and 2 tsp. lemon juice over romaine hearts and season with salt and pepper to taste. Grill for 1-2 minutes per side. Remove from grill and toss with dressing below.

Low-fat Caesar Dressing:

Whisk together 1/3 cup plain non-fat yogurt, 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice, 1 tsp. olive oil, 1 tsp. white wine vinegar, 1 tsp. Dijon mustard, 1 tsp. anchovy paste, 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce, 1 crushed garlic clove.

Say yes to sustainable fish

Wild or organic farm-raised fish is best, especially low mercury choices like cod or salmon. Green choices include white seabass, Pacific halibut, and farmed cobia, bay scallops, or rainbow trout are also great picks. Try Cedar Plank Alaskan Wild Salmon at your next cookout. Cooking on a cedar plank reduced the amount of HCA’s (the dangerous chemical that’s produced when meat is cooked).

Cedar Plank Salmon: To start, soak an untreated cedar plank in water, weighed down, for at least 1 hour. Mix together 4 minced garlic cloves, 1/4 cup fresh dill, salt, pepper, and 1 tsp. lemon zest. Brush over 1 whole filet of salmon (up to three pounds), skin on and scored. Place soaked plank on hot grill, close lid and allow to heat for about 5 minutes. Place the salmon onto the hot plank, move to indirect heat (or turn burners to low) and cook with the lid down for 20-30 minutes, until opaque and has reached 130°F.

Load up on Greens

Say no to chips and yes to healthy side dishes like leafy greens. Not only are they chock-full of beneficial nutrients like vitamin K, iron, and magnesium they also contain antioxidants to counteract some of the harmful effects of other foods at a BBQ. Your local farmers market is a great place to find locally grown and organic produce.

In addition to the featured grilled Caesar salad recipe, this broccoli salad is NutriCat’s favorite BBQ side:

Roasted Garlic Lemon Broccoli: Toss 2 heads broccoli florets with 2 tsp. olive oil, sea salt and pepper, and 1 clove minced garlic. Spread the broccoli onto a baking sheet and roast at 15-20 minutes at 400°F. Toss cooked broccoli with 1 tsp. lemon juice.

Another easy variation is to steam broccoli and toss with above dressing. Just as delicious, but a little lighter in taste.

Recipes courtesy of foodnetwork.com, allrecipes.com, and NutriCat.
It's true, restaurants try to trip-up your healthy dining choices. That's because cheap, unhealthy food yields a bigger profit. Here are the 5 most common tricks aimed at getting you to spend more.

1. Pictures that look good enough to eat. The larger, more vivid the pictures, the more likely you will choose that option. Pictures located in the upper corner and center of the page are picked the most.

2. Names like “German Black Forest Indulgence”. Creative names like this one sound more exciting than “chocolate cake”. Enticing descriptions cause a positive emotion about how the food with taste. It also makes the product seem special enough to order.

3. Healthy options next to fattening ones. Duke University found that people are more likely to order a high calorie meal if the side dish is a healthy one. They may feel that they have met their nutrition goals with a healthy side (like steamed vegetables or a side salad) and indulge themselves with items like meatloaf or fettuccini alfredo.

4. Lots of produce in plain sight. Simply seeing vegetables, even if they are deep fried or served with fatty sauces, make people feel like they are ordering a healthy meal. Don't be fooled, fried zucchini and asparagus still pack a hefty calorie punch similar to a slice of pizza or small hamburger.

5. Sampler platters. When people have a variety of food to choose from, they are likely to eat 10% more than having only one choice. This is especially true of buffets, where individuals often consume 50% more calories then they normally would.

Bottom line: Stick to what you would choose at home. Thankfully, most restaurants calorie and fat information is now either online or labeled right on the menu. Make a point to seek this out, even on splurge meals. It will help you make healthy and indulgent choices when need be.

Resource: health.msn.com/nutrition

Perfect for summer, both of these recipes are cooling on a hot day. Try them as you would egg or chicken salad. NutriCat likes them with a slice of tomato in a wheat pita or on top of a sourdough roll. Yum!

Tofu Salad

Ingredients: 1/2 block of tofu, 1/4 cup fresh or frozen thawed peas, 1/4 cup finely chopped celery, 2-3 slices of dill pickles, chopped, 2 tbsp. chopped onions, 1 tbsp. (or more) chopped fresh parsley, 1 tbsp. mayonnaise, 1 tbsp. vinegar, 1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice. Blanch peas for 3 minutes until bright green in boiling water. Drain and set aside. Wrap tofu in a cloth and place on a plate. Place a second plate on top and add a weight. Press down for 10 minutes to press out the liquid. Bring water to a boil in a steamer, unwrap the tofu and place it in the steamer basket. Cover and steam for 5 minutes. Transfer the tofu to a clean bowl and mash with a fork until crumbly. Add the peas, celery, pickles, onions, parsley, mayo, vinegar, and lemon juice.

Tempeh Salad

Very similar to tuna salad, this recipe is a variation on the one sold at whole foods.

Ingredients: 16 ounces tempeh, 1/4 cup sweet pickle relish, 1/4 cup finely chopped celery, 1/3 cup finely chopped red onion, 1/4 cup finely diced red bell pepper, 1/4 cup raw sunflower seeds, 1/4 cup finely diced green pepper, 1/4 cup finely sliced scallion, 2 tbsp. soy sauce, 2 tbsp. chopped parsley, 2 tbsp. Lemon juice, 1 tsp. ground cumin, 1 tsp. dry dill weed, 1 cup light or veggie mayo (Vegenaise makes a great non-dairy mayo)

Prepare the tempeh by breaking it into large chunks and steaming it over boiling water in a covered steamer basket for 15 minutes. Set aside and allow to cool. Assemble the rest of the ingredients in a large bowl. Finely crumble the cooled tempeh into the bowl and combine with other ingredients. Add the mayonnaise last. Chill before serving. Also great with tortilla chips!

Learning Curves

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- Education on fitness and health

Classes run 6/1—8/12
Tuesday & Thursdays
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Program fee: $35
For more information contact Derrick Gleason
dgleason@pacific.edu