

Life after divorce: Cooking for one

Tips and recipes to keep you healthy and happy when you're eating on your own

By: Deborah Moskovitch



I've found that separating the "emotional divorce" from the "legal divorce" is essential to a healthy, smart divorce. Through life experience and research, I have learned the best ways to manage and cope with the emotional aspects of life after divorce, and throughout the process. However, I feel the time has come to share my crimes and misdemeanors when it comes to dealing with certain post-divorce habits - and I plead guilty.

Regain your lust for healthy living It's more a factor of laziness, rather than anything else. I take pride in ensuring my children eat well, preparing healthy, nutritious and delicious meals. But when it comes to cooking for one - when my kids are with their dad - well, there's a bit of slippage. I figure, what's wrong with an occasional bowl of cereal for dinner, followed by a 100-calorie snack or two? Sometimes I indulge in my favorite: cottage cheese and noodles. At my laziest, I grab a decadent chocolate bar for lunch, followed by an apple for dessert. **But there are alternatives.**

I think I've figured wrong when I read about the importance of healthy eating. As I celebrate the wisdom gained through age and maturity, sadly, my metabolism doesn't grow, but rather my midsection. To help get me out of this rut, I enlisted the help of leading Canadian nutritionist Barbie Casselman for the times when I'm cooking for one.

"If we want to stay healthy, feel better and look younger, we have to

change our lifestyle," says Casselman. "By which I mean all the factors that contribute to the way we eat, the exercise we get, stress, cigarette and alcohol consumption, our relationships and our spiritual outlook."

Casselmann is adamant that people need to change their perceptions. **Although bad habits** are hard to break, it becomes easier once you have the education and resolve to make good decisions. A good understanding of a healthy lifestyle means, "Keeping activity level high, increasing your lean muscle mass, and realizing that there are no foods which will increase metabolism." There aren't any magic formulas.

Pump up the energy and excitement in your life after divorce with these tips to help you put together healthy and delicious meals that are just for you.

When shopping, cooking and preparing for your next meal alone, you might consider:

Grocery Shopping with Purpose

- **Eat healthy.** Stick to the perimeter of the supermarket so that you are choosing fresh, unprocessed foods.
- **Eat with ease.** You don't have to buy in bulk. Buy your fruits and vegetables precut and prewashed. This enables you to eat a wide range of healthy items.
- **Eat variety.** Quality and variety is key. For example, don't eat apples and nothing else. Mix it up with other types of fruit; all fruits and vegetables have different nutrients and benefits.
- **Eat healthy without effort.** Grocery stores offer a wide variety of prepared single-serving frozen entrees and soups with minimal preservatives and lots of fibre - in low-calorie, low-sodium options.

Cooking with Ease

- **Cook in bulk.** Prepare big batches of soup, ratatouille, or other vegetable-based meals that you can separate into portions and freeze. Not motivated to cook? Now you have something that is healthy, filling and easily accessible.
- **Cook new things.** There are numerous cooking websites that provide great-tasting recipes. Just search, for example, "low calorie" plus "chicken" and "vegetable" and you'll find an abundance of delicious recipes.
- **Cook in a flash.** A quick and easy dinner would consist of 4-6 ounces of

protein with lots of vegetables and a starch. Preparation can be effortless; use your barbeque or a George Foreman grill, and you've got dinner in less than 20 minutes. Keep it simple with a starch like potato or quinoa.

Feel good about yourself As Casselman emphatically states, "Proper nutrition and weight control are the starting points to feeling good, and to feeling good *about* ourselves."

Life is about balance and moderation. It means having a healthy outlook, without deprivation. There are so many options that dinner, even for the tired and worn (and kid-free for the night), no longer has to be cheese and crackers or something out of a box.

To help get you started, Barbie Casselman suggests these easy, healthy, delicious recipes from her cookbook, [Good-for-You Cooking](#).

For further empowerment, read [After divorce: Happier, stronger you.](#) -Give yourself some peace of mind with a little [brain food](#). If you feel like finding a cooking buddy, learn about [midlife dating](#).

What's your favourite thing to make when you're spending the night on your own?

Deborah Moskovitch is a divorce coach, and author of *The Smart Divorce: Proven Strategies and Valuable Advice from 100 Top Divorce Lawyers, Financial Advisers, Counselors and Other Experts*. Deborah has become an opinion leader in the media and has shared her insights and research on television and radio to explain that divorce can be managed in smarter ways. To learn more visit thesmartdivorce.com.

Chick Pea and Sweet Potato Soup

This chick pea and sweet potato soup makes a hearty dinner when combined with a salad and some crusty bread. Sweet potatoes and yams are extremely high in beta carotene, which is considered an important antioxidant.

By: Barbie Casselman



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- 2 large onions, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 stalk celery, sliced
- 2 cups peeled and sliced sweet potatoes
- 5 cups chicken broth
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 1 19-ounce can tomatoes, chopped (including liquid)
- 1 19-ounce can chick peas, drained 3 tablespoons soy sauce

1. Place onion, garlic and celery in a bowl with 3 tablespoons water. Cook, covered, in microwave on high for 4 minutes.
2. Place this mixture in soup pot. Stir in sweet potatoes, chicken broth, bay leaf and basil. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Add tomatoes, chick peas and soy sauce and simmer the soup for another 15 minutes. Remove bay leaf.

Makes 11 cups. PER 1 CUP SERVING: Calories: 126, Protein: 6.8g, Carbohydrates: 21.4g, Fat: 1.8g, % Cal. from fat: 12

Lemon Caesar Salad Dressing

Caesar salads are my favourite. When eating out, I always ask for the dressing on the side. I dip my fork into the thick creamy dressing and then spear a piece of lettuce. This way I get flavor in each mouthful but eat only a minimal amount of dressing.



By: Barbie Casselman

- ½ cup light mayonnaise
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup minced fresh parsley Pepper to taste (optional)

1. Combine all ingredients. Chill.

Makes 1 ¼ cups. PER 1 TABLESPOON SERVING: Calories: 22, Protein: 0.31g, Carbohydrates: 1.6g, Fat: 1.7g, % Cal. from fat: 67

Roasted Eggplant and Pepper Salad

A couple of years ago, I created a line of food for a Toronto gourmet shop. This roasted eggplant and pepper salad was the most popular of all.

By: Barbie Casselman



2 medium eggplants (about 3 pounds), unpeeled, cubed
1 red pepper
1 yellow pepper
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1 cup coarsely chopped fresh parsley
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon oregano
1 ½ teaspoons basil
Dash salt and pepper

1. Spray two cookie sheets with cooking spray. Lay cubed eggplant on sheets and spray very lightly with cooking spray. Bake at 425°F for 20 to 25 minutes, turning after 10 minutes.
2. Place whole peppers on electric stove element turned to high. When peppers start to blacken, turn and continue to grill until all sides are done. Let cool, then slice pepper into strips, removing stem and seeds. (If you have a gas stove, cut peppers into one-inch cubes and bake on cookie sheet with eggplant.)
3. In a large bowl, combine eggplant and peppers with remaining ingredients. Chill.

Makes 6 servings of 1 ¼ cup each. PER SERVING: Calories: 24, Protein: 0.98g, Carbohydrates: 5.7g, Fat: 0.17g, % Cal from fat: 6

Salmon Teriyaki

Salmon is oilier than most fish but is recommended for its abundance of omega-3 fatty acids, which help lower cholesterol. Since its flesh is firm, it cooks well on the barbecue.

By: Barbie Casselman



- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 4 salmon fillets (about 1 pound total)

1. Combine all ingredients except salmon in a small bowl.
2. Pour marinade over fish and marinate at least 30 minutes.
3. Bake fish at 350°F for 12 minutes, or until it just flakes with a fork.
(Alternatively, broil or barbecue, basting with marinade, for 3 or 4 minutes on each side.)

Makes 4 servings. PER SERVING: Calories: 182, Protein: 24.2g, Carbohydrates: 4g, Fat: 7.2g, % Cal. from fat: 37