We all love the flavors of summer − tangy barbeque, just picked corn on the cob, seafood from the grill, red ripe tomatoes, a slice of watermelon, an ice cold glass of lemonade! This summer, bring some extra excitement and a boost of flavor to your favorite foods with these fresh & healthy ideas for the season.

**Summer Herbs**
Fresh herbs straight from the garden, or your local market, add an extra pop of color and flavor to your summer meals. The extra flavor isn't the only reason to add herbs. Many herbs contain antioxidants and other compounds that give them nutrition benefits. So add summer herbs for your health and the flavor.

Basil is delicious with summer tomatoes, thyme is a favorite with chicken or pork, parsley and oregano are perfect in sauces and salads. Enjoy chives, coriander, cilantro, rosemary or dill − try another herb with every summer meal, until you find your personal favorites.

**Summer Spices**
Add some spice to your backyard grill. Spices can wake up grilled meats, fish, vegetables, and even fruits. And many spices, like cinnamon, pepper and ginger are packed with antioxidants and other nutrients. Try chili with corn; saffron with chicken, cayenne or tarragon on fish, or even smoked paprika on grilled peaches. From cumin to cardamom to coriander, find a way to spice up your summer.

**Summer Zest**
There are so many ways to make your summer meals a healthy hit. Try adding lemon or orange zest, mint leaves or fresh ginger root.

Add a new twist to your summer favorites for a fresh and healthy way to enjoy the best of the season.

**Perfect for Summer**
Summer is the time to combine great taste with good health. Try any one of these perfect for summer flavor combinations:

**Mint Tea:** Brew your tea with a handful of fresh mint leaves. Refrigerate overnight and wake up to fresh mint iced tea. Try unsweetened or add a touch of sugar.

**Dilled Grilled Veggies:** Add a little fresh dill to olive oil and coat your favorite veggies. Grill and finish with a squeeze of fresh lime.

**Fresh Cilantro Salsa:** Mince some fresh cilantro and add to your favorite salsa for a burst of fresh flavor.

**Chili Grilled Corn:** Grill corn on the cob until lightly blackened and kernels are slightly tender. Squeeze fresh lime over corn and sprinkle with a little chili powder and just a dash of salt.

**Basil Summer Fruit:** Add fresh basil to fruit or fruit salads. Delicious with sweet ripe peaches, strawberries, watermelon or mango.

**Spices: Flavor & Health Benefits**

**Cayenne pepper:** Studies suggest that compounds called capsinoids in cayenne pepper can boost metabolic rate and suppress appetite. Cayenne is perfect for spicing up summer salad dressings and marinades.

**Turmeric:** Turmeric is the main ingredient in yellow curry powder. It contains compounds that have anti-inflammatory benefits. Try it to marinate grilled chicken or on asparagus with curry.

**Ginger:** Ginger is proven to help digestion while adding flavor. Ginger is great in everything from iced tea to summer smoothies (but remember, a little goes a long way!)

**Ground Cinnamon:** Cinnamon is rich in antioxidants and contains polyphenols that can have a positive impact on blood sugar, so sprinkle onto everything from yogurt to cereal to fresh fruit salad.
HEALTHY Lifestyles

The healthy summer grill experience
Cooking outdoors is a summer tradition. While great taste is at the top of everyone’s list, safety is just as important.

Safe food handling for home cooks
We all know that favorites like potato salad, macaroni salad and coleslaw should be kept cold, but this also applies to raw meat, fish or poultry. Be sure to keep meats safe. Refrigerate even while thawing or marinating. If you’re cooking away from home, use a cooler with ice packs to transport and store your meats until you put them on the grill.

Personal safety for the home chef
For a safe outdoor grilling experience, be careful when wearing long or lose fitting clothing or aprons around the grill. Use flame retardant mitts, buy grill utensils with long handles and never leave a hot grill unattended. Remember that cooking technique, grill utensils and even clothing choices can impact your personal safety.

Grill meats until safe to eat
Meat and poultry should be cooked to a safe internal temperature to destroy any potentially harmful bacteria. Poultry browns quickly on the grill but may not be fully cooked inside. You should use a food thermometer to make sure that the internal temperature reaches at least 165°F for poultry, 160°F for ground beef and 145°F for steaks and chops.

Healthy grilling
Grilling is a healthy cooking method, but the charring that occurs when meats are cooked over high heat can be a health risk. To keep meats from being charred avoid cooking over very high heat. Clean the grill between each use to get rid of any debris. Trim off any meat that does get charred. And remember that grilling lots of vegetables is a great idea since, unlike meat; vegetables don’t create carcinogens when they char.

Enjoy all the fresh and healthy flavors of summer!

Since everyone’s health history and nutritional needs are so different, please make sure that you talk with your doctor and a registered dietitian to get advice about the diet and exercise plan that’s right for you.

Chicken & Melon Salad with Lemon Mint Dressing

Serves 6

Salad:
1¼ lb boneless, skinless, chicken breasts, grilled, chilled, diced
3 cups diced, peeled, seeded cantaloupe
3 cups diced, peeled, seeded honeydew melon
⅔ cup diced, cored, tomato
⅔ cup diced, peeled, pitted avocado
1 Tablespoon minced, seeded, serrano chili
3 quarts bite-size pieces Boston lettuce
12 baked tortilla chips for garnish

Preparation:
Combine chicken, cantaloupe, honeydew, tomato, avocado, chili and dressing. Toss to coat.

On each serving plate, place 2 cups lettuce and ⅓ of the chicken-lemon mixture. Garnish each salad with 2 tortilla chips. Serve immediately.

Dressing:
½ cup vegetable oil
½ cup lemon juice
¼ cup minced fresh mint leaves
1½ teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground allspice

Preparation:
Combine all dressing ingredients. Whisk until well blended.

Nutritional Information per serving
- Calories: 440
- Protein: 25g
- Cholesterol: 60mg
- Sodium: 320mg
- Carbohydrates: 22g
- Saturated Fat: 4.5g
- Total Fat: 28g

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