

# Diverse Foods and Flavours

## Healthy Diabetes Recipes from South Asia



# Introduction

This booklet has been developed for healthy eating as part of diabetes prevention and management. It is a healthy take on traditional cultural dishes from South Asia. The Canadian Diabetes Association has identified this community as being at higher risk for developing prediabetes, type 2 diabetes and diabetes complications at an earlier age (less than 40 years old) than the general population.

Registered Dietitians at EatRight Ontario, faculty and culinary students at the Centre for Hospitality and

Culinary Arts at George Brown College (GBC) partnered to create this recipe booklet to help address the need for culturally focused healthy eating diabetes resources.

You can use the recipes to create healthy and balanced meals that make the most of your traditional favourites. This recipe booklet can be obtained online from the GBC applied research website ([http://www.georgebrown.ca/research/projects.aspx#Food\\_Science](http://www.georgebrown.ca/research/projects.aspx#Food_Science)) and from EatRight Ontario ([www.eatrightontario.ca](http://www.eatrightontario.ca)).

## WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a condition whereby the pancreas either does not make enough of a hormone called insulin and/or the body cannot use insulin properly. Insulin's role in the body is to take glucose (sugar) to the cells to be used for energy. With diabetes, glucose can build up in the blood and lead to high blood glucose levels. Over time, high blood glucose levels can lead to complications like kidney and heart problems, blindness and nerve damage.

Healthy eating is important for diabetes management because blood glucose levels are raised by carbohydrate-containing foods like:

- Fruit
- Milk and yogurt
- Grains
- Legumes (dried peas, beans and lentils)
- Starchy vegetables like potatoes and green peas
- Sugars and sweets like desserts, ice cream, and candies

Choosing healthy foods, exercising most days of the week, achieving a healthy body weight and taking medication as prescribed are all part of diabetes management.

# Healthy Eating for Diabetes Prevention and Management: Enjoy Your Cultural Foods

If your goal is to prevent or manage type 2 diabetes you can still include many of the cultural foods that you enjoy. Continue to eat a variety of healthy foods, pay special attention to your portions and you will be on the right track!

Try to make these healthy eating habits part of your regular routine:

1. Eat regularly throughout the day. Do not leave more than 6 hours between meals.
2. Eat higher fibre foods more often. Include whole grain breads and cereals, beans and lentils, brown rice, vegetables and fruit with their skins. Fibre can help keep blood glucose (sugar) at a healthy level. Fibre can also help manage body weight and blood cholesterol levels.
3. Eat smaller amounts of rice, noodles, roti, pasta, potatoes, cereal, breads and other starchy foods. Having large servings of these foods can make it more difficult to achieve healthy blood glucose levels.
4. Limit juice, regular pop, desserts, candies, jam, honey and other sweet foods. Having too much of these foods raises your blood glucose levels.
5. Limit higher fat foods like deep fried snacks and pastries. These foods can make it difficult to reach a healthy weight and manage your blood cholesterol levels.
6. Use fresh herbs and spices instead of salt or high sodium sauces to flavour your food. Too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and kidney disease.



(Adapted from Just the Basics, Canadian Diabetes Association 2010).

# Understanding the Nutrition Analysis in this Recipe Booklet

## Fat

Many of the recipes in this booklet have tips to reduce fat when cooking. Too much fat, especially saturated fat, affects blood cholesterol levels. Limiting fats and oils is part of heart healthy eating.

## Sodium

Healthy adults only need about 1500 milligrams of sodium each day. This is the amount of sodium in 2/3 teaspoon of salt. We all need some sodium in our diet but make sure to control the amount by always measuring the salt instead of adding a “pinch”. Too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and kidney disease.

## Fibre

Adults with diabetes should aim for 25 grams of fibre or more each day.

## Carbohydrate

A Registered Dietitian can help you understand the amount of carbohydrate that you should aim for at each meal and snack. Generally, men can have 60 to 75 grams of carbohydrate at a meal and women can have 45 to 60 grams of carbohydrate at a meal. Snacks range from 15 to 30 grams.

## Food Choices

The Canadian Diabetes Association has a food choices system called “Beyond the Basics Meal Planning” to keep track of your servings of carbohydrate, meat and alternatives, fats and extras. This system is a helpful tool for planning menus and meeting healthy eating goals for diabetes. Food choices are included in the nutrition analysis of recipes in this booklet. Your healthcare team can help you learn more about food choices and there is more information available at ([www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)).



# Acknowledgements

Professor Sobia Khan, RD, MSc, and the Centre for Hospitality and the Culinary Arts (CHCA) at George Brown College (GBC) have created an applied research project to serve the culturally-specific communities at high risk for diabetes (including South Asian, Chinese, Caribbean, and Latin American). One objective of this community-based research project is to develop and test culturally-specific recipes and make them healthier. The goal is to help prevent and manage prediabetes and type 2 diabetes in communities that are at increased risk.

EatRight Ontario (ERO) provides free healthy eating advice from Registered Dietitians to everyone in Ontario. Residents of Ontario can call 1-877-510-510-2 and speak to a Registered Dietitian in over 100 languages. ERO has healthy eating information on a wide variety of topics, recipes, menus, videos and an “Email a Dietitian” service at ([www.eatrightontario.ca](http://www.eatrightontario.ca)). Examples of the free resources that are available from ERO include culturally adapted and translated diabetes information for South Asian (Urdu, Tamil, Gujarati, Punjabi, and Hindi), Chinese (Chinese), African and Caribbean (French), and Latin American (Spanish) cultures.

GBC and ERO gratefully acknowledge the contributions of:

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- GBC contributors: CHCA culinary students; Chili Leung (photographer); Atanas Bozdarov (booklet designer); Quoc Bao Dang, Marcia Carby, Jiaqi Li, and Anthony Vargas (food stylist)
- Nutrition Analysis: Barbara Selley, RD (Food Intelligence)



# Flavours of South Asia

1. Saffron is a more expensive spice because it is made from a hand-picked flower known as crocus which is dried and handled in a special way. It is known for its bright yellow colour and slightly bitter taste. Used mainly in South Asian, Middle Eastern and Spanish cuisine.



2. Cumin seeds come from a herb that is a member of the parsley family. Cumin is used in both chili powder and curry powder.



3. Carom seeds (*ajwain*) can be used in dishes such as South Asian curries and chutneys. Carom's flavour is similar to the herb "thyme".



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4. Turmeric is the root of a plant in the ginger family. As a key ingredient in curries turmeric powder provides a bright yellow colour and a slightly bitter flavour. Turmeric contains antioxidants, which help to keep the body healthy. Traditionally it has also been used to help improve digestion.



5. Garlic is a heart healthy ingredient that may improve blood pressure, cholesterol and triglyceride levels. It has also been found to protect against cancers of the digestive tract.



# South Asian Healthy Plate

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## FOR A HEALTHY AND BALANCED MEAL, TRY TO FOLLOW THESE PORTIONS:

- 1/4 plate of grains (1/2 cup cumin rice)
- 1/4 plate of meat and alternatives (6 oz fish amritsari)
- 1/2 plate of 2 vegetables (1/2 cup each zucchini curry and mint tomato salad)
- 1/2 fruit (1/2 mango)
- 1 serving of yogurt (1/4 cup cucumber raita)

### NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER PLATE

Calories: .....	602
Fat, total: .....	14 g
Fat, saturated: .....	2 g
Cholesterol: .....	97 mg
Carbohydrates: .....	71 g
Fibre: .....	9 g
Sodium: .....	1065 mg
Protein: .....	49 g

### FOOD CHOICES PER PLATE

Carbohydrate: .....	3
Meat and Alternatives: .....	4-1/2
Fat: .....	1-1/2
Extra: .....	3

*When you understand plate portions, you can eat a variety of foods and still manage your blood glucose levels. Keep this picture of balanced portions in mind when you eat at home or in a restaurant.*



# Tomato Mint Salad

*Preparation time:* 15 minutes  
*Makes 4 servings*

## INGREDIENTS

1 small green chili, minced  
1-1/2 cups (375 mL) chopped roma tomatoes  
1 cup (250 mL) chopped cucumber  
1 cup (250 mL) mint leaves, finely chopped  
1/2 cup (125 mL) drained and rinsed canned chickpeas  
1/2 cup (125 mL) minced onion  
2 tsp (10 mL) freshly squeezed lemon juice  
1/4 tsp (1 mL) salt

## NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER SERVING (1 CUP)

Calories: 62  
Fat, total: 0 g  
Fat, saturated: 0 g  
Cholesterol: 0 mg  
Carbohydrates: 13 g  
Fibre: 3 g  
Sodium: 208 mg  
Protein: 3 g

## FOOD CHOICES

Extra: 1

## METHOD

1. In a bowl, combine green chili, tomatoes, cucumber, mint, chickpeas, onion, lemon juice and salt. Serve immediately or refrigerate covered until required.

## TIPS:

1. Chickpeas and other peas, beans, and lentils are high in fibre. Fibre can help lower unhealthy blood cholesterol levels and it can help you maintain healthy blood glucose levels.
2. Lemon juice and herbs are a flavourful way to dress your salads without adding extra salt or fat.
3. Since the entire can of chickpeas is not used in this recipe, remove the chickpeas from the can and store them in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. They are great to add to salads or stir-fries.

*This quick and easy salad features the combined flavours of fresh tomato and mint—a winning combination!*



# Cumin Rice

## *(Zafrani Jeera Chaval)*

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

**Makes 8 servings**

### INGREDIENTS

2 cups (500 mL) white basmati rice  
1 medium sized yellow onion, sliced thinly into rings  
2 tbsp (30 mL) canola oil  
2 tbsp (30 mL) cumin seeds (*zeera*)  
1/2 medium sized yellow onion, finely chopped  
4 bay leaves  
1 tsp (5 mL) salt  
4 cups (1 L) warm water  
1/2 tsp (2 mL) Spanish saffron threads

### NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER SERVING (1/2 CUP)

Calories: 113  
Fat, total: 2 g  
Fat, saturated: 0 g  
Cholesterol: 0 mg  
Carbohydrates: 22 g  
Fibre: 1 g  
Sodium: 131 mg  
Protein: 2 g

### FOOD CHOICES

Carbohydrate: 1  
Fat: 1/2

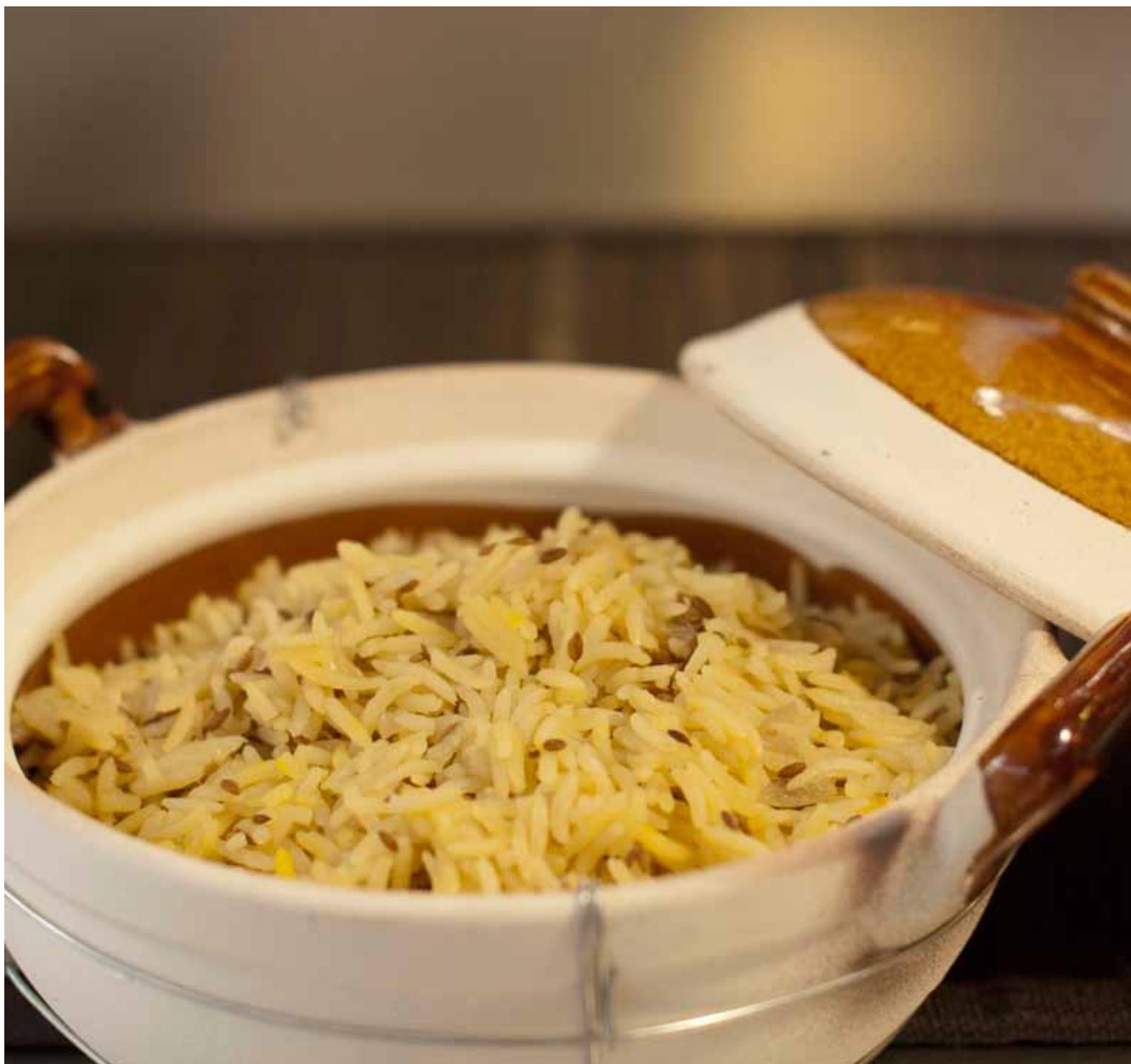
### METHOD

1. In a bowl, soak basmati rice in water for about 20 minutes. Drain and set aside.
2. In a deep pan, heat oil over Medium-High heat. Add sliced onions and sauté until golden brown; about 5 minutes. Remove from pan and set aside for garnish.
3. In the same pan, add cumin seeds; toast for 1 minute. Add finely chopped onions, bay leaves and sauté for another minute. Add salt, continue to cook for 1 minute.
4. Add rice to same pan and stir well to coat with remaining oil in pan; about 5 minutes.
5. Add warm water and saffron threads, stir, cover and simmer on Medium-Low heat and cook for about 9 minutes.
6. Turn off heat and let sit in the pot covered for another 5 minutes.
7. Garnish with sautéed onions if using.

### TIPS:

1. Always use measuring spoons to measure out the amount of oil in a recipe. Adding even a small amount of extra oil will increase the overall fat content of the dish.
2. When cooking with less fat, heat the pan well before adding the oil—this will prevent sticking.
3. Soaking the basmati rice prior to cooking is a step that reduces the overall cooking time.

*Rice can be a healthy choice for people with type 2 diabetes. Remember to manage your portions and to use spices such as cumin or saffron to add flavour.*



# Zucchini Curry

## (*Turaii curry*)

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

**Makes 4 servings**

### INGREDIENTS

1/2 tsp (2 mL) canola oil  
1-1/4 cups (310 mL) thinly sliced (lengthwise) onion  
1 small tomato, chopped  
1/2 tsp (2 mL) chili flakes  
1/2 tsp (2 mL) turmeric  
6 tbsp (90 mL) water  
1 lb (500 g) zucchini with skin on, julienned into 1/2 inch thickness  
1 small green chili, minced  
1/2 tsp (2 mL) carom seeds (*ajwain*)  
2 tsp (10 mL) freshly squeezed lemon juice  
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt

### NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER SERVING (1 CUP)

Calories: 64  
Fat, total: 1 g  
Fat, saturated: 0 g  
Cholesterol: 0 mg  
Carbohydrates: 13 g  
Fibre: 4 g  
Sodium: 401 mg  
Protein: 2 g

### FOOD CHOICES

Extra: 1

### METHOD

1. In a medium sauté pan, heat oil over Medium heat. Add onion and sauté until slightly brown, about 5 minutes.
2. Add tomato, chili flakes, turmeric and stir. Cook until spices are fragrant; about 2 minutes.
3. Add water, increase heat to High and bring to a boil.
4. Add zucchini, green chili, and carom seeds to the mixture.
5. Reduce heat to Low, cover and simmer until the water has evaporated and zucchini mixture has thickened, about 20 minutes.
6. Remove from heat, add lemon juice, salt and stir.

### TIPS:

1. The zucchini in this recipe has the skin on which is great for increasing fibre content.
2. The amount of oil has been cut down from the original recipe. When cooking with less fat heat your pan before adding the oil—this will help prevent sticking.

*The key to eating a half plate of vegetables at each meal is to keep it exciting. The spices in this South Asian curry include a blend of turmeric, carom seeds, and chili flakes to add a bit of heat and color to the dish.*



# Fish Amritsari

- **Preheat oven to 275°F (140 °C)**
- **Non-stick pan**

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 35 minutes

**Makes 5 servings**

## INGREDIENTS

2 lbs fresh kingfish (5 large steak , 6 oz each), rinsed and dried  
3 tbsp (45 ml) white vinegar  
1/2 tsp (5 mL) salt  
1-1/2 cups (375 mL) gram flour (*besan*)  
2 tsp (10 mL) carom seeds (*ajwain*)  
1/2 tbsp (7.5 mL) minced garlic (about 1.5 cloves)  
1/2 tbsp (7.5 mL) minced ginger  
1 tsp (5 mL) chaat masala mix  
1/2 tsp (2 mL) turmeric  
1/3 cup (75 mL) freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 2 lemons)  
1 cup (250 mL) water  
2 tbsp (30 mL) canola oil  
4 lemon wedges

## NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER SERVING (1 CUP)

Calories: 338  
Fat, total: 11 g  
Fat, saturated: 1 g  
Cholesterol: 96 mg  
Carbohydrates: 16 g  
Fibre: 3g  
Sodium: 531mg  
Protein: 42g

## FOOD CHOICES

Carbohydrate: 1  
Meat and Alternatives: 4-1/2  
Fat: 1

## METHOD

1. In a bowl, combine fish with vinegar and salt. Set aside and prepare coating; about 2 minutes.
2. In a separate bowl mix gram flour, carom seeds, garlic, ginger, chaat masala and turmeric.
3. Add lemon juice and then add water gradually, stirring after every addition until a thick batter is made. Remove fish steaks from vinegar mixture and dip fish in the batter to coat.
4. In a large non-stick pan over Medium-High heat, add oil. Add fish and sear on each side for about 2-3 minutes until golden brown.
5. Transfer fish from pan to baking sheet and bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes.
6. Garnish with lemon wedges if using.

## TIPS:

1. A way to easily peel garlic is to put one clove of garlic flat in the centre of a cutting board. Place the widest and flat side of your blade on top of the clove and smash down on the middle of it with the palm of your hand. This will crack the papery skin of the garlic and help you peel the skin.
2. Chaat masala is a mixture of spices that is used in snacks, salads and other South Asian dishes. It usually has a sour or tangy flavour. Always measure out the chaat masala precisely as adding extra can increase the overall sodium content of the dish. Typically, chaat masala can have up to 420 mg of sodium per teaspoon.

*Fish Amritsari originates from Amritsar, located in Northern India. A fried fish with Indian spices, fish Amritsari is typically sold as street food, used as an appetizer or used as a side dish to a meal. Traditionally fish Amritsari is deep fried. In this recipe the fish is pan fried and then baked, and it still turns out to be crispy and delicious!*

