

How to Make a Low Calorie Smoothie

Explore this Article ■ [Building A Low-Calorie Smoothie](#) ■ [Choosing Low-Calorie Ingredients](#) ■ [Making Low-Calorie Smoothies](#) ■ [Choosing The Proper Blender](#) ■ [Questions & Answers](#) ■ [Tips and Warnings](#) ■ [References](#)

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A smoothie is a delicious blended beverage made with raw fruit, vegetables, and other ingredients, including dairy products, protein powders, tea, supplements, and herbs.^[1] Smoothies are often labeled as healthy foods, but they can sometimes be high in calories. To get maximum health benefits from your smoothie, learn how to make a low-calorie smoothie.

Method 1

Method 1 of 4: Building A Low-Calorie Smoothie



1 Choose the right ratio of ingredients. Start your smoothie with a liquid base. It should be added to your blender first before the fruits, vegetables, or other ingredients. This helps protect the blades as well as helping things blend well.^[2]

- The ratio of the liquid base to the fruits and vegetables should be for every 2 cups of liquid base, add about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of fruit, vegetables, or other ingredients. You can add more fruits and vegetables if you want, especially if they are juicier.
- For a low-calorie smoothie, instead of piling in a lot of high calorie fruits, choose one or two fruits, a green, a protein, and some spices.
- Balance high calorie fruits, like bananas and pineapple, with lower calorie fruits, like berries. Instead of one cup of nut milk, consider using $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of skim milk and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water to reduce calories.
- Add ice at the end if you want to cool your drink, give it a frozen treat consistency, and thin it out.



2 Start with a liquid base. Smoothies are thick, so you should start with a thin liquid base. This can be anything liquid, such as dairy milk, soy milk, herbal teas, or nut milk. If you want to use dairy milk, make sure to use a lower calorie version, like 2% or 1%. Use unsweetened nut milks instead of sweetened nut milks or dairy milks to save calories.^[3] For low-calorie smoothies, choose low-calorie bases including:

- Water
- Unflavored, unsweetened almond milk
- No sugar added coconut water or coconut milk
- Rice milk
- Green tea



3 Add frozen or fresh produce. ^[4] The produce is the main ingredient for your low-calorie smoothie. You can use frozen fruit or vegetables, but, of course, fresher is better. You can add just about any fruit or vegetable you want. For lower calorie smoothies, load up on veggies and limit fruits.

- Some good ideas for vegetables include any dark leafy greens, like kale or spinach, carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, avocados, or beets. Almost any fruit makes a good smoothie. Try berries, melons, bananas, pineapple, pears, peaches, mangos, and kiwis.^[5]
- You can buy prepackaged smoothie packs in the freezer section of your grocery store. You can also freeze your own produce. Bananas, mango, berries, kale, spinach, and even melons can be frozen. Since you are just throwing them in a blender for a smoothie, you don't have to worry about freezing them perfectly.



4 Add protein. To make a low-calorie, all around healthy smoothie, add some protein.^[6] This doesn't mean tossing in some protein powder. There are natural, tastier ways to get protein in your smoothie. Try:^[7]

- Low fat cottage cheese
- Low fat plain Greek yogurt
- Tahini, almond butter, or low-calorie, no sugar added peanut butter
- Nuts, such as almonds or walnuts
- Hemp, chia, flax, or pumpkin seeds
- Silken tofu



5 Add extra flavor. You can add a lot of flavor into your smoothie without adding in extra calories. Smoothies don't have to be just strawberry and banana or tropical. You can make any kind of smoothie you want with any flavor. Try adding spices and herbs to vary the flavor. Try:^[8]

- Cinnamon
- Nutmeg
- Basil
- Mint
- Turmeric
- Cardamom
- Cilantro
- Thyme
- Cloves
- Ginger
- Cayenne

Method 2 of 4: Choosing Low-Calorie Ingredients



1 Choose fruit wisely. Fruit is one of the most popular ingredients in smoothies. They contain more calories than vegetables, and not all fruit have the same calorie content. Fruits with the lowest number of calories are:

- 1 Apricot: 17 calories
- ½ Grapefruit: 20 calories
- 1 Plum: 20 calories
- 1 Kiwi: 25 calories
- 1 Mandarin orange: 20 calories
- 100 grams of Cantaloupe melon: approximately 20 calories
- 1 Peach: 36 calories
- 1 Orange: 48 calories
- 1 Pear: 48 calories
- 1 Nectarine: 50 calories
- ¼ pineapple: 50 calories
- Handful of blueberries: 51 calories; blackberries: 28 calories; cherries: 40 calories; grapes: 60 calories; raspberries: 24 calories; strawberries: 24 calories
- All these calories vary depending on the weight of your fruit.



2 Add veggies for low-calorie nutrition. Vegetables are great, low-calorie additions to your smoothie. You can include any greens or vegetables that you prefer. The following vegetables are under 40 calories for a serving:[9]

- Arugula and other salad greens
- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Kale, spinach, collard, and mustard greens
- Zucchini squash and yellow squash
- Radishes and radish greens
- Celery
- Carrots



3 Reduce calories with your liquid base. The liquid base can be one of the lowest calorie or highest calorie parts of your smoothie. Skip calorie-heavy unhealthy ingredients like ice cream, sherbert, whole milk, sweetened milks, and sugar-filled juices. Instead, make smart choices. Fruit and vegetables will give enough flavor that you shouldn't have to depend on your liquid base. The calorie count for the liquid bases per cup are:[10]

- Coconut water: 46 calories
- Unsweetened almond milk: 30 calories
- Unsweetened rice milk: 120 calories
- Water and Green tea: 0 calories

Method 3 of 4: Making Low-Calorie Smoothies



1 Make a blueberry smoothie. This blueberry smoothie is a great source of omega-3 fats, antioxidants, and minerals. Just add the milk to the blender, then add the remaining ingredients and blend until smooth. The ingredients include:[11]

- 1 cup base milk, like unsweetened almond, soy, or coconut milk
- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 Tablespoon flaxseed oil
- Honey or stevia to taste



2 Try a banana nut smoothie. This smoothie is a good source of minerals like potassium, probiotics, and omega-3 fats. Add the milk and yogurt to the blender first. Then add the remaining ingredients and blend until smooth. Add to the blender:^[12]

- ½ cup low-fat milk or ½ cup of an unsweetened nut milk
- ½ cup plain (low-fat) regular or Greek yogurt
- ½ to 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, almond butter, hazelnut butter, or cashew butter
- ¼ to ½ ripe banana
- Honey or stevia to taste



3 Drink a spinach smoothie. This smoothie is high in iron, fiber, vitamins A and C, as well as healthy fats. If you add walnuts to the smoothie, it is also a good source of Vitamin E.^[13]

- 1 cup washed spinach leaves
- 1 ½ cup chopped honeydew melon
- ¼ cup low-fat regular or Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon nuts, like walnuts, cashews, pine nuts, pecans, or hazelnuts
- Honey or stevia to taste
- Add the yogurt and melon to the blender. Add the remaining ingredients and blend until smooth.



4 Fix a kale cranberry smoothie. This smoothie is high in fiber, minerals, antioxidants, and vitamins. Add the kale, oranges, and bananas one at a time to the cranberry base mixture. Add the lime juice as the last ingredient. Include:

- 2 cups fresh kale
- 1 1/2 cups unsweetened cranberry juice
- 1/2 cup water, coconut milk, coconut water or rice water
- 2 oranges, peeled with the seeds removed
- 2 bananas
- Juice of 1/2 lime



5 Try a ginger green smoothie. This smoothie can be a great energy boosting smoothie early in the morning, especially if you use green tea as a base. It is high in antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Additionally, ginger is an anti-inflammatory herb and can help settle an upset stomach. Add the water or tea, spinach, and romaine to the blender. Add the remaining ingredients and blend until smooth. Ingredients include:[14]

- 1 ½ cup water or green tea
- 1 cup spinach leaves
- ½ cup romaine lettuce
- 2 oranges, peeled and seeded
- 2 bananas
- 1 inch peeled and chopped ginger
- 1 cucumber
- Honey or stevia to taste



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6 Drink a spring tonic smoothie. This is a light, refreshing smoothie perfect for revitalizing yourself in the spring. The dandelion leaves are traditionally used as a spring tonic to remove the winter blues.

- 1 cup green tea
- 1 cup cilantro
- 1 cup chopped kale
- 1 cup chopped dandelion leaves
- 1 sliced cucumber
- 1 cup pineapple chunks
- 1 inch peeled ginger
- ½ avocado
- Honey or stevia to taste
- Add the green tea to the blender. Add the remaining ingredients to the blender and blend until smooth.



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7 Make a coconut green smoothie. This is a light smoothie that refreshes and revitalizes. The parsley acts to help clear wastes from your body. Add the following to the blender and mix until smooth:

- 1 cup coconut water
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup coconut milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped kale
- 1 stalk celery
- 1 pear, cored but not peeled
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, about 2 sprigs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ avocado
- Honey or stevia to taste



8 Go for a spicy veggie smoothie. This smoothie is very low in calories. It's full of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, which makes it a great pick me up. Add the kale, tomatoes, celery, and scallions to the tea and blend. Then add the garlic, lime, and red pepper as a garnish.

- 1 cup green tea
- 2 cups chopped kale
- 3 cups chopped tomatoes
- 1 or 2 full stalks of celery
- 2 scallions, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon minced fresh garlic
- Splash of lime
- 1/8 teaspoon ground red pepper

Method 4 of 4: Choosing The Proper Blender



1 Use a blender instead of a food processor. To make any smoothie, you need a good blender, but higher power blenders do not necessarily mean better blenders. Additionally, you don't want to use a food processor for smoothies. Food processors work better with solid foods, and smoothies are mostly made with softer fruits and vegetables.



2 Try an immersion blender. Immersion blenders are hand-held blenders with the blades at the bottom. An immersion blender is a popular choice for making smoothies. You can blend the ingredients in the cup you want to drink from, or you can do it in a separate bowl or container.^[15]

- You can't crush ice with an immersion blender. Some frozen fruit may pose difficulties, too.



3 Use a traditional countertop blender. Countertop blenders sit on the countertop and ingredients are added to the blender jar. The jar can be glass, plastic, or steel. These blenders can range from \$20 to over \$500.^[16]

- Glass is heaviest and provides the most stability. In addition, glass won't retain any flavor or odors. Glass also allows you to see your smoothie as it is made, which can help you know if you need to add more liquid or if you need to keep blending.
- Plastic blenders can get stained, especially when you are using a lot of brightly colored fruits and vegetables, like blueberries and beets.

A photograph of a technical specification sheet for a SilverCrest SSM 550 E1 blender. A hand is pointing to the 'Power' row, which is highlighted with a green double-headed arrow. The sheet lists various specifications including manufacturer, model name, operating voltage, power, speed levels, power cord length, dimensions, weight, and maximum fill level. A 'wikiHow' logo is in the bottom right corner.

SilverCrest SSM 550 E1	
Technical specifications	
Manufacturer:	SilverCrest
Model name:	SSM 550 E1
Operating voltage:	220 - 240 V, 50
Power:	max. 550 W
Speed levels:	5
Power cord length:	100 cm
Dimensions:	approx. 180 x 173 x 438 mm (W x D x H)
Weight:	approx. 3750g
Max. fill level:	1.75 l

4 Consider a higher speed motor. If you are going to make smoothies with a lot of harder vegetables and fruits, like carrots, beets, frozen fruits, or similar, you may want to buy a blender with a larger motor. This helps ensure the blender is strong enough to puree all the ingredients. Consider a blender of at least 1000 watts.^[17]



5 Decide if you want single-serve or multi-serve. Blenders come in a lot of various sizes. If you are making smoothies for yourself, a single serve blender may be all you need. If you are looking to involve family members, use smoothies to serve guests, or make extra for later, you may be more interested in a multi-serve blender.^[18]

- Traditional countertop blenders are usually multi-serve. High-speed blending systems, like the NutriBullet, are single serve.



Expert Q&A

Question

What do you put in a smoothie?



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Expert Answer

Start with a liquid base, like water, coconut water, almond milk, or green tea. Then, add fruits and veggies. You can also add protein, like nuts, protein powder, or yogurt. If you want more flavor or vitamins, try adding herbs or supplements.

Helpful ☐ 0 Not Helpful ☐ 0



Tips

- Making smoothies is a creative exercise. You can use the ingredients on hand and you can improvise. You can substitute any of the fruits and vegetables in these recipes. If you don't like mangos, substitute peaches, nectarines, or a fruit that is in season. You can substitute spinach for kale, carrots for beets, and asparagus for celery. Find what flavor combinations you like the best.



Warnings

- Never give honey to a child under 12 months of age, as this puts them at risk for infant botulism.

References

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