

Why Choose a Heart-Healthy Latino-Style Eating Pattern?

A **heart-healthy eating pattern** will lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. A Latino-style eating pattern that includes foods common to Mexico and Central and South America can be very heart-healthy when it has black and red beans, avocado, colored vegetables like peppers and tomatoes, yams and plantains, grilled lean meats, brown rice, and corn oil or olive oil.



However, some foods used in Latino-style cooking are *less healthy*. These include foods like lard and other solid fats, whole-fat cheese, white rice and white flour tortillas, pork belly and fatty cuts of beef, fried croquetas, empanadas and tostones, and sweets like flan and churros. Eating these unhealthy foods can cause excess body weight, high cholesterol and fats in the blood, diabetes, and high blood pressure, risk factors commonly found in Latinos. The **National Lipid Association** recommends the *heart-healthy tips below* to reduce your risk of heart disease when enjoying Latino-style meals.

Tips for Eating Heart-Healthy Latino-Style Foods

Eat lots of vegetables

- Fill ½ of your plate with raw and cooked vegetables
- Eat colorful red, green, and yellow peppers
- Cook squashes like napoles and chayote
- Use spicy sofrito and tomatillo sauce

Eat plant-based or lean protein

- Fill ¼ of your plate with lean protein
- Eat more pinto and black beans
- Grill fatty fish like salmon
- Cook skinless chicken breasts
- Cook lean beef and pork

Choose healthy fats

- Avoid using lard and butter in cooking
- Avoid whole milk and full-fat cheeses
- Use more avocado and less cheese in meals
- Snack on raw or unsalted nuts and seeds
- Use canola, corn, extra-virgin olive, and safflower oil

Choose fiber-rich whole grains and tubers

- Fill ¼ of your dinner plate with brown rice
- Eat maize, yucca, yams, and plantains
- Eat whole-wheat or corn tortillas
- Choose whole-grain cereals

Choose a variety of fruits

Choose papaya, mangos, bananas and pineapple for snacks and dessert.

Eat low-fat dairy foods

- Drink skim or 1% milk
- Use reduced-fat cheeses
- Try plain soy or rice milk
- Buy low-fat, low sugar yogurt

Use spices for flavor instead of salt

Season dishes with chili peppers, cumin, oregano, cinnamon, and cilantro



Heart-Healthy Latino-Style Meal Ideas



1 egg with refried beans made with canola or olive + corn tortilla + salsa - 1 banana - coffee or tea



3 oz. skinless chicken breast with herbs, spices and onions cooked in corn oil, yucca and fresh papaya

4 oz. grilled fish, non-fried plantains, black beans made with canola oil - ensalada with tomatoes



Snack on almonds, pumpkin seeds, and dried mango mix OR ¼ cup guacamole with raw vegetables

A registered dietitian nutritionist can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle, and support you in your journey to a healthful dietary pattern.