

**NaNo Nutrition**

**Feeding Yourself and Possibly Your Family**

**Fast**

**During NaNoWriMo**

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Smashwords Edition

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This book is dedicated to my son and food consultant, Jed Early.

This book is not an official publication of National Novel Writing Month.

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## **I Won't Insult You With Sandwich Recipes and Such**

You are an adult, or nearly an adult, and you know how to make sandwiches and noodles and such. And you know what you like in your sandwiches. You know already that you can fry an egg or slightly scramble an egg and put it between bread slices with a bit of mayo and maybe mustard. You know that you can make a grilled cheese by melting the butter in the pan first instead of buttering or mayonnaising the bread (although mayonnaising and frying it with the mayo side down is good, too), and you surely know enough to use grated sharp cheddar instead of slices.

You also know that a big can of chicken makes way better sandwiches than tuna ever thought of. Also that you can trick yourself into eating some fruits and vegetables by grating apples, carrots or zucchini into your chicken salad and throwing some greens in there. And that you can do the same things with egg salad.

And that peanut butter (or sunflower butter or almond butter) sandwiches are good with bananas or mayonnaise and not just jam.

And that you can put any old thing with noodles, but that they are especially good with bacon, garlic and onions that you fry up in a pan and then add the cooked noodles to. (The Phil special.)

And that spaghetti is good, and macaroni and cheese is good, especially if you add extra cheese. And that the store and Schwan's sell pierogies and pot pies and pizzas. And that scrambled eggs are a meal if they are made with onions and other tasty vegetables.

You know all this so I will not be insulting you that way.

## **Rice and Stuff**

First you cook some rice. Lots of rice. Brown or white. Brown has the best nutrition, and it tastes good, but if you don't like it, then make basmati rice, which is also high in nutrition. Or whatever the heck kind you like.

Your rice cooker is very smart and knows how to cook rice without making a fire in the kitchen while you're writing. Set a timer anyway so that you don't get totally dried out rice and that you don't die from lack of food. This is important, the not dying part.

Okay. Got lots of rice now?

### *Meals Made Right in the Rice Cooker*

You can eat rice with all kinds of stuff. My son, Jed, a busy creative sort, does many meals using the rice cooker. He doesn't make a big batch like I just told you to, but just enough rice for one meal. He also puts a chunk of chicken in the steamer on top, half a breast, along with some vegetables, like little carrots (those baby carrots are fun during NaNo, as they are already washed and small and cute) or frozen veggies or chunks of cauliflower or broccoli. When the rice cooker says it's done, the other stuff is done, too,

and he adds some sauce he got at the store, whatever kind he wants from the gravy and sauce part of the store. Works great, he says. I've tried it and it works great for me, too.

### *Rice and Beans – Fancy and Plain*

You have your rice already, and maybe it's already hot because this is the day you made it. If not, then it's ok to warm it up in the microwave. Splash some water on that stuff and warm it up just before you put it together with the beans and such.

For plain rice and beans, just warm up some beans from a can. Throw some salsa or sour cream or cheese on there, or any combination thereof, or nothing at all, and it's food.

For fancier rice and beans, while the beans are getting hot, you sauté some onions and celery in a frying pan in butter or something else you like. Olive oil? Avocado oil? Coconut oil? You could do some peppers or cabbage, too. Or other vegetables. If you want to save time chopping, then use some already-chopped veggies from the store. It's not cheating during NaNo to use those already-chopped peppers and stuff like that. You can even use pico de gallo this way. Near the end of the sautéing time, put in some greens or some cilantro or both and cover the pan to wilt the green stuff. If you want the green stuff. Or leave the cilantro not heated, it's good that way. too.

### *Mjeddrah*

Mjeddrah is a Middle Eastern dish, and if you make it the real way it's not real fast and NaNo month-ish. If you want to do it real, here's a great recipe:

<http://andreasgardencooking.com/2013/02/24/mjeddrah-lentils-rice-onions/>

But you can also do it a fast way by cooking rice and lentils together in the rice cooker. Then use some cheaty fried onions from somewhere and throw them in there, too. French-fried onions from the store, or frozen ones, or maybe you were in a mood and fried a boatload of them the day before. Put some nice seasonings in there, cinnamon, nutmeg and cardamom.

Serve your mjeddrah topped with cucumbers and other raw vegetables and some lemon juice. I have been known to skip the seasonings and just put ranch dressing on it. It does not resemble mjeddrah much, but it does resemble food.

### *Fried Rice*

Fry some vegetables, and when they're cooked through, put in some hot rice and mix it all up well. Then make a well in the center and your favorite cooking oil. When it's the right temperature for eggs, mix a couple eggs up in a bowl, and dump them in there and cook them scrambled egg style. Then toss them around with the rice and veggies. If you are seasoning with soy sauce, add it AFTER the eggs are cooked to keep the eggs from turning an ugly gray that any children in the house will whine about. Fried rice does not have to be Chinese – you can make it into anything you want it to be. Let the oil be coconut oil, and add some peanuts and cilantro for a Thai flavor. Or let the oil be coconut and add some curry powder for an Indian flavor. Or use butter and it'll be American. Or

even French if you toss in some parsley or a tiny tiny bit of tarragon. Remember, Julia Child said, “The secret to making good eggs is to use lots and lots of butter.”

### *Rice Pudding*

Grease a little casserole dish. In a bowl, mix up 2 eggs, a cup of milk, 1/3 cup of sugar, one teaspoon vanilla and one teaspoon cinnamon. If you like cloves and ginger then go ahead and throw some of that in there with the cinnamon, or pumpkin pie spice. Put two cups of your rice in the casserole dish and pour the mixed up stuff over it. Bake at 325° for 25 minutes or until set. Or in the microwave till set. I’d use half power and do it slowly.

That might look like a dessert. So what? Desserts are food, too.

### *Rice and Vegetables and Chicken or Something*

Do this just like you did the fancy rice and beans only without the beans. Those vegetables are good without any beans, too. You could put in more if you want since there are no silly beans to fill you up.

Or put something else in there instead of beans. I like to keep thawed chicken breasts around. I take them out a few minutes before it’s time to cook and thaw them in a big bowl full of hot water. It takes only 15 – 20 minutes to thaw them this way. Perfect for pantsers! Then you slice them up and fry them in the pan that you already cooked the vegetables in, then add the veggies back in to mix them up.

You can treat fish the same way, only it’s more delicate so you won’t cook it for as long. Or cooked shrimp.

Bored? Sauces and gravies make things saucier. Puns for the punster!

For gravy, sprinkle some flour on there just as it’s finishing up, then add milk or broth and let it get hot.

For cheese sauce, do the same thing and then add some cheese, stir it a little bit, take the food off the burner and cover it while the cheese melts.

For peanut sauce, in a little bowl mix equal parts hot water, peanut butter and soy sauce. It adds some protein to vegetable things and it tastes good, too. Oh, if your veggies aren’t sweet (for example, sweet potatoes and carrots don’t need this), put a little bit of sugar in that peanut sauce. You can add some chili sauce or ground chili if you want some spice.

For a curry sauce, mix coconut milk (the kind from a can, not the stuff that is in the dairy case pretending to be milk) with some ginger paste and some garlic paste and some kind of curry powder or a reasonable facsimile. Or some curry paste that you found in the store.

### **Potatoes and Stuff**

Did I say potatoes? Yes, I did. But you can use sweet potatoes or garnet yams, too, for more nutrition. (Garnet yams are sweet potatoes, too, a different variety, but they’re

called yams in the USA even though they aren't really yams, as that is a whole 'nother species in the rest of the world. It's a marketing thing.) Just think about what the various potato-like things taste like and decide what to use for what. Sweet potatoes and yams bake up beautifully and they make really nice potato salad, too. (See the salad section.)

How do you bake potatoes? There are several ways to do it. Lately I have been happy with doing them in the microwave in a potato bag. A potato bag is a quilted bag found in a kitchen shop. It is a pretty cool thing. You scrub your potatoes, put them in the bag and nuke 'em. You don't dry the taters off and you don't poke holes in them. It is really magical. I recommend it highly. You can get a couple of them here: [OVister set of 2 potato bags](#)

Of course you can still bake them in the oven, too. It takes longer, but they come out great. Here is how to do it: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/alton-brown/the-baked-potato-recipe1.html> The short way to tell you to do this is wash, dry, poke, 350° for an hour. Sweet potatoes get rolled over halfway through and they have to sit on a foil-lined baking sheet to save messing up your oven.

Now to magically transform these potato-things into meals, you top them with whatever you like: butter, olive oil, cottage cheese, grated cheese, cheese sauce, parmesan, bacon, chicken salad, yogurt, scrambled eggs for crying out loud, shrimp, herbs, caramelized onions, fried mushrooms, spaghetti sauce (yeah, even leftover), chili, any kind of beans, broccoli.

Also, any topping that's good on a sweet potato will be good in a halved acorn squash, or on a slab of some bigger squash.

## **Drink Your Greens**

If you know me very well, you knew I'd get around to this part.

Greens. Leaves and stems of green plants, are vital to your health and very few people are getting enough of them. I like to drink green smoothies. They are fast to make and fast to drink and packed with nutrition. If you do not have a turbo blender, then stick to very tender fruits and vegetables to make your smoothies so as not to trash your blender. Put in 2 or 3 cups of spinach, cold filtered water to the top of the greens (a cup or two) and a banana or cut up pear. Blend it on the "whole juice" setting if your machine has such a thing. Later on, or if you have a turbo blender, you can use chard and other stuff. For lots and lots of recipes, go here: <http://www.rawfamily.com/green-smoothie>

I usually put either a banana or a pear in as my fruit so there is plenty of soluble fiber, and if I have any leftover smoothie it won't separate in the jar and look ugly.

Yes, you can also get greens from eating salad, but you would have to eat a LOT of salad to get this much green goodness and I guarantee that you cannot chew as well as a blender can. Also, salads are slower than smoothies and drinking them will save you time that you can use for more writing.

## **Salad Thingies**

Okay, yeah, salads are good, too. Green salads. Get the big container at the store, the one with mixed greens, or whatever kind of greens you like. Eat that stuff up with a good

dressing that you like on it. Add grated zucchini on top – it's faster than grated carrot and it's good for you, too. Sunflower seeds, beans, hard-boiled eggs, leftover veggies. You can put all kinds of stuff on salad.

### *Sweet Potato Salad*

You probably have a favorite potato salad recipe – this is kind of like that. But when the sweet potatoes are cooked and you have just drained them, dump over them real quick while they're still hot, a combination of 1 tablespoon vinegar and one tablespoon of mustard and toss them. The flavor will go right into those things and make them yummiier. For my dressing I use half mayo and half sour cream and a little salt. Don't need any mustard or sugar. Whatever kind of pickles or none. Bacon is good in there if you like bacon. Plenty of hard-boiled eggs. I like to smash the yolks and mix them with the dressing for color and to keep any whiny people from getting a big bite of yolk.

### *Taco Salad*

Along with fancy scrambled eggs, taco salad is one of my default meals.

Do not listen to detractors who say that yours is not REAL taco salad, as my children once said to me when I made it with beans instead of meat. No. If it has corn chips, greens, some kind of protein and some cheese, then you may declare it to be a taco salad.

Taco salads I have known that may not standard, but really good? One featured cabbage and pulled pork. Others have beans as the protein. I make it with chicken regularly. Sometimes shrimp. I sometimes use mixed greens, but the intense flavors do interfere with the cheese, so usually I stick with romaine or cabbage. Iceberg lettuce is a standard for many, but it is not as nutritious as romaine or just about any other green in the entire world, so you might want to avoid it.

Toppings can include taco sauce, sour cream, or ranch dressing or taco sauce in a pinch. Of course guacamole or cut up avocados, tomatoes, pico de gallo. By the way, I usually do avocados this way: <http://www.foodshouldtastegood.com/entertaining/crunch-feed/slicing-up-an-avocado>

None of those things are totally necessary, though, to make it a taco salad. If you have somebody in your house who finds all the frills necessary, then they can provide said frills.

## **Soups**

Okay, not to be insulting as I know you know how to go to the store and get soup, so I'll just give you a favorite recipe, and it is timely for NaNoWriMo, too.

### *Pumpkin Soup*

1 15 or whatever it is ounce can pumpkin

2 cups vegetable broth  
1 cup half and half (double cream for non-USA residents)

Mix that stuff up and warm it up on the stove in a saucepan slowly. At the end you can add some garlic powder or nutmeg and serve it with a spoonful of sour cream if you want to be fancy, but it is good just the way it is.

### **About the Author**

Did you get all the way through this without knowing what NaNoWriMo is? Well, go on over to the site and have a look. I do NaNo every year – it's a lot of fun.

<http://nanowrimo.org/>

If you want to see snapshots of my novels, go here:

<http://nanowrimo.org/participants/duktape/novels>

If you enjoyed this little book, please take a look at my other titles here:

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/DukTape>

If you would like to add anything to the book, I'm open to suggestions! Write to me at kathygab (at) gmail (dot) com. Please put NaNo Nutrition in the subject line so that I see it right away. Or if I'm your facebook friend, write to me there.