

Balanced Budget Cookbook Lesson Plan: Tuna Salad

Lesson Overview

This lesson will feature the tuna salad recipe from *The Balanced Budget Cookbook* (page 17). You will demonstrate how to prepare this recipe while the audience follows along, working in groups of 4, to prepare their own batch of tuna salad. This lesson will also include nutrition education segments focused on MyPlate, the health benefits of tuna, and how to select the most nutritious canned foods.

Lesson Objectives

Participants will:

- recognize how recipe ingredients fit into the MyPlate guide.
- identify the health benefits of tuna.
- describe the characteristics to consider when selecting canned foods.
- prepare a tuna salad recipe from *The Balanced Budget Cookbook*.

Allergen Alert: This recipe contains fish, soy, eggs, and wheat.

Estimated Time of Lesson: 20 minutes

Shopping List: Ingredients and Equipment

The audience will work in groups of 4 to create this recipe. The amount of ingredients and equipment will vary based on the expected audience size. If necessary, groups may share some ingredients and equipment (larger bottles of mayonnaise, salt and pepper shakers, can openers, etc.).

Recipe Ingredients (per group of 4 participants)

- 2, 6-ounce cans of tuna in water
- ¼ cup light mayonnaise
- ¼ cup finely diced celery (approximately 1 celery stalk)
- Salt
- Black pepper
- 24 whole grain crackers (approximately half of a box)

Equipment:

- “Snack” sized plastic bags (1 per group, for portioning prepared celery)
- Hand sanitizing wipes (1 per person)
- Can openers (1 per group)
- 20-ounce disposable bowls (1 per group, for mixing tuna salad)
- 12-ounce disposable bowls (1 per group, for draining excess liquid from canned tuna)
- ¼ cup measuring cup (1 per group)

- Plastic knives (1 per group)
- Mixing spoons (1 per group)
- Medium (~9") disposable plates (1 per person)
- Disposable spoons (1 per person)
- Paper napkins (1 per person)
- Cleaning supplies for before and/or after cooking demonstration (trash bags, disinfecting wipes, etc.)

Preparation before the Demonstration

- Wash and dry celery. Finely dice celery and portion ¼ cup diced celery into “snack” sized sandwich bags (1 per group).
- Print copies of the lesson handout (1 per person, see accompanying document)
- Set up stations for you and the participants (working in groups of 4) to prepare the recipe. If necessary, groups may share some ingredients and equipment (larger bottles of mayonnaise, salt and pepper shakers, can openers, etc.). Ideally, each station should contain:
 - 4 lesson handouts
 - 2 cans of tuna
 - 1 jar of light mayonnaise
 - ¼ cup diced celery
 - Salt and pepper shakers
 - 1 box of whole grain crackers
 - 4 hand sanitizing wipes
 - 1 can opener
 - 1 small (12-ounce) bowl
 - 1 large (20-ounce) bowl
 - 1 measuring cup (1/4 cup)
 - 1 plastic knife
 - 1 mixing spoon
 - 4 medium (~9") disposable plates
 - 4 disposable spoons
 - 4 paper napkins

Suggested Script for Cooking Demonstration

“Good [morning/afternoon]! My name is [insert name], and I am excited to be here today to share with you some tips on healthy eating. We are also going to work together in groups of 4 to prepare a recipe from the Balanced Budget Cookbook. [Ensure that audience is evenly split into groups.] For those of you who are not familiar with the Balanced Budget Cookbook, it is a 29-page cookbook that was designed by two dietetic interns from the University of Florida Pediatric Pulmonary Center. This cookbook contains child-friendly and nutritious recipes centered around ingredients commonly provided by local food pantries or WIC. If you would like a copy of the cookbook, please see me at the end of this cooking demonstration and I would be happy to provide you with a copy! Has anyone had the chance to try any recipes from the Balanced Budget Cookbook yet?”

[Allow audience to respond. If participants have tried recipes, ask what they made and whether they enjoyed it.]

“Today, we will be making a tuna salad. This is a quick and nutritious recipe that can be easily adapted by adding different seasonings or mix-ins to suit your or your family’s taste. We will be serving the tuna salad on crackers, but you may also serve it on whole-wheat bread to form a sandwich. We will be adding diced celery to this tuna salad. This is an easy way to incorporate vegetables into this meal, and it also adds a nice “crunch” to the tuna salad. If you make this dish at home, you may substitute other mix-ins, such as diced onions, apples, bell peppers, or relish. Does anyone have favorite tuna salad additions that they would like to share with the group?”

[Allow audience to respond and discuss.]

“All of the ingredients we will be using today are laid out on the table in front of you. This recipe calls for 2, 6-ounce cans of tuna, ¼ cup light mayonnaise, ¼ cup finely diced celery, salt and black pepper to taste, and 24 whole grain crackers [hold up or point to ingredients as you introduce them]. Let’s take a closer look at how this recipe fits into the MyPlate guidelines. There is a picture of MyPlate on the handout [hold up handout and point to MyPlate image]. Is anyone familiar with MyPlate?”

[Allow audience to respond and discuss.]

“MyPlate serves as a visual guide to promote a healthy eating style. It encourages people to focus on making healthy food and beverage choices from all five of the food groups – fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy. MyPlate recommends that half of your plate consist of fruits and vegetables. A quarter of your plate should contain lean protein, and the final quarter should contain grains, ideally whole grains. You should also have a serving of low-fat or fat-free dairy with each meal. Who can tell me how the ingredients from today’s meal fit into MyPlate?”

[Allow audience to answer. Ideally, they will determine that canned tuna is a protein food, celery is a vegetable, and whole grain crackers fit into the grain group. If needed, facilitate the discussion to reach this answer.]

“Great job! The canned tuna is a lean protein source [hold up or point to canned tuna]. One serving of tuna, which is 3 ounces (or the size of a deck of playing cards), contains 70 calories, less than one gram of fat, and 16 grams of protein! Besides being a lean protein, tuna has many other health benefits. Tuna is a great source of vitamin D, which is important for bone health. A 3-ounce serving of tuna contains nearly 40% of the daily recommended amount of vitamin D. Tuna also contains heart healthy EPA and DHA, which are polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acids. Because of these health benefits, it is recommended that you consume seafood, such as tuna, twice a week. Some of you may be familiar with the concern related to the mercury content in fish. Canned, light tuna, which is what we are using today, has a moderate mercury content. It is safe to consume once or twice per week. However, pregnant women or young children should limit their consumption to once per week.”

“Celery fits into the vegetable food group [hold or point to celery]. Finally, the whole grain crackers belong to the grain group [hold or point to whole grain crackers]. You can check the ingredients list to determine if a product is whole grain. The first ingredient should be a whole grain. You can also look for the Whole Grain Stamp. If we wanted to incorporate foods from all five of the food groups, we could serve this dish with a side of fruit and a serving of low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt.”

“This recipe makes 4 servings of tuna salad. You can multiply or divide this recipe to create more or less of the tuna salad. First things first, we want to make sure that our hands, preparation area, and produce are clean! I have provided each station with hand wipes to sanitize their hands. To save time, we have washed and diced the celery beforehand.”

[Sanitize your hands with a hand wipe and wait for the audience to do so as well.]

“We will begin by opening and draining two, six-ounce cans of tuna. Be careful with the sharp edges of the cans. If you were at home, you could drain the water from the can into the sink. For now, you can drain the water into the smaller disposable bowl at your station. We will discard the liquid at the end of the demonstration. You can easily drain the tuna by pushing the lid of the can inward to prevent the tuna from falling out, then tilt the can to allow the liquid to drain out.”

[Open cans of tuna with a can opener and drain liquid into the 12-ounce bowl.]

“We will put the tuna in the larger mixing bowl, along with ¼ cup light mayonnaise.”

[Add tuna to 20-ounce bowl. Use a measuring cup to measure ¼ cup light mayonnaise. Use the plastic knife, if necessary. Add mayonnaise to bowl with tuna.]

“Next, we will mix in our diced celery. This is where you can be creative at home and add different mix-ins, such as diced onions, apples, bell peppers, or relish.”

[Add diced celery to mixing bowl.]

“We will now mix these ingredients together until they are combined nicely. The ingredients should mix together easily. You can use a spoon, fork, rubber spatula, or any utensil that you have on hand.”

[Mix ingredients together using mixing spoon.]

“We are almost done! At this point, we can add our spices. We just have salt and pepper here, but you can add your favorite seasonings when you make this dish at home. We will just add a couple sprinkles of salt and pepper and then give the tuna salad a final stir.”

[Sprinkle salt and pepper into mixing bowl. Mix well.]

“Our tuna salad is now ready to eat! As we discussed before, you can serve it as a sandwich on whole wheat bread, or simply enjoy it with whole wheat crackers like we have today. If you make this dish at home and don’t plan on eating it right away, store it in the refrigerator for up to 3-5 days.”

[Pass out plates, napkins, and spoons if not already present at stations. Allow audience to taste tuna salad. Solicit for feedback from the audience on what they think of the dish.]

“While you are enjoying the tuna salad, I would like to discuss another aspect of this recipe – the utilization of canned meat. Canned foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and meats, are less expensive alternatives to fresh or frozen foods. Canned foods are also a convenient option due to their long shelf life. When selecting canned fruits, vegetables, and meats, there are a few important factors to consider.”

“Canned foods may differ in the way that they are packaged. For example, some canned fruits are canned in water or 100% fruit juice, while others are packaged in syrup. Which of these do you think is the more nutritious choice?”

[Allow audience to respond. The ideal answer is that the canned fruits packaged in water or juice from the fruit are more nutritious, as the fruits packaged in syrup contain added sugars.]

“Great thoughts! When selecting canned fruits, try to avoid those that are packaged in syrup, as these contain added sugars. Canned fruits packaged in water or 100% juice are a more nutritious choice. A half-cup serving of canned peaches in 100% juice contains 70 calories and 13 g of sugar, all of which are naturally found in the peaches. On the other hand, a half-cup serving of canned peaches in syrup contains 100 calories and 21 g sugar, many of which are added from the syrup.”

“Now let’s discuss canned vegetables. Canned vegetables often differ from one another in the amount of salt that is added. When selecting canned vegetables, it is important to look at the nutrition facts panel and choose the option that contain the least amount of sodium. Often times, these items are labeled as ‘no sodium’, ‘low-sodium’, or ‘reduced sodium’. A half-cup serving of canned peas contains 380 mg of sodium, which is 16% of recommended daily sodium intake. On the other hand, a half-cup serving of ‘no-sodium’ canned peas only contains 10 mg of sodium, which is the amount that is naturally occurring in peas.”

“Finally, let’s discuss canned meats such as the canned tuna we used in this recipe. When selecting canned meats, some are packaged in water, while others are packaged in oil. Who can tell me what this tuna is packaged in, and how they found out this information?”

[Allow audience to respond. The correct answer is that the canned tuna is packaged in water. This information could have been found on the front of the package, but more importantly, it is also found on the ingredients list.]

“Correct! This tuna is packaged in water, vegetable broth, and salt. Even if it is listed on the front of the package, you should also check the ingredients list to see all of the ingredients in a product. Canned tuna packaged in water is more nutritious than canned tuna packaged in oil, as the oil adds extra fat and calories without providing any additional nutrients. Some canned meats are seasoned, which may increase the sodium content.”

“Thank you all for joining me today for this cooking demonstration. I hope you enjoyed the tuna salad and learned some new information related to nutrition. The recipe from today, as well as some of the nutrition information we discussed, is listed on the handout for you to take home and share with your family. Does anyone have any questions?”

[Allow audience to ask questions.]

Lesson References

- Choose MyPlate. USDA MyPlate Web site. <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>. Accessed May 17, 2017.
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- Vitamin D Fact Sheet for Health Professionals. National Institutes of Health Web site. <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminD-HealthProfessional/>. Accessed May 17, 2017.

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