



HEALTHIER YOU
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Winter Warmers

As we reach the peak of winter, we are often asked about foods that will make us feel better but not have a dramatic impact on our weight. We are looking at modifying some traditional meal options to ensure they are healthier for you. So what are the top 5 winter warmer suggestions? Here are some suggestions:

1. **Breakfast - Rolled Oats.** The traditional start to the day can be an ideal winter warmer. A recent Harvard University meta-analysis of 12 studies involving nearly 800,000 people found that eating 70 grams of whole grains a day - the equivalent of a large bowl of porridge - lowers the risk of all-cause death by 22 per cent and death from cancer by 20 per cent. It also reduces the risk of dying from cardiovascular disease by 20 per cent ⁽¹⁾. To make porridge a whole lot healthier, we have 2 suggestions to have less of an impact on your weight. Rather than making it on milk and adding brown sugar to sweeten it, try making it on water and using yoghurt as a sweetener. It is creamier, contains less calorie and will keep you warm
2. **Lunch – Soup.** Soup is the ideal winter warmer at lunch. Important ingredients to make a healthy soup. Firstly, a lot of vegetables for fibre. Secondly, make sure there is a good quality protein (eg chicken). Protein fills us up and you will be fuller for longer if there is a protein in the soup. Consider adding lentils or legumes to the traditional pumpkin soup. And instead of a bread roll with the soup, try using crispbreads. Often crispbreads contain ½ the energy of bread
3. **Evening meal – Stews.** Get the slow cooker out and create a nourishing stew. Like the soup, make sure there is a quality, lean protein (e.g. beef). Add plenty of vegetables. To reduce the energy in the stew, cut down on potato, pumpkin, peas and corn. These “starchy vegetables” contain about 3 times the energy of non-starchy vegetables (e.g. carrots, mushrooms etc) and need to be limited. For the gravy, use a low salt option
4. **Desserts:** Try using lighter energy deserts to finish the meal. Instead of heavy desserts like puddings and ice cream, try sweet treats like meringue and fruit or yoghurt. If you make the meringues use artificial sweeteners instead of sugar. Always aim to use a low energy, low fat yoghurt (e.g. yo plait for me) as the yoghurt
5. **Drinks:** Try modifying your hot chocolate. Consider making it on water instead of making it on milk. Not all hot chocolates are the same. Some brands of hot chocolate (e.g. Vitarium) use natural sweeteners like stevia instead of using sugar and this substantially reduces the energy they provide. And don't forget a cup of green tea contains plenty of antioxidants and is an ideal way to increase your overall fluid intake. On top of that, it contains substantially less calories.

So there are ways you can create winter warmers this season that do not have a long term impact in your waist line. It is a matter of a few simple changes for an overall healthier you.

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Reference:

1. <http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/diet-and-fitness/bowl-of-porridge-a-day-could-be-secret-to-a-longer-life-20160613-gpic00.html>