

Why Choose a Heart-Healthier Southern-Style Eating Pattern?

If you live in the south, you may eat a Southern-style diet. This eating style can raise your risk of heart disease and stroke. It often has foods like fried chicken, fried seafood, and country-fried steak, and processed meats like sausage, bacon, bologna, and lunchmeats. It may have organ meats like liver and chicken gizzards and eggs and egg dishes. Drinks are often sweet teas and sodas. These foods are high in unhealthy fats, cholesterol, salt, and sugar. The traditional Southern diet is also low in healthy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats. Southern eating can be tasty and *healthier* with the tips below.



Tips for Eating Heart-Healthy Southern-Style Foods

Eat More Vegetables

- Fill ½ of your plate with colorful vegetables
- Choose fresh or no-salt frozen vegetables
- Sauté, steam, or roast fresh vegetables
- Steam collard and other greens

Eat More Fruits

- Choose berries and dark fruits
- Buy fresh or frozen fruits
- Buy canned fruit with no sugar
- Drink only 100% fruit juice
- Limit juice to ½ cup per day

Choose Whole Grain Foods

- Choose brown and wild rice
- Bake with whole grain flours
- Choose whole grain sliced breads
- Buy or bake whole grain corn bread



Eat Healthier Protein Foods

- Eat more beans, peas, legumes, and nuts
- Eat more fish—fresh and canned
- Limit bacon, sausage, and hot dogs
- Choose lean cuts of beef or pork
- Choose skinless white poultry

Add Flavor, Not Salt

- Use lemon, lime, and orange zest, mustards, fruity vinegars, herbs, and spices

Reduce Added Sugars and Unhealthy Fats

- Use half the sugar in recipes
- Drink unsweetened flavored iced tea
- Limit butter, margarine, and shortening
- Use olive or canola oils and their spreads

Heart-Healthy Food Swaps

Instead of:	Choose:
Pork or Beef BBQ	Baked chopped chicken breast without skin with a low-salt, low-sugar BBQ sauce
Meat Chili	Ground white turkey breast, kidney beans, diced tomatoes, chili powder (all no-salt)
Baked Potato	Baked sweet potato topped with chopped pineapple or no-added sugar applesauce
White Rice or Pasta	Brown or wild rice or rice and pastas made with cauliflower
Mac N Cheese	Whole-wheat pasta with a low-fat shredded cheese
Fast Food Breakfast	Whole grain English Muffin with egg-whites and low-fat cheese OR oatmeal with diced apples and cinnamon OR whole grain pancakes with fresh fruit
Frying	Bake, roast, grill, poach, boil, or oven-“fry” (dip in egg white, bread crumbs, and bake)

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.