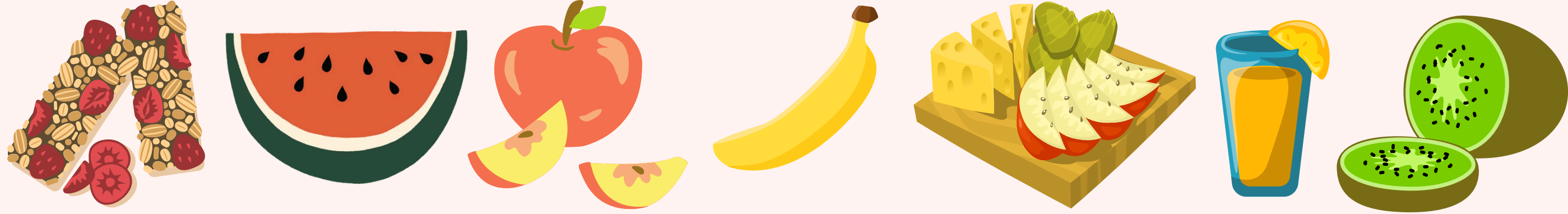




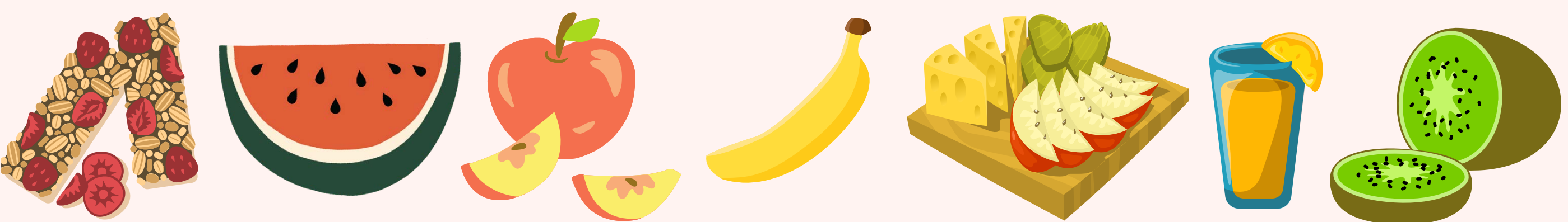
MEHARA'S
SNACK
JOURNAL



Hello reader,

Welcome to Mehara's Snack Journal! This book highlights healthy snack substitutions. On each page, if you click on *More about the dish*, you will be taken to the recipe I followed. The *specialty* category highlights the importance of this specific version of the dish compared to the traditional recipe. The *Improvements* category is what I could have done differently, hopefully you can learn from my mistakes! Lastly, the *unique physical and mental health benefits* discusses the health benefits certain ingredients in the dish has on the human body. This section is based on research found, but please be advised that most of these findings need to be further validated according to the researchers.

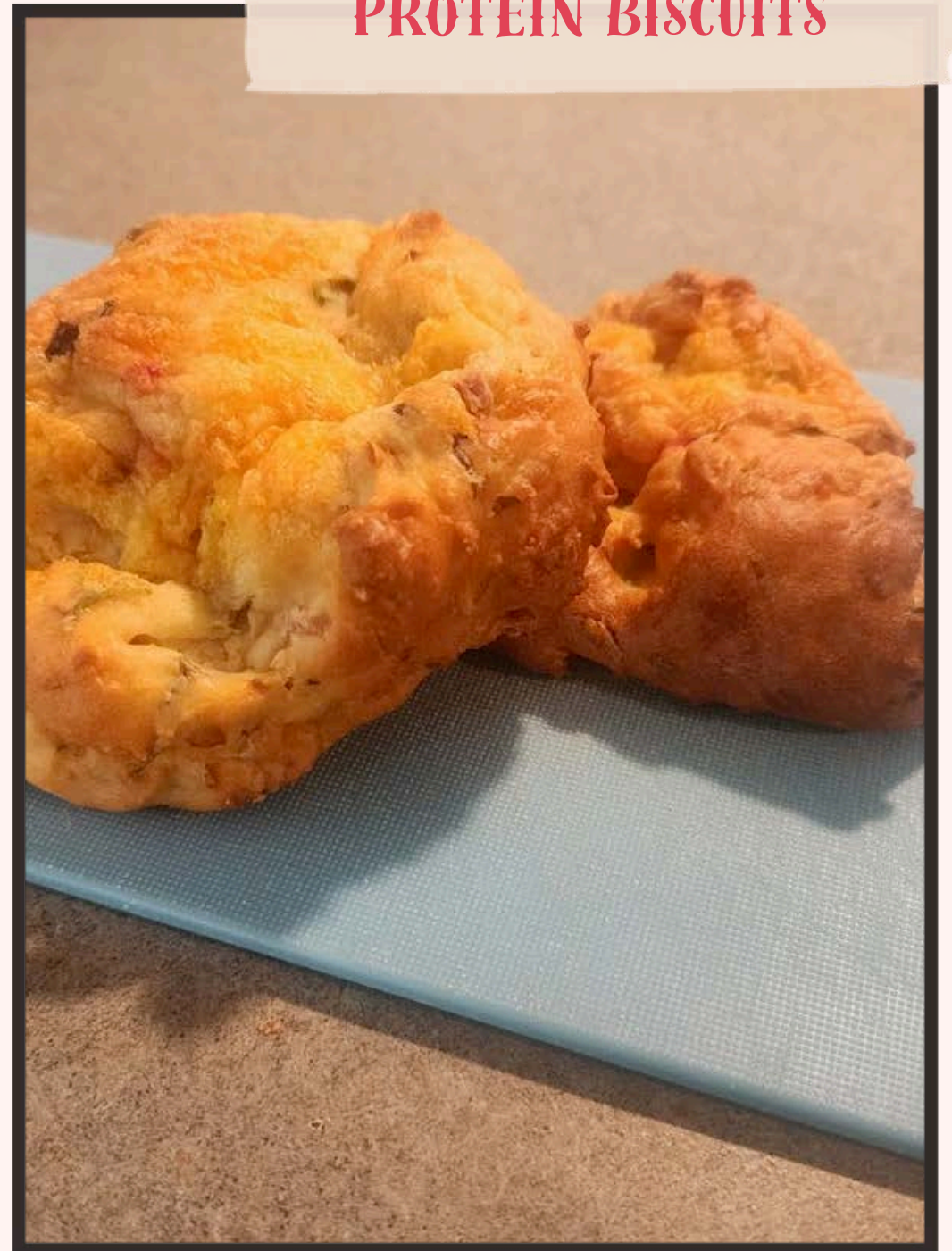
I hope you enjoy this journal and learn a thing or two from it!



More about the dish



- Protein biscuits are a savory meal prep snack or breakfast choice. Each biscuit contains 15g protein (Addison, 2024).
- As mentioned, these biscuits can be eaten as a quick snack in-between the day or paired with some berries and Greek yogurt for a balanced breakfast.
- Additionally, these biscuits are customizable, where the meat and greens can always be substituted and still taste great



Specialty

What sets this biscuit apart from a traditional fast food chain biscuit (Addison, 2024):

- Greek Yogurt = source of protein and fat, while adding a moist texture
- Flax seeds = source of fiber and protein
- spices = garlic powder, salt and red pepper flakes adds flavor
- Chives = source of herbs
- Spinach = source of greens

Improvements ✓

It was the first time I used Greek yogurt for baking and was not too confident going into it. While I was making the dish, the dough did get a bit too sticky than what the instructions portrayed so I panicked a bit. In the future, I want to start by making a smaller batch by reducing the amount of ingredients so I do not end up making a bulk of items that I am making of the first time. Overall, I am proud of my progress because I usually butcher biscuit recipes.

Unique physical and mental health benefits



In addition to the specified ingredients that makes these biscuits a healthier option, I would like to highlight the additional benefits of using Greek Yogurt. In addition to the nutrients (calcium, protein, iodine, and vit B-12), probiotics in the yogurt helps improve gut health. In relation, research suggest that the intake of probiotic yogurt helps with stress, depression and anxiety, due to improved gut health enabling the production of neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine.

"The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison."

- Ann Wigmore

More about the dish



- Kale chips are a popular snack that is made of three simple ingredients; kale, olive oil and salt.
- Acts as a healthier substitutions compared to store bought potato chips
- Some ways to enjoy kale chips other than as a snack is with dips, in salads, or sandwiches (Jessica, 2019)
- Variety of flavours = cheesy, spicy, sweet, and herbed kale chips (Jessica, 2019)



Specialty

Why are kale chips better than potato chips (Shiue, 2017):

- Compared to potato chips, when baked into chips, kale still keeps its nutritional value
- Kale is packed with fiber, antioxidants, vitamin A, and calcium, and it also provides B vitamins, vitamin C, and potassium
- Additionally, kale is naturally free of fat and sodium --> only small amount added with the oil and salt

Improvements ✓

Even though I have made and tried kale chips before, this attempt was after quite some time. There are definitely some things I would change when I make them again. For starters, I should have let the leaves completely dry because I did end up with some soggy chips. Additionally, I think I should have spreaded out the leaves and baked it in two trays instead of one. I found that the leaves that were bunched up and folded over did not crisp evenly. Despite the improvements I should make, the chips were crispy and delicious!

Unique physical and mental health benefits



In addition to the known nutrients, recent studies have shown kale to have a benefit towards mitigating age-related cognitive decline; due to its bioactive phytochemicals like lutein, folate, nitrate, tocopherols, etc. However, further studies need to be conducted to further validate these findings. Kale also has important chemical components that regulate microRNAs (miRNAs) and inhibit DNA methyltransferases (DNMTs) and histone deacetylases (HDACs), potentially offering benefits for cancer prevention (Gupta, 2024).

"Food is medicine. and the right kind of a relationship with food can make a positive impact on your health."

- Hayley Hobson

STRAWBERRY FROZEN YOGURT



More about the dish



- As we approach the summer, I'm sure we are all craving a cool sweet treat. Strawberry frozen yogurt is a faster and healthier option!
- This yogurt can be served as it is with some toppings or fresh fruits, or in a waffle cone just like an ice cream cone
- Additionally, this recipe is customizable. Any frozen fruit can be substituted in and made into frozen yogurt

Specialty ✨

What makes this dish better than store bought frozen yogurt (Walder, 2023):

- Greek Yogurt = source of protein and fat
- Strawberry = source of fiber

Additionally, this healthier version does not contain all the unhealthy options such as food coloring, corn syrup, carrageenan, etc.

Improvements ✓

Some things that I would change for next time is use a bit more frozen fruit. I let the strawberries thaw and it made it more of a smoothie so I had to pop it in the freezer. Also, I am not too used to the thickness of Greek yogurt but I look forward to enjoying this dish as the summer approaches. Overall, I am happy with making this dish because I can now eat a sweet, cold treat without feeling guilty.

Unique physical and mental health benefits



In addition to the Greek yogurt, strawberries have great health benefits. The fiber aids digestion and gut health. In addition strawberries are abundant in anthocyanins, which protect against oxidative stress and inflammation, potentially supporting anti-aging and skin health (Sepulveda, 2024). In term of mental health, studies have shown strawberries to improve memory and alleviate mood. Therefore, it is recommended for those at risk of dementia due to insulin resistance (Neporent, 2023)

"What most people don't realize is that food is not just calories: it's information. It actually contains messages that connect to every cell in the body."

- Dr. Mark Hyman

More about the dish



- Cauliflower popcorn is a low-carb snack that acts as a great substitution to crunchy popcorn
- A way to sneak in a small source of vegetables to your daily life
- This dish is low-carb and gluten-free
- Can be made with different types of seasonings: salt, pepper, garlic powder, paprika, nutritional yeast, spices or parmesan
- This dish can be made with either baking, deep frying or air-frying



Specialty

Why eat cauliflower popcorn instead of the regular popcorn:

- Cauliflower = high source of vitamin C

Also 92% water, meaning it can help you stay hydrated

Main specialty is that a vegetable that most people are not fond of is turned into something they cannot resist. Cauliflower also adds great nutritional value to the dish making it a healthier option compared to regular popcorn.

Improvements ✓

One main thing I would improve is keeping it longer in the oven. As I was trying this dish, I realized that the crunch was not there. The recipes did mention it won't be crunchy, but for next time I want to try grilling it on high for 5 minutes. In the end, this dish is delicious and I would definitely keep making this dish as I hate eating raw cauliflower.

Unique physical and mental health benefits



Along with the many benefits of cauliflowers, 2 unique benefits. Cauliflower has many antioxidants which acts as protection from cell damage linked to diseases like cancer. Researchers suggest that I3C may inhibit the growth of cancer cells and aid in preventing tumor formation. Additionally, studies indicate that sulforaphane has the potential to destroy cancer cells. Additionally, cauliflower has choline which is essential for a healthy nervous system such mood regulation, memory and muscle control. Lack of intake may increase the risk of age-related cognitive diseases (Nelson, 2024)

*"Our bodies are our gardens: our wills are our gardeners."
- William Shakespeare*

CORN TORTILLA CHIPS

More about the dish



- Homemade tortilla chips are a tasty and healthier substitute to store-brought chips
- Easy to prepare and can be customized with different seasonings such as paprika, cumin, chili powder or garlic powder to add more flavor
- Can be served with dips such as guacamole, salsa, Queso or Hummus
- Eaten as a snack alone or as a side dish for tacos, burritos and chili



Specialty ✨

Corn-based tortilla chips are a better option because (Selina, 2024):

- corn-based = gluten free
 - corn = source of carbohydrates, fiber, and other nutrients
- less in calories compared to store-bought chips
- Has essential minerals such as magnesium and phosphorus
- Source of a healthy fat for the body in addition to adding flavor to the chips

Improvements ✓

One main thing I would change is making sure that I take the chips a bit faster from the oven. I did manage the chips a bit. However, I am happy with what I made because my entire family was enjoying the chips with guacamole. In the future, I would try to make different types of chips and find even healthier substitutions!

Unique physical and mental health benefits



The magnesium and phosphorus in the tortilla chips contribute to the body. Magnesium adds benefits to bone health and muscle function, whereas phosphorus aids in cell repair and energy production (Selina, 2024). In addition, olive oil is known to improve brain function, promote heart health and control blood sugar (Ramsey, 2024). In fact, olive oil is referred to as “liquid gold” where research has found meals with olive oil as a predominant ingredient helps mitigate depression symptoms.

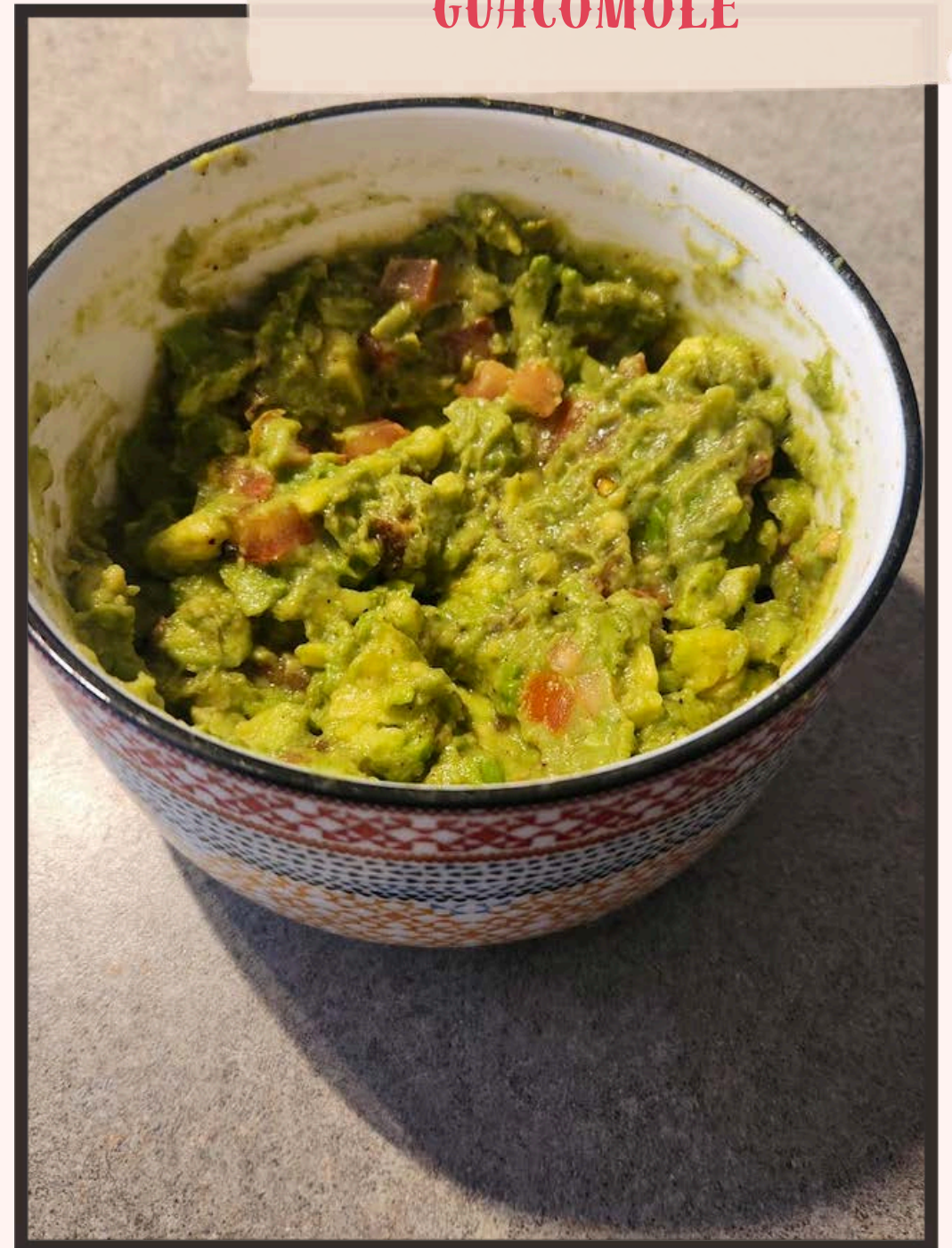
“The best and most efficient pharmacy is within your own system.”

– Robert C. Peale

More about the dish



- Guacomole is a mashed, raw avacados dish mixed with other ingredients
- This dish is serbed with chips/vegetables or part of other dishes such as tacos, nachos, burritos, and quesadillas
- Compared to the store-bought homemade version can limit the sodium and sugar that some manufactures add



Specialty

Why should we eat more gaucomole?:

- Source of fats and fibers, vitamins and mineral
- Also supply vital nutrients crucial for immune system health, such as vitamins C, B6, and E
- High levels of folate, which supports brain health

*It is important to note that this dish can be unhealthy if such options are added, but to keep its nutritional value do not use sour creama or mayonnaise (UPMC, 2023)

Improvements ✓

I loved making this dish! It was so satisfying to mash the avocadoes and convert it into this delicious dish. I am not a fan of eating avocadoes as it is, but as guacamole I really like it. I did add some chili powder, but I think I added too much. It is in fact too spicy for me, so next time I will watch the amount. I also realized that I should have let the avocadoes ripen more because some were still hard when chopping.

Unique physical and mental health benefits



Avocadoes are known to hep you lose weight due to its healthy monounsaturated fat. Additionally, it has been found that a cup of avocadoes will ensure enough vitamin B for adults and make them less prone to depression. Fun fact, pregnant women are told to eat it due to the folate in them which can help prevent birth defects. In terms of the physical body, avocadoes are great for the heart, due to the unsaturated fats which help lower “bad” cholesterol, triglycerides, and blood pressure (Richmond, 2024)

“You are what you eat. What would YOU like to be?”

- Julie Murphy

More about the dish



- This brownie dish is a great way to satisfy your sweet tooth while eating a refined sugar-free option
- This recipe offers a gluten-free, dairy free and vegan option for those with restrictive diets
- This dish can be served exactly as normal brownies; with a glass of milk, ice cream or simply eaten as it is
- In fact, it is a great dessert option for those with celiac disease



Specialty

What makes these brownies better than the traditional recipe?

The predominant ingredient are the dates which adds flavor and health benefits (Today's Date, 2024):

- They are rich in nutrients and high in fibre
- This recipe offers a gluten-free, dairy free and vegan option for those with restrictive diets
- The lower glycemic index means there is no rapid increase in blood sugar levels compared to when using refined sugars

Improvements ✓

When I was making this dish,, I was constantly doubting that dates would do the job. To my surprise, it tastes delicious. In fact, I think this is one of the best brownie versions I have made so far. Nevertheless, there is always room for improvement. I think I should keep in the oven a bit longer next time. I would also try to use less dates because I feel that it is a bit too sweet for my liking.

Unique physical and mental health benefits



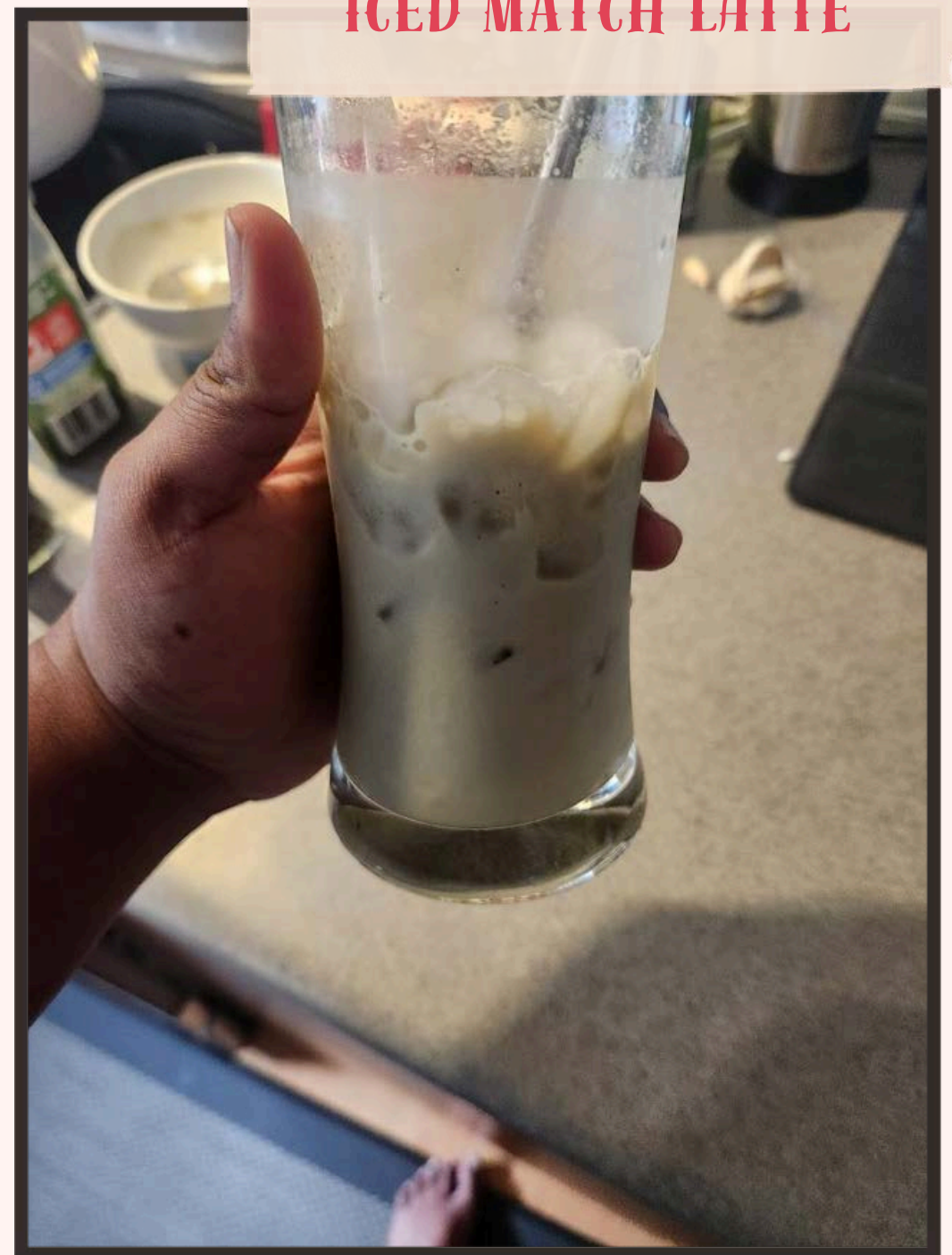
Dates have potassium, magnesium, and vitamin B6, all of which contribute to overall health. Almond flour provides protein and healthy fats, and cocoa powder is rich in antioxidants. Together, these ingredients support heart health and immune support. Additionally, the fiber can make you feel full and reduce overeating, while the sweetness in the dates can cut your cravings for the sugary snacks (Today's Date, 2024). It also found that dates have an antioxidant, polyphenols, that plays a role in brain plasticity, behavior and mood, and cognition (Coachella's Best, 2022).

*"Your body is the direct result of what you eat as well as what you don't eat."
- Gloria Swanson*

More about the dish



- This is a refreshing drink that has the rich flavor of matcha and the creamy texture of milk
- It is a perfect healthier afternoon drink to boost your energy and satisfy your thirst
- Matcha is a product of green tea that is rich in chlorophyll
 - This ingredient originates from Japan
- This drink can be made either hot or cold, perfect for all seasons!



Specialty

Why drink matcha and not a pop drink this summer (Jawad, 2022):

- Avoid the caffeine crash - the caffeine in matcha is altered by the amino acid, L-Theanine, which has a gradual release of energy that avoids the jitters or crashes commonly linked to other caffeine sources
- Matcha is also rich in antioxidants that will aid in boosting metabolism and burning calories

Improvements ✓

I have a lot to learn about the art of making Matcha Lattes. This did not turn out the way I wanted it to. It tasted okay, I would give it a rating on 5/10. I think I added too much dairy and also too little of the matcha powder. I think there is much more to learn and I am here for it. My goal from this activity is to master this drink and hopefully convince my mother that in fact it is a 10/10 drink!

Unique physical and mental health benefits



Matcha has been proven to have many physical and mental health benefits (Gleim, 2023). Researchers have found that matcha has a short-term enhancement to brain function by improving attention, memory and response time. Additionally, matcha has catechin that may protect cells from DNA damage and slow tumor growth. However, it is also said that more research needs to be conducted to further gain knowledge.

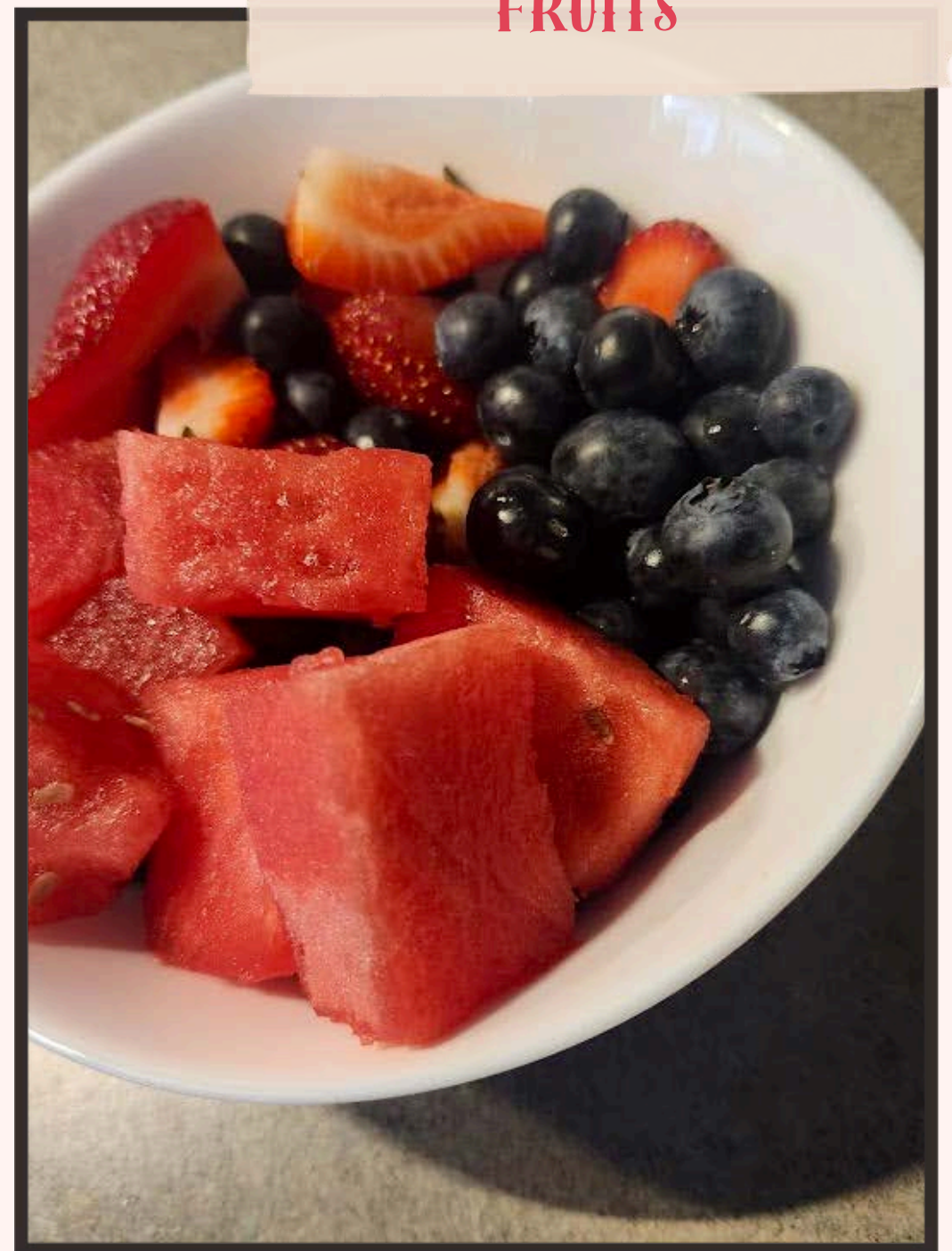
"I don't think I'll ever grow old and say, 'What was I thinking eating all those fruits and vegetables?'"

- Nancy S. Mure

More about the dish



- This dish is something that everyone can make and requires very little prep time
- Even though the preparation is simple, eating fruits as a snack daily has many benefits
- Hyperlinked is a fruit salad recipe, which is another way to serve fruits in the summer
- This is a great way to stay refreshed while also ensuring we eat a healthy amount of fruits each day



Specialty

Why should we eat more fruits (USDA, n.d.):

- Great substitution for sweet treats with higher calories
- Reduces the risk of certain diseases
- Great source of fiber and potassium which we often lack in some main dishes we eat
- Offers other nutrients such as vitamin C and folate, which is vital for the maintenance of a healthy body

Improvements ✓

Eating fruits has always been difficult for me because I simply hate the preparation. However, once I got into the habit of preparing fruits the day before, it became part of my dinner cleanup routine. Thanks to my parents I got used to their daily fruit consumption. I think something that I would improve is the variety of fruits I try. I am a very picky eater who likes to eat the same food. Yet, I think trying new fruits will ensure that I do not get tired of eating the same fruits every week

Unique physical and mental health benefits



Studies have shown that an increased consumption of fruits correlates with greater psychological health, where people report greater feelings of confidence, energy and relaxation. Additionally, the high levels of antioxidants in fruits can reduce inflammation and aid in better bowel movements. In fact, it has been found that consuming fruits may aid in the improvement of the function of cells that line blood vessels (Darby, 2024)

"To change our eating habits, we must learn to eat mindfully, being more aware of chewing and tasting what we eat so that the brain can register the incoming nutrients."

- John M. Poothullil

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