

STELLA'S KITCHEN

Creative Cooking for Fun, Flavor and a Lean, Strong Body

By Stella C. Juarez

Foreword by
Dave Draper

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STELLA JUAREZ

Stella Juarez, B.A., is a single mother, athlete and freelance writer. She has applied and developed her artistic and technical skills in a variety of professions, but her expression is best displayed in her cooking expertise. She contributes cooking and fitness material to various exercise and food magazines and websites, and she excels in teaching others the skills of healthy food preparation.

Stella is a bodybuilding enthusiast whose fitness adventures began far from the dumbbell rack—she started walking in her early efforts to shed 50 pounds. Walking led to recreational running and eventually she completed a marathon, raising money for a leukemia patient in the Vancouver International, 2000. Along the way she grabbed a barbell, learned how to squat, press and curl, and embarked on a lifelong love affair with muscle and the iron.

Ms. Juarez is About.com's Guide for bodybuilding; her information-packed About.com website can be found at www.bodybuilding.about.com.

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Shake It Up

Is there anything more basic to the diet of today's athlete than the protein shake? Fortunately, sports nutrition has advanced beyond the insoluble, bland powders of yesteryear, making it more appealing to the general public.

Day after day, the same taste can bore the tastebuds of even the most dedicated health food advocate. If not knowledgeable about alternatives, in a weaker moment you may succumb to the call of a chocolate Ding Dong.

There are protein shake recipes that call for the addition of cookies, cheesecake mix and mere tablespoons of protein powders; nutritional blasphemy! Let's not even discuss the smoothie bar chains that are adding sugary flavored powders on top of fruit concentrates and then giving you a chunk of bread to go with it.

On the ingredients...

I've focused on low sugar, low calorie, and low-to-moderate carbohydrate enhancements knowing that you generally have no trouble finding larger amounts of these on your own. My most common flavor tools are various extracts and sugar-free instant pudding. All of these can be made with low-fat milk or water and several will add slim-to-none in the way of calories.

On the quantities...

Those who desire only one scoop of protein should simply omit the second scoop from the recipes. On the other hand, those whose shakes contain more than two scoops of protein at a time will need relatively increased amounts of the ingredients listed in the recipes.

On the nutritional data...

The total nutritional value will change according to the brand and amount of protein powder and liquid used. The calorie counts are only for the added ingredients, not the protein or milk. Use this information if you are closely monitoring your calorie intake.

On the protein...

The scoop on protein...You will hopefully be pleasantly surprised by the extensive variety of protein shakes included in this section. If you are unfamiliar with using protein for a quick nutritional supplement between meals, my suggestion is that you start with a basic whey protein powder or a "time-released" blend made with various types of proteins. Vanilla is probable the most versatile flavor because you can easily change its flavor. It can be purchased at health food stores, mail order catalogs and internet nutritional supplement websites. Even with shipping costs, you will usually get the best deal online or via mail order as opposed to a large chain store.

Troubleshooting The Protein Shake

We've all got our own quirky taste and texture preferences, even for simple protein shakes. Here are a few tips you may find useful in preparing your favorite protein shakes.

If your shake

is too thin: Try adding a few ice cubes, frozen fruit, or a tablespoon of sugar-free instant pudding mix to thicken it.

is too thick: Some protein mixes have guar gum or other artificial thickeners in them. To use up less-favorable protein powders, you can make shakes using only a half-serving, mixing in a regular whey protein to cover the protein gap.

is not creamy enough: Try using a tablespoon of sugar-free pudding mix if you make your shakes with water or milk. If you use milk, you can try using milk with higher fat content (1 or 2% instead of skim). Low-carb dieters or those not concerned with low calorie counts can add some half and half—magic!

is not “foamy” or frothy enough: Extend the whip time in the blender to fluff the shake.

won't dissolve: Solubility are usually related to the the particular brand of protein. Your best option is to first blend your liquid and ice and slowly add the protein to the blender. Look for an “instantized” protein that blends easily to avoid the problem all together.

is not sweet enough: Add a packet or two of Splenda or a small piece of banana. Fructose (fruit sugar) is 70% sweeter than sucrose (table sugar); a small piece of banana or other fruit goes a long way in providing sweetness.

has weak vanilla flavor: A ½ teaspoon of imitation vanilla flavor or ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract will enhance the vanilla flavor without adding calories. Alternatively, you could add a tablespoon of sugar-free instant vanilla pudding.

has weak chocolate flavor: A teaspoon of real cocoa powder will give you a nice chocolate flavor without adding the sugar that comes with using chocolate syrup. This is a great idea for those who only purchase one flavor of protein at a time because you can add cocoa to vanilla protein to make rich chocolate shakes.

sticks to blender glass: Always add the liquid to your blender or shaker first. When blending thicker shakes, try pouring the protein into the blender as it whirls or lightly pushing the powder down with a spoon to ensure it mixes.

is “to go”: To cut down on dishes and make a handy “to go” shake, you may be able to use a pint or quart Mason jar in place of your blender pitcher. Simply remove the blending attachment from the pitcher; if it twists onto the jar (like a jar cap), it will work. Put your drink ingredients into the jar, twist on the blending assembly, turn the jar top-down onto the blender and hit the switch. Voila!

1 serving

Ingredients

- 2 scoops strawberry protein (or 2 scoops vanilla plus 4 strawberries)
- 3 fresh or frozen strawberries
- 1½ tablespoon sugar-free vanilla pudding mix
- 1 dash Butter Buds or other butter-flavored seasoning
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla
- 8 ounces cold water or low-fat milk
- 3–5 ice cubes

Nutritional Info

for added ingredients (excludes milk and protein powder)

Calories—36

Carbohydrates—9g

Protein—0g

Fat—0g

Fiber—0g

Strawberries and Cream Shake

This shake has a fresh, wonderful strawberry and crème taste that will please those with even the most refined and discriminating palates. Strawberries are loaded with Vitamin C and antioxidants, so feel free to grab a couple and dip them in your shake.

Directions

Add all ingredients to blender, whip and serve—in a parfait glass garnished with a strawberry! I like extending the whip time on this shake to give it a nice, creamy “mouth feel.”

Muscle Beach Shake

Muscle Beach has a light citrus taste that offers a taste of California right in your kitchen. This one has lots of variety and flavors—just like the people seen strolling down the Venice Beach boardwalk.

Directions

Add all ingredients to blender, blend and serve.

Modifications

Low-carb version: Omit fruit juice and banana and use one-half teaspoon strawberry-orange-banana sugar-free drink mix instead. Subtract all nutritional counts as this alternative will not add any caloric or nutritional value to the liquid and protein powder used.

1 serving

Ingredients

- 2 scoops vanilla protein
- ½ cup orange juice
- 3 strawberries
- ½ medium banana
- 8 ounces cold water or lowfat milk
- 3–5 ice cubes

Nutritional Info

for added ingredients (excludes milk and protein powder)

Calories—122

Carbohydrates—30g

Protein—2g

Fat—0g

Fiber—2g

1 serving

Ingredients

2 scoops vanilla protein
1½ tablespoons sugar-free pistachio pudding mix
1 mint leaf or a few drops peppermint extract (optional)
1 few drops green food coloring (optional)
8 ounces cold water or low-fat milk
3–5 ice cubes

Nutritional Info

for added ingredients (excludes milk and protein powder)

Calories—19

Carbohydrates—5g

Protein—0g

Fat—0g

Fiber—0g

The Hulk Shake

I came up with this pistachio-flavored shake for my son one busy morning—he loved it because it was green, and he spent the rest of the day doing lat spreads that “ripped his shirt.” I loved it because it only added 19 calories to my protein shake. If you’re over the age of six, omit the lat spreads and head to the gym for a weight workout.

Directions

Add all ingredients to blender, blend and serve. This tastes great without the mint so don’t worry if you don’t have it on hand. The shake is a light green even without the food coloring but if you want it deep green, like The Hulk, you’ll need a few drops.

Strawberries and Chocolate Shake

Imagine how romantic this one can be when served to your significant other in a glass with two straws. Double up on the strawberries for extra vitamin C.

Directions

Add all ingredients to blender, blend and serve. I let this one whip a little longer to develop the smooth feel of chocolate.

IN STELLA’S KITCHEN

Loving touch—Garnish this with a strawberry slice and dust of cocoa or a teeny bit of grated chocolate. You can even make a few chocolate curls by running a vegetable peeler over warm chocolate.

1 serving

Ingredients

1 scoop strawberry protein
(or 1 scoop vanilla plus 2 extra strawberries)
1 scoop chocolate protein
(or 1 scoop vanilla plus 1 teaspoon cocoa powder)
3 fresh or frozen strawberries
1 tablespoon sugar-free chocolate pudding mix (optional)
8 ounces cold water or low-fat milk
3–5 ice cubes

Nutritional Info

for added ingredients (excludes milk and protein powder)

Calories—25

Carbohydrates—6g

Protein—0g

Fat—0g

Fiber—.6g

1 serving

Ingredients

2 scoops chocolate protein
¼ teaspoon peppermint extract
1 teaspoon cocoa
(optional, use if you like a deeper
chocolate flavor)
8 ounces cold water or lowfat milk
3–5 ice cubes

Nutritional Info

for added ingredients (excludes
milk and protein powder)

Calories—6
Carbohydrates—.8g
Protein—.4g
Fat—.1g
Fiber—.5g

Peppermint Patty Shake

This is a chocolate mint-flavored protein shake made by adding only a trace of calories to a regular chocolate shake. Reminds me of those innocent-looking cookies you can buy once a year outside the grocery store. Given the chance, many of us could eat a whole row of them. Instead of actually doing that, try whipping this minty chocolate dream up after a good workout.

Directions

Add all ingredients to blender, blend and serve.

Amaretto Shake

The nutty flavor of Amaretto liqueur is delicious; here's an alternative that's not full of empty calories. In fact, there are no added calories in the recipe. You could also add sugar-free lemonade mix to this and you'd have the smoothie equivalent of an Amaretto Sour.

Directions

Add all ingredients to blender, blend and serve.

Modifications

A few almonds can be added if you're looking for some added healthy fat.

1 serving

Ingredients

2 scoops vanilla protein
(chocolate or strawberry tastes
good, too)
½ teaspoon almond extract
¼ teaspoon rum extract
8 ounces cold water or low-fat milk
3–5 ice cubes

Nutritional Info

for added ingredients (excludes
milk and protein powder)

Calories—0
Carbohydrates—0g
Protein—0g
Fat—0g
Fiber—0g