FIT TO BE REFRIED

Despite the name, canned refried beans are typically free of bad fat, high in fibre, and a decent source of protein and iron.

The problem: sodium can reach 400 to 600 milligrams in every half cup.

The solution: Eden.

Our favourite canned-bean people have done it again. Organic beans, water, and sea salt are all you'll find in Eden Organic Lightly Salted Refried Beans, which come in Black, Pinto, Kidney, and Black Soy and Black Beans.

Why not salt-free? If you’ve ever tried mashed beans without salt, you’ll know. With 170 to 200 milligrams of sodium in every half-cup serving, Eden’s beans are “salt sensible.”

But that doesn’t do you any good if you have no idea what to do with refried beans. Here’s a start: Wrap them with grilled vegetables and salsa in a tortilla. Serve them—mixed with crushed garlic, cilantro, and lime juice—in place of rice or potatoes as a side dish with chicken or fish. Or mix them with brown rice, diced onions and tomatoes, and a shot of Tabasco.

If you like heat, Eden offers Lightly Salted Spicy Pinto Beans and Spicy Black Beans.

Salt isn’t the only thing Eden has cut. “All Eden Organic Beans come in steel cans with a baked on c-enamel lining that does not contain the endocrine disruptor chemical bisphenol-A,” says the company.

Less salt. No BPA. Canned beans don’t get more Edenic than that.

Eden Foods: (707) 578-7188

SLAM JUNK

If you go to Denny’s, you know your Slams. Take the Grand Slam (2 pancakes, 2 eggs, 2 bacon strips, and 2 sausage links). Its 860 calories, 14% grams of saturated fat, 510 milligrams of cholesterol, and 2,240 mg of sodium supply too much of almost everything before 9 a.m.

Want a Slam you can hold in your hands? Denny’s has you covered. The Grand Slamwich has “two scrambled eggs, sausage, crispy bacon, shaved ham, mayonnaise and American cheese grilled on potato bread with maple spice spread.” In case that’s too skimpy, the Slamwich is “served with hash browns.”

Even without the hash browns, your sandwich hits 1,320 calories and two days’ worth of sat fat (42 grams) and sodium (3,070 mg). It has the calories of 4½ McDonald’s Egg McMuffins...with an extra 20 grams of sat fat. Bonus: the Slamwich holds a regular smorgasbord of processed meats that may raise your risk of diabetes and colon cancer. And not a fruit or vegetable (other than fried potatoes) in sight!

With ordinary hash browns, the sandwich hits 1,530 calories. Get the Everything Hash Browns instead and the cheese and gravy boost your grand total to 1,800 calories, 50 grams of sat fat, and 6,890 mg of sodium.

To be fair, Denny’s lets you “Build Your Own Grand Slam” with any four items. But other than oatmeal and egg whites, the best choices—like fruit and yogurt—cost extra.

That should send many patrons scurrying back to the Build Your Own Belly side of the menu.

Denny’s: (604) 730-6620

Quick Orzo Veggie Risotto

Sauté 1 diced onion in 2 Tbs. olive oil until soft. Stir in 1 cup whole-wheat orzo, 2 cups low-sodium broth, 1 cup milk, and ½ cup sun-dried tomatoes. Simmer, stirring often, until most of the liquid is absorbed, about 10 min. Stir in 1 bag baby spinach and ½ cup Parmesan cheese.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

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About CSPI, publisher of Nutrition Action Healthletter

The Centre for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), founded in 1971, is an independent non-profit consumer health group. CSPI advocates honest food labelling and advertising, safer and more nutritious foods, and pro-health alcohol policies. CSPI’s work is supported by Nutrition Action Healthletter subscribers and foundation grants. CSPI accepts no government or industry funding. Nutrition Action Healthletter, which has been published in the U.S. since 1974 and in Canada since 1996, accepts no advertising.

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