



Fresh & Healthy
HAWAIIAN

Healthy Eating Guide



Hawaii's Unique Cultural Landscape

Hawaii boasts a rich, diverse population, making it home to the largest multiracial community in the United States. This cultural tapestry includes people of Native Hawaiian descent, as well as those with mixed ethnic backgrounds. The most common multiracial groups are White and Asian, followed by Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and then White and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Interestingly, Hawaii is the only state where the largest multi-racial group consists of White, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ancestry.

The Evolution of Hawaiian Cuisine

Hawaiian cuisine has a fascinating history, blending influences from Polynesian settlers, European explorers, and Asian immigrants. Traditional staples like poi (a paste made from taro root) remain popular, while the influx of diverse culinary traditions has created a unique fusion cuisine.

Nutritional Challenges in Modern Hawaii

While traditional Hawaiian diets were well-suited to an active lifestyle, modern sedentary habits have led to increased health risks. Popular dishes often feature high-calorie, high-sodium ingredients that can contribute to obesity and related health issues when consumed in excess.

PearMD's Tips for Healthier Eating in Hawaii

1. **Embrace Whole Grains:** While poi is culturally significant, consider incorporating other whole grains that thrive in Hawaii's climate, such as amaranth or oats.
2. **Mindful Fruit Consumption:** Enjoy tropical fruits like mango and pineapple in moderation, especially if you have diabetes or are watching your sugar intake.
3. **Reimagine the Plate Lunch:** Opt for brown rice and whole grain pasta instead of white rice and regular macaroni in traditional plate lunches.
4. **Choose Healthier Fats:** Use plant-based oils like olive, avocado, or flaxseed oil for cooking instead of butter or lard.
5. **Flavor Without the Salt:** Experiment with lemon juice, vinegar, and herbs to add flavor without excess sodium.
6. **Smart Snacking:** Replace processed snacks with fresh fruit or a small portion of nuts.
7. **Traditional Cooking Methods:** Rediscover traditional cooking techniques as alternatives to frying.



PearMD's Healthy Hawaiian-Inspired Meal Ideas

Breakfast:

- **Tropical Overnight Oats:** Combine oats, coconut milk, fresh pineapple, and a sprinkle of macadamia nuts.
- **Taro Pancakes:** Make pancakes using taro flour, topped with a small amount of local honey and fresh papaya.

Lunch/Dinner:

- **Poke Bowl Makeover:** Serve ahi tuna with quinoa, avocado, edamame, and a light soy-based dressing.
- **Lean Kalua Pork:** Slow-cook lean pork shoulder and serve over cauliflower rice with a side of steamed local greens.
- **Veggie-Packed Saimin:** Load up this noodle soup with extra vegetables like bok choy, mushrooms, and carrots.

Snacks:

- **Dried Fruit and Nut Mix:** Combine unsweetened dried pineapple, mango, and papaya with a small portion of macadamia nuts.
- **Limu (Seaweed) Wraps:** Use nori sheets to wrap small amounts of brown rice, vegetables, and lean protein.

PearMD's Clinical Insights

- The Waianae Diet Program has shown promising results in improving health outcomes by returning to culturally-based food and lifestyle habits.
- Encouraging physical activity is crucial, as it can help improve insulin sensitivity and overall metabolic health.
- Incorporating traditional Hawaiian foods like taro, sweet potatoes, and lean proteins into a balanced, low-energy-dense diet can be both culturally satisfying and nutritionally beneficial.

By following these guidelines, PearMD aims to help Hawaii residents embrace their rich culinary heritage while making choices that support long-term health and well-being.

