



**Every Ingredient is an Opportunity:**  
**Delicious and Nutritious**  
**Recipes for People Living**  
**with Gastric Cancer**

Featuring recipes from Chef Hans Rueffert

All recipes have been reviewed by a certified nutritionist; however, CONSULT YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER BEFORE CHANGING OR MODIFYING YOUR DIET, INCLUDING THE USE OF INGREDIENTS IN THESE RECIPES. This guide is for informational purposes only and not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice or treatment.

## Introduction

Join Chef Hans, gastric cancer survivor, as he guides you through some of his favorite vegetarian and gluten-free recipes developed especially for people living with gastric cancer. Of course, each of our digestion systems is unique. Once you find what foods work well for your specific digestive idiosyncrasies, feel free to modify these recipes to include those “safe foods”. Of note, always consult with your healthcare provider before changing or modifying your diet.



*“Life’s too short to eat bad food...  
Let’s eat like there’s no tomorrow.”*

— Chef Hans Rueffert

## Meet the “Chef Without a Stomach”, Hans Rueffert

Gastric cancer survivor, father, husband, author, speaker, and teacher, Chef Hans was diagnosed with gastric cancer in 2005 just two weeks after taping the finale of the reality show, *Next Food Network Star*—and quickly traded in his “Celebrity Chef” status for “Cancer Survivor.” Following his diagnosis and subsequent surgeries, Hans has continued to share his talent in the kitchen with thousands. Motivating and engaging, his endless knowledge and love of food coupled with his personal struggles with post-treatment life are a source of ongoing inspiration and interest.

Learn more about Hans at [www.Hanscooks.com](http://www.Hanscooks.com) and check out the *Gesundheit Kitchen*, a series of nutritional videos that Hans hosts for the Gastric Cancer Foundation, at [www.gastriccancer.org](http://www.gastriccancer.org).

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*All recipes may be refrigerated for up to 7 days.*

## On Recipes

I've always believed that cooking is a bit like driving; there's more than one way to get there! Oftentimes, people think of recipes as rigid rules that can't be broken, but I think of them as "suggested routes", one of many possible paths toward a gut-healthy diet. That said, I encourage you to take these recipes and make them your own. Don't like spinach? Substitute another leafy green. Don't have chickpeas on hand? Use the navy beans hanging around in your pantry. Like driving, the journey is part of the inherent joy of cooking.



## Almond Butter Hummus

1. In a food processor, add chickpeas, lemon juice, garlic, olive oil, almond butter, salt, and cumin.
2. Blend until completely smooth, adding a splash of cold water to help develop a smoother texture.
3. Adjust to taste with additional salt and cumin.

**Serving suggestion:** Spread on a bowl and embellish with fresh mint, coriander, a drizzle of oil (try pumpkin seed, sesame, flaxseed oil, etc.), cracked pepper, and toasted nuts (pine nuts, almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds, pepitas, etc.). Also delicious with a little [Lemon Greek Yogurt Dressing](#) (see below) drizzled on top!

**Variation:** Create Gingered Carrot Hummus by adding [Gingered Carrots](#) (see page 6) and 5 g of turmeric—always a refreshing snack!

425 g chickpeas, rinsed  
(canned or cooked from dried)  
2 garlic cloves  
100 g almond butter, smooth  
30 mL lemon juice (juice of one lemon)  
30 mL olive oil  
Salt, to taste  
Cumin powder, to taste  
+/- 120 mL cold water, for texture

### Optional ingredients for Gingered Carrot Hummus (serving suggestion)

Gingered carrots (see page 6)  
5 g turmeric

## Lemony Greek Yogurt Dressing

1. In a jar with a tight-fitting lid, add all ingredients and shake vigorously until well blended and creamy.
2. Add a splash of water, as needed, to bring it to a pourable consistency.
3. Customize to your taste (see optional ingredients). Enjoy!

**Serving suggestion:** This probiotic-rich dressing has a tart, lemony kick that's great for enhancing the flavor and nutrition of all sorts of foods. Try it drizzled over grilled vegetables, as a crudité dip, or served with your favorite leafy greens.

250 mL natural Greek yogurt  
Juice (about 30-45 mL) and zest of one lemon  
50 mL light vinegar (white balsamic, white wine, or apple cider vinegar)  
50 mL extra virgin olive or avocado oil  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
Ginger, whole-grain mustard, and/or fresh herbs, to taste (optional)



## Kefir Chia Pudding with Berries

1. In a large bowl, combine chia seeds, kefir, sweetener (if using), salt, and cinnamon by gently whisking.
2. Divide the mixture into single serving containers and refrigerate until the pudding sets. Once firm, top each pudding with fresh berries. For crunch, top with toasted nuts, hemp hearts, crisped rice, or high-protein granola.

60 g chia seeds  
400 mL plain kefir  
Pinch of salt  
Pinch of cinnamon  
Natural sweetener such as stevia, honey, or agave, to taste (optional)  
Handful of fresh berries

### Get Cultured

Probiotic rich, cultured foods are a great source of gut-healthy, living bacteria. Not only can these bacteria help boost our overall immune systems, but they also aid in digestion and may contribute to overall health.



*Bacteria in cultured, probiotic-rich foods partially "pre-digest" many complex starches and proteins.*

## Middle Eastern Bean Salad



1. In a small jar with a tight fitting lid, combine vinaigrette ingredients and shake vigorously.
2. In a large bowl, combine salad ingredients, add enough vinaigrette to coat the salad, and adjust the seasoning. Garnish with chopped, fresh herbs and a drizzle of oil.

**Serving suggestion:** Bean salads like this are often served for breakfast with a serving of warm pita bread in parts of the middle east—a fantastic way to start the day with high fiber and protein. It's also delicious on top of sourdough toast that's been spread with a layer of [Almond Butter Hummus](#) (see page 4).

### For the salad:

100 g fava beans or kidney beans, rinsed (canned or cooked from dried)  
100 g chickpeas, rinsed (canned or cooked from dried)  
100 g millet (cooked)  
1 medium-sized cucumber (diced)  
1 large Roma tomato (diced)  
1 large orange bell pepper (diced)  
1 small red onion (diced)  
Cumin powder, to taste  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
Fresh herbs (e.g., coriander, parsley, mint), for garnish (optional)

### For the vinaigrette:

60 mL cold-pressed flaxseed or avocado oil  
80 mL white wine vinegar  
5 mL Dijon mustard  
1 large garlic clove, minced  
Zest and juice of one lemon  
Salt and pepper, to taste

## Orange, Beet, and Fennel Salad with Amaranth

1. In a small jar with a tight fitting lid, combine vinaigrette ingredients and shake vigorously.
2. Toss together the prepared amaranth, beets, orange segments, sliced fennel, and greens with enough vinaigrette to coat all of the salad components.

**Serving suggestion:** Pasteurized feta, blue cheese, or goat cheese always pairs nicely with the rich, earthy flavor of beets. Adding toasted nuts or seeds will not only add some crunch, but a nice kick of protein.

### Get on Team Fiber

Fiber can help increase the weight and size of your stool. To help improve bowel functions, increase your fiber intake slowly to allow the natural bacteria in your digestive system to adjust. Also, be sure to drink plenty of water to help soften your stool.



*Fiber helps regulate blood sugar, preventing extreme highs and lows that can trigger "Dumping Syndrome"—common for many people with gastric cancers.*

### For the salad:

120 g amaranth, cooked  
3 small beets, roasted and cut into bite-sized pieces  
2 oranges, peeled and segmented  
1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced and tossed with some lemon juice to prevent browning  
Large handful of mixed greens (baby kale, beet greens, spinach, arugula)  
Salt, to taste

### For the vinaigrette:

Zest and juice of one orange  
35 mL cold pressed flaxseed oil, avocado oil, or extra virgin olive oil  
70 mL white balsamic vinegar or red wine vinegar  
10 mL Dijon mustard  
1 small shallot (diced)  
Salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste  
Pasteurized feta, blue cheese, or goat cheese (optional)  
Toasted nuts or seeds (optional)



## Gingered Carrots



1. Add all ingredients to a medium pot with a tight fitting lid and cook over medium heat until the pot begins to emit steam.
2. Reduce heat to medium/low and cook until the carrots are just knife tender (about 8-12 minutes, depending on the carrots). Stir the pot once or twice to make sure the ginger and garlic are evenly distributed.

**Serving suggestion:** Delicious hot, these carrots are also great cold, mixed with cooked whole-grains as a salad; blended into my [Almond Butter Hummus](#) (see page 4) for a high-protein dip/spread; and as a simple Gingered Carrot Soup. To make the soup, puree the carrots with some additional vegetable stock, a bit of cultured sour cream, a little curry powder, and voila! Throw in some cooked grains for added fiber and protein.

500 g carrots, peeled and sliced  
3 large cloves of garlic, minced  
10 g ginger, minced  
50 mL vegetable stock or water  
50 mL ghee or olive oil  
Kosher salt, to taste  
Pinch of white pepper

### Optional ingredients for Gingered Carrot Soup (serving suggestion)

Additional vegetable stock  
Cultured sour cream  
Curry powder  
Cooked grains

## Flax Meal Crepes

1. Using a blender or a whisk, blend together all ingredients and let rest for about 5 minutes, as the flax meal can thicken a bit when mixed with liquid. You want the crepe batter to be the consistency of heavy cream; if too thick, add a splash of milk.
2. Using a non-stick skillet or crepe pan seasoned with a little ghee or butter, cook the crepes over medium heat one at a time, layering the finished crepes on a plate between paper towels.

**Serving suggestion:** A good source of protein, fiber, omega-3 fatty acids, thiamin and more, this dish is highly versatile. Use leftover crepes to create German Fritatten Soup—a comfort food for me, made with thin strips of crepes piled high in the center of a bowl of a clear, savory broth. Add fresh spinach leaves for texture and nutrition.

4 large eggs  
100 mL milk or plant-milk (flaxmilk works well here)  
50 g flaxseed meal  
30 mL ghee or melted butter  
Pinch of salt

### Optional ingredients for German Fritatten Soup (serving suggestion)

Clear, savory broth  
Fresh spinach leaves



### Protein—Getting Creative

Protein doesn't come from only animal-based foods. If you're looking for non-meat alternatives, natural sources of plant-based protein like beans, whole grains, nuts, seeds, tofu, and tempeh may be more digestible options.



*Many non-meat protein sources are naturally high in fiber.*

## Tempeh and Okra Sauté with Brown Rice

1. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, add the ghee, garam masala or curry spice, onion, and garlic. Sauté until it just starts to brown.
2. Add the tempeh and sauté until the edges start to get crispy.
3. Turn heat down to medium, add okra, and sauté for another minute or two; the okra should still be dark green and crunchy.
4. Add the cooked brown rice, turn off the heat, stir to combine, and season with a little salt and pepper.
5. If desired, a drizzle of honey at the end adds a sweet note to this savory dish.

**Serving suggestion:** Tempeh, made from fermented grains and beans, may be a great source of easy-to-digest protein and fiber. This dish can be a main course or the base for a grilled piece of fish. Leftovers can be enjoyed cold with a drizzle of [Lemony Greek Yogurt Dressing](#) (see page 4), or mixed into vegetable soup.

210 g tempeh, crumbled or cut to bite-size  
150 g brown rice, cooked  
20 g diced onion  
240 g fresh okra, cap removed and cut to bite-size  
2 large garlic cloves, rough chopped  
Curry or garam masala spice, to taste  
50 mL ghee or avocado oil  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
Drizzle of honey (optional)



## Vegetarian Chili with Whole Grain Sorghum



1. In a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat, add the ghee or oil.
2. Sauté the onion, garlic, bell pepper, and bay laurel leaves until the onions are just translucent.
3. Add the tomato paste, cumin, salt, and pepper. Sauté for another minute and add the beans, chickpeas, sorghum, and crushed tomatoes.
4. Different grains have different levels of inherent starch, so add vegetable stock as needed and simmer until the chili reaches desired consistency.
5. Optional: For a little sweetness, add ketchup at the end of the preparation.

**Serving suggestion:** Garnish with chopped spring onion, a spoonful of cultured sour cream, a chopped hard-boiled egg, a squeeze of lime—make it your own! Any prepared whole grain will work, but the slightly chewy texture of sorghum holds up well in any long-simmered dish.

### Cook Once, Eat Twice

It's not always easy to find time to create delicious, nutrition-focused meals. Preparing more than what you need means you can create a second or third meal with minimal effort. Looking at every ingredient as an opportunity will help you to create your own hybrid meals.

100 g whole grain sorghum, cooked  
100 g dark red kidney beans, rinsed (canned or cooked from dried)  
100 g chickpeas, rinsed (canned or cooked from dried)  
½ large white onion, diced  
1 red bell pepper, diced  
400 g crushed tomatoes  
60 g tomato paste  
2 large garlic cloves, minced  
60 mL ghee or olive oil  
15 g cumin powder  
2 bay laurel leaves  
100-200 mL vegetable stock  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
Ketchup, spring onion, cultured sour cream, chopped hard-boiled egg, squeeze of lime, to taste (optional)



*Cooked grains will last up to a week in the refrigerator, and may often be frozen.*



# Staying the Course On Your Nutritional Journey

## Calories—Beyond the Numbers

Gaining and/or maintaining weight can be a challenge for many living with gastric cancer. When making food choices, consider not just the caloric count, but the quality of those calories. Focus on protein and fiber when reading nutrition labels. If you need help, talk with a nutritionist or dietician recommended by your healthcare professional.

## Food Journaling

Keeping a daily food journal is one of the best pieces of advice I've ever received! Because each of us have unique digestive systems, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to nutrition. A simple food journal helps identify what foods work well for you and, equally important, which ones simply do not.

## You Can Do This

Learning to cook mindfully can feel overwhelming but the benefits are critical. I recommend thinking of nutrition not as a chore to be tackled, but as an opportunity to make kitchen time cathartic, not chaotic. Stay the course and you'll find that both you and your loved ones will reap the benefits of healthy, delicious eating.

