

# Trending... Clean Eating Yogurt Bowl

Having a curious nature, I'm always interested in what is new in the world of food and food trends. I am not one who really cares much about high-end restaurants, I'm more interested in what real people are eating, what is accessible to everyone and how small things in the world of food can make a big impact.



Most of what I read about lately is, of course, January is everyone's "clean eating" month. Most of the blogs and articles I read were focused on a more meatless diet in general, using what you have on hand instead of buying specific ingredients to make a recipe and the health benefits of Greek yogurt. I really liked that idea and starting thinking about how that would apply to my own refrigerator and pantry. Besides, I LOVE Greek yogurt so I decided that it would be my inspiration to come up with my version of "clean eating".

What differentiates Greek yogurt from traditional yogurt is that Greek yogurt has been strained to remove the whey. As a result, Greek yogurt has a creamier, thicker texture and rich flavor. In addition, the removal of whey results in a healthier yogurt with 40 percent less sugar, 38 percent less sodium and more than twice the amount of protein than traditional yogurt. It is also packed with nutrients and provides numerous health benefits such as probiotic bacteria that helps promote a healthy gut, it is an important source of calcium, magnesium and potassium, which is believed to help lower high blood pressure. Greek yogurt provides calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and protein, which work together to promote strong, healthy bones. Numerous studies have also found a link between eating dairy and weight loss. A

2010 study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition compared 300 men and women who followed either a low-fat, Mediterranean or low-carb diet over a 2-year period. Regardless of the type of diet they followed, those who ate the most dairy lost approximately 12 pounds more than folks who ate a low amount of dairy foods. Greek yogurt is one of those foods that can make a big impact. Let's hear it for Greek yogurt!!!

While you can always just eat Greek yogurt plain, I like to, as my grandmother use to say, "doctor it up" a little. My favorite Greek Yogurt is Fage 2%. To start my clean eating experiment, I made the Greek yogurt sauce that I use for most everything from grilled lamb chops to a dipping sauce for Naan bread.



I take one 6 oz. container of Fage 2% and add 2 tablespoons of fresh lemon juice and 1 1/2 tablespoons of good extra virgin olive oil, a generous pinch of salt and a good dash or two of cayenne pepper. I let it sit in the refrigerator for at least a couple of hours to let the flavors develop. I have to hold myself back from just eating out of the bowl with a spoon it is so good.

Next I opened my refrigerator to see what was sitting in my produce bin for vegetables that would work for a deconstructed Mediterranean type of "bowl" and would also work well with my Greek yogurt sauce. Salad greens and baby spinach went into the base of the bowl with a squeeze of lemon juice and a good drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper.



I had some Persian cucumbers, celery, cherry tomatoes, yellow and red beets and an avocado that needed to be used. After chopping them all into bite size pieces, I found a small can of garbanzo beans in the pantry and used them as well for a little more protein. I arranged the vegetables and garbanzo beans in their own little piles around the sides of the bowl and let the Greek yogurt take center stage in the middle. A squeeze of lemon juice and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil on all the veggies as their dressing. The final touch was a lonely half of a jalapeño that was going to get tossed that I minced (took out the seeds) and used it as a garnish for my Clean Eating Yogurt Bowl. What I loved about my Clean Eating Yogurt Bowl is that is a dish that is so accessible because you are not limited by anything. Just let your imagination go to work.

I have a lot of family and friends who are vegetarians. This one's for you.