

# 4 Genius Ways to Cook with One of the World's Healthiest Foods



by Jessica Smith, [REDBOOK](#)

You may think of oatmeal as a hearty, warm healthy breakfast option, but did you know exactly why it's so good for you?

**1. It helps lower cholesterol.** "Oatmeal contains heart-healthy fiber - and is known for its cholesterol-lowering properties. It's soluble fiber helps to lower LDL (bad) cholesterol, and it's insoluble fiber promotes regularity and a healthier colon," explains Registered Dietitian [Lauren O'Connor](#).

**2. It aids in weight loss.** Not only does oatmeal's fiber help you feel full (which may aid in weight loss), it also can help slow the digestion of carbohydrate foods, stabilizing blood sugars and enhancing your satiety, says O'Connor.



**3. It's a great disease fighter.** Oats are also a good source of B vitamins, contain the antioxidant vitamin E, and provide calcium, iron and zinc. Oatmeal also contains magnesium (which may help decrease the risk of Type 2 diabetes) and selenium (which may help decrease asthma symptoms, prevent heart disease and reduce cancer risk), says O'Connor.

So now that you know why you should be eating oatmeal, try our favorite four ways to enjoy some oatmeal (beyond the porridge bowl):

**1. Use it as a thickening agent in soups and sauces.** Substitute oats to thicken soups and gravies instead of flour or corn flour recommends O'Connor. (Tip: Grind oats in a food processor until it is the consistency of flour, then add it). Or, use it as a spaghetti sauce extender: "The oatmeal acts as a thickener and extender to fresh or store-bought spaghetti sauce - just a couple tablespoons of finely ground oatmeal while sauce is heating until it thickens," suggests O'Connor.

**2. Swap oats for breadcrumbs in recipes.** Add some more fiber to your meal by using oatmeal in place of breadcrumbs, recommends O'Connor. "You'll be getting whole grain goodness and all the cholesterol-lowering, heart-healthy benefits that come with it". Try making meatloaf or meatballs with oatmeal instead of breadcrumbs. Here's a recipe to try for [meatloaf](#).

**3. "Fry" chicken with it.** Registered Dietitian [Christen Cooper](#) likes to "fry" her chicken with oatmeal: "I coat the chicken with one egg, lightly flour it and then put the oatmeal on, then bake at 350 degrees for about 35 to 40 minutes or until done)." Cooper says using this method you can save almost 250 calories and 28 grams of fat vs. traditional frying.

**4. Whip up some oatmeal pancakes.** Not a fan of eating oatmeal in the morning? Why not try this recipe for protein oatmeal pancakes from Registered Dietitian [Sharon Richter](#): Combine  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of oatmeal, 8 egg whites,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp vanilla,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp cinnamon and then cook like a regular pancake.