

Stage 3: Smooth Textures

Starts: Day 7

Lasts for: 1 Week

Protein Foods

Vegetarian Refried Beans: Canned refried beans are a great option - soft in texture, packed with protein and fiber!

- **Heat and Eat-** open a can of refried beans, heat up in a pan, and enjoy! Try adding in some hot sauce or other seasonings for extra flavor (lime juice, cumin, chili powder, pepper, etc.) or add a scoop of Greek yogurt for some extra protein.
- **Homemade refried beans-** drain liquid from 15oz can of pinto beans and rinse beans under water. Spray a sauté pan with cooking spray and add pinto beans to the pan. Cook for 1-2 minutes. Pour 1 cup of vegetable broth into sauté pan along with spices of your choosing (garlic powder, cumin, chili powder and/or onion powder). Bring the pinto beans to a slow boil and continue to boil until broth is reduced by half (about 3-5 minutes). Using a potato masher, mash the pinto beans until very smooth. You may also use a blender.

Cottage Cheese: Look for low-fat plain cottage cheese or flavored varieties with less than 5g sugar per serving.

- **Tangy Dill** – Mix ½ teaspoon of dried dill, ½ teaspoon of cumin, a pinch of salt, and ½ tsp of lemon juice into ½ cup cottage cheese.
- **Fiesta Lime** – Mix ½ teaspoon of lime juice and ½ teaspoon of chili powder into ½ cup cottage cheese.
- **Chives and Onions** – Mix ½ teaspoon of dried chives (or minced fresh chives), ½ teaspoon of dried onion flakes, and ½ cup either cottage cheese or ricotta cheese. Let sit for at least 1 hour to allow flavors to blend.

Ricotta Cheese: Choose part-skim ricotta to eat on its own or mix with sweet or savory flavors.

- **Peach ricotta** – Mix ½ cup ricotta with a few teaspoons of canned peaches and a pinch of nutmeg.
- **Ricotta sweet treat** - Mix 1/4 to 1/2 scoop Salted Caramel/Chocolate/Vanilla Protein Powder + 1/4 cup part skim ricotta. Mix ingredients together and let sit in refrigerator 10 minutes.
- **Savory ricotta** – Combine ½ cup ricotta with ‘everything but the bagel’ seasoning and lemon juice.
- **Scrambled egg whites w/ ricotta-** scramble 2-3 egg whites until almost cooked through. Remove from heat. Stir in 1 tablespoon ricotta cheese, allow heat to soften ricotta cheese and finish setting egg.

Tofu: Find tofu in the refrigerated section of your grocery store, in a square package. Popular brands include Nasoya, Soy Boy, and Wildwood. Tofu is bland by itself, but absorbs other flavors added to it! It is sold in 3 textures:

- **Extra Firm:** best for stir-fry, marinating, pan-frying, and baking
- **Firm:** best for making tofu scramble
- **Silken:** blended for sauces, dips, and smoothies

Sweet Tofu Recipes

- **Chocolate Pudding** – Blend in food processor or blender: 16 oz silken tofu (drained), 2 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa, ¼ cup zero-calorie sweetener, ¼ tsp salt, and 2 tsp vanilla extract. Puree until smooth. Keep refrigerated.
- **Banana Pudding** – Use food processor or blender to combine 16 oz silken tofu (drained), 2 bananas, and 1 tsp vanilla. Puree until smooth. Add zero-calorie sweetener to taste. Store in refrigerator.

Savory Tofu Recipes

- **Tofu Scramble** – Crumble firm tofu in a bowl and stir in favorite seasonings (e.g., salt, pepper, garlic powder, seasoned salt, etc.). Pour mixture into a heated non-stick skillet (can use non-stick spray too) and stir. Continue stirring every minute or so until tofu is cooked to preferred level.

- **Pan-Fried or Baked Tofu Cubes** - Slice a block of extra firm tofu in half to make two ½-inch thick squares. Place between 2-3 layers of paper towels and lightly press out excess water. Cut into cubes.
 - **If pan-frying:** Preheat pan on medium heat and spray generously with non-stick cooking spray. Pan-fry tofu for 15-20 minutes until browned and crispy; stir every few minutes to avoid sticking. When tofu has been cooked to preferred level, splash with 1 tablespoon soy sauce. Add additional seasonings if desired or serve with dipping sauce (e.g., hot sauce, low sugar BBQ sauce, sriracha sauce, etc.).
 - **If baking:** Marinate tofu cubes in your preferred low-fat, low-sugar marinade for at least 30 minutes or overnight. Marinade ideas include salad dressings, teriyaki, thinned-out BBQ sauce, and soy sauce. There are also tons of healthy marinade recipes on-line. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Prepare baking sheet with parchment paper, non-stick cooking spray, or use non-stick pan. Place single layer of cubes on a non-stick baking dish and bake for 20-25 minutes or until lightly brown. Turn cubes halfway through cooking time.
 - In a pinch? Grab **pre-marinated tofu** that is ready-to-eat. Microwave or heat up in a skillet if you prefer it warm or enjoy it cold right from the package.
 - Nasoya “TofuBaked” Marinated Baked Tofu: Chipotle, Sesame Ginger, Teriyaki
 - Trader Joe’s Marinated and Ready to Eat Organic Baked Tofu: Savory or Teriyaki
 - Wildwood Organic Baked Tofu: 11 different varieties

Non-Protein Food ideas

- **Pureed Vegetables:** Try with broccoli, butternut squash, carrots, cauliflower or parsnips:
 - Peel and chop vegetables if needed; pre-chopped or frozen vegetables can also be used.
 - Steam or boil chopped vegetables until tender (easily pierced with a fork).
 - Add vegetables to a blender or small food processor.
 - Puree until smooth - adding liquid, a little at a time, to help reach smooth consistency. Broths work well to thin out the puree and add flavor.
 - Season to taste with spices if desired (salt, pepper, cinnamon, Italian seasoning, chili, cumin etc).
 - Consider adding protein powders such as unflavored or chicken soup flavor for a protein boost!
- **Banana “Ice Cream”-** Blend ½ ripe/ frozen banana with a splash of milk. Then, mix in your choice of: ¼ tsp vanilla extract or mint, 1-3 Tbsp cocoa powder and/or peanut butter powder, or your protein powder! ,
- **Oatmeal, Cream of Wheat and Farina**
 - Prepare according to instructions, cooking with water, low fat milk or milk alternative.
 - Look for instant varieties with <5g added sugar.
 - You can use sugar substitutes but Avoid honey, sugar or maple syrup.
 - Flavor with spices: cinnamon, nutmeg or vanilla or almond extracts or mashed banana, canned peaches

Egg Oatmeal Protein Bowl: Adding an egg to your oatmeal provides a hearty breakfast full of protein.

Directions:

- Combine 1/3 cup rolled oats, ½ cup low fat milk or milk alternative and egg white in a microwave-safe bowl and mix well.
- Microwave for 1 minute and stir.
- Microwave another 60-90 seconds, depending on desired consistency
- Top as desired (try cinnamon, nutmeg, PB2 or vanilla extract) and serve warm.

