



HEALTHY GREEN ATHLETE
Recipe Guide

Green smoothie recipes to
boost athletic performance
and enhance recovery



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About this Guide

Hey there, I'm Coach Karen.

As an athlete, nutrition coach and scientist, I am always researching and trying different foods, herbs and supplements that claim to improve some element of athletic performance. This recipe guide is the culmination of my own experience, my education in raw nutrition, and science-backed evidence regarding the benefits of certain adaptogenic and superfood ingredients.

As a busy working professional, I really enjoy the convenience that smoothies provide. As a nutrition coach specializing in optimizing performance, I believe that everything athletes put into their bodies should be packed with as many nutrients and beneficial compounds as possible. Therefore I am a huge advocate of supplementing a healthy diet with adaptogenic foods and superfoods!

Many of the ingredients recommended in these recipes are those recommended by traditional herbal medicine and have not been evaluated by the FDA. I suggest you consult your doctor before trying them to ensure there are no harmful side effects that may interfere with your current health conditions or medications.

Assuming you have your doctor's permission, I would encourage you to be your own scientist by trying out new foods while at the same time really tuning into how they might be impacting your physical and mental health. Do your own research by using Google Scholar and reading Amazon reviews of products you're interested in buying. Many of these recipes can be easily modified to meet your dietary preferences and/or macronutrient goals and I provide some advice on how to do so for each recipe.

If you have any questions about these green smoothie recipes, please don't hesitate to reach out. My contact information is below!

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What are adaptogenic foods?

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Adaptogenic foods, often referred to as herbs, are those that contain unique compounds (or phytochemicals) which have the ability to restore balance to the body, support important metabolic reactions in cells, and assist in adapting to physical and mental stress. These foods can contribute to increased strength, stamina, and stress relief. Oftentimes these compounds are isolated by the pharmaceutical industry and used in creating a variety of drugs.

The highest quality adaptogens are going to be those that are in their purest form – meaning they are both organic (free from chemicals and pesticides) and raw. The term “raw” is used to identify foods that haven’t been heated above 104 degrees Fahrenheit in order to ensure that their beneficial compounds are not altered by the cooking process. Some common adaptogenic herbs that are used throughout this recipe guide and can easily be found at most grocery stores or online include:

- [Ashwagandha](#) – a root which has been used for thousands of year for it’s restorative and rejuvenating effects. This adaptogen can help alleviate stress, anxiety, fatigue, low energy, and difficulty concentrating.
- Mushrooms – there are a variety of species of mushrooms that provide adaptogenic benefits. Compounds in medicinal mushrooms provide support to the brain and immune system, slows the process of aging, elevate energy and endurance, and help to manage physical and mental stress. Common species include: lion’s mane, reishi, cordyceps, turkey tail and chaga. I would recommend using a product that contains multiple mushroom species such as [Om Master Blend](#) or [Thrive 6 Mushroom Complex](#).
- [Holy basil](#) – an herb that supports a healthy immune system and a balanced mood. This herb has anti-histamine properties and aids in establishing hormonal balance by providing support to the adrenal glands. This adaptogen is also known for it’s blood thinning effects so do not take if that will impact your health in a negative way.



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Adaptogenic Foods. cont'd.

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- [Rhodiola](#) – a root known for providing energy, endurance and stamina. Rhodiola is an excellent addition to fruity smoothies because of its delicate rose flavor.
- [Maca](#) – a root with a malty, earthy and nutty taste which promotes balance in the body (especially to the hormones!) and provides a natural boost of energy.
- [Spirulina](#) – a blue-green algae that grows in both fresh and saltwater environments and provides a wide-range of health benefits. Since it contains many essential vitamins and minerals, it can be used to support the immune system and cover nutritional deficiencies. Compounds found in this organism have been found to support heart health, provide anti-inflammatory effects, and have powerful antioxidant properties. No wonder it's been used by NASA as a dietary supplement for astronauts on space missions!



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What are superfoods?

Superfoods are foods that contain a large dose of nutrients, specifically vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients, in a single food. These nutritionally-dense foods are often plant-based, low in calories and high in fiber. The jury is out for what exact foods receive the title of “superfood” but every recipe included in this guide contains at least one superfood which meets the definition above. Examples of these foods, which can easily be found in grocery stores or on the internet, include:

- [Tart Cherries](#)

Tart cherries contain many phytonutrients that may increase strength and reduce muscle soreness, boost the immune system and lead to better sleep quality which could make them a great ingredient to include in a post-workout smoothie for promoting fast recovery.

- [Bee Pollen](#)

As bees fly from flower to flower, they create balls of pollen granules which serve as a food source for the hive. These pollen granules contain 22 essential amino acids and are full of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidant compounds.

- [Chia Seeds](#)

Chia seeds are a good source of fiber and contain a healthy dose of plant-based omega-3 fatty acids which are important for joint and heart health. They do a great job of absorbing liquid so adding them to a smoothie gives it a thicker and smoother texture.

- Dark leafy greens

When it comes to leafy greens, the darker the green the more phytonutrient-rich they are. Leafy greens such as spinach, kale, collard greens, arugula, dandelion greens, mustard greens and swiss chard are all excellent additions to any green smoothie. These vegetables are high in fiber so they support healthy digestion and contain compounds that help to eliminate toxins from cells and tissues.



Superfoods. cont'd.

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- [Cacao](#)

Dried beans from the cocoa tree is the raw form of chocolate and serves as an excellent source of fiber, magnesium and iron. This superfood can be found in a couple of different forms including raw cacao powder and cocoa nibs.

- [Flax seeds](#)

Flax seeds contain omeg-3 fatty acids, a great source of plant-protein, a good dose of fiber and phytonutrients called lignans. Lignans are plant compounds which scientists have found to have strong anti-oxidant properties which lower the risk of cancer and improve overall health. In fact, studies have show that flax seeds contain 800 times more lignans than any other plant.

- [Hemp hearts](#)

While in the Cannabis family, hemp hearts are not marijuana and do not contain THC or CBD. Hemp hearts are the soft inner part of the hemp seed and serve as a great source of protein, healthy fats, fiber and a long list of vitamins and minerals. They provide a nutty flavor to any recipe and give a thick and smooth texture to green smoothies. They provide a great source of energy and support a healthy immune and digestive system.

- [Matcha](#)

Matcha is a made from Japanese tea leaves that are harvested, air dried and then crushed into a fine powder. Scientists have that matcha contains 3 times as much epigallocatechin gallate (a green tea antioxidant) than regular green tea. Research has linked this antioxidant to increased bone strength, improved brain function, reduced blood pressure and reduction in muscle soreness. In addition to caffeine, matcha also contains the amino acid L-theanine which induces a calming sensation. That makes it a tea that can stimulate and calm at the same time!



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Basic Smoothie Ingredients

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Every smoothie in this guide starts with the same 3-5 basic ingredients. They include:

1. A liquid.

Here's where you can begin customizing your smoothie to suit your dietary needs. I would recommend that everyone stay away from cow's milk and stick to a non-dairy option since dairy can cause inflammation throughout your entire body. I'd also recommend staying away from a soy-based milk since soy is another inflammatory food. Research also shows that milk proteins and fat globules in dairy can bind to antioxidants in superfoods and make them less useful. There are a ton of plant-based milks available these days but some popular options include: almond milk, coconut milk, oat milk, or another plant-based milk. Each recipe in this guide uses coconut or almond milk because those are my favorites but feel free to swap it out with your fave. Other liquid options may include: coconut water, aloe vera juice, tart cherry juice or freshly made bone broth.

2. A texturizer.

In order to make the smoothie smooth and creamy rather than thin and clumpy, adding a thickening ingredient such as frozen fruit, soaked chia seeds, nut butter, banana or avocado will help with maintaining texture and consistency.

3. Leafy greens.

It's not a green smoothie without greens so these are a must in every recipe. I often use baby spinach because it blends well and has a pretty mild taste, but feel free to swap it out with whatever greens you're feeling that day (or whatever is on sale). All leafy greens are high in fiber and full of important phytonutrients so there's no wrong option here. Just a word of caution to the newbies: Some leafy greens, like mustard greens, arugula and kale, are more bitter than others so they can take some getting used to.

4. A sweetener.

While this one is optional, it's also swappable. This ingredient is purely for flavor and is dependent on your affinity for sweetness and your desired macronutrient ratio. If you're looking to cut back on your sugar intake or sticking to a low-carb diet, I would recommend choosing a natural zero calorie sweetener such as stevia, monkfruit sweetener or erythritol. If you're not worried about carb content then opt for using dates, real maple syrup or honey as your sweetener.



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Basic Smoothie Ingredients. cont'd. ⁷

5. A protein.

Most of these smoothie recipes call for a non-dairy animal-based protein powder because I believe these to be the highest quality proteins available. These options include grass-fed beef-protein, bone broth protein and collagen protein. I've included some of my favorite high-quality protein powder brands below and links for you to check them out for yourself. Another great option would be to use homemade bone broth as your liquid instead of milk to boost not only your protein but many other vitamins and minerals as well.

As with the milk options, I would stay away from cow milk protein in the form of whey, and soy protein. If you're a vegan or vegetarian feel free to substitute this with your favorite plant-based or egg-based protein powder. Whichever you choose I would recommend choosing one that has at least 10g of protein per serving and no more than 6g of carbohydrates per serving. And of course stay away from artificial ingredients such as flavors, colors and sweeteners.

Lastly, keep in mind that adding a protein source to these smoothies increases calorie content and turns them into a small meal. This is important to know for those sticking to a calorie goal but I believe it's incredibly important for all athletes to make sure they are getting enough high-quality protein in order to support the form and function of their muscles.

Type of Protein	Product Name
Beef	EQUIP Beef Protein Powder
Beef bone broth	Ancient Nutrition Bone Broth Protein
Beef Collagen	Primal Kitchen Collagen Peptides
Marine Collagen	Natural Force Marine Collagen Peptides
Plant-based	Aloha Protein Powder



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Where to Buy Ingredients

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Most ingredients such as milk-substitutes and produce can be purchased at your local grocery store. Adaptogenic foods and superfood ingredients can often be found in the natural foods section of the grocery store, but they are usually much more expensive than you can buy them for online.

When it comes to buying specialty ingredients online, you can find them at the following places. These are my go-to online stores where I find all my ingredients at great prices.

[Thrive Market](#) – This online health-food store is my favorite place to go because it's high-quality products at near-wholesale prices. I buy all of my pantry staples here but also find many specialty ingredients that would be almost double the price in a grocery store. They do require a yearly membership which costs around \$60 (much like Costco and Sam's Club) but offer free shipping on all orders over \$50 and they often throw in free gifts for being a member. Unlike Costco and Sam's Club, Thrive Market only sells products made with real ingredients that are safe for the environment and fairly priced. Think of an online version of Whole Foods but for way less money and with a lot more perks. If you use the link below to join, you'll receive a free gift worth up to \$24 for joining.

Here is the the link to join and claim your free gift: <https://bit.ly/2SNqw1s>

[Amazon](#) – Good ol' Amazon is my backup plan for when I can't find something I need on Thrive Market. This is especially true for products that contain multiple adaptogens and superfoods in one container. I also love the reviews feature so I can read actual reviews from real people about what they liked or didn't like about a product.

If you're not satisfied with the options available in your grocery store or online you might be able to find something at a local farmer's market or you can always grow your own and make your own adaptogenic ingredients.



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Blending Tips & Tricks

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When it comes to blenders, there's really nothing like a high-powered one like the Vitamix. You can probably get by with a lower power one but your smoothies won't be as smooth or blended – especially if you're using a tough leafy green like kale and frozen fruit.

You can purchase a [re-furbished Vitamix blender](#) for a fraction of the cost of a new one that will work just as well as a brand new one. Years ago I bought a refurbished one and it's still going strong! Plus they have really great customer service so if anything does go wrong they will likely send you a brand new one.

Regardless of your blender, I would recommend adding all of your liquid ingredients and your greens to the blender first and giving it a quick blend on low speed before adding your other ingredients. Always start slow and gradually increase the speed to high until all ingredients are blended and you've reached a smooth consistency.

If your blender is running but the mixture is just sticking to the sides it means it's too thick and you'll have to add more liquid. I would recommend erring on the side of too thick than too thin because you can always add more liquid in the form of water. If your smoothie is too thin, you'll have to add more volume of solid ingredients to thicken it up and it may result in a much larger smoothie than you were hoping for.

Even if your smoothie is on the thick side, just let it melt for a minutes or two and consume it with a stainless-steel straw. [These ones](#) are my favorite!



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Tropical Island Green Smoothie

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This energizing tropical smoothie contains aloe vera juice which contains compounds that promote healing and recovery. It also contains coconut water which contains natural electrolytes to keep the body hydrated. I would recommend consuming this smoothie first thing in the morning or 30 minutes before beginning your workout.

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup frozen pineapple or mango
- ¼ cup [Aloe Vera Juice \(whole leaf\)](#)
- ¼ cup coconut water
- 1 tsp [maca powder](#)
- 1 handful spinach
- 1 tsp [monk fruit sweetener](#)
- ½ tsp [raw organic ashwagandha powder](#)
- Optional: 1/8 tsp fresh ginger

Notes:

- You can substitute the aloe vera juice with aloe vera powder which you can find [here](#). If you choose this option, make sure to increase the amount of coconut water so that your liquid volume remains the same.
- You can also use [coconut water powder](#) instead of coconut water.
- Maca powder is best if it's organic and raw. You can sometimes find this in the natural foods section of your grocery store, or you can purchase it [here](#).
- Maca is a great adaptogen but it comes from the root of the plant so it can have a pretty strong malty and earthy flavor. I would recommend starting with 1 tsp (or less) and adding a tiny bit at a time until you've reached a desired taste.



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Peanut Butter & Jelly Green Smoothie ¹¹

As far as smoothies go, this is my second favorite smoothie (behind the chocolate peanut butter one). The peanut butter can be replaced with any nut butter or even peanut butter powder. This smoothie is designed to be high in protein so it would make for a delicious post-workout meal.

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

- 1 cup almond milk
- ¾ cup frozen berries
- 1 handful spinach
- 1 scoop [collagen peptides](#)
- ½ TBSP [hemp hearts](#)
- 1 tsp [spirulina powder](#)
- 2 TBSP natural peanut butter
- 1 soft Medjool date, pitted

Notes:

- If you're using peanut butter powder instead of nut butter, you may need to adjust the thickness of the smoothie by using less liquid.
- Hemp hearts are high in fiber so they may cause digestive discomfort if you're not used to them. Start with a small amount, like 1 teaspoon, and work your way up to 1 TBSP.
- You can substitute the date with your favorite low-calorie sweetener like monk fruit or stevia.



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Chocolate Peanut Butter Green Smoothie

This is hands down my favorite smoothie to consume after a workout. The peanut butter can be replaced with any nut butter or even peanut butter powder. It's high in protein and packed with vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients from the added superfood ingredients.

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

- 1 cup almond milk
- ½ frozen banana
- 1 scoop [chocolate protein powder](#)
- 1 TBSP natural peanut butter
- 1 handful spinach
- 1 tsp [raw cacao powder](#) or [cocoa nibs](#)
- 1 tsp [organic mushroom powder](#)
- 1 tsp (or more) [monk fruit sweetener](#)

Notes:

- Often times the protein powder that you select will have sweetener in it so you may want to omit the added sweetener in this smoothie.
- Peanut butter can be replaced with your favorite nut butter or 1 TBSP of [powdered peanut butter](#)
- There are a lot of great mushroom powder products available these days but here are my favorites:
 - [Om Mushroom Master Blend](#)
 - [Thrive 6 Mushroom Complex](#)



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Cherry Cordial Green Smoothie

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This high-protein anti-oxidant rich smoothie contains tart cherry extract which contains compounds which help the body recover after workouts. Consume one of these sweet treats post-workout or on your rest days.

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

- 1 cup almond milk
- 1 tsp [Tart Cherry Extract](#)
- ½ cup frozen cherries
- 1 handful spinach
- 2 TBSP [raw cacao powder](#) or cocoa nibs
- 2 scoops [collagen peptides](#)
- 1 tsp (or more) [monk fruit sweetener](#)

Notes:

- You could swap the milk and tart cherry powder with pure tart cherry juice for an extra nutritional boost.
- If you don't have a high speed Vitamix blender, I'd recommend using cocoa powder instead of cocoa nibs since they can be tough to blend
- Tart cherry extract doesn't taste all that much like anything so the frozen cherries are added for flavor. For a low carb alternative and help with hydration, the frozen cherries can be substituted with a scoop of my favorite brand and flavor electrolyte powder, [Ultima Replenisher Cherry Pomegranate](#).



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Goji Berry Green Smoothie

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Goji berries are gaining popularity and I'm so happy! These berries are incredibly popular with the raw food community because they provide such amazing nutritional value in one tiny berry. The rhodiola and holy basil extracts add even more nutrition to support the body's ability to manage physical and mental stress.

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

- 1 cup almond milk
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup frozen berries
- 1 handful spinach
- $\frac{1}{2}$ avocado
- 2 TBSP [dried goji berries](#) (or [goji berry powder](#))
- 2 ounces [Rhodiola extract](#)
- 1 ounce [Holy basil extract](#)
- 1 tsp [monkfruit sweetener](#)

Notes:

- The avocado can be replaced with $\frac{1}{2}$ frozen banana but keep in mind that this will add a bit more sweetness so you may want to omit any added sweetener.



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Vanilla Matcha Green Smoothie

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This energizing superfood smoothie is a perfect way to start your day without the jitters that coffee may cause. Drink first thing in the morning, before a workout or in the early afternoon for a gentle pick-me-up. Since this smoothie contains caffeine, I would recommend not drinking it too late in the day as it might interfere with your valuable sleep.

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

- ½ cup almond milk
- ½ cup canned coconut milk
- 1 handful spinach
- 1 scoop [vanilla protein powder](#)
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tsp [Matcha Green Tea Powder](#)
- 1 tsp [monkfruit sweetener](#)

Notes:

- To make this smoothie a bit thicker, replace the sweetener with half of a frozen banana.



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Blueberry & Lavender Green Smoothie ¹⁶

Lavender contains many calming properties which makes it great for recovery, reducing stress and anxiety, and for soothing inflammation. The chia seeds are another ingredient that tackles inflammation with their omega-3 fatty acids. The coconut water adds important electrolytes to help hydrate and nourish the body making this smoothie perfect to consume any time of day and particularly after an intense workout.

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

- ½ cup coconut water
- ½ cup canned coconut milk
- 1 handful spinach
- ¾ cup frozen blueberries
- 1 TBSP [chia seeds](#)
- 1 tsp [dried lavender flowers](#) (or 1-3 drops [lavender essential oil](#))
- 1 tsp [monkfruit sweetener](#)

Notes:

- When purchasing lavender flowers (also called buds), make sure they are organic and food-safe like [these ones](#). Same goes for using essential oils – make sure they are high-quality and safe to consume like [this one](#).
- Start with a teaspoon of lavender flowers or 1 drop of lavender essential oil and add more depending on how strong you want the lavender taste to be.



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Apple Cinnamon Green Smoothie

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The combination of nourishing ingredients in this smoothie make it the perfect thing to consume when you're feeling under the weather or when you need a nutritional boost before a big competition. The bee pollen boosts the immune system and delivers a high dose of nutrients in a tiny serving.

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

- 1 cup bone broth (homemade or [store bought](#))
- 1 handful spinach
- 1 TBSP almond butter
- 1 TBSP [ground flaxseed](#)
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp [bee pollen](#)
- 1 apple, skin removed and sliced
- 1 tsp [monkfruit sweetener](#)

Notes:

- The apple can be substituted with ½ cup of unsweetened applesauce
- Using 4-5 frozen cubes of bone broth will provide more of a smoothie consistency rather than one resembling a broth
- Add more cinnamon if desired



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Pumpkin Pie Green Smoothie

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This smoothie is high in protein and fiber which makes it a great pre-workout meal. It also serves as a healthier and athlete-friendly alternative to a slice of real pumpkin pie which doesn't provide any real benefit to athletic performance.

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

- ¾ cup almond milk
- ½ frozen banana
- 1/2 scoop [vanilla protein powder](#)
- 1/3 cup [organic pumpkin puree](#)
- ½ tsp [pumpkin pie spice](#) (add more if desired)
- 4 soft Medjool dates
- 1 TBSP [hemp hearts](#)
- 1 tsp [maca powder](#)

Notes:

- The banana and dates in this recipe add texture to the smoothie but can both be replaced with a different sweetener such as monk fruit or stevia. To retain the desired texture, add 1-2 tablespoons of your favorite nut butter.
- Hemp hearts are an excellent source of fiber and protein but can be a little rough on the tummy if you're not used to them so start with 1 tablespoon and add more if your body can handle it.



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Peaches & Cream Green Smoothie

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This smoothie is super creamy and loaded with fiber and healthy fats. It makes a sweet afternoon treat or could be paired with a bowl of oatmeal for breakfast.

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

- ½ cup almond milk
- ½ cup canned coconut milk
- ½ scoop [vanilla protein powder](#)
- ½ avocado
- ¾ cup frozen peaches
- 1 handful spinach
- 1 TBSP [chia seeds](#)
- 1 tsp [monkfruit sweetener](#)

Notes:

- Add ½ cup of whole oats and replace ½ cup of milk with plain Greek yogurt to make this smoothie a complete breakfast
- Depending on the protein powder you use, you may need to adjust the liquid amounts with a little bit of water to thin it out a bit.
- You can omit the vanilla protein powder altogether and add a dash of vanilla extract to retain the vanilla flavor of this smoothie.



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Feedback wanted!

Did you love one of these recipes or was there one that you just couldn't finish because it was so gross?

I'm always open to feedback so I'd love to hear your thoughts, good or bad, on any of the smoothie recipes in this guide. Any feedback will score you a 10% off coupon code to use on any Healthy Green Apparel!

Here's how you can share:

- Take a photo of your selfie and upload to Instagram. Make sure to tag @healthygreenathlete!
- Email me at karen@healthygreenathlete.com and tell me if there's anything you would change about the recipe.
- Send me a message on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/healthygreenathlete

Hope to hear from you soon!



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