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Count carbs, and still enjoy your chili, margaritas

Super Bowl snacks don't have to be diet busters

By **Jennifer Biggs**
[Contact](#)
January 28, 2004

It happens every January. You start the year off motivated and determined to eat right. But no matter how good you are, the Super Bowl comes around and let's face it: It's no fun munching crudite when everyone else is tearing into nachos and swilling beer.

How's a pot of chili sound instead? Or tacos? With a margarita or two? Your waistline will be none the worse for it, I promise. Just take a trip to your local low carb store.

I've become a big fan of these stores in the past few weeks. They're not just for folks who are counting carbs. Many of the products are low in fat and calories, too. Also, in every store I've visited, the people who work there know the products and will lead you to the real finds.

Here's this week's picks:

- Boca Ground Burger Original, about \$2.50 for a 12 ounce package, available at Super WalMart. Per 1/2 cup serving: 70 calories, .5 g of fat (none saturated) no cholesterol, 220 mg sodium, 7 g of carbohydrates, 4 g fiber, 11 g protein.

There's just no reason not to replace some or all of the ground beef in your recipes with these crumbles, because you truly can't tell the difference. In fact, they taste better than very lean ground beef, which I find stringy, rubbery and a very unappealing gray color, to boot.


Low carbers, keep in mind that a package (the box has three individual packets) has 3 net carbohydrates (carbs minus fiber). Use a whole box and you add only 9 g of carbohydrates to a recipe and you save big on the fat. I usually use half ground chuck, browned and drained, and half Boca crumbles.

- Eden Organic Black Soy Beans, about \$1.79 per 15 ounce can. At groceries, low carb stores and health food stores. 120 calories, 6 g fat (1 saturated), no cholesterol, 30 mg

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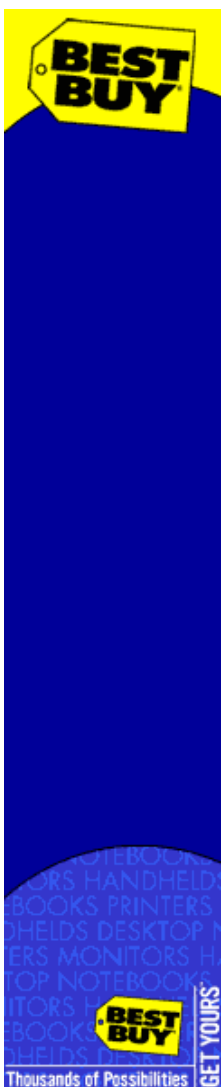
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sodium, 8 g carbohydrate, 7 g fiber and 11 g protein per 1/2 cup serving.

These have 1 net gram of carbohydrate per serving, much less than kidney, pinto or black beans. And they're good for you, full of fiber and protein. Soy protein may help lower cholesterol, protect against heart disease, strengthen bones and even protect against certain kinds of cancer.

And they've got a great mild taste. I haven't yet, but I imagine I'll use them in salads just like black beans, or even for beans and rice. They're great in chili.

- La Tiara Authentic Mexican Taco Shells, 4.2 ounce package (18 shells), \$2.99 at low carb stores. Per shell: 37 calories, 2.3 g fat (.5 saturated), no cholesterol, 4 mg sodium, 4 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, .4 g protein.

Wow. These are just wonderful. We'll never eat another taco shell in my house. They are so light and delicate. My only complaint is that they get soggy faster than a regular shell. But that's easy enough to remedy: Just make what you're going to eat and if you want more, head back to the kitchen.

- Baja Bob's Original Low Carb Margarita Mix, \$6.99 at low carb stores. Less than 10 calories per 4 ounce serving, 45 mg of sodium, one g carbohydrate (and nothing else, until you add the tequila, anyway).

I was leery of this product. First of all, it's pricey. Second, I don't like margaritas.

But I do like daiquiris. Without the rum, the mix was a little too tart. When I mixed it, though, I was pleasantly surprised. It is tart, maybe too tart for some, but I could drink one or two of these with no complaint. Tequila has about 90 calories per jigger (1.5 ounces), and no carbohydrates.

So here's your menu:

A pot of chili, made with Boca crumbles and Eden black soy beans. Use your favorite mix, whether it's homemade or store-bought. But beware if you're counting carbs: The prepackaged mixes are full of them. You can buy no-carb versions at the low carb stores.

Tacos with La Tiara shells. Brown 1 pound of ground chuck, drain grease, and add Boca crumbles and/or Eden black soy beans.

Chop onions, lettuce and tomatoes, shred cheese (low fat or regular), and even splurge on a little sour cream (light, fat free or regular, depending on whether you're counting fat or carbs), and let everyone make their own bowl or plate. Mix up a batch of margaritas and you're set. If only the Titans were playing. . . .

- Jennifer Biggs 529-5223

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