

A day in the life of Nina Manolson

{full-time life coach and mom to
Coby 13 and Ruby 10}



About Nina

Nina is the Smokin' Hot Mom and Soulful Mom mentor and teaches busy moms how to reclaim their bodies and end their struggles with food, so they can get their energy, glow, and giggle back. In addition to her Smokin' Hot Mom programs, Nina teaches moms how to make healthy food that the whole family loves through her Healthy Yummy Kids program.

Nina's formal training is in Eastern/Western Nutrition and Holistic Health from The Institute for Integrative Nutrition. She holds a Masters in Counseling Psychology with a specialty in the Psychology of Eating. She is a Certified Yoga Teacher, Licensed Massage Therapist and Certified Raw Food Chef and Teacher. She has over 20 years in the health and wellness field and is known for her compassionate approach where she meets each client and class participant where they are in their unique journey to creating great health and a life they love.

Q & A

Mia: Can you tell me about a typical day – work, food, and exercise?

Nina:

Wake up and drink a big glass of water that my husband brings me.

Before I even get dressed I do two **yoga breathing** exercises that are kind of like my morning “coffee”. I do the breath of joy and big sun breaths.

Then I step into clothes that make me feel feminine, powerful, and of course comfortable in my body.

Make breakfast and lunch for the kids

Prepare oatmeal. Once or twice a week I come down to breakfast already made because I’ve set up the slow cooker to have breakfast ready for us in the morning.

While the kids are eating, I pack them lunch and sometimes even dinner if it is a long day. Their lunch might be leftover dinner, Mitoku Ramen noodles with seaweed and sesame seeds, hummus and crackers, I always also pack them apples, carrots and unsweetened dried mango.

Make green smoothie for me

Everyone is off and I make myself my green smoothie, which I sip all morning. My green smoothie is the key to me feeling vibrant all day.

Get to work

I set up shop in my living room for a day of coaching calls and writing. There are days when I leave to teach, but I feel so lucky to work at home because I’m a bit of a home-body. So connecting with my clients while I sit in front of the fire is my idea of heaven. I have a set-up for sitting in front of my computer for writing, but I also have a headset and a table that works for standing so that I move throughout the day. Being able to change my work position is essential for keeping up my energy all day. I even have a hula hoop which I use between clients!

Morning Snack

If I get hungry after my green smoothie, I enjoy a small bowl of sunflower seeds, dried coconut, and dried fruit.

Lunch

My go-to lunch is my Belly Bowl. I have it about 3 or 4 times a week. I am efficient this way. It takes 2 minutes to make, it is good for my belly, and I don’t seem to get sick of it! I make a point of sitting and eating my meals – no eating on the go!

Afternoon Snack and Planning

In the afternoon I need something sweet and hearty and might make myself a Superfood smoothie.

At this time I also scan the fridge to see what we might have for dinner. I might put a squash in the oven, wash some lettuce or bake some rice to move dinner forward. Sometimes I’ll start some beans soaking for the following day. Just coring a few apples sets me up to make an easy baked apple desert that can bake while we eat dinner. In my coaching, I teach clients to meal plan for the week to ease the stress of dinner-time, but at some point after you’ve planned for a while, it becomes habit. I can now pull together a meal with ease from the kitchen basics I buy every week.

Dinner

We value family dinner in our house. Even if I have packed “dinner” the kids come home for more. My father-in-law, who lives downstairs, also joins us for dinner. When everyone is home, it takes me 30 minutes to make dinner. In the winter I am a big fan of soup and stews and rely heavily on my pressure cooker. A big soup and an everything-salad (that’s every and any kind of veggie can go in) make a comforting winter meal.

Bed

My kids are getting older, but I am still part of their bedtime routine. I wash up with them, then snuggle and chit-chat about the day. Another thing I do is brush my teeth with them, which is a good trick for avoiding late-night snacking. When I come upstairs in the evening, I leave my work downstairs. The i-pad might come upstairs, but it is only for reading, not emailing.

Mia: *Can you tell us more about your weekly exercise routine? I love that you hula throughout the day!*

Nina: I love to invite my body into different types of movement, so I switch up my exercise routine a lot. I take 1 powerful yoga class a week, and then a couple of times throughout the week I do what I call pajama yoga. I lay on my mat in front of the fireplace and move in the way my body wants. I listen deeply to my body's wisdom and what arises is a deeply restorative yoga practice. I also take a salsa or swing dance class with my husband every week (that's our date night). I also use my movement time as social time (I go for walks with friends) or as learning time (I listen to my continuing ed training on my mp3 player). I love my weekly belly dance class, and picking up my hula hoops between clients keeps my energy moving. And then of course there's always fun kitchen dance parties that happen spontaneously! I'm a firm believer in movement that makes you smile. I'm not a hard-core exerciser. I go for enjoy-my-body-and-love-the-movement type of exercise. I love trying new types of dance — it opens my body-mind to new pathways and patterns, and it lets me have a dynamic and ever-evolving relationship with my body.

Mia: *Do you have any thoughts on grocery shopping?*

Nina: If you don't have healthy food in your fridge it's really hard to make healthy choices. So, I keep a full fridge. I love looking into my fridge and seeing a variety of veggies—it lets me be creative in the kitchen and it always ensures that I can at least make a big veggie soup or veg & curry stew.

My husband and I fit shopping between other things. We have a running list on the fridge and if one of us is driving by the grocery store we'll stop in. But we always shop at the farmer's market weekly. We're super lucky where we are because as soon as the outdoor farmer's market closes for the season the indoor winter farmer's market opens up.

We buy many of our pantry basics online and in bulk to reduce trips to the store and to shop more economically.

Mia: *Do your kids ever eat sugar?*

Nina: My kids do sometimes eat sugar. We don't eat refined sugar at home, I make lots of delicious naturally sweetened treats, but when we're traveling they'll certainly enjoy the local delicacy. But we talk about moderation, about listening to their tummies signals and we talk a lot about the quality of food. What's in it? Who made it? How long has it been sitting on a shelf or was it homemade?

Mia: *What is the most important food lesson you want to pass onto them?*

Nina: The food and body wisdom that I would want to pass onto my kids is for them to attentively listen and deeply respect their bodies. I also want them to love the food that loves them back, meaning that I want them to fully enjoy the food that works for their body.

Mia: *Do you have any soul practices you want to tell us about?*

Nina: Before dinner we meditate for two minutes as a family. I meditate before bedtime. I practice metta meditation, which is a loving kindness meditation. I pray and foster an intimate relationship with the life force energy that I believe envelopes us all. I dance as a way to keep my soul vibrant, happy and fully expressed!



NINA'S GO-TO GREEN SMOOTHIE

Ingredients

- 1 cup of organic Green Vegetables (like spinach and bok choy)
- 1 large organic Celery Stalk
- 1/2 cup Parsley
- 1 Cucumber (peel if it's not organic or the peel is bitter)
- 1 peeled Lemon
- 1 – 2 Bananas
- 2 cups of water

Directions

Blend it all up in a Vitamix or powerful blender

Watch Nina make it here:

<http://www.smokinhotmom.com/?p=404>

NINA'S BELLY BOWL

Ingredients

- 1 Avocado
- 1/2 cup Naturally Fermented Sauerkraut

Directions

Cut avocado in half and top with sauerkraut!
Really, it's that simple.

Comments

Nina's current favorite brand is Real Pickles. Their sauerkraut comes in many flavors, her current favorite is garlic – Spicy Asian is very warming in winter months. If you can't find Real Pickles look for the words, RAW or Naturally Fermented.

plansimplemeals.com





NINA'S BASIC VEGETABLE SOUP (MADE EASY IN A PRESSURE COOKER)

Set aside some time each week to cut up veggies and make this soup. I make it in a pressure cooker for speedy results. Lorna Sass is my go-to-gal for pressure cooker recipes. But this recipe works in a slow-cooker on regular stovetop cooking. This soup is infinitely versatile. Start with this basic vegetable soup base, then vary the protein, change the veggies seasonally add different spices and you won't ever be bored.

For kids I often add Eden Alphabet Noodles. They give kids the noodle experience they love and they add a fun element of letter play.

Texture is important for kids. Some kids don't like the chunky texture of a vegetable soup, or a particular vegetable turns them off. If that's the case for your child, then blend your soup. An immersion blender makes it easy because you can blend right in your cooking pot. If you have a child who likes chunky textures and likes to see all the different colors in their soup, leave your soup as is.

I'm not providing you amounts for this recipe because I want to encourage you to take your largest pot and fill it with every veggie you like and have.

But here are guidelines:

Sauté chopped onions, garlic, carrots, leeks, and celery in 2 tablespoons of olive oil.

Add any vegetable you like, check the list below for ideas (not tomatoes—you'll add those later)

Cover generously with water. Add 1-2 vegetable bullion cubes (Rapunzel is my favorite brand). Homemade vegetable stock is even nicer if you have it on hand.

Add sea salt to taste.

Simmer until all vegetables are soft, for regular stovetop cooking about 20-25 minutes.

In a pressure cooker – cook at high pressure for 10 minutes and then use quick release valve to release pressure and serve.

Onions
Carrots
Celery
Parsnips
Sweet potatoes
Squash
Zucchini
Mushrooms
Broccoli
Cauliflower



Once you have your basic vegetable soup, you can start playing with variations. Take a few cups of the basic soup, add the following combinations and warm gently.

Asian:

Tamari
Toasted Sesame Oil
Crumbled Wakame (seaweed)
Grated Ginger
Gomasio

Italian:

Parsley
Italian Seasoning mix
Chickpeas
Fresh Tomato

Greek:

Lemon Juice
Pepper
Parsley
Fresh chopped spinach

French:

Herbes de Provence
White Beans

Mexican:

Black Beans
Salsa
Chili Powder

Super Green:

Fresh kale chopped finely
Fresh spinach chopped finely
Any Fresh herbs

Indian:

Curry powder
Chickpeas
Coconut milk

Add brown rice for extra texture and bulk.

NINA'S SUPERFOOD SMOOTHIE

A superfood smoothie is the perfect afternoon snack when you're at that tired-low-blood-sugar moment of your day. The fruit will give you that nice sweet pick-me-up but the chia and hemp balances that with lots of protein and healthy fats which will keep you satisfied and full of energy.

Ingredients

1 cup Water
1/2 Banana
1/2 cup Mango
1/2 cup Raspberry or Strawberry
1 tablespoon Chia Seeds
1 tablespoon Hemp Seeds
1 tablespoon Maca Powder
(optional – but good for hormone balancing and libido)
1–2 tablespoons Cacao (depending on how much of a chocolate lover you are and how sensitive you are to caffeine)

Directions

Blend well



NINA'S DECADENT DANDY DRINK

Ingredients

2 tablespoons Dandy Blend
1 heaping tablespoon Hemp Seeds
1 heaping tablespoon Chia Seeds
1 heaping tablespoon Coconut Flakes
2 – 4 whole pitted Dates
1.5 cups Water
3 shakes Cardamom
3 shakes Cinnamon
3 drops Vanilla Stevia (liquid)
2-3 Brazil Nuts (optional – but adds a lovely richness)

Directions

Blend well in Vitamix.

If you want it warm – blend for 3 full minutes.

If you don't have a Vitamix, use warm water and blend for longer and use soaked dates so they are softer and easier to blend.

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