



FOOD BITES



January 2014

Save Money While Cooking Quality Meals for Your Family

With so many families on fixed budgets and short on time, it's important to realize that cooking for your family does not have to break the bank! You do not have to use expensive ingredients to make a delicious dish, nor should it take a long time to prepare. This edition of Food Bites is going to be packed with 5 ingredient dishes to enjoy with your family. Bon Appétit!

Apple Kielbasa Crockpot Dish

Ingredients:

2 pounds fully cooked kielbasa sausage
3/4 cup brown sugar
1 cup chunky applesauce
2 cloves garlic, minced

Directions:

Cut kielbasa into 1" pieces and combine with brown sugar, applesauce, and garlic in 3 quart crockpot. Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours until thoroughly heated.

Bacon Monkey Bread

Ingredients:

11 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 small onion, chopped
3 (10 ounce) cans refrigerated buttermilk biscuits
1/2 cup butter or margarine, melted

Directions:

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease a 10-inch Bundt pan. Combine bacon, Parmesan cheese and onion; set aside.

Cut biscuits into fourths; dip each piece in butter, and layer one-third in prepared Bundt pan. Sprinkle half of bacon mixture over biscuits; repeat procedure, ending with biscuits.

Bake for 40 minutes or until golden. Cool 10 minutes. Invert onto a serving platter. Serve immediately.



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The Food Stamp Program helps low-income people buy nutritious foods. Food Stamps can help you and your family eat a healthier diet. Better Living for Texans is supported by USDA's Food Stamp Program. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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New Year's Resolution Calendar

At the stroke of midnight on December 31, millions of Americans will resolve to start eating better and/or lose those extra pounds they are carrying around. But within a few days or weeks, most will have given up.

This year, take a systematic approach to those nutrition-related resolutions. Instead of resolving to “eat better and lose weight”, set one resolution for each month throughout the year. This can improve the chance that your resolutions are kept and that they actually turn into new and healthy habits.

January

Reduce your intake of artery-clogging saturated fat by switching from whole milk and dairy products to lowfat or nonfat milk and dairy products. This includes sour cream, yogurt, cheeses, and canned milks as well as milk.

February

Increase your intake of fruits to two or three servings a day. Make it as easy to reach for a piece of fruit as it is to reach for a cookie by keeping a bowl of fresh fruit on the kitchen counter. Use canned or dried fruits for snacks on the go. Eat vitamin C-rich fruit like oranges, strawberries, or kiwi everyday.

March

Increase your intake of vegetables to three to five servings a day. 3-4 times a week, choose dark green, deep yellow and orange vegetables such as romaine lettuce, spinach, broccoli, sweet potatoes, and carrots.

April

Instead of high fat, high sugar snacks, choose foods like whole grain crackers, lowfat popcorn, pretzels, rice cakes, popcorn cakes, and graham crackers. Of course, fruits and veggies are excellent choices as well.

May

Reduce your intake of saturated fat and cholesterol by eating at least one meatless meal each week. Plan menus that include pasta dishes, bean dishes, whole grain breads, and a variety of fruits and vegetables. Baked potatoes are easy to make and can function as the entrée. Vegetarian chili is another option.

June

Limit your intake of sodium. Choose “low salt” or “no salt added” versions of foods such as crackers, nuts, canned vegetables, soups, and soy sauce. Use less salt in cooking, and don't add salt to food at the table.

July

Reduce your intake of fat by limiting fried foods to once a week or less. This includes fried meats, French fries, fried cheese, chips, grilled sandwiches, cheese curls, and fried vegetables.

August

Boost your fiber intake by starting the day with a bowl of high fiber cereal. Look for cereals that have at least 4 grams of fiber per serving. Increasing your intake of fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains will also help increase your fiber intake.

September

Reduce your risk of osteoporosis by including good sources of calcium in your diet. Lowfat or nonfat milk or yogurt are the best sources of calcium. However, foods like leafy green vegetables, figs, beans, and salmon and sardines with the bones are good sources as well.

October

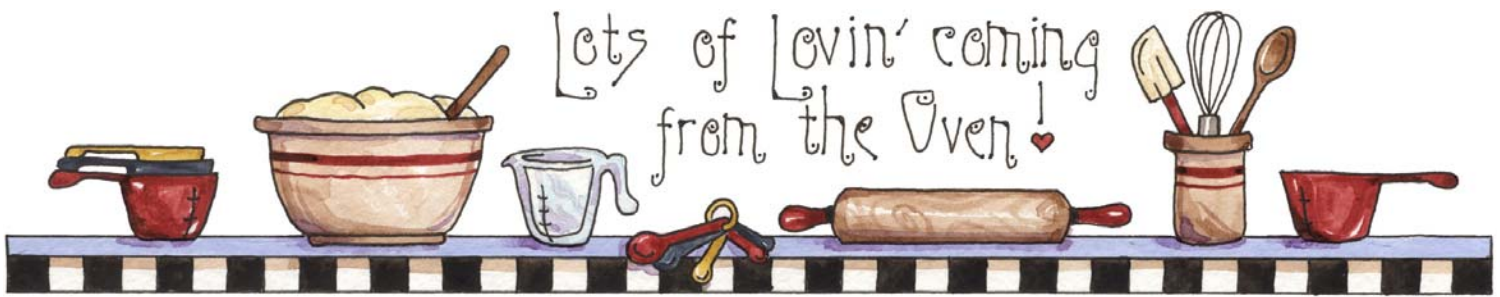
Eat fish at least twice a week. Fatty fish, such as salmon, mackerel, trout, sardines, and herring contain omega-3 fatty acids which appear to reduce the risk of heart disease.

November

As the holiday season approaches, begin practicing lowfat cooking techniques. Look for ways to modify your favorite recipes to lower the fat and calorie content. Attend healthy cooking classes that may be offered at hospitals in your area.

December

The holiday season is upon you. Try to maintain your weight by sticking to a consistent exercise schedule and limiting high calorie foods. As you look back over the year 2013, you will have now developed 12 new healthy eating habits to make you healthier in 2014.



Broccoli-Cauliflower Casserole

- 1 pound frozen broccoli
- 1 pound frozen cauliflower
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 small jar Cheez Whiz
- 1 small can French-fried onions

Place broccoli and cauliflower in a 9 x 13-inch baking dish on top of stove. Heat the soup and Cheez Whiz in a pan. Pour over the vegetables. Bake for 40 minutes at 325 degrees F. Place the onions on the vegetables during the last 10 to 15 minutes.

Busy Day Casserole

- 3 pounds lean beef, cubed
- 2 cans golden mushroom soup
- 1 envelope dry onion soup mix
- Noodles or rice
- Sour cream

Place all ingredients in a dish in order given. Bake at 325 degrees F. for 2 to 3 hours. Stir in a small carton of sour cream just before serving over rice or noodles.

Adobo Chicken

- 1 small sweet onion, sliced
- 8 cloves crushed garlic
- 3/4 cup soy sauce
- 1/2 cup vinegar
- 1 (3 pound) whole chicken

In a small bowl combine the onion, garlic, soy sauce and vinegar and mix all together. Place chicken in crock pot and pour mixture over chicken. Cook on low for 6 to 8 hours.

Cajun Beef Roast

- 1 (2 pound) boneless beef chuck roast
- 1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 (14 1/2 ounce) can diced tomatoes with garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon Tabasco sauce

Sprinkle roast with Cajun seasoning, and rub in well. Place in crock pot and sprinkle with onion. Pour tomatoes over roast, and sprinkle with Tabasco. Cover and cook on LOW for 8 to 10 hours.



Cheesy Hash Brown Casserole

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 can cheese soup (any variety desired)
- 1 bag hash browns (any variety desired), slightly thawed

Brown ground beef. Add hash browns and continue cooking until hash browns are the brownness desired. Add cheese soup and mix. Cook until soup is warm (this doesn't take long).

Italian Surprise

- 1 to 1 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 4 cups Bisquick, divided
- 1 1/3 cups milk, divided
- 1 large jar Prego sauce (any variety)
- 1 (8 ounce) package mozzarella cheese, shredded

Brown ground beef; drain; add sauce.

Meanwhile, mix 2 cups Bisquick and 2/3 cup milk. Spread on the bottom of a 3-quart baking dish. Add ground beef sauce to top of Bisquick. Sprinkle shredded mozzarella over sauce. Mix remaining Bisquick and milk. Spread carefully over cheese. Bake at 375 degrees F until well browned, 30 to 45 minutes.

Praline Sweet Potato Casserole

- 4 large sweet potatoes, baked
- 1 stick (1/2 cup) butter
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

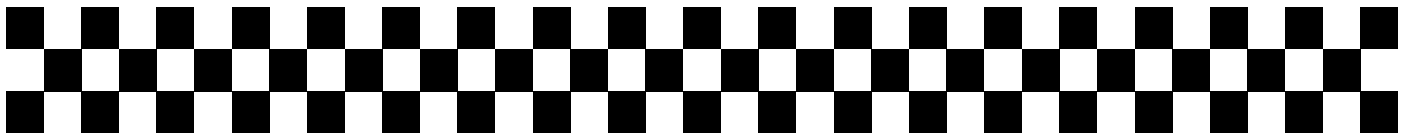
Peel sweet potatoes while still very warm. Mash with butter in large mixing bowl. Add brown sugar and eggs, mixing well. Pour into a greased 2-quart baking dish, and top with pecans. Bake at 350 degrees F for about 30 minutes.

Crescent Casserole

- 3 cans crescent rolls
- 2 pounds ground beef
- Onion to taste
- 4 cups shredded cabbage
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella or cheddar cheese

Brown ground beef with onions. Drain. Salt and pepper to taste, if desired. Add cabbage to ground beef mixture and steam until cabbage is done.

Place half of the crescent rolls in the bottom of a well greased 9 x 13-inch pan to form bottom crust. Put cabbage and hamburger mixture on top and then add cheese and cover all with the remaining crescent rolls. Bake at 350 degrees F for about 45 minutes. Cover with foil the last 10 minutes so the crescent rolls don't burn.



Did You Know that January is National Oatmeal Month?

There are several different kinds of oatmeal such as steel-cut, rolled, and stone-ground...but is there any difference in their nutritional value?

First, some quick definitions. Steel-cut oats are hulled, toasted, oat grains that have been coarsely chopped into chunks about the size of a sesame seed. Stone-ground oats are the same thing, only ground into smaller pieces, closer to the size of a poppy seed. To make old-fashioned rolled oats, they steam the hulled toasted grains and then run them between rollers to create flakes.

The biggest differences between rolled, steel-cut, and stone-ground oats are in the texture and cooking times. They are all considered "whole grains" in that they all contain the germ, endosperm and bran of the original grain.

Any differences in nutrition would be due to the different processing methods, but the differences are minor. Some nutrients will be lost to heat and moisture during the steaming of the rolled oats, for example. On the other hand, the steel-cut oats have to be cooked for longer (losing nutrients along the way) so it's probably just about the same. Similarly, the stone ground oats may have a slightly higher glycemic impact than the steel cut because they've been reduced to smaller particles. But all three forms are considered to be low-glycemic foods.

Quick-cooking and instant oats are a whole different story--as they are the kind that are packaged with flavors and sweeteners, therefore they are not as nutritious as oatmeal in its natural state.

Happy Oatmeal Month!

Overnight Crockpot Oatmeal

Ingredients:

1 cup steel cut oats
4 cups water
1/2 cup half and half or milk
1 cup dried fruit or 1 fresh apple, diced
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 T. butter
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
2-3 T. cinnamon sugar



Directions:

1. Find a bowl that will hold four cups of liquid, and fit inside your crock pot with the lid on.
2. Measure out one cup of Steele cut oats. Pour that into the inner bowl. Add the four cups of water, milk or half and half, brown sugar, vanilla, butter and cinnamon sugar. If you would like to add dried fruit or a cut up apple then add it as well.
3. Fill the crock with water to about halfway. Set the inner bowl in the crock and see how high the water rises. Add more water in the crock if necessary. Try to match it so that the water reaches about the same height on the outside of the oats bowl or just below the bowl.
4. Place the lid on your crock pot. Set on low and go to bed. When you get up the next morning your oatmeal should be cooked perfectly in that steamy water bath.