



# Food Bites



June 2014

## June: Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month!!!

### Berries!

Berries are a decadent treat of summer. They are also a benefit to your health:

- Their potassium helps keep your blood pressure low
- Berries contain fiber for a healthier heart - for every cup you eat, you take in 2-3 grams of fiber
- They also contain phytochemicals that may help lower the risk of cancer
- They are an excellent diversion for a sweet tooth - consider that 1 cup of strawberries is just 50 calories while 2 cookies, the same weight serving, contain 160 calories and 8 grams of fat
  - Cost-wise, berries are about the price of ice cream
- PLUS berries help you get to 4.5 cups of fruits and veggies each day because when you have them in the house you want to eat them

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### Berry Freezer Jam

1 cup crushed fresh strawberries

1 cup crushed fresh raspberries

1 cup sugar

1 pkg (1.75 oz) powdered pectin

1/2 cup water

Combine strawberries and sugar, and let stand 20 minutes. Combine pectin and water in a small sauce pan. Bring to a boil. Boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. Pour pectin mixture over strawberry mixture, and stir 3 minutes. Immediately pour jam into jelly jars or frozen food containers, leaving 1/2 inch head space. Cover at once with lids. Cool to room temperature. Refrigerate up to 1 week or freeze up to 1 year. Makes approx. 3 cups. Use to top yogurt, oatmeal or whole grain toast.

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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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Texas AgriLife Extension Service,  
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## **WIN** with fruits and vegetables...

MyPlate tells us to fill half our plate with fruits and veggies. That's what we call a healthy plate! You, too, can **WIN** with fruits and veggies! Here's how:

**Weight:** The more fruits and veggies that you eat, the easier it is to manage your weight. Usually you hear moderation, portion control and counting calories. But the simple thing about fruits and veggies is that they are low in calories and calorie density and high in fiber. So when you are eating more of them you tend to displace higher calorie foods.

**I** am healthier - people who consume greater amounts of fruits and veggies tend to lower their risk and have less incidence of chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers.

**Nutrients** - Fruits and veggies contain most of the nutrients that most people are lacking. Vitamins, minerals and fiber are presented in a colorful package that is proven for health, inexpensive, good for you and void of added fat, sugar and sodium. Many, like apples and bananas can be ready on the go faster than fast food. **AND** they are great for breakfast, lunch, dinner and dessert. What more could you ask for!

**Be A WINNER!**

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# Roasting Veggies



Summer produce season is in full swing and how better to celebrate by cooking up some fun new vegetable dishes? Today we'll focus on preparing fresh vegetables in two ways -- roasting in the oven and cooking on the grill. Whether the weather is perfect or anything but, you'll have a fun way to prep veggies at your fingertips. Roasting or grilling vegetables is easy, low in fat, and produces a seriously rich flavor.

## Grill 'Em!

When in doubt, grill it out!

- Coat large slices of vegetables (like eggplant or sweet potatoes) with a bit of olive oil and place them straight on the grill. Remember to flip them a few times.
- For smaller vegetables thread pieces onto skewers or place chunks of veggies in a grilling basket. It is a good idea to place the skewered veggies on foil. Rotate the skewers occasionally and be sure to toss the veggies in the basket from time to time to ensure even cooking.

## Roast 'Em!

Try these simple tricks for perfect roasted veggies, every time.

- There are two ways to roast vegetables in your oven. You can either roast them quickly by placing them directly under a hot broiler, or you can take things slow by assembling your veggies on a baking sheet and putting them into a hot oven.
- Make sure your veggies are completely dry after you wash them. This will ensure that they roast, rather than steam.
- When possible, make sure that none of the veggies are touching any others. The space allows them to roast more evenly.

## Try it Out!

Are you ready to try some of these techniques? Try roast vegetable pasta! You can also grill the vegetables instead of roasting them without affecting the recipe.

## Roasted Vegetable Pasta

### Ingredients:

- 1 pound bow tie pasta (or any other small pasta)
- 2 ripe plum tomatoes, sliced
- 1 small onion, sliced thin
- 1 bell pepper, cut into strips
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil or vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon chopped garlic
- 2 cups mushrooms, sliced
- 1 cup diced eggplant
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 package fresh spinach leaves
- 1 tablespoon fresh or dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Black pepper to taste

### Directions:

1. Prepare the pasta according to package directions. Drain and set aside.
2. Preheat broiler; place tomatoes, onions and pepper strips on a pan in a single layer. Broil these veggies until tender and browned.
3. Add garlic, mushrooms, and olive oil to a large nonstick pan. Saute, then add the eggplant and water. Cover the pan and let cook briefly.
4. Add the spinach and cook until wilted. Once all the veggies in the pan are cooked, add the pasta and roasted vegetables and cook until heated through.
5. Serve topped with a bit of Parmesan, oregano, and black pepper. A large fresh salad is the perfect accompaniment to this surprisingly hearty meal.

Serves 6. Each 2-cup serving: 354 calories, 6 g fat, <1 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 31 mg sodium, 63 g carbohydrate, 12 g protein, 5 g fiber.

See <http://foodandhealth.com> for more recipes and ideas using vegetables, pasta and your grill.

## 7 Steps for Lung Cancer Protection

While the National Institute of Cancer maintains that giving up smoking is the most beneficial health action that smokers can take to lower their risk of lung cancer, the following dietary recommendations may also offer protection against lung cancer — for smokers and nonsmokers alike.

### 1. Eat carotenoid-rich foods.

Carrots, green and red bell peppers, sweet potatoes, winter squash, and leafy greens contain DNA-friendly antioxidants that protect the lungs. Beta carotene, a vitamin A precursor, has been the carotenoid most associated with lung cancer protection. Mangoes, apricots, cantaloupes, and peaches are excellent fruit choices. Skip the pills and get beta carotene from food sources instead. Results of a 1994 Finnish study showed an increased rate of lung cancer among smokers given high doses of beta carotene supplements. Other studies have shown that increased beta carotene from food decreased cancer rates. Lycopene, another carotenoid, has also been found to protect against lung cancer. The antioxidant action of lycopene also helps ward off prostate cancer. Tomatoes, tomato products, guava, watermelon, and pink grapefruit are all good sources of lycopene.

### 2. Eat one serving of cruciferous vegetables daily.

Cruciferous vegetables (like broccoli, cabbage, kale, watercress and Brussels sprouts) contain a phytochemical called isothiocyanate. Isothiocyanate blocks an enzyme that activates cancer-causing agents in tobacco smoke. Get at least one serving of these helpful veggies every day.

### 3. Find food sources of selenium.

A study indicated that dietary supplements of selenium (200 mcg) may significantly lower the incidence of lung cancer. Since the possible benefit of selenium supplementation needs to be assessed in a larger population study, eat heart-healthy food sources that are high in selenium. These include Brazil nuts, whole grains, and tuna.

### 4. Eat foods high in vitamin E.

Vitamin-E rich foods include nuts (almonds, walnuts, & sunflower seeds), avocados, mangoes, and wheat germ. Vitamin E (tocopherol), an antioxidant, maintains lung cell integrity. A Finnish study showed that a diet rich in Vitamin E lowered the risk of lung cancer among smokers by 20%.

### 5. Limit fat intake.

Limit your intake of fat, especially saturated fat found in red meat and high-fat dairy foods. Studies show a direct correlation between lung cancer and intake of animal fats. Eat more fatty fish, since these are high in omega-3 fatty acids (good fats) as opposed to saturated (bad) fat. Try salmon, mackerel, or tuna. Beans as healthy high-protein alternatives.

### 6. Get enough vitamin C.

Oranges contain vitamin C and folic acid (a B-complex vitamin). Both nutrients appear beneficial in protecting against lung cancer. Other high Vitamin C foods include kiwi, potatoes, and red bell peppers. Asparagus, broccoli, and dried beans are good sources of folic acid.

### 7. Get fit!

Two recent studies show evidence that regular exercise may exert an "anti-cancer" effect. In addition, one of the studies found that men who were fitter had a lower risk of dying of lung cancer. The researchers suggest that fitness may protect the lungs against the ravages of tobacco smoke and that being sedentary may be one of the factors contributing to lung cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends 30 minutes of cumulative moderate physical activity on most days of the week.

### The bottom line:

While research continues to determine diet's role in lung cancer, the best advice for smokers who want to reduce their risk of lung cancer is stop smoking. For nonsmokers who wish to ward off lung cancer, a low fat diet with 5-9 servings daily of colorful fruits/vegetables and grains is a good bet.

# Swedish Meatballs



## Ingredients:

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| 2 slices day-old white bread, crumbled | 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg                    |
| 1/2 cup heavy cream                    | 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice                  |
| 1 teaspoon butter                      | 1/8 teaspoon ground ginger (optional)         |
| 1 small onion, minced                  | 1 tablespoon butter                           |
| 2/3 pound ground beef                  | 1/4 cup chicken broth                         |
| 1/3 pound finely ground pork           | 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour, or as needed |
| 1 egg                                  | 2 cups beef broth, or as needed               |
| 1 tablespoon brown sugar (optional)    | 1/2 (8 ounce) container sour cream            |
| 1 teaspoon salt                        |   |
| 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper       |   |

## Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Place the bread crumbs into a small bowl, and mix in the cream. Allow to stand until crumbs absorb the cream, about 10 minutes. While the bread is soaking, melt 1 teaspoon of butter in a skillet over medium heat, and cook and stir the onion until it turns light brown, about 10 minutes. Place onion into a mixing bowl; mix with the ground beef, ground pork, egg, brown sugar, salt, black pepper, nutmeg, allspice, and ginger. Lightly mix in the bread crumbs and cream.
3. Melt 1 tablespoon of butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Pinch off about 1 1/2 tablespoons of the meat mixture per meatball, and form into balls. Place the meatballs into the skillet, and cook just until the outsides are brown, about 5 minutes, turning the meatballs often. Insides of the meatballs will still be pink. Place browned meatballs into a baking dish, pour in chicken broth, and cover with foil.
4. Bake in the preheated oven until the meatballs are tender, about 40 minutes. Remove meatballs to a serving dish.
5. To make brown gravy, pour pan drippings into a saucepan over medium heat. Whisk the flour into the pan drippings until smooth, and gradually whisk in enough beef broth to total about 2 1/2 cups of liquid. Bring the gravy to a simmer, whisking.

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# White Chili



## Ingredients:

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| 1 pound ground pork                 | 2 teaspoons ground cumin                                    |
| 2 tablespoons olive oil             | 1 teaspoon dried oregano                                    |
| 2 onions, chopped                   | 4 cups chicken broth  |
| 5 cloves garlic, chopped            | 1 (14.5 ounce) can great Northern beans, rinsed and drained |
| 2 (4 ounce) cans diced green chiles | 2 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese                        |

## Directions:

1. Cook and drain the pork.
2. In a large stockpot, saute onions and garlic in olive oil until transparent. Stir in the chilies, cumin, and oregano. Cook and stir 2 to 3 minutes more. Add broth, pork, and beans; bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer, and cook uncovered for 20 minutes.
3. Remove from heat, and stir in the cheese until melted.

# Green Enchilada Pork Chili



## Ingredients:

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| 4 tablespoons olive oil, divided        | 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper       |
| 1 pound ground pork                     | 3 cloves garlic, minced                |
| 2 fresh jalapeno peppers, stems removed | 1/2 cup all-purpose flour              |
| 1 tablespoon butter                     | 1 (28 ounce) can green enchilada sauce |
| 1 medium white onion, diced             | 1 (7 ounce) can green salsa            |
| 1 teaspoon kosher salt                  | 1 quart water                          |
| 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin               | 1/2 bunch fresh cilantro, chopped      |
| 1/2 teaspoon sweet paprika              | 1/2 lime, juiced                       |
| 1/4 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper      |  |

## Directions:

1. In a 4 quart pot, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium heat. Add the jalapenos and saute for 1 minute. Stir in the ground pork and cook until evenly brown. Remove the browned pork and jalapenos from the pot and set aside.
2. In the same pot used to cook the meat, add the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil, butter, and onion. Cook for 2 minutes or until the onion starts to soften. Stir in the salt, cumin, paprika, cayenne, and black pepper and cook until the onion is soft. Mix in the garlic and cook for 1 minute.
3. Reduce the heat to low. Sprinkle the flour over the onion and garlic. Cook, stirring for three minutes. Slowly pour the enchilada sauce into the onion mixture, whisking constantly to prevent lumps from forming. Mix in the green salsa and water.
4. Return the cooked pork and jalapenos to the pot. Increase the heat to medium and slowly bring the soup to a boil. When the soup boils, reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Before serving remove from heat and stir in chopped cilantro and lime juice

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# Cheesy Meatloaf



## Ingredients:

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| 1 pound ground beef                     | 1 1/2 cups dry bread crumbs                |
| 1 pound ground pork                     | ground black pepper to taste               |
| 1 (1 ounce) envelope dry onion soup mix | 3/4 cup water                              |
| 2 eggs, beaten                          | 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese, divided |

## Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C)
2. In a large bowl combine the beef, pork, soup mix, eggs, bread crumbs, pepper and water. Stir in 1/2 cup of the cheese. Mix well and spread half of mixture into a 9x5 inch loaf pan. Spread remaining 1 1/2 cups cheese over meat loaf mixture. Top with remaining half of meat loaf mixture.
3. Bake in preheated oven for 60 minutes. Let cool 10 to 15 minutes before serving.

