



# Chef Charles

# Says...

December

## Pick a Better ...Holiday Food Gift

Food gifts are appropriate for just about everyone. Homemade gifts can save time, energy and money as well as provide a personal touch. Food gifts can be tasty and nutritious at the same time. A healthy gift from home is always welcome.

- ◆ Consider giving the food item in a container that can be used again, or add a small gift that will promote healthy eating or an active lifestyle throughout the year.
- ◆ Fill a salad spinner with a bottle of low-fat salad dressing. Make your own dressing and share the recipe, or include a bottle of your favorite dressing. Add a bag of spiced nuts (See Pick a **better** snack™ idea in this issue), dried cranberries or a can of mandarin oranges to dress up a salad.
- ◆ Bake pumpkin or cranberry bread. Wrap with a cutting board and a decorative knife and tie with a bow.
- ◆ Combine dry beans, lentils or split peas along with spices and herbs for a hearty vegetarian soup mix. A recipe for Lentil and Split Pea Soup Mix is in this issue. Don't forget to share the soup recipe. A soup mug or small bag of low-fat crackers could be added.

(Adapted from *Communicating Food for Health*, October 2008)



## Be Active

### Stretching at The Right Time

If you stretch your body muscles only once in a while, you may be doing more harm than good. Some studies suggest that a person's strength is slightly lowered immediately after stretching. Regular stretching (four or more sessions a week) slightly increases strength. It also appears to reduce the risk of injury. Regular stretching helps you increase and maintain flexibility. Flexibility helps with routine tasks such as lifting packages or bending down to tie your shoes.

(*Mayo Clinic Newsletter*, 2005)

Developed by: Iowa Department of Public Health  
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Information & resources for seniors  
with home & family questions  
**ISU AnswerLine 1-800-262-3804**

## Resources

Check [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov) for quick and easy information and tools to help stay healthy and prevent disease. Personalized health recommendations are available for both men and women of all ages.



## **Just a DASH**

Chef Charles has been promoting the DASH diet plan over the last year. DASH stands for ‘Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension,’ which means using a healthy diet to prevent high blood pressure. The DASH plan:

1. Promotes more fruits and vegetables
2. Promotes using low-fat dairy foods
3. Reduces intake of saturated fats from foods like red meat and cheese.

Following the DASH diet, which focuses on lowering sodium and increasing calcium and potassium, lowers the blood pressure of many individuals. Some people are able to control their high blood pressure with this diet and no medication. The DASH diet is not hard to follow, but it is much easier if you can cook your own meals and minimize use of heavily processed foods. Most people can use the DASH principles within a healthy lifestyle.

We hope that you will continue to use the DASH diet plan and take charge of your health and blood pressure. If you would like to learn more about the DASH diet plan you can access a 34-page booklet on line at:

[http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new\\_dash.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new_dash.pdf)

## **Stretch Your Dollar**

### **Balance Your Budget & Diet**

Eating well on a budget can be challenging, but cost-conscious grocery shoppers don’t have to skimp on nutrition. As we age, healthy eating habits become even more important. That’s because good nutrition can help with problems like hypertension, osteoporosis, diabetes and heart disease.

Try these suggestions to eat healthy without blowing your grocery budget:



- ◆ Make a shopping list to prevent impulse buying.
  - ◆ Use eggs, beans and lentils for high quality, low-cost protein.
  - ◆ Buy frozen vegetables and fruits canned in water to save money.
  - ◆ Purchase foods like low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese, canned fish and dark leafy greens for calcium.
  - ◆ Shop for foods labeled “low-fat” or “fat-free” and look for grocery store brands instead of name-brand products to save money.
  - ◆ Eat at least 10 different foods every day and choose foods from each My Pyramid group.
  - ◆ Choose color when planning meals and snacks. Colorful fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamins and nutrients that help keep you healthy.
  - ◆ Stretch your food dollar by attending congregate meals that offer a
- 2** balanced meal for a contribution you are comfortable giving.

## **Get the News**

### **Eating Nuts and Popcorn Does Not Increase Risk of Diverticulitis**

An 18 year study of close to 50,000 men found that those who reported eating nuts at least twice per week had a 20 percent lower risk of developing diverticulitis compared to men who reported eating less than once a month. Men who ate popcorn had a 28 percent lower incidence of diverticulitis than those who ate the least popcorn. Contrary to the usual recommendation to people with this condition to avoid eating nuts and popcorn, eating more of these foods may in fact protect against diverticulitis. Of course, if your health professional has made dietary recommendations, ask before changing your diet. (JAMA, August 27, 2008)



### **Good News Something Fishy**

Eating fish at least twice a week may help protect against age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in older adults. Fish is a rich source of omega-3s, an important component of the retina. Another good reason to eat fish.

(Archives of Ophthalmology, June, 2008)



# Cinnamon Pecans

- 1 egg white
- 1 teaspoon water
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 12 packets Splenda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 4 cups pecan halves



Preheat oven to 225 degrees. Beat egg white, water and vanilla until foamy. Add the Splenda and cinnamon. Stir the pecans into the egg white mixture to coat. Spread pecans in a single layer on a baking sheet coated with a no-fat cooking spray. Bake for one hour, stirring three times. Allow cooling completely on the baking sheet. Store in an airtight container.

Pick a better snack



Make a pretty card with the cooking instructions or copy the sample below for your soup mix gifts.

## Lentil & Split Pea Soup Mix

To make soup; combine mix with 4 cups water, cover and simmer on low heat for 45 minutes or until lentils are tender. Stir occasionally to keep from sticking. To freshen the soup add a squirt of lemon juice or a dash of balsamic vinegar just before serving.



## Lentil & Split Pea Soup Mix

- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoon dried minced onion
- 1 tablespoon dried minced parsley
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ cup red or brown lentils
- ½ cup yellow or green split peas

Combine all ingredients into an airtight container, a freezer zip-top bag or layer into a 12 inch decorator cone for a festive appearance. To make soup; combine mix with 4 cups water, cover and simmer on low heat for 45 minutes or until lentils are tender. Stir occasionally to keep from sticking. To freshen the soup add a squirt of lemon juice or a dash of balsamic vinegar just before serving.

(Adapted from *Communicating Food for Health*, October 2008)

### Answers

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
3	26	12	24	11	23	20	6	13	16	22	8	10	21	19	17	15	5	2	7	18	25	14	9	1	4
A	S	W	E	A	G	E	.	H	E	A	L	T	H	Y	E	A	T	L	N	G					
3	2	14	11	3	20	11	.	6	11	3	8	7	6	1	11	3	7	13	21	20					
H	A	B	L	T	S	B	E	C	O	M	E	E	V	E	N	M	O	R	E						
6	3	26	13	7	2	26	11	12	19	10	11	11	25	11	21	10	19	5	11						
J	M	P	O	R	T	A	N	T	B	E	C	A	U	S	E	G	O	O	D						
13	10	17	19	5	7	3	21	7	26	11	12	3	18	2	11	20	19	19	24						
N	U	T	R	L	T	L	O	N	C	A	N	H	E	L	P	W	L	T	H						
21	18	7	5	13	7	13	19	21	12	3	21	6	11	8	17	14	13	7	6						
H	E	A	L	T	H	P	R	O	B	L	E	M	S	.											
6	11	3	8	7	6	17	5	19	26	8	11	10	2												



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This material was funded by the Iowa Nutrition Network and USDA's Food Stamp Program. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. Food Stamps can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more about Iowa's Food Assistance Program, contact the local Iowa Department of Human Services office serving the county where you live, or call toll-free at 1-877-937-3663 (1-877-YES FOOD).



# Nuts!

- Almonds
- Brazil Nut
- Cashew
- Chestnut
- Corn Nuts
- Filberts
- Hazelnut
- Macadamia
- Pecan
- Peanut
- Pine Nuts
- Pistachio
- Roasted
- Salted
- Spiced
- Walnut

S R C A F M I F Q R T D L W O  
P X G D F I J T L E W A A N I  
I G Q L D Y L B T E N L W D H  
C J X H I A J B H X N S D E C  
E O S A A C A S E U H E D T A  
D K R Z F S A I T R D N U S T  
D X V E T C O G M B T N R A S  
T U N L I Z A R B A T S H O I  
S T U N E N I P S S D T T R P  
C L H U I X Y K E D A A K T I  
X M E T M F W H B W N L C M A  
P E A N U T C W S I J O T A M  
J I X H N A C E P V G J M E M  
S J Q R O C O R N N U T S L D  
R E R W E W F Q X Q I I Z D A

Did you know that filbert is another name for a hazelnut?



With a bigger portion of your budget going towards fuel and food this winter, food assistance may help you and your family eat better and stay healthier.

Call **1-877-YES-FOOD** to explore options for food assistance. The average older lowan receives food assistance benefit of \$78.54/month.

## A Healthy Balance

Decode the message by finding each substitute letter or symbol.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
3	26	12	24	11	23	20	6	13	16	22	8	10	21	19	17	15	5	2	7	18	25	14	9	1	4

3 2   14 11   3 20 11   ,   6 11 3 8 7 6 1   11 3 7 13 21 20

6 3   B   26 13 7 2   B   26 11 12 19 10 11   11 25 11 21   10 19 5 11

13 10 17 19 5 7 3 21 7   B   26 11 12 3 18 2 11   20 19 19 24

21 18 7 5 13 7 13 19 21   12 3 21   6 11 8 17   14 13 7 6

6 11 3 8 7 6   B   17 5 19 26 8 11 10 2