

SUMMERTIME: COOL FOOD & FUN

FOOD FOR FITNESS AND FUN

JULY/AUGUST 2000

4TH OF JULY FOOD FUN

STARS Use a star-shaped cookie cutter to cut stars from fruits currently in season. A very colorful (and tasty) combination could include watermelon, cantaloupe, and honeydew with blueberry accents.

EDIBLE SPARKLERS

To make a safe, healthy sparkler clean and shred one large carrot. For each 'sparkler', dip a large pretzel rod into low-fat cream cheese, then into the shredded carrot.

EDIBLE FIRECRACKERS

Take advantage of the colorful plastic wraps currently available in the grocery store. Make a sandwich (peanut butter works well) and then smash it! Roll the sandwich up jellyroll style and wrap it in colorful plastic wrap. Twist the ends of the plastic wrap so the sandwich looks like a piece of hard candy. Secure the ends with twist ties. Use several colors of wrap and arrange the sandwiches in a basket or bowl for a colorful display of edible firecrackers.



EDIBLE FLAGS



Use sliced strawberries for the stripes on a piece of angel food cake. Add a cluster of blueberries to make the star area.

RED, WHITE AND BLUE DESSERT

In a parfait glass or clear plastic cup, make layers of *red* (strawberries), *white* (non-fat vanilla yogurt), and *blue* (blueberries). Repeat. Top with a cantaloupe star!

WATERMELON POPS

Make watermelon even more fun to eat by making it into a 'popsicle'. Simply insert a coffee stirrer or popsicle stick into a 'stick' of watermelon. Place on cookie sheet to freeze. Once frozen, remove from sheet place in plastic bag and store in freezer. Enjoy!



Adapted from Communicating Food for Health, June 2000

GREEN BEANS WITH SALSA

Green beans are plentiful in the Midwest in July and August. Try this to keep fat and salt low, but flavor high.



- 2 cups fresh green beans
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ¼ cup chunky salsa

Cook green beans and onions in a small amount of water for 10 minutes; drain. Heat garlic and salsa in microwave. Pour over beans. Serve. (4 servings)

FRIDGE TEA OR SUN TEA?

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Next to water, many of us enjoy iced tea as a way to quench our summertime thirst. If you have been making sun tea, note these precautions.

The directions on the box of tea bags say to brew sun tea for 3 to 4 hours. Research shows that the caffeine present in black teas inhibits the growth of organisms (mold and bacteria) up to 4 hours. However, many of us allow it to brew even longer allowing bacteria counts to soar. Teas that do not contain caffeine, such as herbal and green tea, are not recommended.

A simple, safe alternative is Fridge Tea. Use the same ratio of tea to water as for sun tea (9 regular or 3 family size tea bags to a gallon of cold water) and 'brew' it in the refrigerator for about 24 hours. Because you are using refrigeration which inhibits bacteria growth, instead of heat which promotes it, the fridge tea method is also fine for herbal and green teas.

Adapted from Joan Carter, RD/LD, MBA; USDA/ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center of Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine

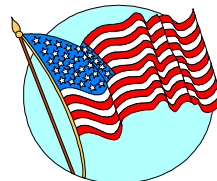
WATER: THE FORGOTTEN NUTRIENT

With all the talk about protein, carbohydrates, and fat, it's easy to forget about the most important nutrient – water. Each day we need at least 8 cups of fluid.

HEALTHY WATER HABITS

- Start the morning with a glass of water as soon as you get up (before coffee!)
- Always carry a water bottle and drink from it often.
- Keep a large mug or bottle of water on your desk at work. Refill it on your breaks. (Wash it daily).
- Don't pass a drinking fountain without taking a sip.
- Order water with lemon at restaurants and sip it while waiting for your meal.
- Set goals for yourself. Example: No coffee until drinking a cup of water or no afternoon soda until finishing a water bottle.

By Hollis Bass, MEd., RD, Communicating Food for Health, July/August 2000



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EASY SUMMER MEAL IDEAS

When it's hot outside, no one wants to spend any more time than necessary in the kitchen. Try these ideas to keep kitchen time to a minimum:

- **Spinach Wraps:** Mix together 1 cup shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese, 1 teaspoon minced garlic, and ½ cup chopped red onion. Spread this mixture onto 4 tortillas. Heat each tortilla in the microwave until cheese melts. Add ½ cup chopped fresh spinach to each tortilla. Wrap and eat!
- **Sweet Potato Salad:** Wash, pierce and dry 1 pound of sweet potatoes (about 2-3 large potatoes). Microwave on high until tender or about 5 minutes per potato. Cool potatoes, then peel and cut into 1-inch pieces. Combine potato pieces, 1 cup thawed frozen green peas, ¼ cup sliced green pepper, ¼ cup diced red onion, 1 Tablespoon cider vinegar, 1 Tablespoon oil, 1 teaspoon dried oregano and black pepper to taste. Serve immediately or chill for later use. Serves 4. *Communicating Food for Health, July/Aug. 2000*
- **Zucchini Sticks:** Cut medium sized zucchini into sticks (lengthwise into 8 pieces, then in half to get 16 pieces). Dip each stick into a small saucer filled with skim milk and then drop into a bag filled with the following: ½ cup bread crumbs, 2 Tablespoons grated parmesan cheese, and ¼ teaspoon garlic powder. Arrange on a cookie sheet sprayed with vegetable spray. Bake in a toaster oven for 10-15 minutes at 450°F (or until golden brown). Serve.
- **Red and White Cabbage Salad:**
This is a colorful, cool and nutritious salad.
½ head red cabbage, chopped
1 package (3 oz.) Raman noodles, beef flavor
1 ½ cup cooked soybeans, chilled OR garbanzo beans
1 bunch green onions, chopped
¼ cup vegetable oil
¼ cup sugar
¼ cup white wine vinegar
Mix oil, sugar, vinegar and seasoning packet from noodles. Stir into cabbage, onion and bean mixture. Add crushed Raman noodles just before serving.
NOTE: The noodles are very tasty, but also rather high in fat, so try using just half of the package.



SOYBEAN COOKING FOR BUSY COOKS

One cup of dry beans will yield 2-3 cups of cooked soybeans. It's easy to cook them in the crockpot. You will need to adjust amounts depending upon the size of your crockpot. Place soybeans in crockpot liner with enough water to cover. Let soak overnight in the refrigerator. In the morning, drain water off beans, add fresh water and cook on high for 5 to 6 hours. (Note: I've let them cook all day and they were just fine).

Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating.

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VACATION SURVIVAL

Summertime mean vacation time for many. When vacationing, you don't have to abandon healthy eating. Following are suggestions for low fat, nutrient rich choices that you can eat away from home.

For Long Car Rides

- Fresh fruit: apples, bananas, oranges, grapes, etc.
- Dried fruit: apricots, prunes, raisins, etc.
- Baby carrots
- Sliced red or green pepper
- Cherry tomatoes
- Low-sodium vegetable juice
- Low fat cookies: fig bars, ginger snaps, graham crackers
- Rice cakes
- Whole grain low-fat crackers
- PBJ on whole wheat bread
- Unsweetened applesauce
- Small cans (pop-up lid) fruit in its own juice



For the Cooler or Mini-fridge in Hotels

- Low-fat light yogurt
- Bottled water
- Cartons of fat-free milk
- Baby carrots and vegetable sticks
- Fresh fruits: apples, plums, peaches, grapes
- Low fat puddings or gelatin dessert
- Individual 100% fruit juice cartons



Best Bets for Eating Out

Restaurants

Breakfast

- Single serving cold cereal with fat free milk
- Bagel or English muffin
- Low fat bran muffin



Lunch or Dinner:

- Grilled chicken breast sandwich (hold sauce)
- Baked potato topped w/broccoli, chili, or salsa
- Veggie or turkey sandwich (hold mayo, oil)
- Veggie or chicken pita (dressing on the side)
- Veggie pizza (light on cheese) with salad
- Corn-on-the-cob (hold on the butter)
- Select baked, broiled, grilled, steamed or stir-fry items from the menu
- Watch portions
- Make "special" low-fat requests to omit butter, cream, oil; ask for sauce on the side

Convenience Stores

- Prepackaged turkey sandwich
- Individual packs of dried roasted nuts or seeds
- Baked chips
- Water, fruit/vegetable juices

By Sandy Hernandez, MS, RD