

# FOOD FOR FITNESS AND FUN

December - 2008

I've focused on ideas for stretching your food/gift dollars plus red, green and gold foods this month. Have a safe and joyful holiday season - Jan Temple

## HEALTHY MEALS IN A HURRY – 14 MAIN

DISHES FOR NOW AND LATER - PM 2035

Food is an appreciated gift – especially if someone else prepares it. As you review your list of persons to receive gifts, consider choosing one or more of the 14 entrees in this publication to prepare, freeze and give as gifts. They are lower in sodium and fat and may be packaged in individual portions. AND it can save you money compared to some gifts. Prepare extra for your own freezer! One of the great recipes in the publication is for “Dry Cream Soup Mix”. It may be used as a low fat/low sodium alternative to canned cream soups.



To give this as a gift from your kitchen, just combine the ingredients and put in a bag or jar along with the directions for using.

You may purchase a copy of “Healthy Meals in a Hurry” for just \$2.50 from your local Iowa State University Extension Office or through the Online Store at [www.extension.iastate.edu/store/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/) I (as well as the other Nutrition and Health Field Specialists in Iowa) would be happy to present a more in-depth “Healthy Meals in a Hurry” program to your group or worksite. For more information, contact Jan at 319-337-2145 x116.

## DRY CREAM SOUP MIX – EQUAL TO 7 CANS SOUP

2 cups instant nonfat dry milk	1 tsp. dried thyme leaves
3/4 cup cornstarch	1 tsp. dried basil leaves
1/4 cup sodium free dry chicken bouillon	1/2 tsp. ground pepper
2 Tbsp. dried minced onion flakes	

**Directions:** Combine all ingredients and store in air tight container. **To use as a substitute for one can condensed soup:** Mix 1/3 cup dry mix and 1 1/4 cups water. **Stovetop:** Cook and stir with whisk until thickened. **Microwave:** Using a large microwave safe bowl, cook on high for 2-3 minutes, stirring with whisk every 30 seconds until thick.

**Nutrients per can-equivalent:** Calories: 149; Protein: 7g; Fat: 0g; Sat. Fat: 0g Carbohydrates: 28g; Sodium: 111mg; Cholesterol: 4 mg; Fiber: 0.5g

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## BROCCOLI CHICKEN RICE CASSEROLE –

6 SERVINGS

This uses the Dry Cream Soup Mix (left). You may either freeze the entire casserole or freeze it in individual portions.

3/4 cup instant brown rice	1 1/4 cups water
1/3 cup chopped onion	1 16-ounce pkg. frozen broccoli florets or chopped
1 teaspoon margarine	2 cups chopped cooked chicken*
1/3 cup Dry Cream Soup Mix	1 cup reduced fat shredded cheddar cheese

\*1 pound boneless skinless chicken breast yields about 2 2/3 cups chopped cooked chicken.

### To Freeze for LATER use:

1. Prepare rice according to package directions.
2. Meanwhile, in Dutch oven or deep pan, cook onion in margarine over medium to low heat until golden.
3. Add dry cream soup mix to pan, stirring to mix well. Stir in water. Heat to boiling. Cook and stir until thick.
4. Remove pan from heat. Stir in frozen broccoli, cooked chicken, cooked rice, and cheese. Let cool slightly.
5. Place an opened, gallon-size freezer-weight bag inside a 2 quart microwave safe dish. Spoon chicken mixture into bag. Seal and label with date and cooking instructions. Keep filled bag inside dish and place in freezer. When mixture is frozen, remove bag from dish. Store in freezer up to 4 months.



### To serve LATER:

1. Remove frozen casserole mixture from plastic bag and place in microwave safe dish.
2. Defrost on low (30% power) for 10 minutes or use the defrost feature on your microwave.
3. Heat on high for 10 to 14 minutes or until thermometer registers 165°F.

Product	Cal-ories	Total Fat g	Sodium mg	Cost
Purchased-Generic	150	6.25	2100	\$ .50
Store Brand - 98% Fat Free	200	6.25	1850	\$ .95
98% Fat Free	175	6.25	2100	\$1.28
25% Less sodium	275	20.5	1625	\$1.19
98% Fat Free; 45% less sodium	175	5.0	1175	\$1.29
Dry Soup mix (equal to one can)	149	0	111	\$ .63

**Fast Fact:** For ready-to-heat smaller portions, use pint-or quart freezer bags inside containers.

## CRANBERRY FRUIT DIP

A great way to use leftover Thanksgiving cranberry sauce. PLUS, dips are popular anytime; especially at the holidays.

In a blender, combine equal parts of **Cranberry Sauce** and **Strawberry Yogurt** or mixed berry yogurt. Use the pureed mixture as a dip or sauce for fresh fruit such as orange sections, apple slices, kiwi slices or grapes.



Each 2 Tbsp. Dip: 31 calories, 0 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0.2 mg cholesterol, 8 mg sodium, 7 g carbohydrate, .3 g fiber, .3 g protein.

## HOLIDAY RICE SALAD SERVES 10

This is a colorful holiday salad.

1 Tablespoon olive oil	1/2 cup dried cranberries
1 orange – zest and juice	1 red apple, cored, chopped
2 Tablespoons cider vinegar	1 cup chopped celery
Black pepper to taste	4 sprigs parsley, chopped
Pinch ground nutmeg	1/4 cup pecan pieces, toasted
4 cups cooked brown rice	

1. Combine the olive oil, orange zest, orange juice, vinegar, pepper, and nutmeg in a bowl.
2. Add the rice, cranberries, apple, celery, parsley and pecans.
3. Toss all together. Chill until ready to serve, up to 24 hours.



Each 1/2 cup serving: 130 calories; 4 g fat, .5g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 7 mg sodium, 22 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 2.5 g protein.

Source: *Communicating Food for Health*, November 2005

## ROASTED PLUM TOMATOES — SERVES 10

Let the oven do the work to create this colorful appetizer.



2 pounds plum tomatoes, sliced in half and cored  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1 Tablespoon olive oil  
Preheat oven to 275°F. Place tomatoes cut side up on a shallow baking pan. Drizzle olive oil and sprinkle minced garlic over tomatoes. Bake, uncovered, until


soft, about 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

Cool to room temperature and serve as an appetizer on whole wheat crackers or pita triangles. Optional garnish: chopped basil.

Each 1/4 cup serving: 29 calories, 1.5 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 4 mg sodium, 4 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, <1 g protein.

Source: *Communicating Food for Health*, November 2005

## HOLIDAY LIGHTS

1. **Learn the 3 and 1 shuffle.** Tune up your body to burn up more calories. For each minute at the table, walk at least three.
2. **Scoop up salsa instead of fat.** Dips are dietary disasters. Dunk a dipper into spicy salsa and save 50 calories per scoop.
3. **Thrive on five.** Fill up on fiber – eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Fiber fills you up not out. Munch a crunchy apple before the next buffet to help curb your appetite.
4. **Take the punch out of your drinks.** Alcohol is a kissing cousin to fat in the calories it keeps. Mix sparkling water with fruit juices for bubbles without a bite.
5. **Let fruit be your just dessert.** Weigh your choices; apples at 80 calories versus pecan pie at 425 calories per slice. 
6. **Party-goers plan ahead.** Select creatively when facing a bounteous array of tempting treats. Take a casual stroll around the table, filling your first plate with green crunchy crispy vegetables and fruits. Lean towards lean meats. Use mustard in place of mayonnaise for bread. Skip entrees swimming in sauce
7. **Shake the salt.** Taste food before you season. Try a new twist, lemon or lime, on chicken or fish. Banish the salt shaker behind closed doors and treat your taste buds to the natural sodium in food. (It takes about a month to realize what you've been missing.)
8. **Recycle your food gifts** Kitchen counters congested with food gifts galore? Remember your favorite charity or the hungry and homeless this holiday season.
9. **Attention mall shoppers!** Get energized with healthy choices from the food court smorgasbord. Red alert words on the menu that signal fat traps are: crispy, golden brown, fried, sautéed, creamy, cheesy, jumbo or supreme. Green lights are hearty broth-based soups, grilled chicken, stirfry, baked potatoes, side salads with nonfat dressings.
10. **Sleeping does burn calories!** Holiday hassles may tempt you to burn the midnight oil. Relax - sleep helps rejuvenate you, plus you do burn calories as you sleep.

Source: *Communicating Food for Health*, 1999.

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