

FOOD FOR FITNESS AND FUN

February - 2008

This month I am sharing some chocolate ideas to share with your Valentine; the health benefits of using canned food and a tribute to Sweet Potato Month. Enjoy! Jan Temple

CHOCOLATE MYTHS AND TIPS



Ahhhh. . .chocolate. The ultimate comfort food. Feel guilty just thinking about it?

Well, don't. Chocolate, as it turns out, isn't a food to feel guilty about eating in moderation. Here are some sweet truths about chocolate.

Myth #1 – Chocolate is as harmful as butter.

Truth – Chocolate does contain the same amount of saturated fat as butter. When possible, use cocoa powder which is lower in fat and calories. Eating one ounce of chocolate candy is equal to:

- 1 Tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder **PLUS**
- 4 teaspoons sugar **PLUS**
- 2 1/3 teaspoons shortening.

Myth #2 – Chocolate is high in caffeine.

Truth – the amount of caffeine in a 1.3 ounce chocolate bar is about the same as the caffeine in a cup of decaffeinated coffee, less than 10 mg. (A 6 oz. cup of coffee contains over 100 mg of caffeine.)

Myth #3 – Chocolate causes hyperactivity.

Truth – Research has shown for years that sugar does not cause hyperactivity, and this includes chocolate. Experts believe that it is the excitement surrounding events where sugary foods are consumed that causes children to get wound up.

Myth #4 – Nothing about chocolate is healthy.

Truth – A study published in the Lancet reported that chocolate contains relatively high amounts of phenolic compounds, which possess antioxidant properties. A 1.5 ounce chocolate bar contains about the same amount of phenolic compounds as a 5-ounce serving of red wine.

The Bottom Line: An occasional chocolate treat is OK as long as you fit it into a high-fiber, low-fat eating and exercise plan. According to Jeannie Moloo, registered dietician in Sacramento, California and a spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association, "To get the maximum possible health benefit, consumers should look for chocolate made up of **at least 70% cocoa.**"

Source: *Communicating Food for Health, February 2000*

CHOCOLATELY MOCHA CRÈME-SERVES 8

For a touch of red, top this with strawberries.

1 5 oz. pkg. chocolate cook & serve pudding and pie filling mix – NOT instant	1 Tablespoon cocoa powder
2 Tablespoons instant coffee granules	½ Cup fat free non-dairy whipped topping
3 Cups fat free milk	Cocoa powder for garnish
1 Cup semi-sweet chocolate chips	



In a medium saucepan, stir pudding mix and instant coffee into milk. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture comes to full boil; remove from heat. Add chips and cocoa, stir until chips are melting and mixture is smooth. Spoon into 8 small dessert dishes. Press plastic wrap directly onto surface. Serve slightly warm or chilled. Garnish each with whipped topping. Dust with cocoa.

Each 1/2 cup serving: 211 calories, 7 g fat, 4.5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 1.6 mg cholesterol, 160 mg sodium, 35 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 5 g protein.

Source: *Communicating Food for Health, February 2000*

COCOA BRANANA MUFFINS-SERVES 12

A healthy breakfast or snack for a chocolate lover.

1 Cup all-purpose flour	1 ½ Cups bran cereal
2 teaspoons baking powder	¾ Cup fat free milk
½ teaspoon salt	2 egg whites (1/3 cup)
2 Tbsp. cocoa powder	2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
½ Cup sugar	1 Cup sliced ripe banana~1 medium

1. Stir together flour, baking powder, salt, cocoa powder and sugar. Set aside.
2. Measure bran cereal and milk into large mixing bowl. Stir to combine. Let stand 2 minutes or until cereal has softened. Add egg whites and oil. Beat well. Stir in bananas.
3. Add flour mixture, stirring only until combined. Portion batter evenly into greased muffin pan (2 1/2 inch muffin cups).
4. Bake at 400 degrees F for 25 minutes or until muffins are lightly browned. Serve warm.



Each muffin: 124 calories, 2.8 g fat, .3 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, .3 mg cholesterol, 213 mg sodium, 25 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 3.3 g protein.

Source: *Fiber for a Healthy Life™, TM Kellogg Company*

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CANNED FOODS CAN BE HEALTHY



Canned fruits and vegetables are very nutritious. Those destined for canning are picked at their peak and processed within hours. What a great way to preserve nature's bounty! They are also

convenient for those lacking freezer space.

NUTRITIOUS

Researchers who have looked at the nutritional value of canned foods have found that nutrient losses are minor, much as you would get with home cooking. The biggest losses occur with heat-sensitive and water-soluble nutrients, such as vitamins B and C, but even here there is usually not much nutritional difference and many canned foods are good sources of these nutrients.

A study at the University of Illinois found that some canned foods were even more nutritious than fresh!

Canned salmon, for example, has more calcium than fresh salmon because during processing the small bones are softened enough to be eaten.

Lycopene, a powerful antioxidant in tomatoes, becomes more potent with canning. And legumes such as kidney beans actually have an increase in soluble fiber during canning. This could translate to a lower risk for heart disease.

The two biggest nutritional differences between canned and fresh are the salt and sugar that are sometimes added to canned foods. You can reduce the sodium content of canned foods by up to 40% by rinsing them thoroughly under cold running water. Many low-sodium canned goods are also available for purchase in grocery stores and whole food markets. To avoid excess calories from sugar, look for fruit packed in water or its own juice.

DELICIOUS

Canned foods taste good, too. At the University of Massachusetts, 12 favorite American recipes were each prepared in two versions, one using canned foods and one using fresh foods. When the dishes were rated on taste, appearance, aroma, texture and nutrition, the canned food versions did very well – they were usually liked as much as those prepared with fresh foods, and sometimes the canned foods were preferred!

Canned foods also put international delicacies at your fingertips. Meals that use water chestnuts, pineapple, mandarin oranges, or artichoke hearts

would not be possible for most of us if we didn't rely on canned foods.

SAFE

Most canned food is shelf-stable for at least one year as long as they are properly stored. Store canned foods in a cool, dry place and avoid storing them at hotter temperatures. Never use cans that are rusted, leaking, deeply dented (especially on the seams), or bulging to avoid deadly botulism. Once opened, canned foods are perishable and should be stored in a covered, food-safe container in the refrigerator.

Source: *Communicating Food for Health*, February 2003

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER



In 1891, George Washington Carver became the first African American to enroll at Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, which today is Iowa State University. Carver's work resulted in the creation of more than 100 products from sweet potatoes and hundreds more from a dozen other plants native to the South. These products contributed to rural economic improvements by offering alternative crops to cotton that were beneficial for the farmers and for the land. Carver also carried the Iowa State University Extension concept to the South creating "movable schools," bringing practical agricultural knowledge to farmers, thereby promoting health, sound nutrition and self sufficiency.

Source: *Linn County EFNEP newsletter*, February 2005

CARVER DIP – SERVES 8

February is Sweet Potato Month. Pay tribute to George Washington Carver with this dip using canned sweet potatoes.

1-15 oz. can sweet potatoes, drained and cut in 1/2 inch pieces	1/2 to 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
2 apples, peeled and cut into 1/2 inch pieces	1 1/2 Tablespoons brown sugar
1/4 Cup apple juice	

1. Combine potatoes, apples and apple juice.
2. Microwave until apples are cooked (5-8 minutes)
3. Add cinnamon & sugar and blend or mash.
4. Serve as a spread or dip for fresh fruit or graham crackers.

Each 1/4 cup serving: 107 calories, 2.7 g fat, .4 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 167 mg sodium, 19.6 g carbohydrate, 1.4 g fiber, .8 g protein.
Source: *Linn County EFNEP Unit newsletter*, February 2005

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