

# FOOD FOR FITNESS AND FUN

February - 2009

During February we celebrate Valentine's Day, President's Day and Potato Month. Check out "Spend Smart. Eat Smart" for information about wisely spending your food dollar at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/>  
Enjoy! Jan Temple

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**VALENTINE SMOOTHIE** - SERVES 1 - Below is the favorite of several combinations I tried for this Valentine tribute. Others you may wish to try – substitute chocolate milk for strawberry if you have a chocolate fetish. OR substitute cranberry juice for the milk if you want a tart treat. Reduce the fat by using fat free milk and strawberry mix.

1/2 Cup frozen dark cherries	1/2 Cup strawberry flavored milk
1/2 Cup frozen strawberries	


In a blender, puree the frozen pitted dark sweet cherries and the frozen strawberries with the strawberry milk stirring as needed, until smooth. Pour into serving glass.



Each smoothie: 187 calories, 3.7 g fat, 2.5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 15 mg cholesterol, 59 mg sodium, 34.4 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 4.6 g protein. Cost: \$1.68 per serving

**AMAZING CHOCOLATE FUDGE** - 96 PIECES  
You'll never guess pinto beans are the amazing ingredient.

2 cups cooked pinto beans, warm (15 oz can yields 1.5 Cups)	1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1/3 cup margarine or butter; melted	2 pounds powered sugar, sifted
1 cup unsweetened cocoa	1 cup chopped walnuts
4 ounces unsweetened baking chocolate, melted	1 cup dried cherries (optional)

 Spray a 9-inch x 13-inch pan with cooking spray; set aside. Mash or puree pinto beans. Add butter or margarine, cocoa, baking chocolate, and vanilla. Mix in powdered sugar gradually. Add nuts and cherries if desired. Press into pan. Cut into 96 pieces (8 by 12). Store fudge in refrigerator.

Each piece w/cherries: 69 calories, 2 g fat, 0.6 g saturated fat, 0.1 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 7.3 mg sodium, 12.6 g carbohydrate, 0.8 g fiber, .9 g protein.

Cost: 9¢/piece with nuts and cherries; 5¢/piece with no nuts or fruit

Source: *Vegetable Desserts* by E. Schafer & J. L. Miller, RD. Chronimed Publishing, Minneapolis, MN. ISBN 1-56561-135-7.

## SPEND SMART. EAT SMART

Planning and shopping for healthy food choices just got easier, thanks to the new Iowa State University Extension website "Spend Smart. Eat Smart." ISU Extension nutritionists offer interactive help for getting the healthiest food into your shopping cart, kitchen, and meals, at the site launched Jan. 15. We tell people that the best way to get the most value out of their food dollar is to make every purchase count toward nutritious food. You start by planning a week's work of nutritious meals. Planning is easy when you download the aisle by aisle publications on the "Spend Smart. Eat Smart" website.



Extension nutrition and health specialists have prepared two-page food selection tip sheets based on grocery store bread, dairy, meat, vegetable and fruit aisles. The tip sheets can be downloaded from the "Spend Smart. Eat Smart" website at [www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/aisle](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/aisle) or picked up at the local county extension office. Once good food choices are made, they can be used to make healthy meals.

Planning meals is made even easier with the help of the [4-day meal planner template](#) available at "Spend Smart. Eat Smart." Reminders on the planner suggest listing what you have on hand that needs to be used and checking grocery ads for specials as you plan menus.

Once your menu is planned, it's time to write a grocery list. Making a list of needed items is one of the best ways to control spending and avoid impulse. The idea is not to buy everything that is on the list plus anything else that looks good. By sticking to the food needed to prepare your menus, getting the most nutrition for your money is easy. "Spend Smart. Eat Smart" is one way Iowa State University Extension is helping families save money and eat healthy. This Extension to Families website is built upon research – but delivered interactively around simple facts that work in the home and grocery store while filling the shopping cart and the cupboards. For more information, contact Jan Temple or your local extension office for "Spend Smart. Eat Smart" tip sheets.

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## POTATO LOVER'S MONTH

Did you know that February is National Potato Lover's Month? Contrary to the bad rap they get from some fad diets, there is much to love about potatoes. Americans do love them – per capita consumption was almost 125 pounds in 2006. Among adults, potatoes make up about one third of the vegetables they consume. For kids and teens, it has been as high as 54 percent! Unfortunately, many of the potatoes are eaten as French fries, which are high in fat, calories, and sodium. Take some time to brush up on these potato facts and learn to love a healthy spud.

### VARIETIES – A POTATO FOR EVERY JOB

**Russets:** This is the most popular variety, great for baking and mashing. These suds are large with rough, brown skin and white flesh; Russets include most Idaho baking potatoes.

**Round and Long White Potatoes:** All-purpose potatoes with smooth, light tan skin and white flesh.

**Round Red Potatoes:** Hold their shape well when cooked, making them good for salads, roasting, steaming, and boiling. These red-skinned potatoes with white flesh go well with seafood.

**Yellow Flesh Potatoes:** Deep yellow flesh cooks up dense and creamy baked or mashed potatoes.

### NUTRITION – POTATOES ARE GREAT

You may be surprised to learn that the humble potato is not only fat-and cholesterol-free, but is also loaded with health-promoting nutrients. Potatoes are a good source of dietary fiber, which is important for digestion and may reduce the risk of heart disease and cancer. They are also high in the antioxidant vitamin C. Potatoes are also a rich source of potassium; a diet rich in potassium (while also low in sodium) helps prevent high blood pressure and stroke.

One medium-sized baked potato, including skin and flesh (approximately five ounces) contains:

- 4 grams of fiber – that's 16% of the daily value
- 22 mg of vitamin C – that's 24% of the DRI.
- 1081 mg of potassium – that's 23% of the DRI.

### SELECTION AND STORAGE

Choose potatoes carefully, looking for firm, smooth skin free of sprouts or green spots. Prolonged exposure to light causes potatoes to turn green, says Beverly Healy, University of Idaho Extension

educator. Because the greening causes a bitter flavor, you should pare off the green portions before eating them.

Mature potatoes will keep for up to two months in a cool, dark, dry place. New potatoes spoil rapidly and should be used within one week of purchase. Avoid storing potatoes in the refrigerator – the starch will convert to sugar, which affects the flavor.

### PREPARATION – LESS IS MORE

Raw potatoes are naturally healthy. It's how we prepare them that can turn this popular veggie into a nutrition disaster. Frying destroys much of the vitamin C, making baked or microwaved potatoes a much healthier choice. And leave the skin on! Many valuable nutrients are lost when you peel a potato. A baked potato is a good choice, as long as you choose healthy toppings. Try a yellow-flesh potato (like Yukon Gold). The creamy yellow texture makes it look as if it is already buttered.

### YOU'LL LOVE THESE POTATO TOPPERS. . .

- Fat-free sour cream and chives
- Spray margarine with a dash of salt-free seasoning or pepper
- Black beans and your favorite salsa
- Steamed veggies: broccoli, peppers, or carrots
- Lemon juice and pepper
- Chili, green onions, and fat-free sour cream

Source: Adapted from *Communicating Food for Health*, February 2002

### MEXICAN POTATO – SERVES 4

The colors of this dish are a feast for the eyes. To reduce cost and sodium content, you may omit the cottage cheese.

4 baking potatoes, baked	1 Cup low-fat cottage cheese
15 oz. can black beans, drained and rinsed	1 Cup salsa
1 Cup green pepper, diced (frozen is fine)	1/4 Cup reduced fat cheddar cheese, grated



Combine rinsed beans and pepper. Layer each hot, split baked potato with 1/2 cup bean-pepper mixture; 1/4 cup cottage cheese, 1/4 cup salsa and 1 Tablespoon cheddar cheese. Microwave or broil until hot.

Each stuffed potato: 309 calories, 2.5 g fat, 1.5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 7.3 mg cholesterol, 1060 mg sodium, 57 g carbohydrate, 10 g fiber, 18 g protein.

Cost: \$1.31 per serving.

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