



## News You Can Use

Nutrition Education  
with Seniors

June 2020

### Pasta—A Pantry Staple

COVID-19, a disease caused by the new coronavirus, has affected all of us and will continue to do so. Those who are at higher risk include adults age 60 years and older. It's even more important to take care of yourself by practicing good hygiene, staying active and eating a MyPlate friendly meal plan.

Health professionals are advising everyone to reduce trips to the grocery store. This means we need to ensure we keep our pantry stocked with shelf stable foods.

Pasta is a great food item that is packed with nutrients and has an amazingly long shelf life of up to two years! Pasta can be used in many different kinds of meals and is easily paired with other food groups.



#### Mix Up Your Pasta:

- **Change up the temperature!** Pasta can be used in hot and cold dishes.
- **Choose difference sauces!** Cheese? Tomato? Thai-peanut? Just oil? Maybe a vinaigrette? Have you tried using yogurt with ranch seasoning?
- **Get creative with additions!** Top pasta salads with nuts and dried fruit. Many different frozen and canned foods are good mixed with noodles and sauce, but try to choose canned goods that are low in sodium (or just drain and rinse).
- **Mix up the type of noodle!** There are lasagna noodles, ramen noodles, black bean noodles and so many more!

Adapted from: <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/nutrition-food-safety-health/nutrition-news/nutrition-news-wdowik-nutrition-column-pasta-making-comeback/>



### It's imPASTable not to love Macaroni!

#### Selection:

- Choose boxes or bags without tears, which could mean the noodles are unsafe to eat.
- Check the "Best by" or "Best if used by" date on the box.

#### Storage:

- Store unopened boxes or bags in a cool, clean, dry place.
- After opening, put **macaroni** in a tightly closed container.

#### Nutrition:

- 1/2 cup of cooked **macaroni**:
- Provides 87 calories and 4 grams of protein.
- Counts as 1 ounce equivalent from the MyPlate grain group.

#### Uses:

- Add **macaroni** in soups, salads, or casseroles.
- Combine macaroni with cheese sauce, broccoli and grilled chicken with a side of juice for a complete MyPlate meal.

## Food Safety Tips

Food safety is important all the time. But as restaurants remain closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more people are preparing food at home. Protect your household by following these food safety tips.

- **Wash your hands often** including after handling grocery items and before and after preparing food.
- **Follow the First-In, First-Out rule.** This makes sure you are using older food items in your pantry, refrigerator, or freezer before the new ones.
- **Know what the food package dates mean.** Most are quality dates, not safety dates. Visit [www.stilltasty.com](http://www.stilltasty.com) to learn more about what the dates mean.
- **Store your food at the right temperature.** Refrigerators should be kept at or below 40°F while freezers should be kept at 0°F. Pantries should be kept just below 70°F.

### Spanish Macaroni

download the Refrigerator and Freezer storage chart at <http://www.iastate.edu/extension/food-safety>  
*\*This recipe has been adapted using all non-perishable items.*

Serves: 4 | Serving Size: 1 cup

**If you have other food safety or general food questions, call ISU  
INGREDIENTS** **Answer Line toll-free at 1-800-262-3804.**

1/2 pound lean turkey  
**OR** 8 ounces of  
canned chicken  
1 green pepper,  
chopped **OR** 1 cup  
corn frozen, thawed or  
canned, drained  
1 small onion, chopped  
**OR** 1 teaspoon of  
onion powder  
2 cups water  
1/2 cup tomato sauce  
1 can (28 ounces)  
diced tomatoes  
1 1/2 cup macaroni,  
uncooked  
1-2 teaspoons chili  
powder

1. Brown the ground meat in a large skillet and remove grease. Skip step if not using turkey.
2. Add green peppers and onions **OR** corn (and chicken). Add diced tomatoes and cook until tender.
3. Add water, tomato sauce, macaroni, and seasonings.
4. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir often. Add ½ cup of shredded cheese for creamy dish. Serve while hot.

#### Tip

Have with a can of peaches and a glass of milk (or add shredded cheese) for a complete MyPlate meal.

#### Storage

Store in a sealed container for 3-4 days in refrigerator, or up 3-4 month in the freezer.

Nutritional analysis (1 cup): 350 calories, 10g fat, 3.5g saturated, 680mg sodium, 42g carbohydrates, 4g fiber, 8g sugar, 22g protein. This recipe is adapted from <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/spanish-macaroni/>

## Self-Care and Coping

Social distancing and the worry about one's health or the health of family and friends can be very stressful. Here are some tips to help:

### Tips:

- **Take a break from the news.** Hearing about it can be upsetting.
- **Move and nourish your body.** Go on a walk, view a free online workout, and eat MyPlate friendly meals and snacks.
- **Stay connected.** Call friends or family. It's important to have social interactions.

**Feeling overwhelmed?  
Call the Iowa Concern  
hotline:  
1-800-447-1985**

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