

Words on Wellness

YOUR EXTENSION CONNECTION TO NUTRITION AND FITNESS

Take a Tastebud Adventure



March is National Nutrition Month. This year the focus is “Celebrate a World of Flavors.” While food patterns are influenced by family traditions and ethnic or cultural groups, it is also wonderful to try and explore new foods. Here are four reasons to try new foods.

1. **Gain Appreciation for Other Cultures.** Trying foods from other areas of the country or world can give you a greater appreciation and understanding of a different culture. Try nearby restaurants that serve cuisine you’ve never tried before. Go to a specialty grocery store (such as an Asian market or bodega) to buy something to try at home. Cook a new recipe. Explore the [USDA Culture and Food](https://bit.ly/3AR0Bek) website, <https://bit.ly/3AR0Bek>.
2. **Expand Your Options.** By being adventurous and trying new foods, you’ll increase your meal options. This will help stop meal prep boredom of cooking the same meals or going to the same restaurants.
3. **Improve Nutrition.** Eating and enjoying a wider variety of food also means that you’ll get more nutritional variety. This means finding new sources of essential vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients in which your current food patterns may be lower.
4. **Find Common Ground.** A common social activity across nearly all cultures is eating. Mealtime is an opportunity for people to gather lowering feelings of loneliness and enhancing happiness.

Thai Curry Chicken

Serving Size: 1 cup chicken curry, 1/3 cup rice
| Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 cup instant brown rice
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken
- 1 onion, chopped (about 1 cup)
- 2 carrots, chopped (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons Thai red curry paste*
- 1 cup light coconut milk (about 1/2 of 13.5 ounce can)
- 1 cup chopped spinach

Directions:

1. Cook instant brown rice according to package directions. Set aside.
2. Cut chicken into 1-inch pieces.
3. Spray a large frying pan with nonstick cooking spray. Add chicken, onion, carrots, ground black pepper, and salt. Cook over medium high heat for 8 minutes.
4. Reduce heat to medium low. Stir in curry paste and coconut milk. (*This dish is spicy. For less spice, use less curry paste or add a little more coconut milk.)
5. Simmer for 5–10 minutes until vegetables are tender, stirring frequently.
6. Stir in spinach. Simmer for 3 minutes more, stirring frequently.
7. Serve curry over brown rice.

Nutrition information per serving:

290 calories, 7g total fat, 3g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 85mg cholesterol, 390mg sodium, 29g total carbohydrates, 3g dietary fiber, 5g total sugars, 28g protein. This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach’s Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu



www.extension.iastate.edu

Put the Freeze on Spoiled Food

Freezing is quick and easy. It helps preserve the nutritive quality more closely to fresh food than any other food preservation method used today. When freezing foods, the goal is to keep ice crystals as small as possible. Large ice crystals can cause an undesirable soft, mushy texture.

Foods to be frozen must be packaged in a way that protects them from the dry freezer climate and excludes as much air as possible. Ideal containers for freezing must be

- expandable or sealed with sufficient headspace for expansion;
- moisture-vapor resistant;
- durable and leak proof;
- resistant to cracking and brittleness at low temperatures;
- resistant to oil, grease, and water;
- protective of foods from absorption of off flavors and odors; and
- easy to seal and label.

Avoid using waxed paper, paper or cardboard cartons, any rigid carton with cracks or poorly fitting lid, or re-used plastic dairy containers (e.g., cottage cheese or yogurt containers). These do not resist moisture enough to be suitable for long-term freezer storage.

To learn more about freezing and other food preservation methods, register for [Preserve the Taste of Summer 101](https://bit.ly/34pVRjQ), <https://bit.ly/34pVRjQ>.

CHAIR WORKOUT

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Move It

To promote health and well-being, healthy adults should get 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity weekly. Although spring is around the corner, it still may not be warm enough to get moving outside. Get moving in the comfort of your home with Spend Smart. Eat Smart.® physical activity videos. You can access these at [Spend Smart. Eat Smart.](https://bit.ly/3ol6oE6), <https://bit.ly/3ol6oE6>.