

Spice it up with Ann

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"Spice it up with Ann" always seemed a little pretentious for the name of this column. This week I am going to have the column live up to its name and discuss spices!

Spices have a mystique from centuries ago. The search for spices led Europeans to sail around India to discover the East Asian cultures, to cross the Silk Road for spices and silk and to sail across the Atlantic in hopes of finding a quicker way to those spices. Spices were highly valued because they helped preserve foods and disguise the taste of foods that were not in their prime. In the ages before refrigeration, these were important characteristics.

Recent research has shown that many spices have properties promoting health. Cinnamon has shown to help reduce blood sugar when taken in doses of a quarter to one teaspoon. Turmeric and ginger have been found to reduce rheumatoid arthritis symptoms. Other spices probably have similar health properties, but researchers are just starting to study many food items. Although the therapeutic doses are rather large and should be discussed with a health care provider before being taken, smaller amounts of spices used in cooking almost certainly have some beneficial effects.

Most of us are familiar with cinnamon. This tree bark is ground into a fine powder, or the sticks are used whole as decoration or to boil with cider. It also has antibacterial and antifungal properties. Traditionally used in sweet baked goods, cinnamon is sometimes used in meat and savory dishes as well. Start with a small amount and taste as you add it to get the right flavor. This technique works well when seasoning any dish that does not contain raw meat or eggs.

Similarly, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, allspice, cardamom and coriander can be used in either sweet or savory

dishes. It works well to blend these in sweet baked goods. Experiment with any dish that uses cinnamon. Start by adding one or two of the other spices.

Many spices are used in Indian cooking. Curry powder is actually a combination of several spices. The British, in their colonial days, created this blend of dried spices because they wanted to simplify the complicated hand mixing and grinding of spices. Dried red chilies, coriander seeds, cumin, turmeric, mustard seeds, black peppercorns, fenugreek seeds, curry leaves, ginger, fennel or cayenne, are all common ingredients in curry powders. Experiment by using the spices that you have in various combinations. The chilies and peppers can be eliminated for mild curries. Turmeric imparts a bright yellow color to foods. Whole mustard seeds are often used to give flavor and texture to vegetables.

Mexican cooking is also known for its spices. Hot peppers come in many variations. A milder Mexican flavor can be obtained by using ground cumin in recipes. Oregano, garlic and onions are also frequently used. Cinnamon and cocoa are sometimes used in Moles to season meats and vegetables. Be careful when roasting or sautéing peppers since fumes can cause eye and breathing difficulties. There is only room for one Mexican recipe below, but a quick internet search will reveal many more.

Easy Mexican soup
26 ounce can plain or vegetable spaghetti sauce with no cheese
15 ounce can kidney or other precooked beans

15 ounce can corn or 1.5 cups frozen corn and 1 cup water
2 teaspoons ground cumin

2 cloves garlic or 1 teaspoon chopped garlic

1 small to medium onion, chopped
2 tablespoons oil

1 green pepper, chopped (optional)

Saute onions in oil until almost translucent. Add garlic and optional chopped green peppers. Then sauté 5 more minutes. Add all other ingredients and simmer for 5 to 50

minutes. Serve hot. Salsa, chips and sour cream go well with this soup. Add some salsa to the soup if you desire a spicier version.

Green Beans Bhaji
This recipe, from the cookbook "Laurel's Kitchen," is good with rice and curried chicken.

4 cups green beans; if using fresh wash, remove ends and chop. Or use 1 pound frozen.

2 tablespoons oil

1 teaspoon whole mustard seeds, black or yellow

2 tablespoons chopped onion

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon turmeric powder

2 to 4 tablespoons water

Heat oil in large, heavy pan with a lid. Add mustard seeds to hot oil and brown till seeds start to pop. Add onions and sauté till onions are almost translucent. Add turmeric and salt. Add green beans and stir to mix, then add water and cover. Cook till beans are tender in about 10 minutes. Add 1/3 cup dried, unsweetened coconut if desired. Cabbage, zucchini or okra may be substituted for the green beans.

Curried Chicken

1 pound chicken breast, cubed

3 carrots, washed and chopped into 1/2 inch pieces

celery, washed and cut into 1/2 inch pieces

1 cup chopped cabbage

1 cup chopped cauliflower or broccoli

1 chopped medium onion

2 cloves garlic

1 teaspoon fresh minced ginger (optional)

1 to 2 teaspoons curry powder

Sauté onions in small amount of oil till almost translucent. Add garlic and ginger and cook 5 minutes more. Add curry powder, stir and then add cubed chicken breast and vegetables. Stir to coat, then cover and allow simmering 10 to 15 minutes. If inside of chicken is pink, cook an additional 5 minutes. Add salt and additional curry powder to taste. Vegetables can be mixed and matched depending on what is in your refrigerator.

Campus Calendar

The Student Affairs Committee of Faculty Senate is currently accepting nominations for the 2007-2008 Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities. Penn State Harrisburg is among the more than 1400 institutions of higher learning across the country nominating outstanding campus leaders and college students. Students may be recommended by faculty and staff, may be self-nominated, or may nominate another student for this honor. Nomination Petition forms may be obtained in Student Services, C120, Olmsted. Completed forms, along with supporting documents, should be returned to C120. The deadline for nominations is by 5:00 p.m., November 28, 2007.

One of the world's foremost Jewish folklore scholars, award-winning Dan Ben-Amos, brings his "Folktales of the Jews" presentation to Penn State Harrisburg Tuesday, Nov. 13. The presentation and book signing is free and open to the public at 6:30 p.m. in the Gallery Lounge of the Olmsted Building. Ben-Amos' presentation is part of the college's programming in Holocaust and Jewish studies. For information, phone 717-948-6039.

The Fall Career Expo at Central Pennsylvania College will be held on Wednesday, October 31, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Expo is at the Central Penn College Conference Center, Valley Road and B

Street, Summerdale, PA. Don't miss this opportunity to network with employers for fulltime and internship positions. Bring your resumes, and dress professionally. Further information at: Central Penn Career Services Office Ph: 717-728-2262. For a list of participating employers, go to: <http://centralpenn.tcob1.com/careerexpo.htm>.

Recognized as the world's leading ethnographer and artist of klezmer music and history, Yale Strom brings his performance to Penn State Harrisburg for a Kristallnacht Memorial Program Tuesday, Nov. 6 at 6:15 p.m. in the Olmsted Building auditorium on campus.

Things You Need To Know

The free shuttle service from the campus to the Village of Pineford in Middletown and to the Willow Garden Apartments in Highspire will continue until the end of the semester. The shuttle will leave at 9:15 p.m. from the bus stop located behind the Olmsted Building (Penn State Way), Monday through Thursday. For information, contact the student Life Office at 948-6018.

Basketball season will be here before you know it! Would you like show your skills on the basketball court? Would you like to compete with members of the North Eastern Athletic Conference? Would you like to compete at a NCAA Division III level? If you answered "yes" to these questions please contact: Men's Basketball Head Coach Kick Ream at ktr10@psu.edu or Women's Basketball Head Coach mrg159@psu.edu.

Before coming to the gymnasium, please check the numerous web calendars for gymnasium availability. Gymnasium refers to the basketball court area, not the entire building. Gymnasium and Capital Union Building hours may be found at <http://php.scripts.psu.edu/dept/iit/hbg/fitness>.

There are still several roster sports available on the college women's intercollegiate basketball team. By participating on the team you can earn 2 credits for Kinesiology 088 and earn a Penn State varsity letter. This is a great opportunity to build relationships, travel and enjoy participating on a varsity sport program. If you are interested in having a fun and exciting college athletic experience, contact head coach Marissa Graby-Hoover at mrg159@psu.edu.

In an effort to increase the security measure at the Capital Union Building, a new swipe card software system has been implemented at the Front Desk. We are asking all students and PSH staff and faculty to use this system. In order to enter staff and faculty into the database, please contact Becky Parthemore or Marilyn Demey for the appropriate form at the Capital Union Building then return into the CUB. Once your information is entered into the software system you may swipe your PSU ID+ card to enter the building.

Water fitness classes will take place from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Fridays and 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursday. These are free for current PSH students, and \$45.00/14 Class Punch card for PSH Staff and Faculty.



Bring a toy and a smile to a child

Make Penn State proud and help a child by donating either a new or gently used toy to one of the donations boxes located around campus.

Bin Locations:

CUB Lobby

Library Lobby

Bookstore Lobby

Olmsted: Town Square and Main Lobby

Dates: November 2 to December 8

Make the holiday a little bit brighter for a child! :-)