

Tasty, Attractive Low-Fat Foods

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— People with health and weight problems often need to adjust eating habits to encourage healthier living. For many, the most frustrating is forfeiting sweets or adapting recipes to low-fat status.

While more and more low-fat recipes are being published in magazines, people are often disappointed in the taste. Cooks hate to waste time and money on ingredients to produce a dessert that doesn't meet their taste qualifications. On the other hand, there are many great-tasting low-fat desserts.

One of the best ways to find these is to attend a workshop sponsored by your county extension service. One of these was held recently at the Lancaster County Extension office. Nancy Wiker, family and consumer sciences agent, prepared a tableful of eye-appealing and tasty dishes for participants to sample. In addition, participants received information and recipes to help them adapt their own recipes.

"Lowfat desserts often taste best if eaten immediately," Wiker said. "Low-fat baked goods often get tough after a day or two."

This is because fat contributes to a tender texture in food.

For those who must limit fat intake but still crave chocolate, Wiker suggested using mini-chocolate chips in place of regular ones. Not as many are needed to spread the chocolate throughout the item. Also, try one of the new low-fat chocolate chip varieties on supermarket shelves. The taste of these have improved considerably, and many people cannot differentiate between the low-fat and regular varieties.

The advantage of attending a workshop is that it gives you an opportunity to sample recipes to determine if you would want to prepare them at home.

You can also adapt your favorite recipes to non-fat versions. Reduction in the amount of fat in a recipe will result in the greatest calorie savings since fat has more than twice the calories per gram than protein or carbohydrate.

Be prepared for some change in texture. Less fat will produce a more "cakey" texture, and the cookies will be soft.

This may take some experi-

menting, but here are a few of the tips Wiker shared:

- Try reducing the total amount of fat in a recipe by one-fourth. This works best in fruit and nut breads, cake recipes, and sauces. Do not do this in rolled cookies or pie crust recipes where the fat is critical. Drop cookies might lend themselves to fat reduction.

- If the recipe calls for oil, use an oil that is lower in saturated fat. The lowest is canola, then sunflower or corn or olive. It will not reduce the caloric value if you do this but will reduce saturated fat. Saturated fat has the effect of raising the blood level of cholesterol.

- Light oils do not have less fat or calories. They are lighter in color and flavor. Vegetable oils never have cholesterol. All oils have 120 calories per tablespoon.

- If the recipe calls for shortening, it means solid vegetable shortening that is hydrogenated. Do not substitute oil. This will alter the texture greatly. You will need to reduce liquid somewhere in the recipe. Try to find a recipe already designed for oil. Butter flavored shortening behaves like shortening, not butter.

- If you substitute butter or margarine for shortening, there may be a change in the texture of cookies and other baked products, mainly because of the water in the butter, which will usually cause the batter to spread more as it bakes.

- Salted butter will keep longer than unsalted butter.

- If you use a stick-type margarine that is 100 percent corn oil, it will make a softer dough than other margarine. In cookies, you will need to chill for at least five hours before rolling. You may even find it works better if you chill in the freezer. Any stick-type margarine that has as its first listed ingredient a liquid oil will behave the same way. Soft tub-type margarines behave differently in recipes that stick-type. So do not use it in baking cookies.

- There are many new spreads and stick-form diet margarines that have less fat than regular margarine. The products have increased water added and they behave differently than butter or margarine in recipes. Recipes are developed especially for the use of these products. The products may have 68 percent fat, 71 percent, 55 percent, 40 percent, even a no-fat margarine. Do not try to bake with one of these products having less than 50



Nancy Wiker, right, offers a tableful of tasty, low-fat desserts to participants attending the workshop held at the Farm and Home Center in Lancaster.

calories per tablespoon or 5 to 6 grams fat. Carefully read the label on your favorite brand of margarine because some have recently been changed with little clear warning on the package.

- Some substitute equal amounts of unsweetened applesauce in cakes, muffins, quick breads, and brownies. This will produce a more moist product. It will not work for a rolled cookie.

- Another recommendation is to use prunes instead of fat. This works in some recipes but the flavor of the prunes is not always compatible with the overall desired effect.

- The pectin and sorbitol in the prunes act to tenderize and moisten. Place $\frac{1}{4}$ cup light corn syrup, 2 tablespoons sugar, a 12-ounce package of pitted prunes in a food processor for 5 seconds, then add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water slowly while processing until smooth. Spoon into an airtight container and store in the refrigerator for up to 2 months.

- Low or non-fat yogurt is also being substituted in cake mixes. See the package directions for guidelines. It can be used to replace half the fat in cookies. The finished product is more dense than the fat version.

- Reduced fat recipes may need shorter baking times.

While consuming too much fat may contribute to such problems as obesity, heart disease, and cancer, it is important to realize that the body does require some fat. Fats carry fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K and aid in their absorption in the body. Fats insulate the body and protect vital

organs.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting total fat intake to no more than 30 percent of calories. The average intake of fat is approximately 34-36 percent of calories. To determine how many calories and fat grams you need a day to maintain your ideal weight, contact your county Penn State Extension listed in the phone book directory.

Here are a few of the recipes Wiker prepared.

CHERRY-FILLED CHOCOLATE ANGEL CAKE ROLL

Cake:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup powdered sugar
- 16-ounce package angel food cake mix
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup unsweetened cocoa
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups water

Filling:

- 2 21-ounce cans cherry pie filling
- 2 teaspoons almond extract

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Cut parchment to fit bottom of two jelly roll pans. Sprinkle powdered sugar onto two clean lint-free towels.

In a large bowl, combine cake mix and cocoa. Add water, beat at low speed until moistened; beat at medium speed one minute. Spread half batter into each of prepared pans.

Bake cakes, one at a time on middle oven rack 10-14 minutes or until top springs back when touched lightly in center. Loosen edges with spatula; invert immediately onto sugared towel. Carefully remove parchment. Starting at shorter end, roll up cake in towel; cool 20 minutes on wire rack. Repeat with remaining cake.

Combine filling ingredients. Carefully unroll cake, remove towel, spread filling, and roll up again loosely, incorporating filling. Place on serving platter, seam side down. To serve, cut into 1-inch slices

Yield: 10 servings of 170 calories, no fat.

This has more of a cocoa flavor rather than heavy chocolate.

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RASPBERRY KISSES

- 2 egg whites
- Pinch salt
- 2 tablespoons raspberry gelatin
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons vinegar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mini chocolate chips or coconut, chopped fine

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

Beat egg whites with salt until foamy. Add gelatin and sugar gradually; beat until stiff peaks form and sugar is dissolved. Mix in vinegar. Fold in chips or coconut.

Drop from a teaspoon onto cookie sheets covered with parchment paper. Bake for 25 minutes. Turn oven off; leave kisses in oven 20 minutes longer. Yield $4\frac{1}{4}$ dozen. May freeze if desired.

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES

- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup unsweetened cocoa
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup orange juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup semisweet chocolate chips

Combine flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, and salt in a medium bowl. Make a well in the center.

Combine orange juice, water, oil, vinegar, and vanilla; add to dry ingredients all at once, stirring just until moistened. Fold in chocolate chips.

Spoon into lined muffin pans, filling two-thirds full. Bake at 375 degrees for 12 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean. Remove from pans and cool on wire rack. Sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Makes 1 dozen, 153 calories each, 5.5 g. fat.

Use mini chips instead of regular, because you don't need to use as many. Also low-fat chips taste almost the same as regular chocolate chips.

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Chocolate Meringues and Cinnamon Apple Crostata taste as elegant as they appear.

HOMESTEAD

NOTES

