

# Ag Progress Visitors Sample Food Made To Keep Families Healthy

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ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.)  
— "You'd never know this has tofu in it," said Peggy Denison of Shiremanstown as she tasted Chocolate and Banana Cream Pie. "It has a dense chocolate flavor in a texture I like. I'm going to make this one at home."

That's exactly the purpose of the cooking demonstrations held in the Family Room on the Ag Progress grounds Tuesday through Thursday.

Extension family living agents demonstrated preparing healthy meals for healthy families. Samples were handed out to the observers.

Two of the more unusual workshops were about the New Face of Soy and A-"Maize"-ing Possibilities with Corneal.

Although soybeans have been grown for thousands of years, consumers are taking a new interest in it because research indicates soyfoods provide numerous health benefits. Soyfoods are believed to reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and osteoporosis and to decrease menopause symptoms.

Because soy is a high protein food, vegetarians also use it in place of meat.

The problem is that soy comes in so many different forms that it is difficult for people to know how to prepare it. Some cooks try and are disappointed with the results and never use it again.

In the workshop, Alletta Schadler, Lebanon County, prepared several diverse dishes, which observers could sample to determine if they wanted to try it at home.

Most people are familiar with the dried yellow or tan-color soybean but there are also brown and black varieties. Some soybeans are green, if they are harvested just before maturity. These are most often cooked like a fresh vegetable and lightly salted.

Dried soybeans need to be soaked in water for eight hours or overnight. Do not add salt or acidic foods such as tomatoes or vinegar to yellow soybeans until they are thoroughly cooked or it will delay softening. (See the recipe for Oven Baked Bean Soup that follows for using dried soybeans).

Tofu is a soft cheese-like food made by curdling fresh hot soy-milk with a coagulant. Tofu is very bland but acts as a sponge in a recipe and soaks up the flavor of the other ingredients. Crumbled into chili, it tastes like chili, blended with cocoa and sweetener it is like cream pie filling, cut into cubes, it can be added to soup or casseroles. Blend into a fruit smoothie drink. Mash into a dip or salad dressing instead of cream cheese. Tofu can be substituted for sour cream, ricotta cheese, and cream cheese in recipes.

Some recipes follow. If you would like more recipes, order a copy of the 1999 U.S. Soyfoods Directory by calling 1-800-TALKSOY or check the Internet: <http://www.soyfoods.com/>.

Cornbread has also been around for a long time. People are taking a new interest in cornbread as a healthy alternative to white bread.

Nancy Wiker, Lancaster Extension, said that cornbread was made by Native Americans long before colonists settled in America. The earliest cornbreads were called "pone," a simple mixture of cornmeal, salt, and water.

In the South, corn pone, ash-cake, and hoe-cake were considered staples. Similar versions in the north were known as johnny-cake, journey cake, or cornbread. In the west, tortillas were popular. As recipes became refined, spider cake, spoon bread, and hush puppies were common fare.

Here are some recipes for the food demonstrated at the workshops.

## HUSH PUPPIES

*Legend has it that during the Civil War, Southerners often prepared meals outdoors. They would fry cornmeal batter, and if Yankee soldiers came nearby, they tossed one of the cakes to the barking dogs and say, "Hush, puppies."*

- 2 cups corn meal
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped scallions
- 1 cup plus 3 tablespoon buttermilk
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- Oil



During a cooking demonstration, Dana Wiker hands out food samples made by her mother Nancy Wiker, at right in background, and by Alletta Schadler, left.

Sift together cornmeal, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Add scallions, buttermilk, and egg. Stir until thoroughly mixed.

Heat oil to 375 degrees and drop by spoonfuls into hot oil. Fry until golden brown. Drain on paper toweling. Serve at once.

## ROASTED RED PEPPER DIP

12 sundried tomato halves, not in oil

- 1 cup hot water
- 2 cans (15-ounces each) soybeans OR 3 cups soaked and cooked dried soybeans
- 6-ounces firm silken tofu
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1/2 cup spicy hot salsa
- 7-ounces roasted red peppers, drained

Soften sundried tomatoes in 1 cup hot water until soft. Drain well. In food processor, process soybeans and tofu until coarsely chopped. Add garlic, cumin, oregano, tomatoes, salsa, and roasted red peppers. Continue to blend in food processor until fairly smooth, yet thick like a dip. Refrigerate. Serve with vegetables.

## CORN TORTILLAS

*These tortillas can be served warm as a bread, with cheese, meat, or salsa. When fried in hot oil, they become tacos or tostadas.*

- 4 cups finely ground corn flour
- 2 1/4 cups cold water
- 1 teaspoon salt

Combine corn flour, water, and salt in a large mixing bowl and stir until smooth. The dough should be slightly sticky and form a ball when pressed together. To test, flatten a ball between palms. If edges crack, add water to the dough a tablespoon at a time, until the piece does not crack.

Divide the dough into 24 golf ball size pieces. Place on a platter and cover with damp towel.

Line a tortilla, press with two sheets plastic. Heat a dry skillet until moderately hot. Flatten each ball of dough in a tortilla press or roll between pieces of heavy plastic. Remove from plastic and lay on the skillet and cook about 30 to 45 seconds on each side. Press the top of each to make it puff.

Serve immediately or let cool, wrap well in a plastic bag and store in the refrigerator for up to a week.

## TAVERN SPOON BREAD

*Spoon bread or batter bread is a custardy corn bread served souffle-hot from the dish, preferably earthenware, in which it is baked.*

- 1 1/2 cups water
- 2 cups milk
- 1 1/2 cups cornmeal
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 5 eggs

1 tablespoon baking powder  
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a large, shallow baking dish. Combine waters and milk and heat to simmer. Add corn meal, salt, sugar, and butter. Stir over medium heat until mixture is thickened, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat.

Beat eggs with baking powder until very light and fluffy, then add to corn meal mixture. Mix well. Pour into prepared dish and bake at 350 degrees for 45-50 minutes. Serve hot.

## OVEN BAKED BEAN SOUP

- 8-ounces dried soybeans
- 3 cups water
- 3 cups lowfat chicken or vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1 cup onion, diced
- 2 cups raw sweet potatoes, peeled, diced

1 cup green pepper, diced  
Pinch ground cloves  
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme  
Black pepper to taste  
Place beans in a large container and add enough cold water to cover them by several inches. Note: to soak them quicker, place the beans in a pot, cover them with water, bring to a boil; cover them, remove from heat and allow to stand one hour. Drain and proceed.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place ingredients into a large oven-proof Dutch oven and heat on top on high heat. Bring to a boil, stir well and cover. Place the Dutch oven in the middle of the oven and allow to cook until the beans are tender, about 2 or 3 hours. Add more liquid if needed.

## CHOCOLATE AND BANANA CREAM PIE

- 12-ounces firm silken light tofu
- 1/2 cup cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 3 ripe bananas
- 1 graham crust

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Place the tofu, cocoa powder, sugar, vanilla, and bananas into a blender or food processor and blend until smooth. Pour into the graham crust and place in the center of the oven. Bake until firm in the center, about 30 minutes. Chill thoroughly before serving, about 3 hours.

### Graham Crust:

- 1 cup graham crumbs
- 1 cereal bar
- Grind crumbs and cereal bar together in food processor. Spray pie pan with cooking oil then pack crumbs into pan.



The question is which do these visitors enjoy more: the chance to relax after wandering over acres of grounds at Ag Progress or the chance to watch a cooking demonstration in order to learn new ways to serve food?