



Home on the Range

Healthy Meals Made Simple

Nutritional deficiencies between vitamin C and scurvy and between vitamin D and rickets were connected during the early 1900s.

Since then, the focus has been on how food and substances in food can improve health and potentially protect a person from disease.

Protein found in meats and seafood give energy and promote healthy cells. If you're in a hurry and don't have time to cook meat, tuna is ready-to-eat from the can. Tuna is high in protein and low in fat and calories when compared with other proteins. Not only does tuna add variety to low-fat diets, but also the protein in tuna stabilizes blood sugar levels, keeping appetite under control and energy levels high.

Calcium found in cheese, milk, and other dairy products are best known for its bone building benefits. It's shown to prevent osteoporosis, which is a bone-thinning disease that causes 1.5 million fractures of the hip, spine, and wrist each year.

Calcium is a mineral needed to help keep bones dense and strong. Dairy products, as well as sardines and canned salmon with bones, are good sources of calcium.

Eating cheese is one of the easiest ways to work calcium, protein, and phosphorous into your diet. Cheese provides the same amount of protein as an equal amount of peanut butter.

Two one-ounce slices of American cheese has about as much calcium as an 8-ounce glass of milk.

The vitamins and minerals found in vegetables are shown to reduce the risk of cancer, heart attack, stroke, diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, and other health risks.

The Five A Day program encourages people to eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily for better health.

When it comes right down to it, almost every food has nutritional benefits. Depending on individual needs some people need to consume more of some nutrient-dense foods and eat sparingly of others. Choices abound. Today's collection offers ideas for a great start toward total nutrition.

For more information about 5 a Day, visit www.5aday.com. Or to receive additional recipes, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Produce for Better Health Foundation, 5301 Limestone Rd., Suite 101, Wilmington, DE 19808.

CALIFORNIA GOLD TART
60 fat-free cinnamon graham crackers, crushed
2 tablespoons butter, melted
9-ounce package sugar-free instant vanilla pudding
1½ cups nonfat milk
¼ cup dried apricots, thinly sliced
2 fresh plums
2 fresh nectarines
2 fresh peaches
3 tablespoons all-fruit, no sugar jam, melted

Mix crumbs with butter and press into bottom and slightly up sides of removable-bottom 9-inch tart pan. Bake at 375 degrees for 6 minutes or until crisp. Cool. Beat pudding mix with milk, whisking vigorously to blend.

Turn filling into tart pan. Brush jam over cut surfaces of fruit to glaze. Chill until ready to serve (best within 4 hours). To serve, gently slip off pan sides. This lean tart base is delicate, so after cutting wedges, slide each wedge on to dessert plate using wide metal pancake-turner style spatula.

Serves 6.

SLIM STRAWBERRY CHEF'S SALAD

¾ cup nonfat light sour cream substitute
¼ cup red wine vinegar
2 green onions, sliced
2 to 3 teaspoons hot-sweet mustard
Salt and pepper, to taste
Butter lettuce leaves
2 pint baskets strawberries, steamed
2 cups assorted fresh fruit pieces (grapefruit segments, pineapple chunks, orange and kiwi slices)

8 slices lean turkey or ham
½ cup alfalfa sprouts

To make salad dressing, in small bowl, whisk sour cream substitute, vinegar, onions, and mustard; season with salt and pepper. Set aside. To assemble salad, line four dinner plates with lettuce. Top with fruits, turkey and sprouts, dividing equally. Serve with dressing on the side. Makes 4 servings.



This may look like a contemporary salad, but the recipe is from a 1623 kitchen of the "The English Housewife."

RAISIN ENERGY BITES
4 egg whites
¼ cup sugar
4 teaspoons vegetable oil
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
¾ teaspoon vanilla extract
1½ cups plain low-fat granola
1 cup raisins
3 tablespoons toasted wheat germ
3 tablespoons raw sunflower seeds
4 teaspoons sesame seeds

In a large bowl, beat egg whites and sugar with whisk until smooth. Beat in oil, cinnamon, and vanilla extract. Stir in remaining ingredients; blend well.

Generously coat 13x9-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray.

Turn raisin mixture into pan; pat to even layer. Bake at 300 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown. Cool 5 minutes in pan. Loosen edges with spatula and invert onto wire rack to cool completely. Cut into four dozen bite-sized pieces.

Snack Mix: Combine Raisin Bites with one or more of the following: dried apricots or dried apples, roasted almonds, peanuts or cashews, or banana chips.

Tip: When there is no time to sit down to breakfast, bag these Raisin Bites for a good breakfast to go.

DOUBLE VANILLA YOGURT SAUCE
1½-inch piece vanilla bean
1½ cups vanilla nonfat yogurt
Place vanilla bean in yogurt; cover and refrigerate two hours. Remove bean from yogurt and split lengthwise in half. Scrape seeds into yogurt with tip of a small knife; discard bean. Cover yogurt and refrigerate until serving.

Ashley Carper
Huntingdon Co. Dairy Princess

BAKED APPLES WITH FRESH MINT
4 apples
½ cup sugar
¼ cup brown sugar
1 tablespoon fresh mint, minced
2 teaspoons butter

Core apples and peel off a one-inch strip around the hole on the top of each apple. Place apples in shallow baking dish. Combine raisins, brown sugar, and mint. Fill apples with raisin mixture. Top with raisin filling in each apple with ½ teaspoon butter.

Bake at 350 degrees for about 50 minutes or until apples are tender. Makes 4 servings.

CREAMY FRUIT DIP
8-ounces cream cheese
¾ cup packed brown sugar
1 cup sour cream
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 cup cold milk
3.4-ounce package instant vanilla pudding mix

In mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and brown sugar until smooth. Add sour cream, vanilla, lemon juice, milk, and pudding mix. Cover and chill at least one hour. Serve as a dip for fruit.

Amanda Martin
Lebanon Co. Dairy Princess

(Turn to Page B6)

Featured Recipe

Today's recipe comes from Stewart and Carol Mathias, Hummelstown. Stewart was recently named Pennsylvania Beekeeper of the Year.

He is an enthusiastic supporter of beekeeping, which has ancient ties to agriculture. In addition to his own achievements, Mathias's daughter Jill, a former Pennsylvania Honey Queen and American Princess, remains active in the industry and is treasurer of the National Honey Board.

This recipe is one of the family's many favorites using honey. Nutrients are packed in the ingredients that combines seafood, spinach, and honey, which is a natural, unrefined food that contains vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Honey is fat-free, cholesterol free, and has no sodium.

Read more about Mathias and the honey and bee industry in the article that appears in this section, and don't forget to try this recipe.

BAKED FLOUNDER WITH SPINACH

1 cup sour cream
2 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon lemon juice
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ginger
2 to 3 chopped scallions
1 tablespoon flour
1 package frozen, chopped spinach, thawed, drained
1½ pounds flounder fillets or other whitefish
Paprika
Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Combine first seven ingredients. Add half the mixture to the spinach and place in bottom of shallow baking dish.
Arrange fillets on top and cover with remaining sour cream mixture. Sprinkle with paprika and bake 20 minutes.

Recipe Topics

If you have recipes for the topics listed below, please share them with us. We welcome your recipes, but ask that you include accurate measurements, a complete list of ingredients and clear instructions with each recipe you submit. Send your recipes to Lou Ann Good, Lancaster Farming, P.O. Box 609, Ephrata, PA 17522. Recipes should reach our office one week before publishing date listed below.

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|-------|--|
| March | 11 - Nutty Recipes With Appeal |
| | 18 - Scones, Biscuits & Specialty Breads |
| | 25 - Citrus Uses |
| April | 1 - Asparagus |