Featured Recipe

Pennsylvania State Dairy Princess Melinda Wolfe writes, "Ahh, the power of cheese." It is the American Dairy Association's (ADA) newest slogan to increase the sale and consumption of cheese across America.

This phrase must be catching on because consumption in America increased six percent in 1999. With so many varieties to choose from, it's no wonder that the average American will eat up to 30-pounds of cheese in one year.

October is Cheese Month, and what a better way to celebrate this festive occasion than by throwing a three-course dinner party. As your guests arrive, allow them to munch on a plate of fresh vegetables and cheese dip as they mingle.

1 cup sour cream
¼ cup plain yogurt
⅓ cup soft American Cheese
2 teaspoons dry Italian salad dressing mix (½ package)

Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Dip will have little lumps of cheese.

Moving on with the main course, your guests will marvel at your cooking expertise as they enjoy your famous chicken casserole.

2 cups uncooked macaroni
2 cups milk
1 can cream of chicken
1 can cream of celery
2 cups diced cooked chicken
1 small onion — chopped
½ pound American Cheese — cubed

Mix all together, cover, and refrigerate overnight. Uncover and bring to room temperature. Bake at 350 for one hour.

And what meal would be complete without dessert? Serve your friends and family an all-time favorite, mini cherry cheesecake.

8-ounce package cream-cheese softened
2 eggs
14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon lemon juice
¼ teaspoon salt
24 vanilla wafers
1 can cherry pie filling

Beat cream cheese and condensed milk until fluffy, beat in eggs, vanilla, lemon juice, and salt. Insert 24 wafers into cupcake liners in muffin pans, flat side down. Fill cups ⅔ full with batter. Bake at 350 for 15-20 minutes or until batter is puffed and set. cool 15-20 minutes. Top with a spoonful of cherry pie filling and chill before serving.

Next time you're at the grocery store wondering what to make for dinner, take a stroll down the dairy aisle to the cheese section. From American to Swiss, sharp to mild, or smooth to grated, cheese can be substituted into any of your favorite recipes to add that extra kick to any meal.

Celebrate Autumn Harvest

Autumn favorites often include cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, collards, and kale.

Cabbage by itself ranks as the sixth most important Pennsylvania crop in terms of acreage. More than 1,600 acres are grown and harvested from late June into December.

Cabbage is considered a cruciferous vegetable, which contains indoles —nitrogen compounds — that seem to protect against cancers of the stomach and large intestine. They also are generally high in fiber and antioxidants such as vitamin C and carotenoids. Antioxidants neutralize the action of free radicals — unstable oxygen molecules that promote cancer.

Cruciferous vegetables also contain compounds that stimulate the release of anticancer enzymes.

Some people object to the odor produced by cooking cruciferous vegetables. The odor is caused by the release of sulfur compounds as these vegetables cook. While boiling cruciferous vegetables in large amounts of water in an open pot will minimize the characteristic strong cabbage taste, it maximizes the loss of nutrients. Steaming, microwaving or quick cooking in small amounts of water minimizes nutrient loss in the cooking process.

Dietary experts recommend including cruciferous vegetables in the diet regularly, at least several times a week. They also recommend a daily serving of a vegetable or fruit high in vitamin A, one high in vitamin C, and one high in fiber. Broccoli fulfills all three requirements while cabbage and cauliflower fulfill the vitamin C and fiber requirement.

Many of today's recipe collection reveal novel ways to incorporate these healthful vegetables into your family mealtime.

CABBAGE PATCH STEW

1½ pound ground beef
4 ribs celery, chopped
1 onion, chopped
7 cups chopped cabbage
2 16-ounce cans kidney beans, rinsed, drained
28-ounce can diced tomatoes
3 cups beef broth
15-ounce can tomato sauce
2 carrots, peeled, chopped
Pepper to taste

Saute ground beef, celery, and onion until meat is done. Add remaining ingredients, bring to a boil. Simmer one hour.

Note: Thanks to reader who sent in this and another recipe. No name was attached. We are sorry we cannot credit the person. This happens too often. Please, readers, when you send in a recipe, make sure your name is on the page of every recipe. We appreciate the time taken to write and send in recipes, and we really do want to give you proper credit.

SQUASH GAI CHOW

1 pound spaghetti squash
1 tablespoon butter
2 green peppers, seeded
4 medium carrots
Vegetable oil
1 can sliced mushrooms
1 can drained diced pineapples
½ cup soy sauce
2 cups diced, cooked chicken breast

Cool squash 30 minutes in boiling water. Cool. Cut in half, remove seeds. Scrape out pulp using the edge of a spoon.

Saute squash in butter, stir to avoid browning. Set aside.

Slice peppers in thin strips, and carrots in juliene style. Pour oil into carrots and peppers, using just enough to coat lightly. Heat frying pan and stir fry until barely tender. Add mushrooms, pineapple, and squash. Toss until well mixed. Pour soy sauce on this and add chicken. Simmer on heat just enough to get piping hot. Serve over rice.

Not only is this a delicious dish, but it is very colorful, the anonymous contributor writes.

SQUASH CASSEROLE

4 cups diced yellow squash
Pepper to taste
2 tablespoons grated onion
⅓ cup grated carrots
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 cup sour cream
2 cups prepared stuffing
3 tablespoons butter
Slivered almonds (optional)

Cook squash about 10 minutes in 1½ cups water to which ¼ teaspoon salt has been added. Drain and add next five ingredients. Butter a baking dish and put 1 cup stuffing in bottom. Add squash mixture, top with remaining stuffing, and dot with butter. Also sprinkle with almonds, if desired. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Servings 4 to 6.

CREAM OF BROCCOLI SOUP

1 small head broccoli (or 10-ounce package frozen broccoli)
2 tablespoons chopped onion
1 cup chicken broth
3 tablespoons melted butter
3 tablespoons flour
2 cups milk
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
1 cup grated American cheese

Cook broccoli and onions in chicken broth in small saucepan until tender. Do not drain. Blend butter and flour in saucepan, stir in milk. Cook until thick, stirring constantly. Season with salt and pepper. Add cheese; heat until cheese melts. Add broccoli, onion, and broth mixture. Simmer 10-15 minutes.

Evelyn Wood
Buffalo Grange

Cabbage Buying Tips

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program offers these tips when buying fresh cabbage:

- Select firm, compact heads.
- Choose heads that are free of yellow, wilted or splitting leaves.
- Avoid cutting cabbage until just before use.

Broccoli Buying Tips

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program offers these tips when buying fresh broccoli:

- Choose tightly-packed heads.
- Stalks should be green with dark green or purplish-green, not yellow, buds.
- Refrigerate in an open plastic bag.

Cauliflower Buying Tips

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program offers these tips when buying fresh cauliflower:

- Select tight heads with a white or cream appearance.
- Avoid heads that are loose, spotted or bruised.
- Refrigerate in an open plastic bag.

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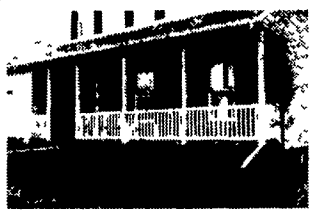
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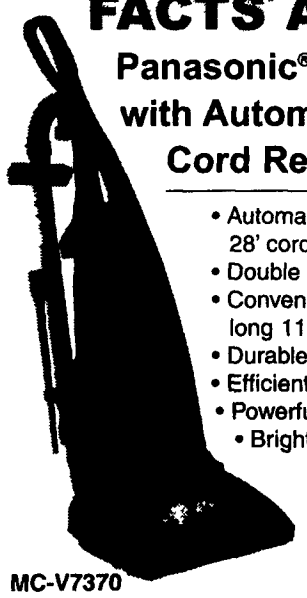
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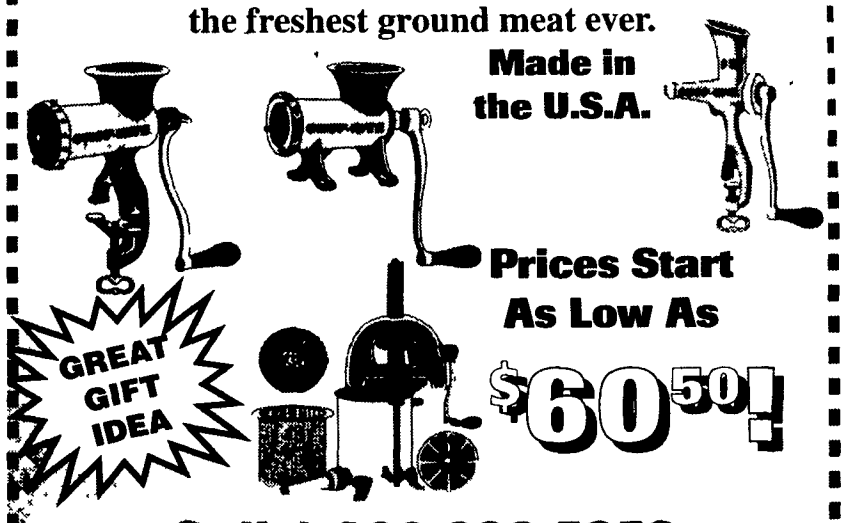
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