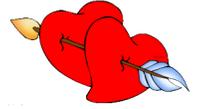




Food Bites

February 2015



Fruit of the Month

Papayas

Papaya belong to the Caricaceae, a small family of only four genera and 27 to 30 species. Linnaeus gave the papaya the Latin name of 'Carica papaya' in 1753. The Mexican Indians named the papaya ambapaya.

The papaya most probably originated along the Caribbean coast of Central America. The species was probably widely cultivated by Indians in Mexico and Central America prior to 1492.

In twentieth century, papayas were brought to the United States and have been cultivated in Hawaii, the major US producer since the 1920s.

Papaya, like most fruit derives most of it calories from simple carbohydrates, with the remaining calories coming for protein and fat. It boosts the immune system. Papaya is particularly high in vitamin C, A and E all powerful immune boosting antioxidant vitamin. Together with it natural dose of vitamin E, beta carotenes, and lycopene, papaya protects skin from signs of sun damage, like wrinkles and brown spots. The papaya providing protective benefits against cancer, heart disease, and other diseases associated with free radical damage.



Vegetable of the Month

Broccoli

Broccoli, botanically-known as *Brassica oleracea italica*, is native to the Mediterranean. It was engineered from a **cabbage** relative by the ancient Etruscans, who were considered to be horticultural geniuses. Its English name, *broccoli*, is derived from the Italian *brocco* and the Latin *bracchium* meaning arm, branch, or shoot. When first introduced in England, broccoli was referred to as "Italian asparagus." Although commercial cultivation of broccoli dates back to the 1500s, it did not become a popular foodstuff in the United States until the early 1920s.

Like the **artichoke**, broccoli is essentially a large **edible flower**. The stalks and flower florets are eaten both raw and cooked, and have a flavor reminiscent of cabbage. The bitter leaves are usually discarded. although some cooks do enjoy them prepared in the manner of chard or kale. Broccoli is related to cabbage, kale, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts.

Broccoli is rich in calcium and has anti-oxidant properties which helps prevent some forms of cancer. The same sulphur that can cause gas from over-cooked broccoli also has beneficial antiviral and antibiotic properties.



Improving Lives. Improving Texas.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service
Family and Consumer Science
P.O. Box 279, Panhandle, TX
79068

Jeanene Montgomery

Jeanene Montgomery
Texas AgriLife Extension
Family & Consumer Science

The Food Stamp Program helps low-income people buy nutritious foods. Food Stamps can help you and your family eat a healthier diet. Better Living for Texans is supported by USDA's Food Stamp Program. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

A program sponsored by
Texas AgriLife Extension Service,
Texas Health and Human Services Commission,
and USDA Food and Nutrition Service.

Baked Chicken Quarter

- 1 Tbsp. Kosher salt
- 1 Tbsp. paprika
- 1 Tbsp. granulated garlic
- 1 Tbsp. Cajun seasoning
- 2 chicken leg quarters
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil, extra virgin



1. Combine all dry ingredients together.
2. Rub olive oil over chicken, then rub spices all over chicken.
3. Place chicken in 8x8 glass dish, cook in oven about 40 minutes, or until juices run clear in 400 degree oven on middle rack.

Crispy Herb Baked Chicken

- 2/3 cup instant potato flakes
- 1/3 cup parmesan cheese
- 2 tsp. parsley flakes
- 3/4 tsp. garlic salt
- 3 1/2 lbs. chicken
- 1/3 cup margarine or butter, melted



1. Heat oven to 375. Grease or line with foil and grease 15x10x1-inch baking pan or 13x9-inch pan.
2. Combine potato flakes, parmesan cheese, parsley flakes and garlic salt in medium bowl; stir until well mixed. Dip chicken pieces in margarine; roll in potato flake mixture to coat. Place in greased pan.
3. Bake at 375. for 45 to 60 minutes or until chicken is fork-tender and juices run clear.

The Thigh Who Loved Me

- 12 boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 3/4 cup ketchup
- 1/2 cup salsa
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin



1. Arrange chicken thighs in a single layer in a 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
2. Whisk together in a separate bowl the ketchup, salsa, honey, dijon mustard, chili powder and cumin until well blended.
3. Pour sauce over chicken; Turn pieces to coat both sides with the sauce.
4. Bake uncovered at 400F for 45 minutes.

Grilled Veggie Ten Minute Tacos

- 1/2 large red onion, sliced
- 2 portabella mushrooms, sliced
- 2 zucchini, cut into strips
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 3 Tbsp. taco seasoning mix
- 4 flour tortillas



1. Heat gas or charcoal grill. Drizzle vegetables (onion, mushrooms and zucchini) with oil; sprinkle with taco seasoning mix.
2. Place vegetables on grill over medium heat. Cover grill; cook 3 to 4 minutes on each side or until charred.
3. Divide vegetables among tortillas; add toppings.

Smoked Leg Quarters

- 4 chicken leg quarters
- 1 Tbsp. simply asia spicy szechwan five mixed spice
- 1 bad of pecan and cherry soaking chips
- 2 bags of charcoal



1. Rinse and pat dry chicken.
2. Sprinkle chicken with spicy Simply Asia Szechwan five spice, make sure you get under skin.
3. Let sit to room temperature.
4. Prepare smoker for 225 degree temperature, make sure its 225 for 20 minutes.
5. Use a drip tray with water to help keep moist.
6. Place chicken in smoker and maintain 225 to 240 degrees throughout smoking process.

Baked Chicken Thighs/Leg Quarters

- 8 chicken thighs
- Garlic powder to taste
- 4 tsp. soy sauce



1. Arrange chicken thighs/leg quarters skin side up in a shallow baking dish.
2. Sprinkle with garlic powder.
3. Drizzle about 1/2 teaspoon soy sauce on each piece.
4. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 45 minutes to an hour, until the skin is crisp and brown and the meat is ready to fall off the bones.

Crispy Baked Chicken Leg Quarters

- 4 chicken leg quarters, with skin
- 1/2 cup soy sauce, divided
- 1 tsp. garlic powder, divided
- 1 tsp. seasoning salt, divided
- 1 tsp. dill weed, divided



1. Preheat oven to 375.
2. Line a large glass baking dish with foil.
3. Remove excess fat from chicken quarters.
4. Separate the skin from the chicken, taking care that the skin stays attached at most points on the chicken.
5. Brush the chicken (under the skin) with soy sauce.
6. Sprinkle some garlic powder, seasoned salt and dill weed on the chicken under the skin and rub into the chicken.
7. Arrange the leg quarters in the pan, skin side up, taking care not to crowd. They need space to cook properly.
8. Brush both sides of the leg quarters with soy sauce.
9. Sprinkle the skin with garlic powder, seasoned salt and dill weed (to taste).
10. Place on middle rack in oven and bake uncovered for an hour.
11. After an hour, increase oven temp to 400 and bake 15 minutes.
12. Chicken is done when internal temp reaches 165 (insert meat thermometer at thickest part of thigh, taking care not to touch the bone).
13. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Easy Vegan Black Bean Veggie Burgers

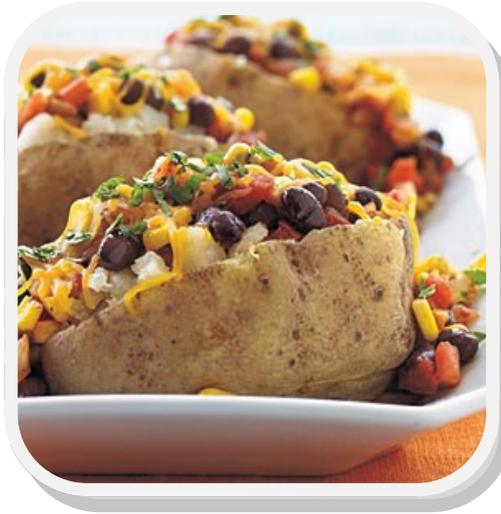
- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 1 can black beans, drained
- 2 slices bread, crumbled
- 1/2 tsp seasoned salt
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- 1/2 cup flour
- Extra salt and pepper to taste
- Oil for frying



1. Sauté the onions till soft, about 3-5 minutes.
2. In a large bowl, mash the beans until almost smooth.
3. Add the sautéed onions to the beans, along with the crumbled bread, seasoned salt, garlic powder and onion powder, mixing to combine well. Then, add the flour a few tablespoons at a time and mix to combine well. Your veggie burger mixture will be very thick (you may want to use your hands to work the flour in well).
4. Form the black bean mixture into individual patties, approximately 1/2 inch thick. The best way to do this is to roll a handful into a ball, then gently flatten it.
5. Finally, fry your black bean patties in a small amount of oil over medium-low heat until slightly firm and lightly browned on each side, about 3 minutes.
6. If your pan is too hot, your bean burgers will brown too quickly and not be heated through and cooked in the middle, so adjust the heat as needed.
7. Assemble your veggie burgers and enjoy with all the fixings, or, eat them on a plate with a fork and a knife and ketchup - they're perfect for doing just that.

Black Bean & Corn –Topped Potatoes

- 4 baking potatoes
- Cooking spray
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp. chili powder
- 1 can black beans
- 1 1/2 cups frozen corn
- 1 1/2 cups salsa
- 1/4 cup shredded cheese
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped



1. Pierce potatoes with a fork; arrange in a circle on paper towels in microwave oven. Microwave at HIGH 10 minutes, turning and rearranging potatoes after 5 minutes.
2. While potatoes cook, heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add onion and next 3 ingredients; sauté 3 minutes. Reduce heat to low. Add beans, corn, and salsa; cook 4 minutes or until thoroughly heated.
3. Split potatoes lengthwise, cutting to, but not through, other side. Fluff with a fork. Spoon about 1 cup bean mixture over each potato. Top each serving evenly with cheese and cilantro.

Veggie Ravioli

- 1 package fresh four-cheese ravioli
- 1 can navy beans, drained
- 1 can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1/2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp. dried basil
- 1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper
- 6 cups fresh spinach, chopped
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup Asiago cheese



1. Cook pasta according to package directions, omitting salt and fat.
2. Combine the beans, tomatoes, basil, oregano, and red pepper in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil; stir in spinach. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 3 minutes or until spinach is wilted. Stir in pasta and 1/4 cup water; cook 1 minute or until thoroughly heated. Sprinkle with cheese.

Meatless Chili

- 1 can hot chili beans, undrained
- 1 can black beans, drained
- 1 can Mexican stewed tomatoes
- 1 cup frozen corn, thawed
- 1/2 cup salsa
- 1/2 cup green pepper, chopped
- 1/2 cup sweet red pepper, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. ground cumin
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- 4 Tbsp. sour cream
- 4 Tbsp. shredded cheddar cheese



1. In a large saucepan, combine the first nine ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 15 minutes or until vegetables are crisp and tender. Top each serving with sour cream and cheese.

Meatless Burritos

- 3 cans red kidney and/or black beans, drained
- 1 can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 1/2 cup salsa or picante sauce
- 1 can corn with sweet peppers, drained
- 1 fresh jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 16 flour tortillas, warmed
- 2 cups shredded lettuce
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- Sliced green onion and/or sour cream (optional)



1. In a 3-1/2- or 4-quart slow cooker combine beans, undrained tomatoes, salsa, corn, jalapeno pepper (if desired), chili powder, and garlic.
2. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.
3. To serve, spoon bean mixture just below centers of tortillas. Top with lettuce and cheese. If desired, top with green onions and/or sour cream. Fold bottom edge of each tortilla up and over filling. Fold in opposite sides; roll up from bottom. Makes 16 servings.

Planning Meals

You eat in a variety of places - your home, work, restaurants, maybe even your car. For some of these places, you have more control over what choices are available than others. Since high-calorie foods are everywhere, it's important to take the time to plan ahead to make sure you have healthy options available.

Meals at Home

Whether you are cooking for just yourself, one to two people, or a larger group, planning meals is a good place to start improving your food choices. Taking the time to plan a healthy evening meal can help you avoid a less healthful "drive-through" dinner.

To start, grab a pencil and paper and list your favorite meals. It may help to talk to your family or thumb through a favorite cook book. Some of the meals will be healthier than others, but for now, just write them all down.

Once you've planned your meals, make a grocery list. Take some time on your visit to the grocery store to **choose lower-calorie ingredients**. Here are some ideas that may help:

- Many casseroles and meat sauces use cream soups as a base. Use a low-fat cream soup.
- Substitute a low-fat cheese in casseroles and vegetable sauces. When using sharply flavored cheese, such as cheddar and parmesan, you can usually reduce the amount in a recipe to save calories without sacrificing flavor.
- Try a non-stick cooking spray or a small amount of cooking oil for sautéing instead of frying with solid fat.
- If you're using ground beef for tacos or meat sauce for spaghetti, look for a lower-fat variety such as ground round or ground sirloin or try using skinless ground turkey breast. Once you've browned the meat, drain to remove excess fat.
- Instead of full-fat versions of mayonnaises, butter, and salad dressings, try those that are lower in calories, total fat, saturated fat, and trans fat.
- Check out the frozen food aisles for quick, low-calorie vegetable side dishes. You can find cut green beans, sliced carrots, and other chopped vegetables in the frozen food section. Avoid the ones with added cream, butter, or cheese sauces as these ingredients can add calories. You can steam these vegetables quickly in the microwave.
- In some soups and entrees, you may also be able to add dry beans to extend the recipe and improve the nutritional value. This is easy to do in vegetable-based soups and chili. You can just add a cup of canned white beans, kidney beans, or pinto beans to the recipe. As another example, if you are making enchiladas, rinse a can of black beans and add these to the ground meat.



Research shows that people get full by the amount of food they eat, not the number of calories they take in. You can cut calories in your favorite foods by lowering the amount of fat and or increasing the amount of fiber-rich ingredients, such as vegetables or fruit. Eating fewer calories doesn't necessarily mean eating less food. To learn more, visit [Eat More, Weigh Less?](#) And see [How to Use Fruits and Vegetables to Help Manage Your Weight](#) for more information.

At first, you may find you only get a lower calorie meal planned for one or two nights a week. Don't criticize yourself; you're making steps in the right direction. Over time, you'll figure out meal-preparation short-cuts and it will become easier to make healthy family meals a regular occurrence.

Meals on the Go

For the places where you might grab a snack or have a meal on the go (such as the car or at your desk), make sure you have nutritious snacks available or at home that you can take with you. For example:



- "Grab-and-go" fruits: apples, oranges, bananas, canned fruit without added sugars, and raisins
- Washed and chopped fresh vegetables: celery, carrots, and cucumbers
- Low-fat and fat-free milk products: yogurt without added sugars, milk, and low-fat cheeses
- Whole-grain crackers and breads
- Protein choices such as low-fat deli turkey slices or almonds and other nuts and seeds

Take the time to make a shopping list and re-stock your cabinets and fridge with healthy options. It's also a good idea to think about stocking your office cabinet or car glove box with healthy shelf-stable treats if these are places where you snack. You'll find it's easier to make better choices when you have a good variety of nutritious foods available in the places where you eat.



Food Bites

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