

Stuff n' Such

WITH THE EXTENSION GALS

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In this issue

- Getting to know your Agents
- Boosting the Immune System
- Passionate about Pizza
- Freezer Pleaser
- Refrigerator and Freezer Storage Chart
- Upcoming Events
- Texas Speaks Survey

Reminders

- Be sure to check our Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Smith County Facebook page. 
- @SmithCounty AgriLife

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Before we go any further, let us introduce ourselves.

I am Claudann Jones. I have been an Extension Agent for the past 17 years and have enjoyed every moment!

I have always loved nutrition and wellness. It is who I am. I enjoy working out and meal prepping. Crazy right? But I do! I love to test out new recipes and find new ways to eat healthy and stay fit. I enjoy spending time with my family and my new grand daughter. I look forward to the many endeavors that we will be promoting this year. This new year! 2021!!

I am Amy Shively, Since moving to East Texas, I have had the privilege to teach for the past 18 years in public education. I enjoy cooking, swimming, gardening and spending time with my family. I am excited to be apart of the A&M AgriLife Extension team and work with in individuals and families in Smith County.

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BOOSTING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

By Claudann Jones-Family and Community Health Agent

It's no secret that we are all wanting to give our immune system a good ole boost! With COVID19, Flu Season and the common cold, nobody could blame us. The problem lies when we go to the grocery store or pharmacy with isles of products to choose from.

COOKING UP THE BLUES



Good nutrition is essential to a strong immune system, which may offer protection from a host of illnesses and other health problems. No one food or supplement can prevent illness but you may help support your immune system by including these nutrients in your overall eating plan on a regular basis.

Protein plays a role in the body's immune system, especially for healing and recovery. Eat a variety of protein foods including seafood, lean meat, poultry, eggs, beans and peas, soy products and unsalted nuts and seeds

Zinc helps the immune system work properly and may help wounds heal. Zinc can be found in lean meat, poultry, seafood, milk, whole grain products, beans, seeds and nuts.

Other nutrients, including vitamin B6, B12, D, copper, folate, selenium and iron also may support immune response and play a role in a healthful eating style.

Vitamin E works as an antioxidant. Include fortified cereals, sunflower seeds, almonds, sunflower and safflower oils, hazelnuts and peanut butter.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE

Vitamin A helps regulate the immune system and protect against infections by keeping skin and tissues in the mouth, stomach, intestines and respiratory system healthy. Get this vitamin from foods such as sweet potatoes, carrots, broccoli, spinach, red bell peppers, apricots, eggs or foods labeled "vitamin A fortified", such as milk or some cereals.

Vitamin C supports the immune system by stimulating the formation of antibodies. Include more sources of this healthy vitamin by choosing citrus fruits such as oranges, grapefruit and tangerines, or red bell pepper, papaya, strawberries, tomato juice or foods fortified with vitamin C, such as some cereals.

Passionate about Pizza

BY AMY SHIVELY

What are you passionate about? Health, wellness, your job, hobby, or family? Are you passionate about pizza?!? Well, I am!! I think of myself of a connoisseur of pizza. Is there a way to make pizza educational, fun to make, as well as healthier? Let us look at my passion for pizza.

Raffaele Esposito from Naples is often credited as for making the lovely flatbread with assorted toppings, pizza. You might be thinking why pizza is seen as unhealthy. Many frozen and fast-food pizzas contain preservatives, colorings, and unhealthy fats. Home-made pizza can be as healthy or unhealthy, depending on how you make it. Cutting down on saturated fats and processed meats and using leaner meats is a way to make a healthier pizza. Also, by adding lots of vegetables or even fruit will help improve the nutritional factors. People are being more creative in their pizza crusts, by using whole-grain crusts or even cauliflower pizza crusts. I love the cheesy goodness; however, the healthier option is to use lighter cheeses. Being mindful to check the sodium content of your cheese. There is so much flavor in pizza you do not need more sodium. Roasted squash or mushrooms could also be used as an alternative. The sauce is also important, make your own homemade sauce or use a lower sodium sauce on your pizza. After looking at ways to make pizza healthier, let us look at the fun part of pizza.



Why not design your own pizza garden? If you have never gardened before, or are looking for a new hobby, why not try gardening. Create your garden around what you like on your pizza. This is also a fun way to be outdoors with children, and possibly a way to encourage kids to eat their veggies. Pizza gardens can be any size or shape, they can be grown in containers. Make sure if you are using containers, they are large enough for the plants to grow. Be sure to fertilize. Remember you need sun at least 6-8 hours a day and have a water source available. Wondering what plants to begin with, let me make a couple of suggestions. Tomatoes are easy to grow and can be used in your sauce as well as certain varieties are great for making "sun-dried" tomatoes. Small cherry tomatoes are great for slicing and baking directly on the pizza. Thyme is an easy-growing groundcover, it smells wonderful and it makes tomato sauce taste richer. Onions impart zesty flavor to pizzas. Peppers are colorful and have different levels of heat. Oregano, Rosemary, and Basil are seasonings to grow and are fragrant. After you have taken care of your garden and it produces it is then time to try out a healthy, pizza recipe.



Serves: 8

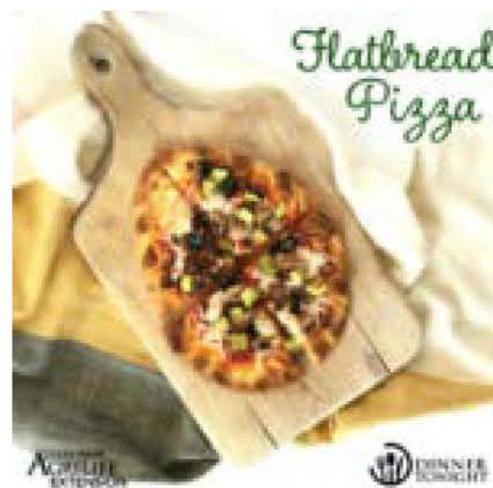
Ingredients:

- 4 naan bread whole wheat
- 8 ounces tomato sauce unsalted
- 2 cups zucchini diced
- 2 cups mushrooms diced
- 1 cup 2% milk mozzarella cheese shredded
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 425°F
- Toss sliced zucchini and mushrooms with olive oil and pepper
- Place vegetables on baking sheet and roast for 20-25 minutes
- Spread tomato sauce evenly on flatbread
- Sprinkle mozzarella over tomato sauce
- Add roasted vegetables
- Bake pizza at 400°F for 8-10 minutes until cheese is bubbly

| Nutrition Facts | |
|---|----------------------|
| 8 servings per container | |
| Serving size | 1/2 flatbread (145g) |
| Amount per serving | |
| Calories | 210 |
| | % Daily Value* |
| Total Fat 7g | 9% |
| Saturated Fat 3g | 15% |
| Trans Fat 0g | |
| Cholesterol 10mg | 3% |
| Sodium 340mg | 15% |
| Total Carbohydrate 28g | 10% |
| Dietary Fiber 1g | 4% |
| Total Sugars 4g | |
| includes 0g Added Sugars | 0% |
| Protein 10g | |
| Vitamin D 0mcg | 0% |
| Calcium 244mg | 20% |
| Iron 1mg | 6% |
| Potassium 346mg | 8% |
| *The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice. | |



FREEZER PLEASER



EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES NEEDED

An Instant Pot or a Crock Pot. I own the 6-Quart 7-in-1 Instant Pot and like it a lot.

To cook my freezer meals, I use the "sauté" and "pressure cook" (manual) buttons, so you should be able to make them in any model of Instant Pot.

64oz Freezer containers or gallon size zip lock bags. I like to freeze my meals in circle containers so they can fit in the Instant Pot frozen. Sixty-four ounce containers (half gallon) are the perfect size to for 6- quart Instant Pots. I bought an 8- pack of these 64oz freezer containers on Amazon. They're re- usable, BPA- free, dishwasher safe, microwave- safe, and perfect for the freezer.



WHATS FOR DINNER?

Do you find yourself always in a pinch for time and asking yourself the same question every evening? The question of the day is "What's for Dinner?" This segment of our newsletter will give you tips and tricks to master those freezer meals and put an end to the question of the day.

Before we begin, I must first give you a little information on how to get started. You know, the basics of prepping your freezer meals.



LABEL YOUR CONTAINERS

Sharpie markers. I label my meals with the name of the recipe and cooking instructions and my writing doesn't smudge at all in the freezer. You can also print off labels that are waterproof for your ziplock bags.



TIPS FOR PREPPING AND COOKING FROZEN INSTANT POT MEALS

Liquid is a must! Fresh meat and vegetables release a lot of liquid when cooking, so I don't add a lot of liquid to my crockpot freezer meals.

HOWEVER, Instant Pots require liquid to achieve pressure and cook the food. (Typically, at least a cup of liquid is needed.) If a recipe doesn't contain one cup of liquid, add 1/2- 1 cup of water or low sodium broth/stock the day of cooking.



Some ingredients need to be added *after* pressure cooking. There are some liquids that may be too thick to help an Instant Pot reach the necessary pressure for cooking (for example, tomato paste, tomato sauce, and canned coconut milk). You can wait until after cooking to mix these ingredients into your meal. Thickening agents like flour and cornstarch should also be added after cooking.

Container size is limited. 64oz containers are only half the size of gallon-sized freezer bags. If you are trying to adapt a crockpot freezer meal and run out of space in the container, add the ingredients that take time to prep (like veggies, measured sauces and spices, and meat). Usually these will all fit in the container, but if the recipe has a LOT of vegetables, like chicken fajitas, you can store what doesn't fit in an extra circle container or plastic freezer bag in the freezer. Save ingredients that can be stored in your pantry to be quickly added the day of cooking (like canned tomato sauce). I recommend labeling your freezer container with any ingredients that need to be added the day of cooking so you don't forget about them.

When I make crockpot freezer meals I layer vegetables at the bottom, sauces and spices in the middle (so they don't get left in the bag), and meat at the top (so it's the first ingredient dumped into the crockpot). I layer my Instant

Pot meals differently because when meat is placed at the bottom of the pot without any liquid it burns. (Don't ask how many times I had to scrub burned food from the bottom of my Instant Pot with a steel wool pad.) I think the best way to layer Instant Pot freezer meals is to put the meat at the bottom of the container (so you can smush it down and conserve space), vegetables and spices in the middle, and sauce at the top so it's dumped into the Instant Pot first.

BURN NOTICE

The "Burn" error. If you ever have an Instant Pot flop that burns and doesn't reach pressure, just open the lid, press the "sauté" button and finish cooking the meal that way. It's the same thing as boiling a meal in a pan on the stovetop



COOKING METHODS FOR FREEZER TO INSTANT OR CROCK POT MEALS

1. Assemble ingredients raw and freeze for up to three months.
2. When ready to cook, place the frozen container in water For a couple of minutes so it's easy to pop out of the container.
3. Dump the container into the Instant Pot and sauté for 5 minutes to create some liquid.
4. Pressure cook for 20 - 60 minutes.
5. Natural release. (I think this makes the meat more tender than a quick release.) Simple, right?!



Boneless chicken breasts (If prepping for IP, cut into 3-4 pieces each) 4- 6 hours on low setting 20 minutes (If you want meat tender enough to shred)

Soup/stew/chili with raw meat cook 6-8 hours on low setting in a crock pot and 35-45 minutes for instant pot.

Pork or beef roast (If prepping for IP, cut into 8 smaller pieces) cook for 6-8 hours o low setting for crock pot and 60 minutes for instant pot.



Eliminating dinner time stress is only one prep away!

NOTE:

Instant Pot cooking times are misleading because they also require time to reach pressure and release pressure, so I like to allot 1- 2 hours to cooking a frozen Instant Pot meal.

CHICKEN TINGA

Yields: 6 servings

Ingredients

Sauce

- 4 cans (14.5oz each) fire roasted diced tomatoes, drained
- 3-4 chipotle peppers in adobe sauce
- 1 small yellow onion, chopped (about 1 cup)
- 8 cloves of garlic
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ⅛ teaspoon cloves
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro



Chicken

- 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts

Materials

- 1 gallon-sized plastic freezer bag

To Freeze and Cook Later

1. Label your freezer bag.
2. Puree sauce ingredients in a blender.
3. Add sauce and chicken to your freezer bag.
4. Remove as much air as possible, seal, and freeze for up to three months.

To Cook

1. Thaw freezer meal overnight in refrigerator or in morning in water.
2. Add contents of freezer bag to slow cooker and cook on "low" setting for 4-6 hours.

Serve with sliced avocado.

REFRIGERATOR & FREEZER STORAGE CHART

These short but safe time limits will help keep refrigerated food 40° F (4° C) from spoiling or becoming dangerous. Since product dates aren't a guide for safe use of a product, consult this chart and follow these tips.

- Purchase the product before "sell-by" or expiration dates.
- Follow handling recommendations on product.
- Keep meat and poultry in its package until just before using.
- If freezing meat and poultry in its original package longer than 2 months, overwrap these packages with airtight heavy-duty foil, plastic wrap, or freezer paper; or place the package inside a plastic bag.

Because freezing 0° F (-18° C) keeps food safe indefinitely, the following recommended storage times are for quality only.

| Product | Refrigerator | Freezer |
|--|--------------|------------------|
| Eggs | | |
| Fresh, in shell | 3 - 5 weeks | Don't freeze |
| Raw yolks, whites | 2 - 4 days | 1 year |
| Hard cooked | 1 week | Don't freeze |
| Liquid pasteurized eggs or egg substitutes, opened | 3 days | Don't freeze |
| unopened | 10 days | 1 year |
| TV Dinners, Frozen Casseroles | | |
| Keep frozen until ready to heat | | 3 - 4 months |
| Deli & Vacuum-Packed Products | | |
| Store-prepared (or homemade) egg, chicken, tuna, ham, macaroni salads | 3 - 5 days | Don't freeze |
| Pre-stuffed pork & lamb chops, chicken breasts stuffed w/dressing | 1 day | Don't freeze |
| Store-cooked convenience meals | 3 - 4 days | Don't freeze |
| Commercial brand vacuum-packed dinners with USDA seal, unopened | 2 weeks | Don't freeze |
| Raw Hamburger, Ground & Stew Meat | | |
| Hamburger & stew meats | 1 - 2 days | 3 - 4 months |
| Ground turkey, veal, pork, lamb | 1 - 2 days | 3 - 4 months |
| Ham, Corned Beef | | |
| Corned beef in pouch with pickling juices | 5 - 7 days | Drained, 1 month |
| Ham, canned, labeled "Keep Refrigerated," unopened | 6 - 9 months | Don't freeze |
| opened | 3 - 5 days | 1 - 2 months |
| Ham, fully cooked, whole | 7 days | 1 - 2 months |
| Ham, fully cooked, half | 3 - 5 days | 1 - 2 months |
| Ham, fully cooked, slices | 3 - 4 days | 1 - 2 months |
| Hot Dogs & Lunch Meats (in freezer wrap) | | |
| Hot dogs, opened package | 1 week | 1 - 2 months |
| unopened package | 2 weeks | 1 - 2 months |
| Lunch meats, opened package | 3 - 5 days | 1 - 2 months |
| unopened package | 2 weeks | 1 - 2 months |

| Product | Refrigerator | Freezer |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Soups & Stews | | |
| Vegetable or meat-added & mixtures of them | 3 - 4 days | 2 - 3 months |
| Bacon & Sausage | | |
| Bacon | 7 days | 1 month |
| Sausage, raw from pork, beef, chicken or turkey | 1 - 2 days | 1 - 2 months |
| Smoked breakfast links, patties | 7 days | 1 - 2 months |
| Fresh Meat (Beef, Veal, Lamb, & Pork) | | |
| Steaks | 3 - 5 days | 6 - 12 months |
| Chops | 3 - 5 days | 4 - 6 months |
| Roasts | 3 - 5 days | 4 - 12 months |
| Variety meats (tongue, kidneys, liver, heart, chitterlings) | 1 - 2 days | 3 - 4 months |
| Meat Leftovers | | |
| Cooked meat & meat dishes | 3 - 4 days | 2 - 3 months |
| Gravy & meat broth | 1 - 2 days | 2 - 3 months |
| Fresh Poultry | | |
| Chicken or turkey, whole | 1 - 2 days | 1 year |
| Chicken or turkey, parts | 1 - 2 days | 9 months |
| Giblets | 1 - 2 days | 3 - 4 months |
| Cooked Poultry, Leftover | | |
| Fried chicken | 3 - 4 days | 4 months |
| Cooked poultry dishes | 3 - 4 days | 4 - 6 months |
| Pieces, plain | 3 - 4 days | 4 months |
| Pieces covered with broth, gravy | 3 - 4 days | 6 months |
| Chicken nuggets, patties | 3 - 4 days | 1 - 3 months |
| Fish & Shellfish | | |
| Lean fish | 1 - 2 days | 6 - 8 months |
| Fatty fish | 1 - 2 days | 2 - 3 months |
| Cooked fish | 3 - 4 days | 4 - 6 months |
| Smoked fish | 14 days | 2 months |
| Fresh shrimp, scallops, crawfish, squid | 1 - 2 days | 3 - 6 months |
| Canned seafood (Pantry, 5 years) | after opening 3 - 4 days | out of can 2 months |



**U.S. FOOD & DRUG
ADMINISTRATION**

Events In Smith County:

**Glass Recreation Center, Tyler Tx
Programs will start in April. Visit the Glass
Recreation Center's Website**

Contact: Amy Shively (903) 590-2980

Walk N' Talk

Get the Facts

Fresh Start to Healthy You

Contact: Claudann Jones

Master of Memory

Health Hot Topics

Thank you Superior Health Plan for
graciously sponsoring our programs!!



FROM



superior
healthplan.

The Extension Service highly values the opinions shared through the TexasSpeaks community assessment. The expectation is that the assessment will take about 10 minutes.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is a statewide network of professional educators, trained volunteers, and county offices. It reaches into every Texas county to address local priority needs and to extend the latest research to the people of Texas. Some of the major efforts are in mitigating drought impacts; conserving water use in homes, landscapes, and production agriculture; improving emergency management; enhancing food security; and protecting human health through education about diet, exercise, and disease prevention and management.

You can provide your input by going to the following tx.ag/texasspeaks

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Smith County Extension office at 903-590-2980 or email us.

Thank you very much for your involvement in this process.



Early Childhood Educator Training Program

2021 MONTHLY Virtual Mini-Conference Series



SAVE THE DATES

January 30th

July 10th

February 20th

August 7th

March 27th

September 18th

April 17th

October 9th

May 15th

November 13th

June 26th

December 4th

TIME: 9AM-12PM Central via Microsoft Teams

COST: \$25 each

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

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