

Low-cholesterol diet inspires free-wheeling cook

"To read your column, one would think that the only things vegetarians eat are eggs and cheese." This criticism came recently not from some faceless, irate reader but from my own father.

What's more, his criticism is justified. My father is on a cholesterol-restricted diet on his doctor's orders and is, consequently, very conscious of the high cholesterol levels in both eggs and cheese.

Although a relatively small percentage of the population is restricting cholesterol on doctor's orders, medical evidence points to a potential danger for all of us in not restricting our intake.

The problem is that eggs and cheese are such easy substitutes for meat. They fit neatly into the visual picture we have of a balanced meal.

Segmented plates are shown on nutrition posters. One wedge holds a green vegetable, one wedge holds a yellow or orange vegetable, one holds a starch, and one, important wedge holds the protein for the meal, usually depicted as red meat, poultry, fish, eggs, or cheese. If we eat a meal that lacks such an easily identified protein, we know we are not getting the protein we need.

A FURTHER "problem" with eggs and cheese is that they are so versatile. Simply put, they are fun to cook.

Depending on one's inclination, these two foods can be whipped up into a five-minute, homey meal or can be as-

sembled into an exotic gourmet repast. A further incentive to the cook lies in the universal appeal of eggs and cheese.

From the scrambled eggs served the toddler to the grilled cheese and pizza enjoyed by the school child to the happy marriage of both foods in the quiche, eggs and cheese enjoy a popularity probably unequalled by any other foods.

A final temptation to over use cheese and eggs is economic. Shell fish are also rich in cholesterol, but few of us have budgets that permit over-indulgence in shrimp, lobster, or crab. Cheese and eggs, in contrast, are reasonably priced, making affordable in dollars what is not affordable in terms of health.

Despite the tempting factors, it is dangerous to allow cholesterol-rich foods to become the backbone of any diet. Although enjoyable as occasional treats, their use should be carefully limited.

In the case of a vegetarian diet, this requires re-education and a retraining of eating habits. The protein portion of a meal should be viewed, not as being provided by a single source, but by a combination of foods. Foods we do not normally think of as protein sources often do contain incomplete proteins. Proper combinations of these foods result in the formation of complete, usable proteins.

I will discuss these combinations in a future column.



A Question of Taste

By Hilary Keating Callaghan

IT IS ALSO helpful to realize that we do not require huge amounts of protein and that, in fact, most Americans consume far more protein than their bodies need.

Thus, it is not necessarily harmful to eat some meals that lack protein but which are otherwise nutritious. My father, for example, will breakfast on Gazpacho during the summer — unorthodox, perhaps, but healthy.

He makes a superb Gazpacho in large batches. If you stop in at my parents' home in the summer, he is likely to offer you a bowl of this delicious cold soup in the same way that someone else might offer you a cold drink.

The recipe he uses is from the Pontchartrain Wine Cellars and I am passing it along for anyone who might wish to try it, if not for breakfast then for a light summer lunch or a delightful first course at dinner.

At other times, my father fixes a turkey-bean-egg combination for a low-cholesterol breakfast. He is a creative, free-wheeling cook, and the ingredients in this dish vary from day to day, de-

pending on his mood, the season of the year, and what left-overs happen to be in the refrigerator on a given morning. This versatile dish can be served hot, as a casserole, in winter or cold, as a salad, in summer.

IF YOU PREFER your first meal of the day to be more conventional, you might want to try this for lunch or dinner.

Vegetarians might try substituting frozen tofu for the turkey. Simply freeze the desired amount of tofu for several days. Thaw the tofu, squeeze out any excess liquid and crumble the dry curd. The texture will be similar to that of ground meat.

The final recipe is one I enjoy. It is extremely tasty, very inexpensive, simple to prepare, and low in cholesterol.

The long cooking time makes this a perfect meal for those days when you must be out of the house just before dinner, running errands or attending Little League games, and need a good,

hearty meal ready to go on the table when you walk back in the door.

GAZPACHO

3 1/4 lb. tomatoes (about 12)
1/2 cup peanut oil
1/2 cup white vinegar
2 tsp. sugar
1 tsp. black pepper
1 tsp. paprika
1 Tbsp. salt
1/2 tsp. MSG (optional)
1/2 cucumber, peeled and chopped
1/2 green pepper, seeded and chopped
1/2 onion, chopped
1 1/2 tsp. chopped garlic
1 hard-boiled egg, sliced (optional)
Pinch caraway seed

Chop tomatoes. Stir in oil and vinegar. Mix well. Add sugar, black pepper, paprika, salt, and MSG. Stir in cucumber, green pepper, onion, garlic, egg, and caraway. Chill. Garnish with croutons. Makes 8 to 10 servings.

BREAKFAST BEANS

3/4 cup cooked rice
1/2 cup finely diced cooked turkey or 4 oz. tofu, diced
1/4 cup canned kidney beans, drained, or baked beans
1/4 small tomato, diced
2 tsp. diced red onion
2 tsp. diced green pepper
2 tsp. diced celery

1 tsp. taco sauce
Salt to taste
1/2 tsp. chili powder (optional)
3 or 4 dashes tabasco sauce (optional)

Combine all ingredients. Serve hot or cold. Makes 1 serving.

CREOLE PINTO BEANS

1 1/2 cups dried pinto beans
1 can (28 oz.) tomatoes, cut up
1 1/2 cups chopped onion
1 1/2 cups green pepper
2 small cloves garlic, crushed
1 bay leaf
2 1/4 tsp. salt
3/4 tsp. thyme
1/4 tsp. pepper
4 1/2 cups hot cooked rice

In large saucepan, cover beans with water and soak overnight or bring to a boil, cook 2 minutes, remove from heat, cover and let stand one hour. Add remaining ingredients, except rice. If necessary, add water to cover. Bring to a boil, cover, and simmer 1 1/2 to 2 hours or until beans are tender, adding more water if necessary. Remove bay leaf. Serve over rice. Makes 6 servings. Serve with a mixed green salad.

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Byrd's Kitchen

by Vivian Byrd

The day the oven went out

The situation felt like it had dragged on for months, though it actually lasted a few weeks. Two days before a big dinner at my house, the oven went haywire. Setting the dial at 350 degrees sometimes resulted in a 500-degree temperature. The next time it might creep up to 200 degrees.

Obviously, the thermostat was out. No problem, right? Just call a repairman. Meanwhile, we could use that fancy toaster oven that does everything but arrange flowers for a dinner table centerpiece.

Need 1 tell you the repairman was not sure he could get parts for that particular model? Or about the time it took?

Maybe it happens to everyone like this, and only seems to me that it just happens to me.

And then the clincher. While waiting for the part to come in (elusive things, thermostats), that fancy toaster oven, still under warranty, died. Croaked. Went out without even a sigh.

No last gasp of the timer light trying to make it through one more piece of toast. No flickering coils. Nothing.

Two-and-a-half weeks, they said; it had to go back to the manufacturer. At three weeks, I called. And at four weeks. Five weeks minus one day, we brought it home again.

By then, the new thermostat was in and working perfectly.

DURING THOSE weeks we cooked on the stove-top, in the electric frypan and on the gas grill, options which allowed for a variety of meals.

The thing we missed the most was toast. As soon as the oven was repaired, we all developed overpowering cravings for crispy, golden slices of bread.

All along, breakfast had been the one meal that, without baking capability, was unsatisfying. Except for weekends when there was more time for goodies such as the from-scratch pancakes we discovered. These were unanimously pronounced "perfect."

Also during this time, at an outdoor fair, we discovered funnel cakes. This is a delightful Pennsylvania Dutch invention, a pancake-like batter that is spiraled into a skillet of hot oil and fried briefly. When done, it is sprinkled with confectioners' sugar and eaten warm. We also tried them with syrup and while it was quite tasty, we preferred the traditional confectioners' sugar version. Making them is fun, more like play than work.

SATURDAY'S PERFECT PANCAKES
2 eggs
2 tbsp. melted margarine or butter

- 2 cups batter/milk
- 2 cups flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 4 tsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt

Preheat the grill or an electric frypan to 400 degrees. Lightly grease the pan with oil, using a basting brush. Using an electric mixer, beat the eggs, shortening and milk in a large bowl until well-blended. Add the remaining ingredients and continue beating until mixed. Depending on the size pancakes you wish to make, spoon or pour the batter onto the grill. Turn the pancakes when bubbles cover the top and the edges begin to look slightly browned. Makes about 20 three-inch pancakes.

- ### FUNNEL CAKES
- Vegetable oil for deep frying
 - 2 cups unsifted flour
 - 1 tsp. sugar
 - 1 tsp. double-acting baking powder
 - 1/2 tsp. salt
 - 2 eggs, lightly beaten
 - 1 to 1 1/4 cups milk

Pour oil into a heavy 12- to 14-inch skillet to a depth of about 1 1/2 to 2 inches and heat until the oil is very hot but not smoking.

Combine the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt and sift together into a deep bowl. Make a well in the center and pour in the eggs and 1 cup of the milk. Gradually mix the dry ingredients into the liquid until the batter is smooth.

To make the cakes, pour 1/4 cup of batter into a funnel with a tip opening approximately 1/2 inch in diameter. Keep the spout closed and control the flow of batter with the forefinger of your other hand. Drizzle the batter directly into the hot oil, moving the funnel in a circle to build a snail-like coil of 3 or 4 rings about 8 inches in diameter. Drizzle two or three lines of batter across the spiral (somewhat like a wagon wheel) so it cooks in one piece. Deep-fry for about 2 minutes on each side, turning once with a slotted spatula. Remove to paper towels and sprinkle with confectioners' sugar or serve warm with molasses or maple syrup. Batter makes about 12 cakes.

For your copy of "10 Fabulous Desserts," send \$1.50 and a stamped, self-addressed business size envelope to Vivian Byrd, P.O. Box 1024, Birmingham 48012. Allow four weeks for delivery.

Correspondence also should be directed to the above address.

Curried Beef and Pineapple inspired by Indian cuisine

Curried Beef and Pineapple is a speedy skillet dinner inspired by East Indian cookery. It features ground beef, rice and the refreshing flavor of pineapple.

Curry powder and ginger combine to add flavor appeal in the recipe which can be put together in minutes. Family preferences should be used as guide to the amount of curry powder to use.

Since the beef in this recipe is browned and the drippings poured off, any ground beef can be used.

CURRIED BEEF AND PINEAPPLE
1 lb. ground beef
1 medium onion, halved lengthwise and sliced

- 2 tsp. cornstarch
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 to 2 tsp. curry powder
- 1/2 tsp. ginger
- 1 can (8 ounces) pineapple chunks in juice
- 2 cups hot cooked rice

Brown ground beef and onion in a large frying pan; pour off drippings. Combine cornstarch, salt, curry powder and ginger; sprinkle over meat and stir. Drain pineapple into one-cup measure. Add enough water to the juice to make 3/4 cup liquid. Stir pineapple liquid and pineapple chunks into meat mixture. Cook slowly 5 to 6 minutes until thickened. Fold hot rice into meat mixture. Makes four servings.

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