

Ann's vegetable dip is a summer stand-by

The ambience of summer brings with it a relaxed style of eating. Lighter meals are supplemented by snacks which, ideally, should help contribute to the glow of good health we associate with summer. Such snacks need not be elaborate. In fact, fresh foods are most nutritious in their natural state so that a good supply of fresh fruits and vegetables and perhaps some seeds and unshelled nuts are all the between-meal foods you need to keep on hand.

What should be avoided, of course, are highly sugared, salted, or refined foods. Unhealthy at any time, these foods are particularly undesirable in the warm months when outdoor activities make extra demands on the body and when a particular premium is placed on a pleasing physical appearance.

Energy and coordination, glowing skin and clear eyes, shining hair and beautiful teeth all depend on what goes into the body.

ALTHOUGH a great deal has been written about the damage done to the body by excess sugar, salt, and refined foods, less has been written about two additional dietary pitfalls which are present particularly in summer snacks.

The first, surprisingly, is the danger of excess protein. In a culture obsessed with protein, it is often assumed that the more protein we consume, the better. Consequently, high protein snacks

such as cheese, nuts, or lunch-meats are considered ideal. Unless meal-time protein intake is inadequate, however, such snacks are not only unnecessary, they are nutritionally negative. An excess of protein in the body actually inhibits the absorption of calcium, which is essential to strong bones and teeth.

A similar imbalance is created by excess consumption of phosphoric acid, an element found in many soft-drinks. The result is a calcium-to-phosphorus imbalance, causing the calcium to be inadequately absorbed by the body. Water, fruit juice, or milk would be better choices for summer beverages.

AGAIN, THE rule of thumb for summer eating or drinking is the fresher and more natural the food, the better.

There are times, however, when, for variety, we wish to tamper with what nature provides. For these times, I have a few suggestions for foods to enjoy pool-side, deck-side, pre-game, post-game or wherever and whenever the urge for a snack strikes.

My first suggestion is for a slightly unconventional version of the summer stand-by, vegetables and dip.

The first time I encountered this dip it was served by my sister-in-law, Ann, a fine cook who enjoys experimenting with food. What makes this dip interesting is watching the connotations of people who, rather than engaging in decorous "dipping," attempt to pile as



A Question of Taste

By Hilary Keating Callaghan

much as possible of this delicious dip onto slender stalks of vegetables.

While not the Indy 500, this can make for rather breath-taking spectator sport, especially when these maneuvers are performed indoors over a light carpet. A nutritional bonus of this dip is its high spinach content, as opposed to most vegetable dips which are almost entirely high-calorie, high cholesterol sour cream or mayonnaise.

ANOTHER delicious snack which can be enjoyed with a clear conscience are Sunflower Cheese Crisps. Crunchy and pleasant-tasting, they are a healthy alternative to commercial crackers which are frequently composed of empty calories — white flour, sugar, salt, and preservatives.

Lacking preservatives, Sunflower Cheese Crisps might not last as long as commercial crackers but they are so good you are not likely to get a chance to discover the limit of their shelf life. Sealed in an air-tight tin or plastic container, they should keep about a week.

They cottage cheese gives the crackers a distinctive, tangy flavor without giving any other hint of its own presence.

A final suggestion, for a more structured snack, is James Beard's Composed Salad. Consisting of a variety of marinated fresh vegetables arranged pinwheel fashion, this is an especially appealing dish visually. Any leftovers can be refrigerated, each vegetable in a separate container, and enjoyed any time of the day or night with the aid of a few toothpicks.

ANN'S VEGETABLE DIP

2 10-oz. pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well-drained
1/2 to 3/4 cup chopped green onion
1 cup chopped fresh parsley
1 cup mayonnaise
1 milk
1 round loaf bread (unsliced)

Stir together spinach, green onion, parsley and mayonnaise. Add a small amount of milk, if necessary, to make

the mixture a proper "dipping" consistency. Hollow out the bread loaf and fill the shell with the spinach dip. The interior of the loaf may be cubed and used for dipping along with an assortment of fresh vegetables.

SUNFLOWER CHEESE CRISPS

1 cup unbleached flour
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 cup butter or margarine
1 cup small-curd cottage cheese
1/4 cup sunflower seeds

In mixer bowl stir together flour and salt. Cut in butter or margarine with a pastry blender until mixture resembles fine crumbs. Beat in cottage cheese with an electric mixer until smooth. Stir in sunflower seeds. Divide dough in half. Roll half of dough out on lightly floured surface to a 16x12-inch rectangle. Cut into 2-inch squares. Prick each square several times with a fork. Place on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 325 for 15-20 minutes or until lightly browned. Repeat with the second half of the dough. Makes 8 dozen crackers.

COMPOSED SALAD

2 bunches young beets
Vinaigrette Sauce (recipe follows)
3 medium-size sweet red peppers
1 lb. green beans
1/4 tsp. tarragon
1 lb. small mushrooms
2 garlic cloves, minced

1 small red onion, sliced
1 small white onion, sliced
1 large head Romaine lettuce

Cook beets until tender. Cut into 1/2-inch slices. Spoon 1/4 c. Vinaigrette Sauce over; toss gently. Refrigerate.

Roast peppers under broiler until charred and blistered. Place in brown paper bag and fold down to enclose them; cook, peel, halve, seed and cut into strips. Refrigerate.

Cook beans, covered, just until crisp-tender, about 8 minutes. Add 1/4 cup Vinaigrette Sauce and the tarragon; refrigerate.

Clean mushrooms. Place in a medium bowl with the garlic; add 1/4 cup Vinaigrette Sauce. Refrigerate.

To assemble: Arrange greens on a large platter. Drain vegetables. Arrange over greens. Pass additional Vinaigrette Sauce. Makes 8 servings.

VINAIGRETTE SAUCE

1 1/2 cups olive or vegetable oil
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
1 tsp. coarse salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

Combine all ingredients in a jar. Shake well. The Composed Salad may also include raw peas, hard-cooked eggs, cherry tomatoes, sliced cucumbers, grated raw turnip and carrot and Brussels sprouts, parboiled and halved.

Vichyssoise for summer



Byrd's Kitchen

by Vivian Byrd

Texas, I am told, drink gallons of steaming coffee during the blistering hot summers their state endures. Initially, that sounds unwise, but the reason for the practice is that the hot liquid causes sweating, which is the body's cooling system.

Smart cookies, those Texans.

Similarly, in southern areas of India, curries are generally much hotter than in northern areas. The hot peppers that put the kick in curry also cause the body to perspire more freely, and again, heat results in cooling.

Fortunately, while Michigan weather has its peculiarities, tropical temperatures are not usually involved. A cold beer or iced tea usually provides comfort on the hottest days.

Another, and very ele-

gant way to cool your body, is to enjoy a bowl of vichyssoise, a chilled soup made with leeks, potatoes and cream. This soup was created by Louis Diat, a Frenchman who was chef de cuisine at New York's Ritz-Carlton Hotel for 41 years, beginning in 1910.

THE HOTEL had a Japanese roof garden, and Diat, looking for cooling dishes to serve there during the hot summer months, remembered the leek and potato soup his mother had made when he was young. His family had eaten it cooled with milk.

He then created a version that used a combination of milk and cream in the dish he called creme vichyssoise. It became his most famous creation.

Below is Diat's recipe. However, where it calls for crushing and rubbing

through a fine sieve, modern cooks have the advantage of using a blender or food processor, conveniences not then available to Diat. The leeks should be split lengthwise and washed carefully as dirt sometimes gets imbedded between layers of this vegetable. Also, white pepper can be added for a spicier soup, though it should be done with a light hand as white pepper, generally less pungent than black pepper, grows slightly hotter when added to food that is then chilled.

VICHYSOISE

4 leeks, white part only
1 medium onion
2 ounces sweet butter
5 medium potatoes
1 quart water or chicken broth
1 tsp. salt
2 cups medium cream
1 cup heavy cream

SENEGALISE

To the above recipe, add 1 teaspoon curry powder at the stage when the ingredients are in the blender or food processor. The amount of curry can be varied to suit your taste.

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