

Serve guests special foods that are low in fat

See related story on Taste front. Recipes from Floren Halpern of Amaryllis Catering & Party Planning in Birmingham.

SHRIMP ETOUFFEE

- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 green onions, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup celery, finely chopped
- 1 green pepper, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1 3/4 cups water
- 1 (10 1/2 ounces) can tomato puree
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

- 4 to 5 drops tabasco sauce
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed dried thyme
- 3 cups cleaned raw medium shrimp (or approximately 1 (12 ounce bag) frozen medium shrimp, thaw and drain)
- Sauteed, sliced fresh mushrooms (optional)
- 3 to 4 cups hot cooked rice or angel hair pasta

In a large non-stick skillet or saucpan, saute onions, garlic, celery and green pepper in olive oil until tender. Do not brown. Add flour, stir to make a smooth paste; cook 1 or 2 minutes. Add water, tomato

puree, bay leaves, Worcestershire, tabasco sauce and other seasonings. Simmer uncovered over low heat, stirring until sauce thickens to desired consistency. May be made ahead to this point. Reheat before proceeding.

Add raw shrimp and cook 15 minutes over low heat, stirring occasionally.

Serve over hot cooked rice or pasta. Sprinkle with sauteed mushrooms if desired. Serves 6 to 8.

BLUEBERRY-GINGER VINAIGRETTE

- 1 cup blueberry preserves or non-sugar fruit spread
- 1/4 cup ginger marmalade

- 1/2 cup crushed pineapple in its own juice
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup cayenne pepper
- 1 to 2 tablespoons canola oil
- Whisk ingredients together. Add oil, a teaspoon at a time, last. Whisk together.

LENTIL RICE SALAD

- 1 large carrot, shredded
- 3 scallions, chopped
- 1/2 cup parsley, chopped
- 1/4 cup dried cherries
- 1 cup lentils
- 1/2 cup long grain rice
- 1/2 cup wild rice
- Dressing

- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup dry onion
- 1/4 cup olive oil

Cook lentils, long grain rice and wild rice according to package directions. Drain well. Add carrots, scallions, parsley and dried cherries. Whisk together dressing ingredients to make dressing. Mix rice, vegetables, and cherry mixture with dressing. Chill. Serves 6 to 8.

PINEAPPLE TROPICALE

- 1 fresh pineapple peeled, cored and cut into bite-size chunks

- 1 ripe banana, sliced
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- Frozen vanilla yogurt
- Fresh raspberries (optional)

Mix fruit with brown sugar and spices in a bowl. Spread in a casserole dish. Bake at 350 degrees for about 20 minutes or until fruit is caramelized. Refrigerate until fruit is cool. To make parfaits, layer fruit with frozen vanilla yogurt in parfait glass. Freeze 1 to 2 hours before serving. Remove from freezer 15 minutes before serving, and sprinkle with fresh raspberries if desired. Serves 4 to 6.

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For dessert, she served an out of this world parfait of baked fresh pineapple and bananas layered with frozen vanilla yogurt, and sprinkled fresh raspberries of top.

Halpern decorated her table with fresh flowers and curls of pink and yellow ribbon. "It's hard to believe something as simple as ribbon could add so much to a table, but it did.

"I've always loved to entertain and set the table," said Halpern who has worn many hats including English teacher, insurance agent, and stock broker before

going into the catering business four years ago. She's been at her Birmingham location since June, and caters parties for 10 to over 400 with the help of her "fabulous staff."

"Do what reflects the season," she said. When you're entertaining in the winter make hot spiced wine, cider or soup. The fragrance will say welcome in a way words can't. Serve guests soup in mugs as a first course in the living room. Be sure to pass around a basket filled with slices of good bread.

Everyone still loves desserts. Turn your brownies into precious morsels by cutting out little hearts with a small cookie cutter. "It's like a reward for being good," said Halpern. "It's OK if you do it in small bites."

Guests who don't want dessert will appreciate specialty coffees and interesting teas. "Put a little whipped cream in a bowl and dust it with cocoa and cinnamon. It's beautiful, and low in calories because you don't use very much," said Halpern.

Other dessert ideas she shared were to sautee apple slices in a little hot fudge or caramel sauce and layer apples with frozen vanilla yogurt. Baked fresh pineapple and poached pears served with raspberries are also elegant. Simmer oranges with an orange flavored liqueur and serve in a crystal bowl, sprinkle pomegranate seeds on top for color.

"Whatever you do, try to do the best you can. Buy the best ingredients, fresh colorful produce — crisp, green lettuce, red onion. Serve foods that are beautiful to look at. Use fruits and vegetables

of the season, each has its own bounty.

"Don't abandon your favorite recipes, but look for ways to reduce the fat," said Halpern. "The original recipe for Shrimp Etouffee had 1/4 cup of butter, we reduced it to one tablespoon."

Gale Cox, Wellness Coordinator for Botsford Hospital in Farmington, shares these low-fat entertaining tips:

- Offer alcohol free drinks, which are also lower in calories.
- Use diet pop in punch, and frozen fruit for decoration.
- Try to serve fruit and vegetables for appetizers. Make fruit kebabs with grilled pineapple.
- For main courses stick to lean beef, boneless, skinless chicken breast, fish and pasta. Use fresh spices, it will add a lot of flavor.

Family from page 1B

noodles are a good substitute. There is no cholesterol and the fat is reduced to 2 grams per 4 ounces.

The sour cream can be substituted in a variety of ways. I used Land O'Lakes fat-free sour cream. You could also use 2 cups of "lite" sour cream and one cup of non-fat. This can be adjusted to your personal preference.

To reduce the sodium, use garlic powder instead of garlic salt and reduced sodium Worcestershire sauce. I suggest starting with 3 tablespoons of Worcestershire sauce and adding the extra if you wish. I found 6 tablespoons to be a little strong myself, but Britcher says that's what gives it a nice "kick." As always, a good non-stick pan will greatly reduce

the amount of fat because you can brown and saute without butter.

but your heart will love it from the start!

Keep in mind that when you substitute ingredients in any recipe the flavor will always change. This applies to "high fat" or "low fat" products. Be sure to keep an open mind when trying new low-fat products or recipes. Your taste buds might need time to adjust,

Laura Letobar of Livonia publishes "Laura's Fat Free Kitchen" newsletter. For a complimentary issue, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to H.W. Publications, P.O. Box 9324, Livonia 48161-1324. Subscription price is \$12 a year.

How to toast nuts

Most nuts taste rich and good fresh out of the shell. But, it's toasting that brings out their fullest flavor.

Toasting nuts is easy, according to Betty Crocker. Most importantly, watch them carefully because the time between prime toasting and scorching is short. These methods work for any type of nut.

■ Skillet method: Sprinkle nuts in an ungreased, heavy skillet. Cook over medium heat 5 to 7 minutes, stirring frequently, until nuts begin to

brown. Then, stir constantly until nuts are golden brown.

■ Oven method: Spread nuts in a shallow ungreased pan and bake, uncovered, in a 350 degree F. oven for 6 to 10 minutes, stirring frequently, until light brown.

■ Microwave method: Mix softened margarine or butter and nuts in microwaveable pie plate and microwave on high, stirring every 30 seconds, until light brown. One teaspoon margarine and 1/2 cup nuts will take 2 1/2 to 3 minutes.



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