

Lo mein makes for good nutrition

Meals should be varied, interesting and inviting. And, as we observe National Nutrition Month in March, it's important to remember to eat various vegetables, fruits, grains and legumes and remember the important nutritional considerations when eating.

The American Institute for Cancer Research advises eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day, but it also recommends that those servings include a variety of types to be sure you're getting the full range of important nutrients.

Half the vegetables Americans consume consists of fresh or frozen potatoes, onions and tomato-based products such as ketchup and spaghetti sauce, even though markets are filled with aisles of fresh produce. Such a limited variety means missing out on many of the beneficial phytochemicals needed to protect your health.

Each type of fruit and vegetable — as well as grain — has its own valuable phytochemicals that work together with other plant compounds to stave off cancer and other chronic diseases.

It's not hard to diversify your eating routine. By simply changing your route through the market, you will discover new varieties of foods to integrate into your diet. The full range of colors in produce — dark green, orange, yellow and red — should be included to ensure that a full range of vitamins and phytochemicals are part of your diet. Don't limit yourself to carrots and beans.

Consider leafy greens, sweet potatoes, red bell peppers and fresh tomatoes. Substitute whole wheat or pumpernickel bread for refined white, brown rice for white, and expand your range of whole grains with oats, rye, barley, bulgur and quinoa.

Today's supermarkets present a chance to broaden the variety of foods in our diet. Egg noodles made of wheat are nutritious, but consider those made from quinoa and corn, and the many Asian versions that use buckwheat, soy or mung beans, green tea, potato and rice.

This lo mein noodle dish includes tofu that is well marinated, a technique that transforms the taste of this highly nutritious, protein-packed food.

VEGETABLE LO MEIN

3/4-1 pound firm (or extra firm) tofu
2-3 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
1/3 cup unsweetened pineapple or orange juice
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1 teaspoon sugar
1/4 pound Chinese noodles (see note)
1 teaspoon Chinese sesame oil
2 teaspoon peanut or canola oil
3-6 large cloves garlic (to taste), minced
2 scallions (with tops), chopped
1 1/4 teaspoon crushed peppercorns (to taste)
1 teaspoon fresh ginger, minced
1/4 cup low-sodium beef or vegetable broth
4 cups chopped fresh mixed vegetables (broccoli, celery, spinach, baby corn, bamboo shoots)

Cut tofu into 1-inch cubes. In a bowl blend soy sauce, juice, cornstarch and sugar. Add tofu and stir to coat evenly.

Refrigerate covered, 30 minutes or overnight.

Cook noodles according to package directions. Drain immediately. Toss with 1 teaspoon sesame oil, cover and set aside.

(Noodles may be refrigerated up to one day.)

When ready to cook lo mein, heat wok or large heavy skillet over high heat. Add the 2 teaspoons oil, swirling to coat pan, and heat oil until very hot. Add garlic, scallions, peppercorns and ginger. Reduce heat to medium high and cook about 10 seconds, stirring constantly. Add tofu with its marinade and bouillon. Continue cooking, stirring, about one minute. Add vegetables and stir in quick, tossing motions, about 45 seconds. Add noodles and heat through, stirring constantly.

Recipe courtesy of the American Institute for Cancer Research.



AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CANCER RESEARCH

Vegetable lo mein: This lo mein noodle dish includes tofu that is well marinated, a technique that transforms the taste of this highly nutritious, protein-packed food. It is flavored with soy sauce, ginger, garlic, broccoli, celery and bamboo shoots.

Chinese chicken dish combines sweet and sour

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The preparation time for this dish of Lemon Chicken is about 16 minutes. Allow another 15 minutes for cooking, and you'll have dinner on the table in about half an hour.

Just follow Martin Yan's directions in "Chinese Cooking for Dummies" (IDG Books, \$19.99 paperback). This is a Cantonese classic, Yan writes, a citrusy treatment of chicken that combines sweet and sour flavors with savory meat.

LEMON CHICKEN

1/3 cup chicken broth
1/3 cup fresh lemon juice

1/2 teaspoon dark soy sauce
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
2 teaspoons lemon zest

1 egg
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon white pepper

3/4 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, butterflied

1/4 cup cornstarch
1/3 cup cooking oil

1-1/2 teaspoons cornstarch dissolved in 1 tablespoon water
1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds (see note)

Make a sauce by combining the

chicken broth, lemon juice, soy sauce, brown sugar and lemon zest in a small saucepan; set aside.

In a bowl, beat the egg lightly with the salt and white pepper.

Dredge the chicken breasts with the cornstarch; dip into the egg batter and dredge in the cornstarch again. Let chicken pieces stand for 5 minutes. Just before cooking, shake off the excess cornstarch.

In a wok, heat the oil until hot. Pan-fry the chicken, a couple of pieces at a time, turning occasionally, until golden-brown, about 3 minutes on each side. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on

paper towels.

Bring the sauce to a boil over medium heat; add the cornstarch solution and cook, stirring, until the sauce boils and thickens.

Cut the chicken across the grain into 1/2-inch slices. Place the chicken on a serving plate. Pour the sauce on top and sprinkle with the sesame seeds. Makes 4 servings.

Note: To toast sesame seeds, place seeds in a small, dry pan and cook over low heat, swirling the pan. When the seeds look slightly colored after 3 to 4 minutes, remove them from the heat.

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CALENDAR

Send items for Taste calendar at least two weeks in advance of event to Ken Abramczyk, Taste Editor, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

LEARN ABOUT COOKING

Here are Continuing Education classes at Schoolcraft College in Livonia for the winter semester:

■ Herb-mania, 6-9 p.m., Thursday, March 22;
■ The Incredible Edible Mushroom, 6-9 p.m., Tuesday, April 3;
■ European Bread Making (two weeks), 6-10 p.m., Thursday, April 6 and 12;

■ Outdoor Grilling & Entertaining, 5-10 p.m., Thursday and Friday, April 26 and 27;

■ Four Course Meals to Go (one day only but offered on different dates), 6-10 p.m., Monday, March 19 and March 26.

An Italian wine class is scheduled for 5-7 p.m. for five weeks beginning Monday, April 2. Anyone interested in more information regarding these classes can call Schoolcraft College Continuing Education at (734) 482-4448.

M-FIT CLASSES

Don't let the cold, harsh days of winter drag you down. The M-Fit Culinary team of the M-Fit Community Health Promotion Division offers cooking classes, such as Oodles of Noodles,

March 21, at the East Ann Arbor Health Center Demonstration Kitchen, 4260 Plymouth Road, Ann Arbor.

Individual class fees are \$30, \$60 for a two-person fee, and \$80 for a series of three classes.

Nutrition education class fees are \$20. Pre-registration is required. Register online at www.mfitnutrition.com. Call Nicole Goyarts at (734) 976-4387, Ext. 236 to register by phone.

Other classes offered from 6-8 p.m. Wednesdays, unless otherwise indicated, include: Going Solo for One (or Two), March 28. Also offered are Warm up to Cajun Cuisine, April 4; Glorious Grains, April 11; To Tell the Truth (About Weight Loss Plants and Fat Diet), 6-7:30 p.m., April 26; Sharpen Up Your Knife Skills, May 8; Magnificent Marinades, May 16, and in the Herb Garden, May 23.

DAILY DEMONSTRATIONS

Busch's Food Store offers daily cooking demonstrations, recipes and cooking tips between 4 and 7 p.m. at the following locations: Grand River and Drake in Farmington Hills, Five Mile and Sheldon in Plymouth Township and Six Mile and Newburgh in Livonia.

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