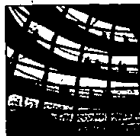


Taste

WINE • RECIPES • SPECIALTIES



Memorable trip

Spectacular views, historic places, are highlights of cruise in Germany. B8

www.observerandeccentric.com

Side dish

Chili cook-off

Plymouth is gearing up for the seventh annual Brooks' Great Lakes Regional Chili Cook-off, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 13, at Kellogg Park in downtown Plymouth. The red and green chili and salsa competition will feature 50-60 cooks vying for the top spot.

Cash prizes and trophies will be awarded. The first place chili and salsa winners advance to Reno, Nevada to compete in the World Chili and Salsa Championships. An event highlight is a ride-in motorcycle bike show that anyone can enter.

There are 15 different classes to compete in, and even the ugliest bike will win a prize.

Sponsored by Motor City Harley Davidson of Farmington Hills, the show is expected to draw 3,000 bikers.

Registration is 10:30 a.m. to noon, \$5 per entry, on Oct. 13. Trophies will be awarded. Bobby Lewis & the Cracker Jack Band supply the beat, and local restaurants will take the Restaurant Chili Challenge.

For \$3 a bowl you can sample and vote for your favorite local chili. At 3 p.m. samples of competition chili will be offered for \$1 per sample.

Chili and salsa applications are being accepted until Oct. 1. For more information, call Annette Horn at Native West, (734) 455-8838.

Healthy tip
Walden Farms Balsamic Vinaigrette is fat free, sugar free, and has zero calories. It's this week's healthy shopping tip from Gail Posner, a registered dietitian at Healthy Ways Nutrition Counseling in West Bloomfield.



"This dressing is delicious on salads, but you can also use it to marinate chicken, or on grilled or roasted vegetables," said Posner. "The salad dressing is sweetened with sucralose (a new artificial sweetener)."

Safety reports on sucralose look promising. Manufacturers are slowly replacing the sweetener aspartame with sucralose in their products.

For more information about the dressing, and other calorie free products from Walden Farms, visit www.waldenfarms.com. To learn more about Healthy Ways Nutrition Counseling, call (248) 855-4558.

Putting some kick in the kids' school lunch



PHOTOS BY JOHN STORZANO | OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC

Center left, Natalie Bloom, 7, munches on fresh fruit and friend Hanna Kohn, also 7, feasts on carrots. Far left, Brianna Kohn samples an organic chicken grape salad. The girls sampled different foods at Whole Foods to test what they'd like in their school lunches.

Kids tell us what foods they'll keep or toss

BY LANA MINI
STAFF WRITER

Parents want their kids to eat healthy foods, but kids just want to have fun. Balancing nutrition with the picky palates of children can be a tough task, any parent knows.

Fourteen percent of American kids are overweight, according to the Center for Disease Control, and the U.S. Surgeon General calls childhood obesity an epidemic. Diets must change, starting with lunch.

So what's a parent to feed their child?

"The key to getting kids to eat well is to give them typical things that they want — like the cookies or chips — but healthier ones," said Maryann Wesselman, a parent, and manager of Whole Foods Market in Ann Arbor.

Cookies can contain fruit juice as a sweetener, rather than sugar. Chips can be baked rather than fried. With that, children can feel like their food is normal.

School time is here, of course,



Amy Crandall and her kids Evan, 3 months, and Anna, 3 years old, shop together for healthy snacks.

and we found kids busy gazing at the array of new, brightly-colored packaged food at Whole Foods Market.

The big hits already this year:

Squeezable foods in tubes. Yogurt that kids ooze into their mouths. Squeezable apple sauce and puddings.

"Kids want food that's fun and parents want foods that are healthy," said Joan Gatsalski, the regional buyer for Whole Foods markets.

"Salads are also very popular among middle school girls," said Wesselman, the mother of teenage daughters. "They emulate the lunches of high school girls who bring homemade salads to school."

Just don't let lunch items become repetitive, Wesselman said.

Brianna Kohn's mom can satisfy her daughter's wants of prepackaged "lunchies" with "The Good Lunch" by Yves natural foods which consists of vegetarian "meat" slices that look and taste like turkey, cookies sweetened with fruit juice rather than sugar and soy-based cheese.

Or she can choose meats that are organic and nitrate-free.

PLEASE SEE LUNCH, B2

KEEP IT FRESH

The trendiest food is squeezable — yogurt, pudding or applesauce. Kids also like fruit roll-ups and chocolate milk.

Here are some ideas to bag for lunch:

- Add raspberries, raisins or chopped dates to peanut or soy nut butter sandwiches
- Pack 100 percent fruit juice boxes like grapefruit, grape, orange or apple. For an extra protein boost, add a box of chocolate soy milk.
- Freeze grapes and watermelon for a cold, sweet treat
- Mac n-cheese can be kept warm in a thermos. Lactose-intolerant kids can try Mac-n-Cheese made from soy or rice cheeses found at natural foods stores.
- Add Mandarin oranges, nuts or organic strawberries to dark green salads for some pizzazz
- Pack humus as a dip for carrots, cucumber slices and cherry tomatoes.
- Spread cream cheese on cucumbers or carrots, and wrap with a slice of deli meat

Update classic steak & potatoes for the grill



NATIONAL CATTLEMEN'S BEEF ASSOCIATION

Steak & Potato Kabobs are a contemporary take on classic steak and potatoes. They're delicious, easy and just right for family meals or casual entertaining.

Classics, whether clothes, cars or food, never go out of style. One of the most enduring classic food combinations is steak and potatoes.

Steak and baked or steak and fries are time-honored favorites, but for a new take on the classic, Steak & Potato Kabobs are a contemporary combination that's easy and delicious.

For kabobs, versatile boneless beef top sirloin steak is a great choice. It's lean, readily available in supermarkets, and easy to cut into kabob-size pieces with little or no waste. Tossed with pieces of yellow or zucchini squash, the beef and potato kabobs are a meal-on-a-skever. To ensure that the potatoes cook through, microwave them just until tender before threading onto the skewer with the steak and squash.

To lend a zesty flavor that is also a classic with steak, toss the steak,

potato and squash pieces with a favorite steak sauce to which you've added crushed garlic. It's guaranteed to grill up as a new favorite classic-smoky, crusty, irresistible!

Serve the kabobs with sliced fresh tomatoes and garlic bread — a great menu for the family or guests. Finish the meal with fresh berries and frozen yogurt, another cool classic.

STEAK & POTATO KABOBS

TOTAL PREPARATION AND COOKING TIME: 30 MINUTES

- 1 boneless beef top sirloin steak, cut 1 inch thick
- 1 pound (approx. 4 small) all-purpose potatoes, scrubbed, cut into 1-1/2 inch pieces
- 2 medium yellow squash or zucchini, cut lengthwise in half

Sauce:
3/4 cup steak sauce
2 large cloves garlic, crushed

Place potatoes in 11 by 7-inch microwave-safe baking dish. Cover with vented plastic wrap. Microwave at HIGH 6 to 8 minutes until potatoes are just tender, stirring once. Cool slightly.

Meanwhile, cut beef steak and squash into 1-1/4-inch pieces.

In 1-cup glass measure, combine sauce ingredients; microwave at HIGH 1-1/2 minutes, stirring once. Cool slightly.

Toss beef and vegetables with 1/3 cup sauce. Alternately thread beef and vegetables on eight 8-inch or four 12-inch metal skewers. Place skewers on grid over medium, ash-covered coals; grill, uncovered, 10 to 12 minutes for medium doneness, turning occasionally and brushing with remaining sauce.

Makes 4 servings (serving size: 2 kabobs)

Recipe from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association

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