

Tuna kebabs make an easy, healthy meal

The ancient practice of roasting small chunks of meat over an open fire can easily be updated for a tasty meal.

By substituting fish for red meat and adding colorful vegetables to the mix, an ordinary grilled entrée can be turned into tuna kebabs for an elegant, easy meal.

A marinade of Asian flavors, basil and olive oil keeps the fish moist as it cooks. Only 15 minutes of marinating is necessary. In addition to the tuna, add big cherry tomatoes, onion wedges and cucumber. While cucumbers are usually eaten raw, cooking them can bring out their sometime-overlooked citrus flavor. To further keep the lean tuna moist while grilling, cut the cucumber into crescents and nestle the fish between a cucumber crescent and a wedge of onion — a position that protects the tuna from excess heat.

Cucumbers are an ancient member of the gourd family. When shopping, pick a firm one with smooth, brightly-colored skin. Avoid those that have soft spots or are shriveled. Whole cucumbers may be

stored in the refrigerator, unwashed and in a plastic bag, up to 10 days. Wash them thoroughly just before using. Since these kebabs only get better when their flavors meld overnight, they can even be made ahead. They are good at room temperature. If you have leftovers, take the tuna off the skewers and serve it on a bed of chopped romaine lettuce for a chunky, grilled tuna salad.

TUNA KEBABS

- 1/2 cup fresh lime juice (about 2 limes)
- 1 tablespoon reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 pound fresh tuna, cut in 12 chunks
- 1 large cucumber, peeled, seeded and sliced
- 8 large cherry tomatoes
- 1 medium red onion, halved vertically and cut into crescents

Preheat grill or broiler.

In a glass or other non-reactive bowl, combine the lime juice, soy sauce, garlic, basil, pepper flakes, pepper and oil. Add the tuna chunks to the marinade, turning to coat them. Set aside to marinate 15 minutes at room temperature.

Assemble the kebabs using four 10-inch metal (or well-soaked) bamboo skewers. Slip a cucumber piece almost to the bottom of a skewer. Add a tuna chunk, followed by an onion crescent, followed by a tomato. Repeat with more cucumber, fish, onion and tomato. Finish the kabob with a cucumber crescent turned toward the onion. Make 3 more skewers in the same way.

Broil the kebabs 3 minutes. Turn and cook until the fish is firm to the touch and the vegetables browned, another 2 to 3 minutes. Do not overcook or the tuna will be dry. Serve either hot or at room temperature with hot steamed rice. Makes 4 servings.

Nutritional information per serving: 241 calories, 11 g. total fat (2 g. saturated fat), 7 g. carbohydrate, 28 g. protein, 2 g. dietary fiber, 100 mg. sodium.

Recipe courtesy of the American Institute for Cancer Research.

PRODUCE

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ties, strengthen Michigan's family farms, improve the quality of life for our citizens in both rural and urban areas, and preserve the state's rich and diverse agricultural heritage," Granholm noted in her declaration.

Scott Harris, produce buyer for Holiday Market in Canton, has his local favorites — corn, tomatoes and grape tomatoes.

"My motto is always say yes to Michigan," Harris said. "If the price is right — sometimes it isn't, but quite often it is — I'm buying it." He enjoys the peaches and the corn, which he said are fabulous. "The corn is 'peaches and cream checked' corn, and the Michigan peach-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOURMET MARKETING INSTITUTE

Cherries are just one of Michigan's popular crops. The state also ranks high in celery and asparagus production.

es are redhaven, which are similar to Georgia peaches, but they have a short shelf life."

Harris said grape and beefsteak tomatoes are his favorites. With the cold spring, none of these foods are available yet, but may be next week.

Many customers love the Michigan corn, Harris said.

"Most of the people who buy Michigan come in and look for what's grown locally," he said. "They're repeat offenders and they'll come after me."

"These customers are buying that produce from Michigan and the money stays here."

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