

Munch on nutritious nibbles

See related story on Taste front.

For more information about the Oakland Steiner School, call 646-2540. The Muesli recipe is from Kathy Knoebel who teaches at the school.

This smoothie recipe is from Nancy Sheffield of Bloomfield Hills.

SMOOTHIE

- 1 frozen banana
- ½ cup blueberries
- ½ cup frozen cherries
- 1½ teaspoons real vanilla extract
- ½ cup milk or plain yogurt
- 2 cups orange juice, grape or mixed berry juice

Put ingredients into a blender and blend. Sheffield said the frozen banana gives the smoothie a thick, icy flavor. Kids love it. For something different, eliminate the milk or yogurt for a fruitier drink. Try different combinations

of fruit, kiwi fruit and strawberries, peaches and blueberries. This recipe is from "Snack Savy" — Tips for Smart Snacking, a brochure published by the Quaker Oats Company. For a free copy, send your name and complete address to: Snack Savy, CA 923-93, P.O. Box 3391, Maple Plain, MN 55929.

CHERRY ALMOND DELIGHT

- 2 tablespoons diet margarine
- 2 tablespoons firmly packed brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons almond extract
- 6 cups puffed wheat or puffed rice cereal
- ½ cup dried cherries or dried mixed fruit bits

Add margarine to large microwave bowl. Microwave at HIGH for 20 to 30 seconds or until melted. Stir in brown sugar and almond extract; mix well. Add cereal, stirring until evenly coated. Microwave at HIGH for 1 minute, 30 seconds; stir. Microwave an additional 1 minute 30 seconds or until cereal no longer appears wet. While warm, stir in cherries. Serve warm or let cool. Store tightly covered.

Conventional Oven Directions: Melt margarine in 13 by 9 inch pan in preheated 250 degree oven. Stir in brown sugar and almond extract; mix well. Stir in cereal. Bake 20 minutes, stirring once after 10 minutes. While warm, stir in cherries. Make 1 cup.
One cup serving: Calories 110, Fat 2g, Sodium 60 mg.

Chicken orange salad refreshing on hot days

See related Chef's Secrets on Taste front.

CHICKEN ORANGE SALAD

- 4 whole skinless, boneless chicken breasts
 - 4 stalks celery, sliced thin on the diagonal
 - 3 scallions, sliced thin on the diagonal
 - 4 Navel oranges
 - 2 cups red seedless grapes
 - ½ cup toasted sliced almonds
- Place chicken breasts in a large skillet. Season with salt and pepper. Barely cover with any combination of chicken stock, white wine, or water. Bring to a boil; turn down to a simmer. Poach the chicken for about 10-12 minutes, turning once. Cool in liquid. Remove chicken from poaching liquid. Slice into ¼-inch thick julienne strips and place in

a bowl. Add the celery, scallions and grapes. Using a sharp knife, peel the skin and the pits from the orange. Cut into half-circles. Add to the bowl along with the almonds. Dress with Lemon Orange Vinaigrette. Adjust seasoning. Serve cold.

LEMON ORANGE VINAIGRETTE

- 1 garlic clove
 - 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
 - ½ cup fresh lemon juice
 - ½ cup olive oil
 - zest of 1 orange
 - Fresh ground pepper to taste
- In a food processor, mince the garlic. Add the mustard and lemon juice. While the motor is running, drizzle the oil through the feed tube. Add the orange zest, salt, and fresh ground pepper. Serves 8.

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Oakland Steiner School learn a lot about nutrition. "People are what they eat. It affects learning," said Nancy Sheffield of Bloomfield Hills, whose daughter, Laura, attends the school.

"We constantly serve un-buttered, unsalted popcorn. We try to serve foods that are as close to their natural state as possible. We make a lot of muffins and add seeds, nuts and dried fruits. Kids love them."

Smoothies — a blended mixture of fruits, yogurt or milk — and juice are a year-round favorite at the Sheffield house. Leftovers are poured into ice cube trays. Insert a toothpick and you've got a "refreshing snack. Or just put the frozen smoothie cubes into a cup and wait for them to thaw a little.

Sheffield cautions parents to read labels. "Make sure you buy real fruit juice. Juice cocktails contain a little juice and a lot of sugar."

When Laura's hungry for a crunchy snack, she'll reach for the carrots and celery sticks her mom

keeps in the refrigerator. Pea pods are another favorite.

"I buy unsalted sunflower seeds, dried fruits and nuts in bulk and mix them together. It's a nutritionally complete snack," Sheffield said. "Unsalted pretzels and tortilla chips, and string cheese, are good snacks too."

Learning how to prepare snacks is part of the learning that goes on at the Oakland Steiner School, named after Rudolf Steiner, who founded the Waldorf School movement in Europe. Waldorf schools like Oakland Steiner, stress self-discovery. Children learn about food by preparing it. Part of the morning routine at Oakland Steiner is preparing a snack.

"Children as young as 3 can help wash and scrub vegetables," said Kathy Knoebel, who teaches kindergarten. "Children ages 6 and 7 can peel, slice and chop fruits and vegetables with supervision. They love to do it."

Knoebel encourages parents to develop a rhythm and routine

with their children. Serve snacks at the same time every day. Introduce them to unusual fruits like kiwi.

Grains are not just for cereals and side dishes, they make great snacks too. A favorite snack at the school is cooked barley with cut up fruit mixed with a little honey or milk.

Preparing snacks helps children develop small motor skills like cutting. They learn how to share equipment and to socialize. While making Muesli, a mixture of chopped oats, fruits, nuts and soy milk, Raffi Schaffa, 6½, his sister Deborah, 4, Lauren Hooten, 6, and Andrew Allen, 6½, grated nuts, sliced strawberries and

stirred the mixture with a wooden spoon.

"Put the food processor away and let the children grate. Give them something real that they can do. It gives them a sense of completion. They start with raw ingredients and see the finished product. It helps them have a vision of how things operate. They say, 'Look what I can do with my hands,'" said Judy Wachler, who teaches first grade.

Florence Steinberg, who teaches at Gibson School in Redford, also serves healthy snacks to her three children ranging in age from 5 to 14. She just discovered "Guiltless Gourmet," no oil tortilla chips which her kids love.

Potato pancakes, tacos Janes Gang favorites

See Chef Larry Janes' Taste Buds column on Taste front.

The following recipes are personal favorites of the Janes' kids and will surely be a favorite in your house, too.

POTATO PANCAKES

- 2 cups fresh grated potatoes (about 4 medium)
 - 1½ tablespoons all-purpose flour
 - 1¼ teaspoon salt
 - 2 carrots, grated
 - 1 small onion, grated
 - 4 tablespoons oil
- In a medium bowl, combine pota-

toes with flour, salt, grated carrots and onion. Mix well. In a large skillet, heat oil until hot. Using a spoon, drop about ¼ cup of potato mixture into a mound in the skillet. Repeat with remaining mixture.

Lower heat to medium and with the back of a spatula, flatten the potato pancakes. Cook, over medium heat for 3 minutes. Flip and continue cooking for 4 minutes. Cover and reduce heat to a simmer. Cook for 5 minutes.

Serve with apple sauce. If desired. Makes about 4 good sized pancakes.

with a pound of hamburger. Try this recipe the next time the kids request taco's.

HOMEMADE TACOS

- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup tomato sauce
- 3 peeled and minced green chilies (not jalapeno's)
- 1 cup cooked chicken or pork sausage or ground turkey meat
- ½ teaspoon thyme
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon oregano
- ½ teaspoon salt

dash cayenne pepper

In a saucepan, cook onion in butter till golden. Combine remaining ingredients and lower heat to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes.

Heat taco shells or tortillas in the oven for 5 minutes. Stuff with meat mixture and top with cheese and lettuce, if desired.

Chef's secret: My kids aren't big onion lovers so I put the onion and green chilies in a blender or processor and process until smooth and then proceed with the cooking so that they never even see those bits and pieces in there!

Wedding Cakes

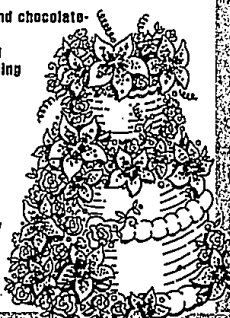
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