

Turn to speed-scratch cooking for fast meals

Getting a healthful, great-tasting meal on the table in a hurry used to be a challenge, but that's not true anymore. Enter speed-scratch cooking, the newest way to save time without sacrificing taste or nutrition.

Speed-scratch cooking really is very simple. Convenience products pair up with "scratch" ingredients that cook quickly and are nutrition-smart.

Handy convenience products these days can be found in every aisle of the supermarket. In addition to familiar standbys such as prepared spaghetti sauce and pizza sauce, canned beans, bottled salad dressing and frozen vegetables, there are fresh salsa, recipredly canned tomatoes with Italian and Mexican flavors, combination herb and spice blends, ready-to-use salad greens and other produce items, flavored rice mixes, instant couscous and instant rice, to name just a few. And, many products offer reduced fat and/or reduced sodium counterparts.

Among the scratch ingredients designed for quick cooking are convenience chicken breasts, fish fillets, ground turkey and lean tenderloin cuts of meat such as pork tenderloin and beef sirloin. Wheat germ fits in this category, too, as a coating for chicken and fish and as an extender for ground meat and poultry.

And don't overlook quick cooking methods such as microwaving, stir-frying and broiling. Other time-saving tips include: buying

combination ingredients such as shredded cheese for tacos and Mexican-style stewed tomatoes; using quick-cooking grains such as angel hair pasta, orzo and couscous; spraying pans with no-stick cooking spray to trim calories and shorten cleanup; cooking enough chicken, fish or meat for a second meal; and making mini-hamburgers or individual meat loaves.

Mini meat loaves with honey-mustard sauce take advantage of several speed-scratch techniques. These savory little loaves cook in the microwave oven in just 10 to 12 minutes. The green onions can be bought prechopped from the supermarket salad bar, and many markets carry a prepared honey-mustard sauce. Lean ground beef gets a nutrition boost from wheat germ, a wholesome extender for ground meat and poultry.

Equally quick and great tasting are Cajun-style fish fillets. Convenient blackened fish seasoning from the supermarket spice section flavors the wheat germ and corn meal used to coat mild, farm-raised catfish fillets. To enhance their crispness, the fillets are lightly sprayed with no-stick cooking spray and baked at a high temperature. They bake in 5 to 10 minutes, just long enough to saute red bell pepper strips and slightly sliced leeks. Complete the meal with quick-cooking rice.

Other quick recipes are available free in the new brochure, *Healthy Made Easy*. For a copy, send your name and address to: Healthy Eating Made Easy, 332

S. Michigan Ave., Suite 900, Dept. N, Chicago, IL 60604. Offer good while supplies last.

Here are some recipes from the kitchens of Kretschmer wheat germ.

MINI MEAT LOAVES WITH HONEY-MUSTARD SAUCE

1½ pounds lean ground beef or turkey
¼ cup Kretschmer original wheat germ
½ cup chopped green onions
½ cup water
½ teaspoon salt (optional)
¼ teaspoon black pepper
1 egg white, slightly beaten
¼ cup Dijon mustard
3 tablespoons honey

For meat loaves, combine first seven ingredients in large bowl; mix lightly, but thoroughly. Shape meat mixture into eight 3 by 2-inch loaves; place in 7 by 11-inch glass baking dish. Cover loosely with wax paper.

Microwave at high 10 to 12 minutes or until meat is no longer pink and juices run clear, rotating dish after 6 minutes; drain. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

For sauce, combine mustard and honey; mix well. Or, for added convenience, use ready prepared honey-mustard sauce. Serve sauce over meat loaves.

Conventional oven directions: Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Prepare recipe as directed above; place meat loaves in 7 by 11-inch glass baking dish. Bake 30 to 35 minutes or until meat is no longer pink and juices



KRETSCHMER WHEAT GERM

run clear. Yield 8 Servings

Nutrition information, ½ of recipe. Calories 230, Calories From Fat 90, Total Fat 10g, Saturated Fat 3g, Cholesterol 55mg, Sodium 300mg, Carbohydrate 13g, Dietary Fiber 1g, Protein 21g.

CAJUN-STYLE FISH FILLETS

¼ cup Kretschmer original wheat germ
¼ cup Quaker or Aunt Jemima corn meal
2 tablespoons blackened fish seasoning

1 egg white
3 tablespoons water
1½ pounds catfish fillets
2 medium red or green bell peppers, cut into strips
½ cup thinly sliced leeks or green onions

Heat oven to 450 degrees F. Lightly spray cookie sheet with no-stick cooking spray. Combine first three ingredients in shallow dish. In another shallow dish, beat egg white and water until frothy. Dip catfish fillets in egg white mixture, then in wheat germ mixture, coating fish thoroughly. Place

on prepared pan. Spray fish lightly with no-stick cooking spray. Bake 5 to 10 minutes or until fish is lightly browned and flakes easily with fork.

While fish is baking, spray skillet with no-stick cooking spray; saute peppers and leeks over medium heat 3 to 5 minutes or until vegetables are crisp-tender. Serve vegetable mixture over fish. Yield: 6 servings.

Nutrition Information: 1/6 of recipe. Calories 220, Calories From Fat 81, Total Fat 9g, Saturated Fat 2g, Cholesterol 35mg, Sodium 250mg, Carbohydrate 12g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 21g.

Luscious chocolate mint cheesecake cuts a lean profile

AP — With the help of low-fat products, luscious chocolate cheesecake cuts a leaner profile. Low-fat cottage cheese and light cream cheese replace regular sour cream and cream cheese.

Cheesecakes were form the crust without any added butter. And, egg substitutes reduce some of the cholesterol usually found in

cheesecake.

Overall, you can save save about 250 calories, 25 grams of fat and 110 milligrams of cholesterol per serving compared to a higher-fat cheesecake recipe.

CHOCOLATE-MINT CHEESECAKE

½ cup crushed chocolate wafers (about 7)

1 cup low-fat cottage cheese
8-ounce package light cream cheese (Neufchatel)

1 cup sugar
½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder

3 tablespoons creme de menthe liqueur
1 teaspoon vanilla

½ cup (4 ounces) frozen egg product, thawed

3 tablespoons miniature semisweet chocolate pieces

Sprinkle water crumbs evenly in the bottom of an 8-inch springform pan. Set aside.

In a food processor bowl or blender container, cover and process or blend cottage cheese until smooth. Add cream cheese, sugar, cocoa

powder, liqueur and vanilla. Blend or process until combined. (The mixture will be thick, so scrape the sides of the container, if necessary.)

Transfer to a large mixing bowl. Stir in egg product and chocolate. Pour into prepared pan. Bake in a 300-degree F oven for 35 to 40 minutes or until cheesecake appears nearly set when shaken.

Cool cheesecake in pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Loosen sides of pan. Cool for 30 minutes more; remove sides of pan. Cool completely. Cover and chill for several hours or overnight. Makes 12 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 175 cal., 7 g fat, 16 mg chol., 6 g pro., 22 g carbs., 0 g fiber, 176 sodium.

Perk up this morning with a cup of delicious coffee



LOIS THIELEKE

A cup of coffee that makes you stop what you're doing to taste and savor the flavor is the most satisfying feeling for a coffee lover. The popularity of coffee is proven by the opening of many specialty coffee shops. No longer are coffee lovers satisfied with a cup of "mud" passing for coffee.

If your coffee comes from a fast food restaurant or out of a can it

is called robusta coffee. It is called this because it comes from a plant that is resistant to diseases and thrives at lower altitudes. The other species is arabica which grows at higher altitudes and bear fruit less frequently. Many coffee companies use a blend of these to make a better cup of coffee.

Almost all coffee beans are "green" when shipped. After the coffee harvest they are sun dried and allowed to ferment for two to three weeks or several months. Aging gives coffee a husky or viney overtone. The green beans are roasted to perfection by the roaster, wholesaler or even the coffee retailer. The flavor of the beverage depends on the temperature of the roast. The longer the beans are roasted, the darker and stronger flavored the coffee.

A pale roast produces a delicate but acidic flavored coffee. Since the heat was not long or very high and the acid did not have a chance to evaporate. A light or medium roast (sometimes called an American roast) is used for most of the commercial blends.

Dark roast coffees also known as French or Viennese are rich and full bodied coffees. A very

dark roast known as Italian or espresso roast have a rich, bittersweet taste. If you have been unable to find just the flavor you want, try blending some coffees or beans yourself.

Freshness is the most important thing in the life of coffee. Heat and light are enemies of coffee so keep it sealed in a airtight container. The best coffee is made from freshly roasted beans. To slow oxidation and loss of flavor whole beans or ground coffee that are in airtight containers can be stored in the freezer. If they are stored too long in the freezer, some of the oils will be destroyed and the coffee will never taste quite the same as before freezing.

Better flavor

Buy whole beans in small batches and use quickly. If you have frozen the beans, let them come to room temperature before grinding, you'll have a better flavor.

If you are going to grind your own coffee beans, your coffee maker will determine the best grind. Fine grinds are best suited to coffee makers that brew very quickly like an espresso machine. A medium is a drip grind and best used in a drip pot. Coarse or regular grinds are best for machines with slow brew cycles such as a percolators. Since the water is heated to boiling and forced up into the basket and drip down again, use only a coarse grind to compensate for this slow brewing process. Grind coffee beans just before brewing for the best flavor.

To brew the perfect cup of coffee, pour hot water over coffee, this is called drip drip. For most of us, we have an electric filter drip coffee maker. The machine heats cold water to drip down through the grounds that are in the basket while the pot is on a warming plate. Many coffee lovers recommend using a gold-washed mesh filter instead of the paper.

One of the oldest coffee makers is known as an "ibrik," a Greek or Turkish coffee pot. Water and sugar are placed in the little pot and brought to a boil, pulverized coffee is added and heated again. When the mixture boils again it is removed from the heat until the froth settles. Repeat this process twice before serving. For most people, drinking this type of coffee takes time to appreciate the taste.

Strong brew

How strong you want your coffee is a matter of personal taste. To make a medium to strong cup of drip coffee use two tablespoons of grounds to every six ounces of water. To make weaker coffee, just decrease the amount of grounds or add more water.

In making espresso, use two tablespoons of ground coffee to three ounces of water. Another key to good coffee is to remove the grounds from the basket after the

brewing is completed because the grounds absorb the aroma from the coffee.

If your coffee is getting sour or bitter, it is because the coffee has been sitting on the burner more than 15 minutes. (This happens a lot in restaurants). As soon as it's brewed, put in a thermal carafe to keep hot but it won't get bitter. Unless you are making iced coffee, coffee needs to be kept and served hot, not lukewarm. For coffee lovers, the perfect cup of coffee does not come from instant granules or bags. Practice making a perfect cup of coffee until all your friends and neighbors want to stop at your house to savor the wonderful flavor of your coffee!

Lois Thieleke of Birmingham is an extension home economist for the Cooperative Extension Service, Oakland County office.

Answers to food questions

For answers to questions about food safety, nutrition and preservation, call the Food and Nutrition Hot line, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, 888-0904 in Oakland County, 484-3013 in Wayne County.



Headache Sufferers Sought For Research Project

SOUTHFIELD **WEST BLOOMFIELD** — Victims of chronic headaches are currently being sought as part of a research project being conducted by Dr. Ronald Gold. Anyone suffering with recurring headaches is encouraged to call Dr. Gold's office for a free information packet. According to Dr. Gold, a local expert, and head and neck pain, headaches, dizziness, irritability, nervousness, loss of memory or focus to list just a few of the symptoms. Dr. Gold is specifically

interested in how stress relates to headaches. He is concerned there may be some additional correlations between stress and other chronic syndromes. The free examinations are available to anyone suffering with headaches. As part of Dr. Gold's research, he will collect information, he will schedule and perform a 26 point examination without obligation, pain or discomfort to the volunteer. As a result, he will provide them with complete disclosures of their personal and confidential results. Dr. Gold emphasizes that only statistical results

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