

Beef Taco-Mac ready in minutes

Sooner practice? Homework? Music lessons? Who has time for a home-cooked dinner? You do, when you prepare quick and delicious Beef Taco-Mac in just 30 minutes!

Made with beef cubed steaks, taco seasoning, tomatoes and spiral pasta, Beef Taco-Mac is a cinch to make and fun to eat. Your family will definitely make time for this great dinner that takes so little time to make.

- each diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 1/2 cups uncooked rotini (spiral) pasta
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

Cut beef steaks lengthwise into 1-inch wide strips and then crosswise into 1-inch pieces.

In Dutch oven, heat oil over medium-high heat until hot. Add beef and onion; cook and stir 3 minutes. Season with salt. Stir seasoning mix, tomatoes, pasta and water into beef. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to low. Cover tightly and simmer 20 minutes or until pasta is tender. Sprinkle with cheese before serving. Serves 4.

Recipe from the Beef Industry Council.



Quick meal: This Beef Taco-Mac can be ready in just 30 minutes.

Pack enjoyable school lunches

BY CHRISTINE VENEMA
SPECIAL WRITER

It's that time of year again — new lunch boxes waiting to be filled and hungry kids waiting to eat their contents. Your child's school may or may not have a lunch program, but even if not, there are good reasons for packing his or her lunch:

- It saves money.
- It allows your child to spend more time eating instead of waiting in line to buy lunch.
- It assures that your child has food that he or she likes and that you know is a good nutritional choice.

The food that children eat affects their growth their behavior and their ability to learn. A hungry child may get drifty or restless and have difficulty focusing on classroom activities.

If you have a choosy eater in your household, it's OK to pack the same foods every day. The important thing is that he or she eats the lunch. Occasionally, lunches will come home uneaten. As a lunch maker, your responsibility is to make sure that nutritious food is offered. How much of that lunch is eaten depends on the child. Unless lunches are repeatedly brought home uneaten, it's not worth a big fuss.

box, but remember that kids need to see and taste food many times before they decide to like it. They also grow in and out of times when it is easier to introduce something new. With a little planning, you can make it a treat for your child to open the lunch box. Try some of these healthful and practical ideas:

- Jazz up peanut butter sandwiches with raisins, grated carrots, banana or apple slices, chopped prunes or apple butter.
- Add crunch to sliced or low-fat cheese sandwiches by adding pickles, sliced cucumber, chopped celery, grated carrot and/or pepper slices or rings.
- Stuff pita halves; fill and roll low-fat tortilla skins or lettuce leaves or cut sandwiches into exciting shapes with cookie cutters.
- Pack bright, colorful fruits and vegetables — carrots, peas, pepper rings, oranges, plums, kiwi, dried apricots, spinach leaves, cabbage slices, grapes, zucchini or turnip sticks.
- Get kids involved in making their lunch. Play a game — "Guess who or what is going to lunch with you" — and let them cut the shape of the sandwich.
- Make carrot curls and raisin eyes on sandwiches.
- Choose fruit filled shredded cereals, pretzels, low-fat muffins or popcorn for treats.

Food likes and dislikes are shaped by what foods are offered in the home, the way they are offered and how frequently they are offered. Keep this in mind as you pack lunches you can occasionally try something new in the lunch

Christine Venema is a home economist for the Wayne County Michigan State University Extension Service.

COOKING CALENDAR

Send items to be considered for publication to: Keely Wygnik, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or by fax (313)591-7279.

Support Groups
TELCOUNTY GELIAC SPIRIT
Helps people diagnosed with Celiac Sprue and Dermatitis Herpetiformis, their families, spouses and friends. Monthly meetings include information on gluten-free foods, label reading, recipe sharing, taste testing, ideas for children and information from professionals. Meet 7:30 p.m., Monday, Sept. 11, Southfield Presbyterian Church, 21575 W. 10 Mile Road. (810) 477-5953 or (313) 274-9232

Special events
MICHIGAN CHILI COOKOFF
Michigan's Official Chili Cookoff, which selects a Michigan Champion to represent our state in the World Championship Cookoff, will be 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 10 at Muskegon's Urban Pier (formerly Acadia) across from the Palace of Auburn Hills. Fifty cooking teams will be competing. Tickets are \$32.50 per person and include beer, wine, pop, mineral water, coffee and food. **Miatchi Nuevo Zapan** and the **blagmas R.D.** Boys will be performing. Proceeds benefit culinary arts scholarships. Tickets must be purchased in advance. (810) 681-4460

AL'S COPPER MUG COOKOFF
Call for all chili cooks. Al's Copper Mug at 1704 W. Maple Road in Walled Lake is hosting a chili cookoff and fund-raiser 10 p.m. to 1 a.m., Sunday, Sept. 10. Chili tasting at 5 p.m., and awards will be announced at 6:30 p.m. Admission to the cookoff is free, donations will be accepted. Call Al or Patti for more information. (810) 674-9859
Weight Watchers (810) 681-4460

COOKING DEMONSTRATIONS
LIFE AFTER SCHOLARSHIP
Life After Scholarship that is, life after the heart-healthy adaptations of traditional Jewish holiday dishes, samples, recipes. 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 7, Bolaford

Center for Health Improvement, 39750 Grand River, Novi. The cost is \$5. Pre-registration, seating is limited. (810) 477-6100

SUPERIOR FISH COMPANY
Cooking classes featuring professional chefs of metro Detroit's most popular restaurants continue 10 a.m. to noon, Sept. 8 with Schuler's Inc. of Marshall. Open to the public, samples. No charge. Superior Fish Company is at 309 E. 11 Mile Road, Royal Oak. (810) 541-6332

BARBER'S HOUSE BAKESTORE
Barbara Norman wants to sign copies of her book "What can I do with my bread machine?" noon to 1 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 9, Barnes & Noble, 6575 Telegraph, Bloomfield Hills. (810) 540-4209

by Calphalon and Krups, noon to 1:30 p.m., Sept. 8 (Northland). Call between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., seven days a week for reservations. All classes are complementary and held in the Marketplace, Warrens Dept. 7-(800)-265-0000

JACOBOSONS
Chef Fabrizio Bottom from Cuisinart will be conducting cooking demonstrations at Jacobosons' locations in the Detroit area. He will be preparing and handing out recipes for Cajun Chicken, Focaccia, all fruit smoothie, frozen yogurt, chocolate mousse and oatmeal monster cookies. He will be at the Birmingham store 9 p.m. Friday, Sept. 15 and at the Livonia store, noon Saturday, Sept. 16.

Classes
THE COMRADESHIP HOUSE
Offers a variety of cooking classes this fall at 390 S. Bates, Birmingham. Silvana Capoupolis is teaching a series of natural cooking classes — A Mexican Fiesta, Indian Vegetarian Cooking, and Fabulous Ethnic Entrees, beginning 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 12. Cost: \$18 per session. Call for information. (810) 644-5522

LEWIS'S NATURAL CUISINE
Cooking school, natural cuisine, step-by-step instruction, recipe hand-outs, 22899 Inquirer Road, Farmington Hills. (810) 478-4455

Dieting
MULTISSIONAL TUNE-UP
Get your diet in gear. Focus on vegetarian, low-fat, low-cholesterol, or diabetic menus. \$25 for individual counseling. Offered by Bolaford Hospital. (810) 477-6100

Stir-up delightful vegetables

(AP) — Quick and easy stir-frying is the key to colorful, flavorful and thoroughly satisfying dishes. The stir-frying technique also appeals to the health-conscious because the intense heat cooks the food with very little added fat. Instead, seasonings such as garlic, ginger, chili paste and sugar are used to flavor the dishes.

In the following recipe, shredded Napa cabbage, broccoli and other vegetables are combined to make a dish called Buddha's Delight Vegetables.

BUDDHA'S DELIGHT VEGETABLES
2 tablespoons sesame oil
3 dried red chili peppers
1/2 cup sliced scallions

- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 peeled carrots, thinly sliced into circles
- 2 cups small broccoli florets
- 1 sweet red pepper, cut into thin strips
- 2 cups shredded Napa cabbage
- 1 cup baby corn
- 8-ounce can sliced water chestnuts

For the sauce:
1 1/2 cups chicken broth
3 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
1 1/2 tablespoons rice wine or sake

- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch

Combine the sauce ingredients; blend well.
Heat a wok, add the sesame oil, and heat until very hot. Add chiles and stir-fry until darkened. Add scallions and garlic; stir-fry 1 minute. Add carrots; stir-fry 4 minutes. Add broccoli and red pepper; stir-fry 1 minute. Add shredded cabbage; stir-fry 1 minute. Add baby corn and water chestnuts; stir-fry 30 seconds. Add sauce to vegetables and mix well. Cover wok, cook until vegetables are crisp-tender. Serve over rice. Makes 8 servings.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine cheese, celery, bell pepper and green onions; stir in potatoes. Toss with salad dressing to coat. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. Makes 6 servings.

Recipe from:
The Sugar Association

Chunky potato salad is simple

(AP) — In the following recipe for chunky cheese and potato salad, "skins-on" red potatoes are used to save preparation time — and to add color.

Tossing the salad with bottled Italian dressing also helps keep it simple. The recipe was created by Mr. Food, a TV chef. Serve with burgers or fried chicken.

CHUNKY CHEESE AND POTATO SALAD

- 2 pounds small red potatoes, quartered (about 6 cups)
- 8-ounce package shredded cheddar cheese (2 cups)
- 1 1/2 cups sliced celery
- 1 cup sweet red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1/2 cup green onions (scallions)
- 1/4 cup bottled Italian salad dressing

In a large saucepan, place pota-

atoes with enough water to cover. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain potatoes; cool to room temperature.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine cheese, celery, bell pepper and green onions; stir in potatoes. Toss with salad dressing to coat. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. Makes 6 servings.

To pan-fry the bruschetta: Cut a 12-inch packaged bread-sty's pizza base into narrow wedges. Heat oil and fry wedges, turning once to toast both sides. Add oil as needed.

Recipe from: California Fresh Carrot Advisory Board.

Quick pasta dish great for after work

(AP) — No time to cook? A quick trip to the grocery store for fresh Italian flatbread, salad greens, carrots and a package of ravioli and you've got dinner in the bag.

Carrot and split ravioli pasta salad can be served hot or cold. Sauté cooked ravioli and carrot slices in vinaigrette and spoon onto salad greens. Serve with wedges of bruschetta.

CARROT AND SPLIT RAVIOLI PASTA SALAD

- 1/2 cup Italian dressing
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 cup diagonally sliced green onion
- 6 to 8 large chard, kale or beet green leaves
- 3 cups assorted tom salad greens
- Pan-fried bruschetta (recipe below)

Trim and diagonally slice carrots. Drop ravioli and carrots into 3 quart boiling water. Return to simmer; cook for 8 minutes or until ravioli are tender. Drain and rinse with cold water. Cut ravioli diagonally into halves to show filling.

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