

### HOME SENSE



LOIS M. THIELEKE

## Call the hot line for answers to food questions

**M**ichigan State University offers a telephone hot line to answer those "nagging" questions on food, food safety and nutrition. This service is ready to take your calls 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday. Call (248) 858-0904 for answers to your questions. Here's a sample of a few of the questions and answers.

**Q. How do I store mushrooms?**  
**A.** Mushrooms need moisture so they don't dry out. After purchasing, put mushrooms in a paper bag or in a dish with a moistened paper towel over the top. Don't wash mushrooms before storing. Mushrooms need air circulation.

At best, mushrooms will remain fresh four to five days. Dried mushrooms will keep for months as long as they are kept in a tightly closed jar. Dried mushrooms can be refrigerated or frozen.

**Q. How do you freeze fresh strawberries?**

**A.** Strawberries can be placed on a cookie sheet and frozen. Remove them from the sheet and put in freezer bags, return to freezer. This method allows the berries to be frozen individually so you can easily measure out the amount you need. Don't let strawberries soak in water while you are washing them, they will become soggy. Make sure strawberries are dry before freezing. The water can break down the cells and make the strawberries mushy. Frozen strawberries are soft when thawed. They will never be as perfect as they were fresh.

**Q. How can I pick out a ripe pineapple?**

**A.** When a pineapple is ripe, it is golden, orange yellow or reddish brown depending on the variety. Look for the right color, and ease of how the "spikes" or leaves can be pulled out from the top. Pick out a pineapple that is heavy for its size. Avoid any that are bruised or moldy, or have a dull yellowish green color.

A really green pineapple will be fibrous and not very sweet. Take your time picking out a pineapple, you can't ripen them at home so choose a good one in prime condition.

**Q. My aluminum springform pan discolors from my cheese cake. Is that safe?**

**A.** The sides and bottom of the cheese cake may discolor as the cooling cake reacts with the aluminum. It is safe, but not attractive.

To prevent your pan from discoloring, line the bottom and sides of the pan with parchment paper. Then coat the paper with nonstick cooking spray. After the cheese cake has baked and cooled to room temperature, loosen the springform sides.

If you are buying a new springform pan, opt for one with a nonstick coating.

**Q. How do you make onion juice?**

**A.** Slice an onion, sprinkle lightly with salt, let stand a moment and then scrape the surface with a knife. Make sure you do this on a plate. If you need a quantity of onion juice, purchase it from the store.

**Q. Are eggs dairy?**

**A.** No, eggs are poultry products while dairy are milk products. Apparently, this becomes an issue because both are purchased in the dairy case at the grocer. Eggs are not in the dairy group on the USDA food guide pyramid. Eggs are in the meat (protein) food group.

Lois M. Thieleke of Birmingham is an Extension Home Economist for the Michigan State University Extension — Oakland County.

### LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on Wine
- Living Better Sensibly



South of the border: Salsa and lime flavor these sassy, bold Salsa Ribeyes with Spicy Black Bean Salad.

## TURN UP THE HEAT when you grill steak

### ISLAND JERK BEEF & PINEAPPLE KABOBS

Total preparation and cooking time: 1 hour

4 beef chuck eye steaks, cut 3/4 to 1-inch thick (6 to 8 ounces each)

#### Kabobs

1/2 fresh pineapple, rind removed, cored and cut into 1- to 1 1/2-inch pieces (approximately 1 1/4 pounds)

3 green onions, cut into 1 1/2-inch-long pieces

2 tablespoons butter, melted

2 teaspoons packed brown sugar

Dash ground red pepper

Jerk Rub

1/4 cup finely chopped green onions

4 large cloves garlic, minced

1 jalapeno pepper, finely chopped

1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh ginger

1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

2 teaspoons packed brown sugar

1 1/2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves, crushed

1 1/4 teaspoons salt

3/4 teaspoon ground allspice

Soak four 12-inch bamboo skewers in water 10 minutes; drain. Alternately thread pineapple and green onion pieces onto each skewer.

In small bowl, combine butter, 2 teaspoons brown sugar and red pepper. Set aside.

In another bowl, combine Jerk Rub ingredients. Press into both sides of each beef steak. Place steaks on grid over medium, ash-covered coals. Grill, uncovered 14-18 minutes for medium rare to medium doneness, turning occasionally.

Grill kabobs 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned, turning occasionally and brushing with butter mixture during the last 5 minutes of grilling. Makes 4 servings.

**Nutrition information per serving:** 387 calories; 31g protein; 27g carbohydrate; 15g fat; 5.3mg iron; 866mg sodium; 116mg cholesterol.

*Cook's tip:* For a rub with less heat, seed jalapeno peppers before chopping.

### GRILLED STEAK & POTATOES WITH CHIMICHURRI SAUCE

Total preparation and cooking time: 55 minutes

Marinating time: 6 to 8 hours or overnight

1 high-quality beef top round steak cut 1 1/2-inches thick (approximately 2 pounds)

2 sweet potatoes (approximately 18 ounces), peeled, cut diagonally into 1-inch thick slices

4 Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled, each cut lengthwise in half

2 tablespoons olive oil

1/2 teaspoon salt

Sauce & Marinade

3/4 cup finely chopped Italian parsley

1/2 cup olive oil

1/4 cup white vinegar

4 large cloves garlic, minced

1/4 teaspoon salt

In medium bowl, combine ingredients for sauce and marinade; mix well. Remove 1/4 cup for sauce; cover and refrigerate. Place steak and remaining marinade in plastic bag, turning to coat. Close bag securely and marinate in refrigerator 6 to 8 hours (or overnight, if desired), turning occasionally.

In large bowl, combine potatoes, oil and 1/2 teaspoon salt; toss to coat. Set aside.

Remove steak from marinade; discard marinade. Place steak on grid over medium, ash-covered coals. Grill, covered, 25-28 minutes for medium rare doneness, turning occasionally. Grill potatoes, covered, 18-21 minutes or until tender, turning occasionally. Meanwhile, bring refrigerated sauce to room temperature.

Trim fat from steak, carve into thin slices. Season with additional salt, as desired. Serve steak with potatoes and reserved sauce. Makes 4 servings.

**Nutrition information per serving:** 359 calories; 30g protein; 29g carbohydrate; 17g fat; 3.6mg iron; 258mg sodium; 71mg cholesterol.

*Recipe from the Beef & Veal Culinary Center, National Cattlemen's Beef Association*

### SALSA RIBEYES WITH SPICY BLACK BEAN SALAD

Total preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes

Marinating time: 30 minutes

4 boneless beef ribeye steaks, cut 1-inch thick, (approximately 8 ounces each)

Spicy Black Bean Salad (recipe follows)

#### Marinade

2/3 cup fresh and chunky salsa

1/4 cup fresh lime juice

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1 tablespoon dried oregano leaves, crushed

2 cloves garlic, minced

In small bowl, combine marinade ingredients. Place beef steaks in plastic food-safe bag; add marinade, turning to coat. Close bag securely and marinate in refrigerator 30 minutes, turning once.

Meanwhile prepare spicy black bean salad.

Remove steaks from marinade; discard marinade. Place steaks on grid over medium, ash-covered coals. Grill 11 to 14 minutes for medium rare to medium doneness, turning occasionally.

Serve steaks with Spicy Black Bean Salad. Makes 4 servings.

**Nutrition information per serving:** 312 calories; 37g protein; 3g carbohydrate; 16g fat; 3.5mg iron; 240mg sodium; 102mg cholesterol.

*Cook's tip:* 4 boneless beef top loin steaks, cut 1-inch thick (approximately 8 ounces each) may be substituted for the ribeye steaks. Grill 15-18 minutes for medium rare to medium doneness, turning occasionally.

#### SPICY BLACK BEAN SALAD

1 can (15 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained

1 large orange, peeled, cut into 1/2-inch pieces

1/3 cup green onions, thinly sliced

1/4 cup fresh lime juice

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

In medium bowl, combine ingredients, mixing gently but thoroughly. Yield 2 1/4 cups.

**Nutrition information per serving:** 168 calories; 6g protein; 21g carbohydrate; 7g fat; 1.6mg iron; 165mg sodium; 0mg cholesterol.

*Recipe from the Beef & Veal Culinary Center, National Cattlemen's Beef Association*

## Start cooking with 'Help!' from mom

If you weren't paying attention while mom was cooking, "Help!" is on the way.

Mother and son team Kevin and Nancy Mills wrote "Help! My Apartment Has A Kitchen Cookbook." (Chapters/Houghton Mifflin, \$14.95) for people who have never ventured into the kitchen except to get a glass of water.

Lots of smart people have cooking anxiety. It's nothing to be ashamed of or that can't be overcome.

"One of my son's friends who goes to Harvard Law School was testing a recipe and called to ask if all the pieces of garlic had to be cut the same size," said Nancy. "He's a very detail oriented person."

The answer is "no," but some beginners want to know exactly what to do.

"People will do the dumbest things," said Nancy remembering the person who put a chicken on a rack in the oven, just like the recipe said, but didn't put it in a pan first. What a mess that made!

"Kevin was afraid not to follow a recipe," said Nancy. "He had plenty of anxiety in the kitchen."

Now 27, Kevin began cooking out of necessity, not because he wanted to. His restaurant lifestyle was draining his savings. Not having anything at home to eat was also inconvenient. There aren't too many restaurants open at 2 a.m.

Over the phone Nancy explained how to roast a chicken. Kevin had good results, except for the burning plastic.

"After a quick call home, I stuck a fork

inside the chicken and pulled out the heart, liver and other unmentionables, plus a lot of red juice. Mom, said to throw away these giblets and cook the chicken for another 30 minutes, and it worked."

Kevin said he wouldn't have stuck with cooking if it had been difficult.

In fact, he's written a second book with his mother — "Help! My Apartment Has A Dining Room" that will be published in the spring.

Please see HELP, B2

