

2 UNIQUE



KELLI LEWTON

Contrasts create flavor excitement

Big flavor, health-minded cooking seems to be the tall order of today.

As we are straying from high fats, oils and butters, try exciting the palate by creating contrasts in flavor, temperature and texture.

The first step to cooking greatness is retaining or encasing the essence of the product you're working with. Providing contrast is an essential element of good cooking. Here are some guidelines to help you:

- **Marinades** are an awesome method for adding flavor to lean meat choices.
- **Smoking** adds big flavor. Using a dry spice rub adds another layer of flavor complexity to smoked products building on the base of great taste.
- **Adding natural fruit juices** to vinaigrettes will lend an earthy kick to dressings.
- **Cook veggies** in fresh stocks or broths to add flavor, but not fat. Add a little stock to baked or braised meats to keep them moist and flavorful.
- **Food harmony** is key. It's difficult to enjoy your plate when foods don't go well together or there is too much of one item. A good rule of thumb is a plate should have 60% of grains, pastas and vegetables.
- **Use low calorie ingredients** in non-traditional ways. For example, use a strong-brewed coffee as part of a gravy base to add a rich flavor to beef dishes. Steep your favorite spiced tea and use it in place of water to intensify the flavor in quick breads, cakes and muffins.

Flavor enhancers

Seasoning is the secret to great tasting food. Here are some suggestions for "Big Flavor" seasoning:

- Chicken or poultry** - Paprika, poultry seasoning, thyme, parsley, sage, fresh mushrooms, basil, marjoram, cranberry relish, ginger, cranberry sauce
- Lamb** - Curry powder, rosemary, garlic, mint, onions, parsley, pineapple rings, mint sauce, mint jelly, oregano, basil
- Pork** - Garlic, sage, onions, marjoram, applesauce, spiced apples
- Beef** - Bay leaf, green pepper, chives, onions, mustard (dry), sage, thyme, tomatoes, marjoram, mushrooms, nutmeg, garlic
- Veal** - Bay leaf, curry, garlic, ginger, basil, marjoram, mushrooms, oregano, pepper, chervil, summer savory
- Fish** - Bay leaf, dry mustard, paprika, curry, mushrooms, tomatoes, dill, green pepper, lemon juice, marjoram, garlic, basil, thyme
- Eggs** - chives, curry, dry mustard, green pepper, mushrooms, onions, paprika, parsley, tomatoes, basil

Seasoning vegetables

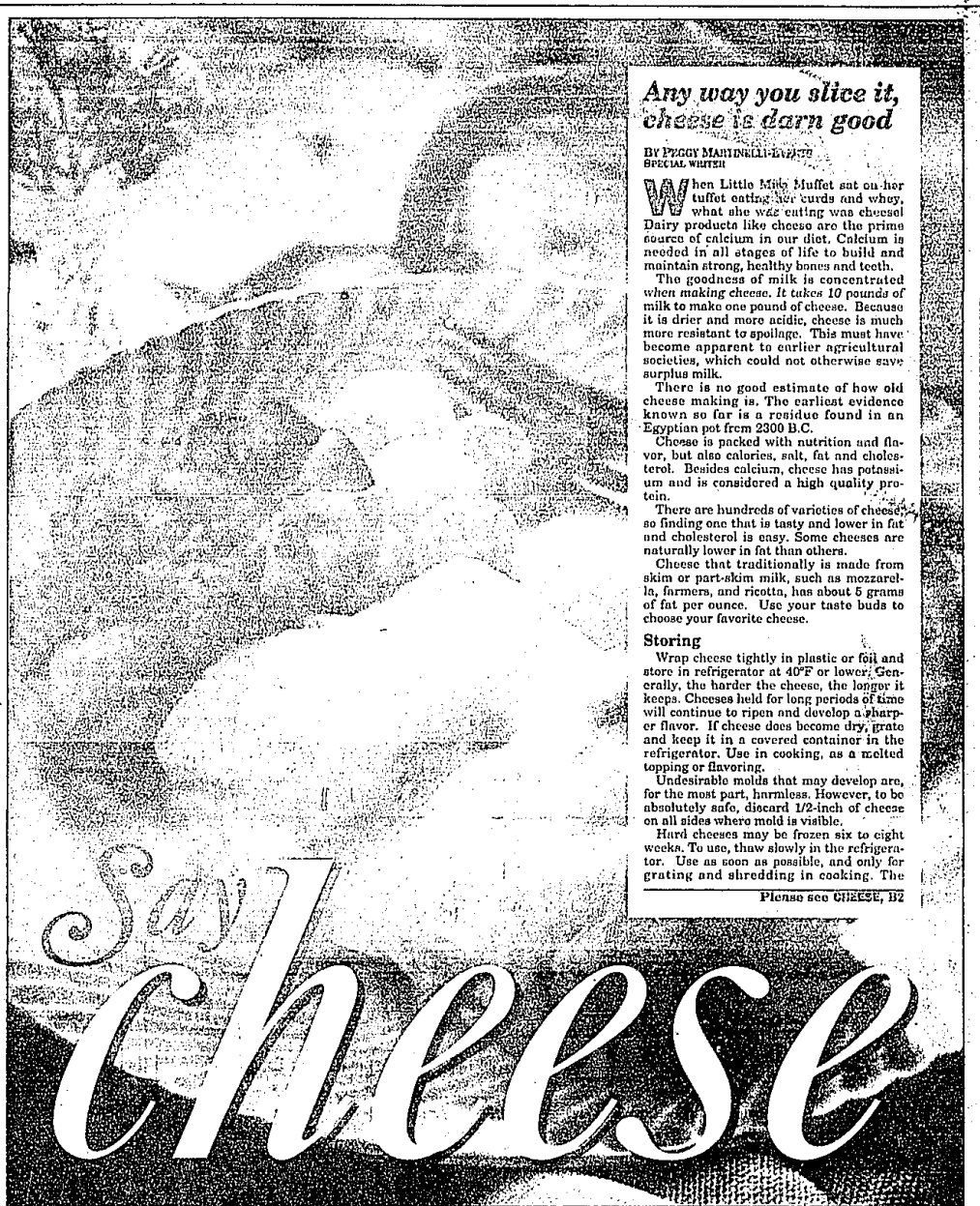
Vegetable flavors can be intensified by a pinch of sugar along with other seasonings. Bay leaf, dill seed and vinegar will improve the flavor of any vegetable. Prepared mustard is high in sodium, but you can add water and vinegar to dry mustard for a spread. Try adding a few of the following to perk up vegetables at your next meal:

- Asparagus** - lemon juice and chives
- Green beans** - marjoram, lemon juice, nutmeg, rosemary, dill seed, onions, chives, scallions
- Broccoli** - Lemon juice
- Cabbage** - Mustard dressing, dill seed, unsalted margarine with lemon and sugar
- Carrots** - Parsley, mint, or nutmeg; glazed with unsalted margarine and sugar; chopped chives, lemon juice.
- Capiflower** - Nutmeg
- Corn** - Green pepper, tomatoes (fresh or canned without salt), chives, parsley, onions, curry
- Potatoes** - Mint, fresh mushrooms, parsley, onions, chives, chervil, lemon juice

The recipe is an updated version of one of my favorites — spinach salad. Several ingredients were changed for smarter eating, flavor enhancement and convenience.

Canadian bacon takes the place of regular bacon, because of its lower fat content, and for cooking convenience. I'm a lazy cook, remember?

Because Canadian bacon comes from the pork tenderloin, the serving portion (2 ounces) has slightly more fat than 2 ounces of skinned chicken breast. The portion size also puts a lid on sodium



Any way you slice it, cheese is darn good

BY PEGGY MARTINDALE-LEWTON
SPECIAL WRITER

When Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet eating her curds and whey, what she was eating was cheese! Dairy products like cheese are the prime source of calcium in our diet. Calcium is needed in all stages of life to build and maintain strong, healthy bones and teeth.

The goodness of milk is concentrated when making cheese. It takes 10 pounds of milk to make one pound of cheese. Because it is drier and more acidic, cheese is much more resistant to spoilage. This must have become apparent to earlier agricultural societies, which could not otherwise save surplus milk.

There is no good estimate of how old cheese making is. The earliest evidence known so far is a residue found in an Egyptian pot from 2300 B.C.

Cheese is packed with nutrition and flavor, but also calories, salt, fat and cholesterol. Besides calcium, cheese has potassium and is considered a high quality protein.

There are hundreds of varieties of cheese, so finding one that is tasty and lower in fat and cholesterol is easy. Some cheeses are naturally lower in fat than others.

Cheese that traditionally is made from skim or part-skim milk, such as mozzarella, farmers, and ricotta, has about 5 grams of fat per ounce. Use your taste buds to choose your favorite cheese.

Storing

Wrap cheese tightly in plastic or foil and store in refrigerator at 40°F or lower. Generally, the harder the cheese, the longer it keeps. Cheeses held for long periods of time will continue to ripen and develop a sharper flavor. If cheese does become dry, grate and keep it in a covered container in the refrigerator. Use in cooking, as a melted topping or flavoring.

Undesirable molds that may develop are, for the most part, harmless. However, to be absolutely safe, discard 1/2-inch of cheese on all sides where mold is visible.

Hard cheeses may be frozen six to eight weeks. To use, thaw slowly in the refrigerator. Use as soon as possible, and only for grating and shredding in cooking. The

Please see CHEESE, B2

AMERICAN DAIRY ASSOCIATION

Cheesy dish: Squash Gratin with White Cheddar Cheese is a flavorful way to enjoy this year's crop of yellow squash.

Fruity main dish salad perks up summer appetites

MAIN DISH MIRACLE



MURIEL WAGNER

Are you into "fusion" cooking? Have you ever considered applying these principles to salads?

No, I'm not talking about blending flavors and ingredients from different ethnic dishes, but rather, mixing fruits and vegetables in the same salad.

The following recipe is a tasty example of flavor contrasts. The

sweetness of the fruit and tartness of the veggies is accentuated by the smoky, salty taste of Canadian bacon, and a soy-lime dressing. This salad is guaranteed to perk up jaded summer appetites.

The recipe is an updated version of one of my favorites — spinach salad. Several ingredients were changed for smarter eating, flavor enhancement and convenience.

Canadian bacon takes the place of regular bacon, because of its lower fat content, and for cooking convenience. I'm a lazy cook, remember?

Because Canadian bacon comes from the pork tenderloin, the serving portion (2 ounces) has slightly more fat than 2 ounces of skinned chicken breast. The portion size also puts a lid on sodium

content. Because Canadian bacon is already cooked, it requires nothing more than a short browning time to reheat. The warm-up adds an interesting temperature contrast to the other salad ingredients.

Mangoes are in season now. They're abundant and inexpensive. Mangoes have a punchy, pineapple taste, lots of fiber, vitamin C and beta carotene. Choose plump mangoes with no soft spots or wrinkled skin. Mangoes will ripen in your kitchen at room temperature out of the sun. When ripe, they have a fragrant aroma, and feel slightly soft.

To cut up mangoes, score the skin lengthwise into quarters and pull off the peel, holding the fruit over a bowl to catch the juices. The pit is wide and thick. Slice each side of the pit into two thick pieces. Cut the remaining fruit from the pit and cut into serving size pieces.

Besides this salad, I like to serve mangoes with grilled meat or chicken.

The soy sauce in this recipe is one of my Oriental cooking style secrets. As you know, soy sauce is relatively high in sodium. Regular soy sauce has 1,200mg of sodium per tablespoon; salt has 2,300mg per teaspoon. Reduced sodium soy sauce is prepared by diluting regular soy sauce with water and adding sweeteners, coloring and

preservatives. In a survey we did for my newsletter "Eating Younger" we found that Kikkoman Lite Soy had the best flavor of the "lite" soy sauces. But, we also found that diluting Tamari (Japanese soy sauce) with equal parts of dry sherry produced a sauce that was a taste treat with one-third of the sodium and no sweeteners, coloring or added preservatives. I've included it in my ingredient list, but you can substitute your favorite reduced sodium soy sauce if you like.

This salad is a one dish meal that partners well with warm, toasted whole wheat raisin bread strips. Keep the salad cool before serving.

FRUITFUL SPINACH, BACON AND TOMATO SALAD

- 10 ounces spinach leaves, washed and shredded
- 8 ounces Canadian bacon, sliced thin and cut into strips
- 2 large mangoes, peeled and diced
- 8 plum tomatoes, diced
- 1 bunch green onions, peeled and sliced
- 1/4 cup reduced sodium chicken bouillon
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic (2 cloves) chopped
- 4 tablespoons fresh lime juice

- 1 tablespoon tamari and 1 tablespoon dry sherry (mixed) or 2 tablespoons reduced sodium soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon white wine Worcestershire sauce

To make salad: Toss spinach, mango, tomatoes and onion together in a bowl.

To make dressing: Blend (tamari/sherry mixture) or soy sauce with bouillon, oil, garlic, lime juice and Worcestershire sauce.

Add dressing to vegetable-fruit mixture.

Heat Canadian bacon in a non-stick skillet until slightly browned. Add to salad mixture. Toss to blend. Serve immediately. Serves 4

Nutrition facts per serving: Calories 252, total fat 2.6g, saturated fat 0.8g, cholesterol 30mg, sodium 966mg.

Food exchanges: 2 lean meat, 3 vegetables, 1 fruit.

Look for Main Dish Miracle on the second Sunday of the month in Taste. Muriel G. Wagner is a registered dietitian and nutrition therapist with an office in Southfield. She publishes "Eating Younger," a quarterly newsletter with recipes and nutrition tips. To subscribe, send a check for \$13.50 to "Eating Younger," P.O. Box 69021, Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on Wine
- Twist on Tradition