Vegetable stew filling and nutritious

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A hot, cooked stew is just the thing to chase away the chilled-to-the-bone feeling some fall days produce, and meatless versions are just as warming.

This Vegetable Stew With Cracked Wheat is a tasty comfort food that is filling and nutritious. The cracked wheat adds crunch and flavor. Ingredients include pantry-shelf items to streamline shopping on bad-weather days, and cleanup is a snap if you serve the stew in an edible Whole Wheat Bread Bowl (recipe follows).

VEGETABLE STEW WITH CRACKED WHEAT

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 cup chopped onion
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 medium zucchini, thinly sliced
8 ounces fresh mushrooms, sliced
1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning
1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper
Two 14 1/2-ounce cans diced tomatoes
8-ounce can tomato sauce
14 1/2-ounce can vegetable stock
2/3 cup cracked wheat
15 1/2-ounce can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
14 1/2-ounce can green beans, drained
1/4 cup fresh parsley
3/4 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic; saute 5 minutes or until tender. Add zucchini and mushrooms; cook 5 minutes. Add Italian seasoning, crushed red pepper, tomatoes, tomato sauce, vegetable stock and cracked wheat. Bring to a boil; cover, reduce heat and simmer 30 minutes. Uncover and add kidney beans, green beans and parsley; simmer until heated through. Ladle about 1 and 1/3 cups into each bread bowl. Sprinkle with cheese.

Makes 6 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 260 cal., 14 g pro., 45 g carbo., 10 g fiber, 6 g fat, 8 mg chol., 1,180 mg sodium.

WHOLE WHEAT BREAD BOWLS

1 1/4 cups warm water (105 to 115 F)
1 package active dry yeast
1 1/2 teaspoons sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 tablespoon oil
2 1/4 to 2 3/4 cups bread flour
1 cup whole wheat flour
1 egg, beaten
1 tablespoon milk

Measure water into a large bowl. Sprinkle in yeast; stir until dissolved. Add sugar, salt, oil and 1 1/4 cups bread flour; beat until smooth. Add whole wheat flour and enough additional bread flour to make a stiff dough. Turn onto a lightly floured board; knead until smooth and elastic, 10 to 12 minutes. Place dough in a bowl that has been lightly coated with nonstick spray, turning to grease top. Cover; let rise in warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 400 F. Grease the outsides of 6 ovenproof bowls that are approximately 4 inches in diameter (such as 10-ounce custard cups).

Punch dough down; divide into 6 pieces. Cover and let rest 10 minutes. Spread each piece into a circle about 6 inches in diameter. Place over outside of bowl, working dough with hands until it fits. Set bowls, dough side up, on a baking sheet coated with nonstick spray. Cover with plastic wrap; let rise in warm place until doubled, about 30 minutes.

Combine egg and milk; gently brush mixture on dough. Bake in oven at 400 F for 15 to 20 minutes until golden brown. Using potholders, carefully remove the bowls. Set bread bowls, open side up, on baking pan; bake for 5 minutes.

Makes six 4-inch bowls.

Nutrition information per serving:@ 279 cal., 10 g pro., 53 g carbo., 3.9 g fiber, 3.6 g fat, 9 mg chol., 588 mg sodium.

Recipes from: Wheat Foods Council.

Simmering soups offer comfort in a bowl

See related 2 Unique column on Taste front. Recipes compliments of Chef Kelli Lewton.

This soup is a great way to use barbecue leftovers.

STEAK & POTATO CORN CHOWDER

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 red bell pepper (small dice)
1 onion (small dice)
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 quart beef stock
2 cups diced potatoes (skin on)
2 New York strip steaks (cooked & diced) or beef of your choice
2 cups milk or half & half
1 cup fresh or frozen corn
3/4 cup shelled fresh or frozen peas
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley
Salt and pepper to taste

Sauté garlic, onions, and pepper until soft. Add beef stock and potatoes, simmer 10-12 minutes. Add milk and corn, simmer 5 minutes.

Remove 1/3 of liquid and puree in a blender or food processor. Return mixture to pot add beef, peas, Worcestershire sauce and parsley, season with salt and pepper, simmer 5 minutes.

Garnish if desired with thinly-sliced onion lightly coated in seasoned flour and fried in vegetable oil. Blot grease and season with salt and pepper. Place a small bundle of fried onions on top of each soup bowl.

Makes about 8 six-ounce servings.

AUTUMN TURKEY & ROOT VEGETABLE STEW

1 pound turkey breast (raw), chopped into 1 1/2-inch cubes
1 cup flour seasoned with salt and pepper
1 cup diced mire poix (combine diced celery carrot & onion to make 1 cup)
3 tablespoons butter
6 cups chicken stock
1/4 teaspoon caraway seeds
1 bay leaf
3/4 cup fresh cider
1 piece rutabaga (chunky dice)
3 carrots, (chunky dice)
3 turnips, (chunky dice)
6 parsnips, (chunky dice)
1 cup butternut squash (peeled and chunky dice)
1 Granny Smith apple (peeled and medium dice)
3/4 cup shelled fresh of frozen peas
3 tablespoons pure maple syrup
2 tablespoons fresh sage finely chopped

Season raw turkey breast chunks with salt and pepper. Dredge turkey in seasoned flour and sauté in melted butter in heavy bottom pan until browned on all sides.

Add mire poix, stock, cider and bay leaf. Bring to a bubble and reduce heat. Simmer for 15 minutes.

Add veggies and apples and simmer for another 15 minutes.

Add maple, peas and sage, cook for another 5 minutes. Adjust seasonings. Yield 8 eight-ounce portions.

Serving suggestions:

Serve in hollowed small pumpkin, bread bowl or right out of the pot into your favorite bowl.

You can substitute leftover cooked chicken or turkey for the turkey breast. If using leftovers, omit first two steps. Add meat after simmering vegetables and apples for 15 minutes.

Tangy broccoli salad ready in minutes

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Broccoli, Sweet Onion and Pecan Salad is a bright, tangy salad that takes only about 20 minutes to assemble.

In addition to blanched broccoli florets, sliced onions and toasted pecans, the salad gets a flavor bonus from red bell-pepper "matchsticks" and raisins. The piquant dressing includes vinegar, soy sauce, garlic and a creamy touch of mayonnaise.

The salad makes 6 servings as a side dish.

Double servings would make a nourishing light lunch, with crusty bread, and fruit to follow.

BROCCOLI, SWEET ONION AND PECAN SALAD

(Preparation time: 20 minutes)

1 large bunch broccoli, tough stem ends removed
1/2 cup pecan halves
1 tablespoon sugar
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar or rice vinegar
1/2 teaspoon soy sauce
1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
1 tablespoon vegetable or light olive oil
1 tablespoon mayonnaise
1/2 cup Vidalia or other sweet onion cut into thin slices
1/4 cup red bell-pepper "matchsticks," cut into thin julienne strips
1/4 cup raisins

Preheat oven to 350 F.

Separate broccoli into florets. Slice tender stalks into thin crosswise coin shapes. Bring a 2-quart saucepan half full of lightly slated water to a boil. Toss in florets and coins and blanch for 30 seconds, then drain quickly and immerse broccoli in a bowl of ice water. Drain again and chill.

Meanwhile, spread pecan halves on a baking sheet and toast at 350 F for 5 to 7 minutes, while you prepare the rest of the salad.

To make the dressing: In a small bowl, whisk together sugar and vinegar. Stir in soy sauce, garlic and pepper. Whisk in oil and mayonnaise until smooth. Set aside.

In a glass serving bowl, combine reserved broccoli, onion slices, pepper matchsticks and raisins. Remove pecans from oven and break in half lengthwise. Just before serving, pour dressing over broccoli mixture and toss to coat ingredients well. Scatter toasted pecans on top.

Makes 6 servings.

Recipe from: Georgia Pecan Commission

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