

# Add a little sparkle to meals with tangy cilantro

The world is made up of two kinds of people: those who love cilantro and those who don't. But even those who haven't liked it in the past could enjoy it in amounts just large enough to add a little sparkle to their meals.

A relation of the parsley family, cilantro is also known as coriander and Chinese or Arab parsley. It plays a key role in Mexican, Middle Eastern and Asian dishes. And, because of its distinctive taste and cancer-fighting antioxidants, cilantro is increasingly being used in American dishes like sauces, salads, spreads, soups, and especially with bland foods.

Cilantro is a three-foot tall

plant with flat, tangy-tasting green leaves which, as an herb, can be used fresh or dried. The seeds are used as an aromatic, slightly sweet spice - in European breads, Middle Eastern stews and Asian curries. Known as coriander dates back 3,000 years, when Egyptians used it as both culinary and medicinal aids. The seeds were found in Egyptian tombs, presumably to prevent indigestion in the afterlife.

The Bible describes manna - the food ancient Hebrews ate while fleeing from Egypt - as being "small, round and white, like coriander seed." The Romans, who used coriander and vinegar to preserve meat, spread

the use of this herb throughout Europe and Asia.

Fresh cilantro is found in the produce section of most markets. Don't rinse the leaves before you store cilantro in your refrigerator (where it will last three to four days). If the roots have been cut off, place the bunch upright in a glass of water and cover loosely with a plastic bag. If the roots are intact, wrap them in wet paper toweling and then store in a plastic bag. Rinse the leaves only when you are ready to use them.

Cilantro leaves can be added to almost any dish. Mix chopped cilantro with cucumbers, fresh lime juice and chili powder for a great tasting salad. Turn ordi-

nary potato salad into an elegant dish by combining small red potatoes with minced onions, garlic, plain fat-free yogurt and finely chopped cilantro. Make a marinade of chopped cilantro, mustard seeds, fresh lime juice, ginger, garlic and olive oil, and let marinated ingredients like fish or poultry stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.

Add a little minced cilantro to broths and soups to add some zing. Jazz up a simple dish like a grilled cheese sandwich by adding fresh cilantro leaves between cheese and slices of whole wheat bread.

Another simple dish that benefits from cilantro's tang is this easy bean salad.

## SOUTHWESTERN BEAN SALAD

- 2 cans (15-oz. each) pinto, black or small white beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/2 cup diced red onion
- 1/2 cup shredded carrot
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh jalapeno or other chili pepper

In large bowl, combine beans,

onion, carrot and cilantro until well mixed.

In small non-stick skillet, heat cumin over low heat just until warm, about 30 seconds. Stir in juice, oil and jalapeno until blended. Pour dressing over salad and toss to blend.

Divide evenly among 4 salad bowls and serve. Makes 4 servings.

**Nutritional information per serving:** 218 calories, 4 g. fat (less than 1 g. saturated fat), 33 g. carbohydrate, 12 g. protein, 12 g. dietary fiber, 415 mg. sodium.

Recipe courtesy of the American Institute for Cancer Research.

## Try Thai cuisine

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

### CHICKEN SATAYS

- 1 pound chicken breast (cut into 2-ounce strips)

### Marinade

- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 cup peanut or vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup light soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons palm sugar
- 1 raw onion
- 1 diced cucumber

Place chicken strips in container.

Mix all marinade ingredients. Pour marinade over chicken and let marinade for at least four hours preferably over night.

Thread chicken on long bamboo skewers and grill on hot flat service or barbecue grill approximately 2 minutes per side on medium/high heat.

Sprinkle onions and cumin on top to garnish.

### GLASS NOODLE SALAD

- 1 package (approximately 7 ounces) dried glass noodles soaked and drained
- 2 celery stalks sliced thin
- 4 green onion sliced thin
- 1/2 green pepper diced small
- 2 limes juiced
- 4 small green chilies finely minced
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 3 tablespoons crushed roasted peanuts
- 1 teaspoon dried crushed chilies
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 tablespoons Fish or soy sauce
- Fresh coriander sprigs to garnish

Cook noodles in boiling water for 3-4 minutes, drain and rinse with cold water.

Cut noodles in 5-inch lengths (about 3 cuts per noodle) just cut in big bunch. Place in bowl.

Mix noodles with the rest of the ingredients, garnish with coriander sprigs and serve at room temperature.

## Shredded spuds make salmon special

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Take stylish salmon fillets, crust them with down-to-earth shredded spuds, and in about half-an-hour a savory dinner for four is on the table.

The potatoes can be shredded fresh, or pre-shredded frozen hash browns, fried to a golden-brown crust on the fish fillets. To complement the salmon, serve a low-fat cucumber-feta sauce, which adds a fresh, tangy accent. To further streamline meal preparation, the sauce can be made a day in advance and refrigerated overnight in an airtight container.

### POTATO CRUSTED SALMON WITH CUCUMBER-FETA SAUCE

(Preparation 10 minutes, cooking time 20 minutes)

- 1/2 cup plain fat-free yogurt
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped seeded cucumber
- 1/2 teaspoon dried mint or dill weed
- 4 skinless salmon fillets (about 4 ounces each)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

- 2 cups (about 10 ounces) shredded fresh potatoes or frozen shredded hash-brown potatoes, thawed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Lemon wedges and kalamata olives, optional

In small bowl, combine yogurt, feta cheese, cucumber and mint; set aside.

Pat fish dry with paper towels; season with salt and pepper. Place 1/2 cup potato on top of each fillet, pressing firmly to form an even layer. In large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium heat until hot. Carefully place fillets, potato

side down, in skillet. Cook 8 to 10 minutes (without moving fillets) until potatoes are golden brown. Using large spatula, turn fillets over; cook an additional 4 to 6 minutes or until fish is cooked to desired doneness. Serve with sauce and, if desired, lemon and olives.

Makes 4 servings.

**Nutrition information per serving:** 362 cal., 18 g. fat, 75 mg. chol., 351 mg. sodium, 21 g. carb., 2 g. fiber, 27 g. pro.

Recipe from National Potato Promotion Board.

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