

HEALTHY, WEALTHY, & WISE

The Family & Consumer Sciences Newsletter

Manatee County Extension Service | 1303 17th Street West · Palmetto, FL 34221 | (941) 722-4524

Quick Turkey Tip

Just in time for Thanksgiving, here's a handy tip to remember when baking that holiday bird:

For the most accurate measure of a turkey's temperature, insert thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh, avoiding the bone, to ensure meat is at the minimum 165°F. If you stuff your bird, the center of the stuffing should also register 165°F before serving.

The best type of thermometer to use is a bimetallic stemmed meat thermometer. Never use a glass thermometer or a digital oral thermometer (the type you use on yourself) to measure food temperature.

PLEASE NOTE

In an effort to save on postage and reduce paper use, you can receive this newsletter electronically. To sign up for our electronic mailing list, please send an e-mail to skennedy@ufl.edu. Receiving the newsletter via e-mail means you will no longer receive a hard copy in the mail.

Agent's Corner



As the holidays approach—and hopefully the cool weather, too—it's important to remember how easy it is to get caught up and carried away. This time of year we tend to eat too much, drink too much, and spend too much—then live to regret it when January comes along.

This year, take a moment to step back and assess what's really important. Plan ahead to reduce your risk of suffering from the holiday doldrums.

Go Gators!

Samantha Kennedy
Samantha Kennedy, M.S.
Family & Consumer Sciences Agent

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Simply Florida: A Taste of Flavors from the Sunshine State

Looking for a great gift idea for that gourmet cook in your life? The new *Simply Florida* cookbook created by Family & Consumer Sciences agents throughout Florida is the perfect choice! Order your copy today by calling Samantha at (941) 722-4524 or by visiting <http://www.simplyflorida.org>.

In this Issue:

Quick Turkey Tip	1
Spice Things Up With Flavored Oils	2
Preparing Perfect Patties	2
Recipe Spotlight	2
The Clear vs. Cloudy Conundrum	3
Going Green for the Winter	3
Tasty Tuna Tidbits	3
Wintertime...and the living is easy	4
Earth-Friendly Tip: Household Cleaners	4

Spice Things Up With Flavored Oils

Tired of trying to decide among a myriad of flavoring choices at the dinner table? Salt. Pepper. A variety of herbs and spices. So many to choose from. Well, there's another way to add flavor to your dishes that's easy and delicious: flavored oils.

You can make them yourself with a variety of ingredients and a simple splash in the frying pan or baking dish can add pizzazz to any dish. Here are a few tips:

- Choose an appropriate oil. For Mediterranean flair, infuse olive oil with crushed garlic and rosemary. For an Asian dish, infuse sesame or peanut oil with hot chiles. If you have truffle shavings, choose a neutral-tasting oil, such as canola or regular olive oil, that won't overpower the truffles' exotic flavor.
- Smash or slice ingredients to release their natural flavors (chiles, lemon rind, basil, garlic, and truffles are some suggestions), and immerse in room temperature oil for 24 to 48 hours. Or heat over very low heat for 5 minutes, turn off the heat, and cool.
- Strain the oil; discard solids. Seal and store the oil in the refrigerator for up to one month. Don't leave the ingredients in the oil, or they may cause it to spoil.

Adapted from *Cooking Light*, August 2007.

**Estimated amount of glucose used by
an adult human brain each day,
expressed in M&Ms: 250.**

- Harper's Index -

Preparing the Perfect Patty



Building a better burger may sound easy enough—take a bit of ground meat, mash it into a patty, and cook it—but with a few simple tips, you can turn the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Start with fresh, not frozen, ground meat. In addition to compromising taste, frozen meat may not hold together well on the grill. What does fresh mean, exactly? Less than two days in the refrigerator.

Cut fat by substituting a portion of meat with lightly sautéed or finely grated potato or carrot. Tomato sauce is especially useful to improve moisture content if you're using 95 percent lean ground beef.

Blend in seasonings such as garlic, basil, or onions gently with a fork. Careful with salt; oversalting may result in tough patties because it dries out the meat.

Make a small indentation in the middle of the patty. Lightly pressing the center with your fingers help prevent breaking and allows even cooking.

Don't mash the patty when cooking. This squeezes out the juiciness more than the fat. Make a thin, flat patty, and move it to a paper towel after cooking to absorb excess fat.

Adapted from *Cooking Light*, May 2007.

Recipe Spotlight: Vegetable Spaghetti Bake

Ingredients:

8 ounces spaghetti
1 (28 oz.) jar meatless spaghetti sauce
1 Tbsp. olive or canola oil
1 1/2 c. zucchini, diced
1 c. sliced celery
1 c. thinly sliced carrots
1 c. sliced fresh mushrooms
1 onion, chopped
2 c. fat-free cottage cheese
2 c. (8 oz.) shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
2 Tbsp. grated parmesan cheese

Directions:

Cook the pasta, drain, and place in a large bowl. Add 1 1/2 cups of the spaghetti sauce and mix until coated. Heat the oil in a skillet until hot and add zucchini, celery, onions, carrots, and mushrooms. Sauté until tender. Spread 1/2 cup of the remaining sauce in a 9x13 baking dish coated with nonstick cooking spray. Layer the pasta mixture, cottage cheese, vegetable mixture, and mozzarella cheese in the baking dish. Spread with the remaining sauce and sprinkle with parmesan cheese. Bake, covered, in a preheated 350°F oven for 30 minutes. Remove the cover and bake for 10 to 15 minutes or until bubbly. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Recipe taken from the *Simply Florida* cookbook.

The Clear vs. Cloudy Conundrum

“An apple a day keeps the doctor away.”

It may be true for apples, but it’s certainly not true for most apple juices. Unfortunately, processed apple juice—the clear kind, at least—is high in sugar, but lacks a powerful nutritional punch in other important areas.

However, all is not lost. According to a recent study, pulpy or “cloudier” apple juice has four times more antioxidants than its clear counterpart. And have no fear: cloudy does not mean unpasteurized. All it means is that the pulp and other particles, which contain the majority of the antioxidants in most fruits, weren’t removed.

To find the safest, healthiest apple juice, look for “unfiltered” on the ingredient list, or use this trick: Hold the bottle up to the light and if the juice is so clear you can see through it, chances are you won’t see many health benefits either.



Adapted from *Health*, July/August 2007.

Going Green for the Winter

It’s the time of year for winter greens—growing them, cooking them, and eating them. Here are a few to keep your eye out for this season:

Collards. A variety of cabbage, this hearty green tastes a lot like its cousin. It’s versatility allows for a variety of uses and flavor combinations. Substitutions include kale, mustard greens, or turnip greens.

Escarole. With a slightly bitter flavor, it’s reminiscent of it Belgian endive relative. It’s used mostly in salads since its delicate leaves don’t hold up to cooking too well. Substitutions include mustard greens, arugula, or spinach.

Kale. This green has an earthy flavor similar to cabbage. Its sturdy leaves hold up well during cooking and are excellent added to casseroles. Substitutions include collard greens, Swiss chard, mustard greens, or spinach.

Mustard greens. These greens have a spicy, peppery taste. The smaller the leaves, the sharper the flavor. Excellent for use in stir-fries and sautés. Substitutions include escarole, kale, Swiss chard, or spinach.

Adapted from *Cooking Light*, March 2007.

“My dog is worried about the economy because Alpo is up to 99 cents a can. That’s almost \$7.00 in dog money.”

- Joe Weinstein -

Keeping Your Fresh Herbs Fresher Longer

When you have a small amount of herbs, wrap them in damp paper towels to keep them fresh for a few days. If you have a large bunch, however, try this method: Line a glass container with four paper towels, letting them extend over the edge. Trim 1/2 inch off the stems and place herbs in the glass. Wrap the paper towels that are hanging over the edge around the top of the glass, tucking into the sides to secure. Pour water into the glass until the towels are saturated and there’s an inch of liquid on the bottom. Store in the refrigerator.

Tasty Tuna Tidbits

Many kinds of tuna are available in cans or tins, glass jars, or pouches.

Pouches filled with fish and no added liquid are a popular convenience item. Pouches and glass jars allow the pure tuna flavor to shine.

Most canned tuna is packed in water, broth, olive oil, or canola oil. Read the labels closely to determine whether any ingredients, such as salt or broth, have been added, and which type and cut of fish are contained.

The price of tuna varies widely and depends upon the cut of fish, fishing method, and canning process. For example, ventresca tuna, the prime cut from the fatty belly area of tuna, is typically line-caught and canned fresh; therefore, it’s the most expensive.

Tuna varieties offer differing amounts of omega-3 fatty acids. Albacore, often labeled “white meat tuna,” has the most: One 4 oz. serving packed in water delivers 1.06 grams, while you’ll get 0.5 gram from the same size serving of albacore packed in oil. Since omega-3s are oils, they don’t disperse when the fish is packed in water, and draining the water allows most of these beneficial fatty acids to remain in the fish. But tuna packed in oil provides an environment where the fish’s natural oils intermingle with the packing oil, so when the can it drained, some of the omega-3 oils are lost.

Taken from *Cooking Light*, March 2007.



November is National Healthy Skin Month



Wintertime...and the living is easy

You don't have to start from scratch to make your living space more comfortable, accessible, and functional. By incorporating a few Universal Design (the idea of updating existing living space to accommodate changing physical requirements) tips, you can transform your current space.

Make everyday tasks simple. Replace doorknobs with lever handles, which require less effort to open. Swap conventional toggle light switches for lighted rocker switches, which are visible in the dark and can be tapped on with an elbow if your hands are full.

Reorganize storage. Retrofit cabinets with full-extension roller slides and wire baskets so you'll have easier access to the back. Store heavy items within comfortable reach; use cabinets to store seasonal and seldom-used objects.

Arrange your kitchen into work zones. Organize to save steps, such as storing flatware in a drawer near the dishwasher for quick unloading.

Choose new appliances wisely. Ranges with controls at the front eliminate reaching over hot burners. Select side-by-side refrigerators and front-loading washers and dryers elevated on platforms for easy access.

Improve lighting. Add task lighting under kitchen cabinets, path lights outside, and nightlights in bathrooms. Replace lamps or fixtures with those allowing higher wattages to fully illuminate rooms.

Taken from Cooking Light, April 2007.

Earth-Friendly Tip: Household Cleaners

Many of today's commercial cleaners are petroleum-based, which may have harmful effects on human and environmental health. But have no fear! On the market today are many wonderful "green" cleaning products that are planet- (and you-) friendly and can be found alongside their more conventional cousins in the cleaning aisle. These products are non-toxic, biodegradable, non-petroleum-based, and are just as effective at getting rid of grime.

They do, however, tend to be more expensive. If spending extra money isn't your thing, you can still "clean green" by taking advantage of a couple of everyday products you probably have in your pantry right now.

White vinegar and **baking soda** are two of the most effective cleaning products out there and cost just a fraction of what commercial cleaning products cost. Add a little warm water to either of these products and you have created a solution that can clean just about everything, from tile floors to coffee-stained mugs to sinks and showers.

Important Dates

November 2	Guild Birthday Lunch 1:00 - 3:00pm
December 7	
November 9, 16, 23, 30	Guild Meeting 1:00 - 3:00pm
December 14, 21, 28	
November 11	Veteran's Day Extension office CLOSED
November 26-27	Thanksgiving Holiday Extension office CLOSED
December 24-25	Christmas Holiday Extension office CLOSED



IFAS Extension

Manatee County Extension

Solutions for Your Life.

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