

There are a couple of special days coming in early February for which you may want to prepare some new and healthful fare. (Stretch out of your comfort zone!) On Feb. 8 we have "Fat Tuesday" which marks the end of Mardi Gras. So how about a healthy Cajun dish? This one is packed with good things like veggies and beans. You can substitute whatever kind of beans is your favorite! Did you know the darker the bean, the more antioxidants it has? And look how much fiber they add to the recipe!

Healthy Cajun Beans and Rice

Makes 4 servings

1 Tbsp. olive oil
1/2 pound turkey sausage, sliced into half inch thick slices (such as Healthy Choice, Louis Rich)
1 medium onion, chopped
1 medium green pepper, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
6 cups cooked rice (try brown rice!)
1 can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
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3 and 1/2 cups stewed tomatoes
1 tsp. oregano
1 Tbsp. Cajun spices
1/2 tsp. hot pepper sauce (if desired)
1 cup green onions, thinly sliced

Heat oil in large skillet over medium high heat. Add sausage, onion, green pepper and garlic. Cook, stirring 7-10 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Add rice, beans, tomatoes, oregano and hot pepper sauce. Cook and stir 2-3 minutes more until well blended and heated through. Serve with green onions sprinkled on top. For a vegetarian dish or lower fat dish, omit the turkey sausage.

Per serving=700 calories, 11 g fat, 35 mg cholesterol, 33 g protein, **14 g fiber**, 942 mg sodium

The Chinese New Year begins on Feb.9, 2005 What a great time to try out a new stir-fry recipe! This one features bok choy (sort of a cross between celery and romaine lettuce) which has a light, sweet and crisp flavor. It is very nutrient dense with high amounts of vitamin A, vitamin C and calcium and is very low in calories. Serve over brown rice and add another whole grain to your intake!

15 minute Stir Fried Chicken and Bok Choy

Serves 4

1 Tbsp. peanut oil or chicken broth
1 cup chopped scallion
2 Tbsp. fresh minced ginger
2 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into bite sized pieces
1 1/2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms (shiitake or another type)
4 cups chopped bok choy
2 Tbsp. soy sauce (or use 1 Tbsp with 1 Tbsp. water added to reduce sodium)
1 Tbsp. rice vinegar
Pepper to taste
Pinch of red pepper flakes (if you like it spicy!)

Stir-fry scallions in oil (or broth to reduce fat and calories) in non-stick wok or large skillet for 2 minutes. Add ginger and stir and cook for another minute. Add chicken, stirring constantly for 2 to 3 minutes. Add mushrooms and bok choy. Stir fry another 3 to 4 minutes. Then add soy sauce, rice vinegar, pepper and red pepper flakes.

The American Heart Association and the new Dietary guidelines are recommending at least 2 servings of fish a week. Many individuals are concerned about mercury and PCB contamination however, food safety experts indicate the health benefits of eating fish outweigh the risks. Here is a new way to serve pasta which uses clams which are low in contaminants, a cancer -fighting cruciferous vegetable and garlic, rich in allicin which boosts immune function and reduces cancer risk and may aid in the control of blood pressure and cholesterol.

Pasta With Broccoli and Clam Sauce

Serves 4

12 ounces pasta of choice

2 cups broccoli florets (frozen broccoli can also be used)

2 Tbsp. olive oil

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 can (6.5 ounces) minced clams

Cook pasta according to package directions, using extra water. About 5 minutes (less time for frozen broccoli) before pasta is done, add broccoli and continue to cook until pasta and broccoli are tender. Drain thoroughly. While pasta is cooking, prepare sauce by heating oil in small saucepan. Add garlic and cook over low heat until tender. Stir in undrained clams, bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 3 to 5 minutes to develop the flavors. Pour sauce over broccoli-pasta mixture. (Broccoli can also be steamed separately from the pasta).

Per serving=249 calories, 9 g fat

I'll be out-of-town next week so there will not be any recipes.

Eat healthy and enjoy!!

Sally

Sally Barclay, MS RD LD
Nutrition Clinic for Employee Wellness
Iowa State University
Food Science and Human Nutrition Department
132B MacKay Hall
294-9625
barclay@iastate.edu