

Making America Organic...One Home At a Time!



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Nutrition Rules Spur Creative Solutions

Cathy the cafeteria worker stands smiling behind a lunch counter filled with everything from salads to desserts. She may just be an image on the Internet, but she's not shy about telling you what she thinks about your food choices.

A salad gets instant accolades: "Congratulations! That's a food with both vitamin A and vitamin C."

Click your mouse on a cookie though and a red circle lights up, warning it's a "Whoa" food -- one that should be eaten less often than a "Go" or "Slow" food.

A suburban Dallas school district launched the "Virtual Cafeteria" site to show what's being served each day at each school. It can tally nutritional information for items on a lunch tray, including calories, fat grams, carbs, protein, vitamin A and vitamin C.

For instance, a meal of a chef salad, a slice of pizza, a cookie and milk will cost \$4.75 and runs about 746 calories.

"We are really making a valiant effort to put nutritional information in the hands of our customers, be it parents, a grandmother, a teacher or the student themselves," said Rachelle Fowler, student nutrition director for the Carrollton-Farmers Branch school district.

About 30 percent of U.S. schoolchildren are believed to be overweight and about 35 percent of Texas children are overweight, something that inspired state Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs to implement stricter nutrition guidelines last year for schools in the state.

Schools are adopting those guidelines and adding their own initiatives, such as the efforts at Carrollton-Farmers Branch and fruit

and vegetable taste-testings for kindergartners at the Magnolia district in southeast Texas.



"We've had fantastic response from school districts across the state," said Beverly Boyd, spokeswoman for the Texas Department of Agriculture. "We've seen so many innovative and creative ideas and physical activities."

Fowler said Carrollton-Farmers Branch officials expect the Web site to be used not only by students, but by teachers as a classroom tool. "Our parents at home can sit down with their children and help them make good, sound nutrition choices," she said.

Since school just started, many students haven't learned about the Web site yet, school officials said. Fowler's department will promote it on in-school television spots and has given staff demonstrations.

Parent Marie Goldis learned about the Web site during a "Meet the Teacher Night" at her daughter's elementary school and the next day explored the site.

"I think it's going to help the kids if they actually get in there and use it," said Goldis, who plans to help her children, a kindergartner and a 7th-grader, plan meals.

She said that she hopes learning the details like how much sugar or carbohydrates are in a product might help her children make better choices.

"(My son) thought it was neat to be able to see the contents and also know ahead of time what's going to be on the menu," Goldis said.

Harvest Blend Regular

- Celery
- Baby Carrots
- Hass Avocado
- Baby Bok Choy
- Red Butter Lettuce
- Red Onions
- Alfalfa Sprouts
- Cherry Tomatoes
- Jonagold Apples
- Starkrimson Pears
- Thompson Grapes
- Kiwi
- Valencia Oranges

See the web site for details on our other options. Produce bag contents are subject to change based on availability.

You Don't Say

"Fake food -- I mean those patented substances chemically flavored and mechanically bulked out to kill the appetite and deceive the gut -- is unnatural, almost immoral, a bane to good eating and good cooking." - Julia Child

"I have always been punctual at the hour of dinner, for I know that all those whom I kept waiting at that provoking interval would employ those unpleasant moments to sum up my faults." - Nicolas Boileau

"The best way to lose weight is to close your mouth - something very difficult for a politician. Or watch your food - just watch it, don't eat it." - Edward Koch

"So far I've always kept my diet secret but now I might as well tell everyone what it is. Lots of grapefruit throughout the day and plenty of virile young men at night." - Angie Dickinson

ORGANICS & EXCESSIVE PACKAGING

Eco-conscious consumers are increasingly suffering ethical short-circuits while shopping. Yes, those organic crackers were made from organic wheat that was not doused with synthetic pesticides or fertilizers. Good for the environment and worth the extra cost?

Yes... But what about the packaging? Neatly lined up in a plastic tray that's shrinkwrapped in more plastic and then swaddled up in a sealed plastic bag, these "organic" crackers suddenly lose their environmental edge.

So what's a consumer to do? Well, if you're from the UK, things are looking up. This week, the British Government announced a new funding program that will reduce waste from packaging of organic products and create new guidelines wherein producers seeking organic certification must also meet stringent packaging waste standards. For US shoppers, the Organic Consumers Association recommends choosing organic products with minimal and/or recycled packaging.

Recipes

24-Hour Lettuce Salad

- 1 head lettuce, torn
- 1/2 cup celery, chopped
- 1/2 cup green pepper, diced
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 1 pk frozen baby green peas, slightly thawed
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 ts sugar or honey
- 4 oz cheddar cheese, grated
- 8 slices bacon or fakin' bacon, crumbled

Layer first 5 ingredients in a glass bowl in order of listing. Spread on mayonnaise. Sprinkle on sugar or honey, then cheese, then bacon. Cover with foil and refrigerate overnight. Toss lightly just before serving.

Korean BBQ Steak on Hot and Sour Slaw

- 2 tbsp grill seasoning blend
- 1/4 cup Tamari dark soy
- 2 tbsp honey
- 2 tsp hot red pepper flakes, divided
- 4 large cloves garlic, chopped, divided
- 2 tsp toasted (dark) sesame oil
- 2 scallions, finely chopped
- 2 lb flank steak
- 3/4# lb bok choy, trimmed and shredded with a knife
- 1/2 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 cup sauerkraut

In a shallow dish, combine grill seasoning, dark soy, a tablespoon honey, 1 teaspoon of the hot pepper flakes, half of the chopped garlic, sesame oil, scallions and a drizzle of vegetable oil. Coat the flank steak in the mixture and let it stand 10 minutes.

Preheat indoor electric grill, stove top grill pan or outdoor grill to medium high. When the grill pan or grill is screaming hot, add meat and cook 5 minutes on each side for medium rare, 7 to 8 minutes on each side for medium well doneness.

STUDY: HIGH LEVELS OF PESTICIDES IN KIDS' DIETS

U.S. government scientists from the Centers for Disease Control have released a new study revealing that switching to organic foods provides children with "dramatic and immediate" protection from toxic pesticides.

The scientists tested the urine of elementary school children for 15 days. Children ate conventional foods for ten of the days and ate organic foods for five days. During those five days, researchers saw the toxins malathion and chlorpyrifos in the children's urine completely disappear. These chemicals are two of the most commonly found pesticides on non-organic foods, and are associated with nerve damage in children. Pesticide levels increased five-fold in the children's urine as soon as conventional foods were reintroduced to their diet.

The study concludes, "An organic diet provides a dramatic and immediate protective effect against exposure to organophosphorus pesticides that are commonly used in agricultural production."

Heat a large skillet over high heat. Add 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, bok choy and peppers. Season with salt and stir fry 2 or 3 minutes. Add a drizzle of honey, about 1 tablespoon, hot pepper flakes and garlic and toss to combine with bok choy. Add sauerkraut and mix in, heating it through 1 minute. Turn off heat.

To serve, let meat rest 5 minutes for juices to redistribute. Thinly slice the meat on a heavy angle against the grain (the lines in the meat). Pile the slaw up and top with sliced Korean steak and serve.

Alfalfa Sprout Sandwich

- 1 cup alfalfa sprouts
- 1 cup carrots, shredded
- 1 cup chicken, skinned, boned, cooked and diced
- 1 cup tomatoes, diced
- 1 cup green peppers, diced
- 1 cup lettuce, shredded
- 1/4 cup low-fat mayonnaise
- 6 pita rounds, medium size

Place all the ingredients except pita rounds in a bowl; toss. Cut each pita in half and fill halves with mixture.

Sherry Cherry Tomatoes

- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- 2 tbsp sherry vinegar or dry sherry wine
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- salt

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Preheat a skillet over medium high heat. Add extra-virgin olive oil, garlic and onions. Sweat them out 2 to 3 minutes then add cherry tomatoes. Turn tomatoes to coat in fat. Add sherry vinegar or sherry, sugar, pepper flakes and salt. Toss to coat tomatoes and roast for 18 to 20 minutes.