

Family Fun with Food

Recipes and Food Activities for the Whole Family

Many of us are home with our families during the COVID-19 outbreak. What better time to explore new, fun ways to involve our kids in the kitchen and broaden their food horizons? Although the foods available to us may be somewhat limited right now, the opportunities to make food fun are endless. **When kids take part in the cooking process and get to try new foods along the way, they tend to be more accepting of the final product and they learn important skills in the process.** Try some of the following activities and recipes to keep your kids busy and happy.



- **Build fruit and vegetable skewers with toothpicks.** Try using apples, bananas, grapes, berries, mandarin oranges, broccoli, peppers, cucumbers, or tomatoes. The fruit can be dipped in yogurt or peanut butter while the vegetables can be dipped in hummus or a savory plain yogurt. This will work with cooked frozen veggies as well as canned fruits (be sure to buy fruits canned in their own juices or in water).
- **Make chocolate-dipped bananas or strawberries.** Melt different kinds of chocolate in the microwave or on the stove top, cut a few bananas in half and place them on skewers, then let the kids dip. Provide toppings to roll them in, such as chopped toasted walnuts, shredded coconut, chopped dried apricots or dates, or anything else they might like. If completely covered in chocolate, the bananas will not brown and should last 2-3 days in the refrigerator.
- **Do a vegetable taste test.** Give your kids a few different versions of some vegetables you make often for them to taste and feel. Try vegetables that can be served raw, steamed, and roasted, and cut them into different sizes and shapes. For example, carrots can be served shredded and cut into coins and matchsticks. String beans, snap peas and snow peas are also three similar but different veggies; these are best eaten raw as finger food and dipped in ranch dressing or hummus. Vote on which preparation is the best!
- **Go for the classic “ants on a log”** – Celery sticks filled with peanut butter and topped with a row of raisins. Switch it up with hummus or different kinds of toppings.
- **Ask the kids to help with making dinner by smashing the potatoes.** Boil marble potatoes (the small, round ones) until just soft, let them cool a little, then place them on a sheet pan and ask your kids to squish them with the bottom of a drinking glass or another flat surface. Then drizzle them with olive oil, salt and pepper before placing in the oven to roast until crispy. Easy, delicious and fun!
- **Spaghetti squash is a fun vegetable.** Cut the squash in half lengthwise, scoop out the seeds, place it cut-side down on a sheet pan, and roast until the skin can be easily pierced with a fork. After letting it cool, ask your kids to scoop out the insides with a spoon or fork (which will come apart like spaghetti) and to choose their sauce and toppings to make their own dish. Try marinara sauce and cheese or use some olive oil, lemon juice and fresh herbs. You can even serve the finished product out of the hollow halves!

SPINACH BANANA PANCAKES

Yield: 16 4-inch pancakes

1 cup unsweetened milk of choice
½ cup water
1 large ripe banana
2 Tablespoons ground flaxseed
2 cups baby spinach
1 cup whole wheat flour
2 Tablespoons maple syrup

1. Add all the ingredients to your blender and process on high speed until pureed.
2. Heat a nonstick griddle or large skillet (greasing first if necessary) and pour the batter directly from the blender spout onto your hot surface.
3. Cook for 4-5 minutes on one side. Flip and cook another 3-4 minutes until golden brown.
4. Serve your pancakes with maple syrup and/or fresh fruit and enjoy!

Per 1 Pancake: Calories 48, Carbohydrates 9g, Protein 1g, Sodium 14mg, Potassium 90mg, Fiber 1g, Sugar 2g

Recipe from www.thishealthykitchen.com

CHOCOLATE CHIP ENERGY BITES

Yield: 18 each, 1-inch diameter

1¼ cup rolled oats
2 Tablespoons seeds (chia, flax, or hemp)
½ cup preferred nut butter (peanut, almond, cashew, etc.)
1/3 cup honey or maple syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup chocolate chips
Any other spices, such as cinnamon or pumpkin pie spice

1. Place all ingredients in a large mixing bowl and stir to combine. If mixture seems too wet, add more oats. If too dry, add more nut butter. It should resemble a somewhat sticky dough that holds together when lightly squeezed. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to set.
2. Remove from the refrigerator. Scoop out dough and roll into balls of 1-inch diameter.
3. Store leftover energy bites in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks or freeze for up to 3 months.
4. Note: This can be modified to have any combination of ingredients such as nuts, coconut, dried fruit, or peanut butter or butterscotch chips.

Per 1 Chocolate Chip Energy Bite: Calories 123, Total Fat 6g, Saturated Fat 2g, Sodium 47mg, Carbohydrates 16g, Fiber 2g, Sugar 9g, Protein 3g

Recipe from www.wellplated.com

BAKED PARMESAN ZUCCHINI FRIES

Yield: 4 servings

4 zucchini, quartered lengthwise
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan
½ teaspoon dried thyme
½ teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon dried basil
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon Kosher salt
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
2 Tablespoons olive oil
2 Tablespoon chopped fresh parsley leaves

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a cooling rack with nonstick spray, place on baking sheet, and set aside.
2. In a small bowl, combine Parmesan cheese, thyme, oregano, basil, garlic powder, salt and pepper.
3. Place zucchini onto prepared cooling rack on baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with Parmesan mixture. Place into oven and bake until tender, about 15 minutes. Then broil for 2-3 minutes or until crisp and golden brown.
4. Serve plain or with plain Greek yogurt or aioli dipping sauce, if desired.

Per serving (1 zucchini's worth of fries): Calories 151, Total Fat 11g, Saturated Fat 3g, Cholesterol 11mg, Sodium 220 mg, Carbohydrates 7g, Fiber 2g, Sugar 5g, Protein 7g

Recipe from www.damndelicious.net

FRENCH BREAD PIZZAS

Yield: 6 servings

3 whole deli rolls or crusty Italian rolls
Jarred marinara sauce or pizza sauce
Jarred pesto
1 pound mozzarella cheese, grated
1 Tablespoon butter
½ onion, sliced
Pepperoni slices
Roma tomatoes, sliced
Sliced black plives

Optional ingredients: Parmesan cheese, sliced bell peppers, various cheeses, pepperoncinis, diced red onion, pineapple, and any other pizza toppings you like

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. Slice rolls in half lengthwise and lay them, cut side up, on a large baking sheet.
3. Top each half with either marinara or pesto. Next, top with cheese, then add whatever toppings you'd like. Each one can be different.
4. Once all assembled, put the pan in the oven on the lowest rack for 8 to 10 minutes. Increase the temperature to 425°F and put it on the highest rack until the cheese starts to bubble a bit and turn golden.
5. Remove and serve, cutting into desired number of pieces.

Recipe from www.thepioneerwoman.com