

STRAWBERRIES: SUPER DELICIOUS AND NUTRITIOUS

March signifies the start of strawberry season for Louisiana, but this year strawberries are starting a little earlier. Experts are saying that Louisiana strawberries will be a bumper crop this year.

Strawberries are low in fat and calories and high in fiber, Vitamin C, folate, potassium and antioxidants that help prevent certain types of chronic diseases. One cup of fresh strawberries provides 45 calories, 84 mg Vitamin C, 26 mg folate and 3.8 g fiber.

When purchasing strawberries, look for berries that have a full red color, firm, plump flesh. Always choose fully ripe berries as they do not ripen after being picked. Look for strawberries that are bright green, fresh looking and fully attached. Avoid strawberries that are moldy, have large uncolored areas or soft and wilted. Strawberries should be used soon after purchase. Once you are home with your strawberries, remove them from the container and place in a flat container in the refrigerator. Wash your berries just before serving with cold running water.

When buying strawberries, 1 quart of berries will yield approximately 3¾ cups whole berries or 2¼ cups sliced berries. When purchasing berries by the pound, 1½ pounds equal one quart, which yields about 4 cups sliced strawberries. Strawberries freeze well with or without sugar.

To freeze berries without sugar, place in a single layer on a tray or cookie sheet, cover lightly and freeze quickly until firm. Remove from pan and package airtight in moisture-proof, vapor-proof containers or bags.

For more information on strawberries or preserving strawberries please contact the LSU AgCenter or www.lsuagcenter.com.

CENTSIBLE NUTRITION BUYS FOR MARCH AND APRIL:

Beets	Mustard Greens	Strawberries	Lettuce
Broccoli	Turnip Greens	Fish	Radishes
Brussels Sprouts	Spinach Greens	Beef	Rutabagas
Cabbage	English Peas	Pork	Turnip Roots
Carrots	Citrus Fruits	Chicken	Grapes
Collard Greens			

MARCH IS NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

March is National Nutrition Month reminding Americans that good nutrition should be all year long, not just one month. The theme for this year is Eat Right. Eating right can happen at any age providing you follow a few tips. Most people think eating healthy is complicated, but it's not. Make these changes and you can be healthy all year long.

- Make a plan to make a few small changes. Make changes or goals that are realistic and they won't seem overwhelming.
- Focus on your food. Try to plan your meals ahead of time so you are not rushing through the drive thru for breakfast, lunch and/or supper.
- Make calories count. Try to select foods that are nutritious and packed with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.
- Increase physical activity. Regular physical activity is good for overall health and experts recommend we get 30 minutes of physical activity per day.
- Be safe with your food. Remember simple food safety principles. Always clean hands and surfaces food has come in contact with. Always cook foods to the proper temperatures. Keep raw and cooked foods separate and refrigerate leftovers promptly to avoid any bacteria growth.
- Be aware of change. Certain times in our lives our nutritional needs change. For more information on changes you need to be aware of contact a registered dietitian.

Check out www.eatright.org (The American Dietetic Association) for more information.

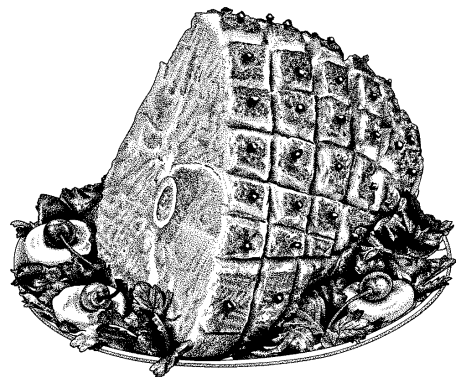
HAM: NOT JUST FOR CHRISTMAS AND THANKSGIVING

Many of you will prepare a ham for your Easter Sunday dinner. Some of you probably haven't planned your dinner yet, but ham can take the center stage of your holiday meal. Like turkeys there are a few kinds of hams on supermarket shelves and all have a different taste. Use this short guide as a reference tool when buying your ham. If you would like you can call our office and request the handling ham publication for more information.

- Ham is pork and can be fresh, cured, or cured and smoked.
- Hams come fully cooked and ready to eat; others have to be cooked.
- When buying a ham use this as your guide so your know how much to buy:
 - ¼ - ½ lb. per serving of boneless ham per person
 - ⅓ - ½ lb. per serving of ham with a little bone per person
 - ¾ - 1 lb. per serving of ham with a large bone per person
- When heating a fully cooked or canned ham, set your oven no lower than 325°F and heat to an internal temperature of 140°F measured with a meat thermometer.
- When cooking a cook-before-serving ham, they must be cooked to 160°F before serving. A country ham can be soaked in water for 4-12 hours to decrease the salt content and then cooked according to package directions.

Use these tips to enjoy and safely cook a ham for Easter or anytime.

For more information about ham please contact our office for the Handling Ham publication.



51 HEALTHY FOODS

In the January-February issue of Nutrition Tidbits, we gave you the first half of the 51 Healthy Foods to include in your diet. In this newsletter we will continue the list and hope to improve your diet.

26. Okra—A southerners favorite summer vegetable is a good source of folate and in ½ cup provides 20% of your Vitamin C needs in one day.
27. Oranges—The Vitamin C in oranges is beneficial in boosting our immune system, but they also contain potassium which is beneficial to our health.
28. Peaches and Nectarines—can satisfy your sweet tooth with only 40 calories in a medium size peach. Peaches and nectarines also have good sources of Vitamins A and C, niacin and minerals.
29. Peanut Butter—is often given a bad rap for its high fat content, but what people don't know is that it's high in monounsaturated fat. Peanut butter is also a good source of protein and 25% of the daily value of niacin in only two tablespoons.
30. Popcorn is a great whole grain snack, without the butter and salt! A cup of plain, air-popped popcorn has only 30 calories.
31. Pork loin is the leanest cut of pork meat. Because pork loin is so lean be sure to cook it to an internal temperature of 160°F.
32. Prunes—do provide a quarter of your daily fiber requirements in just one-half cup. In addition to fiber you also get potassium, Vitamin A, Vitamin B6 and other antioxidants.
33. Quinoa—a whole-grain that can be used in place of oats or rice.
34. Romaine Lettuce—is what your salads should consist of. Romaine lettuce has high amounts of Vitamins A and C along with a tasty crunch. Iceberg lettuce has a fraction of the nutrients romaine lettuce has.
35. Salmon—contains plenty of heart healthy omega 3 fatty acids that should be broiled, baked or grilled. The omega 3 fatty acid content does not differ if its farmed or wild salmon.
36. Sardines—another fatty fish that is high in omega 3 fatty acids and are a good source of Vitamin D and calcium.
37. Shredded Wheat Cereal—gives you an idea for a healthy breakfast but also provides 400 mg of magnesium which is good for reducing the risk of diabetes.
38. Spinach—the quintessential leafy green vegetable that is high in lutein, iron, Vitamins A and K, and folate. Lutein is important in eyesight health and maintenance.
39. Strawberries—which we highlighted in this newsletter contain powerful antioxidants that improve circulation and may have other health benefits as well.
40. Sweet Potatoes or Yams—have more beta carotene, Vitamin C, folate, calcium and manganese than white potatoes.
41. Tea has powerful antioxidants that have been shown to reduce heart disease.
42. Tofu—not something most Cajuns will eat, but does contain soy that is beneficial in the protection against heart disease.
43. Tomatoes—are a good source of lycopene, lutein and half your days Vitamin C.
44. Tuna—is another fish you could eat and get your omega 3 fatty acids, but it is also high in Vitamins B6 and B12 and protein. Try to buy the tuna packed in water instead and go easy on the mayonnaise.
45. Turkey Breast—is an excellent protein choice and is low in calories and fat. Turkey is also rich in B Vitamins and selenium.
46. Walnuts—are low in saturated fat, free of cholesterol and high in unsaturated fat.
47. Watermelon—is a good source of lycopene and in a 1 cup serving you get 20% of Vitamin C and 15% Vitamin A.
48. White Fish— such as flounder, cod and sole are good low calorie and low-fat choices to help you consume fish twice a week.
49. Wholegrain Bread—helps you achieve eating 3 ounces per day of the USDA's recommendations of whole grains. Whole grain bread also is high in fiber and B Vitamins, too.
50. Whole Grain Pasta—can be substituted for regular pasta in many of your favorite dishes. Be sure to follow the recommended cooking times as it is different from regular pasta.
51. Nonfat or Low-fat Yogurt—is a great way to get your calcium intake. Besides being a good source of calcium, yogurt is high in protein, magnesium and Vitamin B12. Enjoy a cup of yogurt as dessert or a snack.

This concludes our list and hopefully you can incorporate some or all of these foods into your daily diet so you can achieve better health.

Source: Tufts University Nutrition and Health Newsletter.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Vermilion Parish Health Fair will be held on April 8, 2009 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Abbeville Library. This program is free of charge and residents will be able to take part in free cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar screenings along with health information. For more information call 898-4335.

- Our Annual Dining With Diabetes Program will be held May 18, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. More information will be forthcoming in next issue.

For more information on any topic in this newsletter or any other topic please contact our office at :

337-898-4335

Cooperative Extension Service

Vermilion Parish

1105 W. Port Street

Abbeville, LA 70510

Phone (337) 898-4335, Fax (337)893-7165

Website: www.lsuagcenter.com

This material is partially funded by USDA's Food Stamp Program.

kindest Regards,

*Mandy G. Armentor, MS, RD, LDN
Assoc. Extension Agent (FCS-Nutrition)
Vermilion Parish Extension Service*

Next Issue Features:

Summer Safety, Beef Month, High Blood Pressure Tips and Much More!!!

