

The Estherville Daily News is proud to bring you the Food page every Tuesday. If you know anyone who should be featured on this page, please send their names and why you think they should be featured to: Managing editor, 10 N. Seventh St., Estherville, 51334 or editor@esthervilledailynews.com

FOOD

Y & Z

Saving the best for last!

By MARY ANN MENENDEZ

We have reached the glorious end! Last but not least are the best of Y and Z — yams and zucchini. While one is bright orange and the other deep green in color, these vegetables provide wonderful flavor. There is a variety of nutrients and both are quite versatile when seeking out recipes. They find their way to the table from beginning to end of the appetite-appealing spectrum.

Yams are not the same as sweet potatoes. Native to Africa, the yam is a root crop. While yams and sweet potatoes can be interchanged in recipes, they are not related. Never eat raw yams. Uncooked yams are quite toxic.

A cup of cooked yams provides 3 percent Vitamin A, 2 percent calcium and 4 percent iron. The biggest value is 27 percent of Vitamin C and five grams or 21 percent of daily dietary fiber. At 158 calories per serving, there is no fat, cholesterol or sodium. It is a wonderful source of potassium and manganese.

The popularity of zucchini burst on the American scene about 30 years ago. We were a little slow in embracing this Italian zucchini. Natives of Central and South America have been enjoying this squash for centuries. The word is derived from the Italian zucchini, meaning a small squash. It is a member of the cucumber and melon family. Nutritionally speaking, zucchini is low in saturated fat, and very low in cholesterol and sodium. It is also a good source of thiamin, niacin and pantothenic acid, and a very good source of Dietary Fiber, Protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin B 6, folate, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, copper and manganese.

Sweet Yams

6 yams
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1/3 cup dark corn syrup
1/4 cup heavy cream
4 tablespoons butter
1/4 teaspoon salt

Boil, peel and halve yams. Put yams in single layer dish and bake for 15 minutes at 350 degrees. In a durable 2-quart saucepan, stir together sugar, corn syrup, cream, butter and salt. Stir constantly, bringing to a boil over medium heat. Boil 5 minutes. Pour over yams and bake for 15 additional minutes, occasionally basting with juice from pan.

Perfect Yam Puffs

2 cups biscuit mix
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 cup mashed yams
1 beaten egg
1/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup applesauce
1/4 cup milk
2 tablespoons oil
Topping:
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/3 cup melted butter

Combine biscuit mix, sugar and cinnamon. Add applesauce, yams, milk, egg and oil. Beat until well blended. Fill greased muffin pan two-thirds full. Bake in preheated 400-degree oven for 15-20 minutes. Cool on rack until warm. Roll entire muffin in melted butter, then in sugar mixture. Cool on rack or serve warm.

Golden Yams

1/3 cup firmly packed brown sugar
4 teaspoons cornstarch
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
Dash of salt
1 cup dry white wine
1/3 cup orange juice
1 tablespoon butter
1 cup dried apricots, snipped in half
6 yams, cooked, peeled, and quartered or canned equivalent

Mix together sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon and salt in saucepan. Gradually add wine and orange juice; cook stirring constantly

until sauce boils for 1 minute. Add butter and apricots; stir and heat until butter melts. Pour over yams in heatproof serving dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until heated through.

Just Peachy Yams

1 large can sliced peaches, drained
5 yams
4 tablespoons butter, divided
1/4 teaspoon ginger
1/3 cup brown sugar
1/3 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped

Combine brown sugar, walnuts and ginger. In a baking dish, layer half the yams, half the peaches and half of the sugar-nut mixture. Repeat layers. Dot with butter. Bake covered at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake about 10 minutes longer.

Yam Toss

2 cups diced yams
1/2 medium red onion, diced
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt or herb salt
3 tablespoons chopped pecans
1/2 cup dried cranberries
2 cups spinach

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Peel yams and dice into 1/2-inch cubes; toss yams and onions with olive oil. Spread on shallow baking dish or pizza pan; sprinkle with salt and bake for 30-35 minutes. Five minutes before removing yams from the oven, spread chopped pecans on the edge of the pan and continue to bake. Remove from oven and place mixture into a serving dish. Add dried cranberries and spinach; toss. Drizzle additional olive oil if desired. Serve warm.

Tropical Zucchini Bread

2 eggs, beaten
1 cup oil
2 cups sugar
3 cups flour
1 1/2 teaspoons soda
2 teaspoons nutmeg
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder

Start young to teach healthy eating

By JIM ROMANOFF
 FOR THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

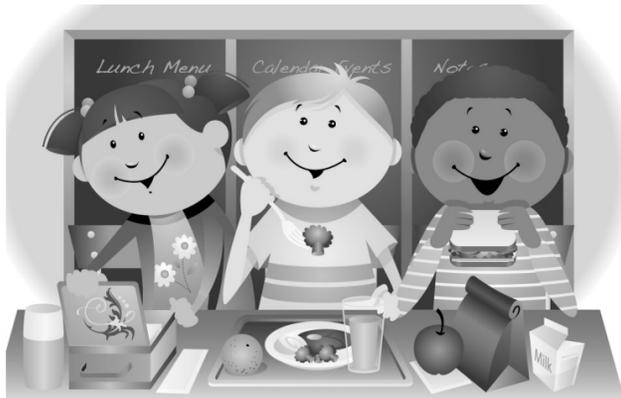
Television and peers can trump parents when it comes to influencing what children eat, but that doesn't mean families can't fight back.

A Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health study found that parents have waning influence over what their kids eat. But it also found that the best defense is to start teaching healthy eating habits early.

Adopting common-sense approaches at home can help:

First, be careful about forbidding certain foods. A good/bad approach often makes less healthy foods more attractive. It also limits children's ability to develop the skills they need to make their own healthful food choices.

Second, quantity matters. The more foods children try, the more likely they will find healthy ones they enjoy. Give them the option



of turning down a new dish as long as they give it a try. The empowering option of refusal often results in a "Hey, I like this," experience.

Third, make healthier foods seem like exciting treats. A colorful fruit salad, homemade whole-grain cookies and English muffin

pizzas made with low-fat cheese are all fun foods that can provide your child with valuable nutrients.

Finally, you can always fight fire with fire. These Parmesan-crusted chicken fingers have all the flavor and appeal of the greasy fast-food classic, but are baked using an "oven-frying" technique that uses

hardly any oil.

Adding Parmesan cheese and tangy Dijon mustard to crunchy, Japanese-style breadcrumbs (panko) gives these easy-to-prepare chicken fingers a sophisticated coating the whole family will enjoy.

Look for panko breadcrumbs in the Asian section of your market. For even more kid appeal, serve the chicken fingers with a homemade honey mustard sauce, or a sweet-and-sour sauce made from apricot jam, cider vinegar, salt, pepper and a drop of hot sauce.

Parmesan-crusted chicken fingers

Start to finish: 35 minutes (15 minutes active)

Servings: 4
Olive or vegetable oil cooking spray
2/3 cup panko (Japanese-style) breadcrumbs
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley (optional)
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 egg whites
1 pound chicken tenders

Place a rack in the top third of the oven. Heat the oven to 425 F. Set a wire rack on a baking sheet and coat the rack lightly with cooking spray.

In a shallow bowl, stir together the breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese, parsley (infusing) and pepper. In another shallow bowl, whisk together the mustard and egg whites until frothy and opaque.

Dip each chicken tender in the egg white mixture, then in the breadcrumb mixture to coat all sides. Place on the prepared rack.

Spritz the top of each tender lightly and evenly with cooking spray, then turn and repeat on the other side. Bake until the crumb coating is golden brown and crisp and the chicken is no longer pink at the center, about 15 to 20 minutes. Serve immediately.

