



The Healthy Lunchtime Challenge

Cookbook

54 WINNING RECIPES FROM AMERICA'S JUNIOR CHEFS

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When our team at Epicurious first dreamed up the Healthy Lunchtime Challenge & Kids' State Dinner, we never imagined we would receive over 1,200 entries from kids all around the world—we even received a recipe from India!

The entries were creative, imaginative, and really tasty, and so many of the recipes came with amazing stories. Some kids sent in their favorite brown-bag lunches or classic family recipes while others shared new creations they invented just for the contest. Even though the recipes were all so different, each of the contestants shared a common purpose—to share their healthy and delicious creations with the world.

Although we loved trying all of the recipes, we had a really tough time choosing which recipes to feature in this cookbook. Eventually, we selected these 54—one from each state, plus three U.S. Territories and the District of Columbia. In some cases we adapted the recipes slightly—something we do at Epicurious, even for the most talented chefs—to ensure the dishes are as nutritious, fresh, and tasty as possible. On August 20, 2012 several of these recipes were served at Mrs. Obama's Kids' State Dinner at the White House.

We know all the winners want to share their favorite recipes, and that's why we created this free cookbook. We all wish you great health, happiness, and good eating!

Tanya Steel

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Yummy Summer Soup

Falcon Wiles, age 9



“I came up with my recipe because tomatoes and yellow bell peppers are in season and they are really good for you. And Alabama’s tomatoes are both delicious and nutritious,” says Falcon. “I like a toasted turkey and cheese sandwich with my soup to include all the ChooseMyPlate food groups.”

Makes 8 to 10 servings

INGREDIENTS

3 pounds tomatoes, halved
2 yellow bell peppers, seeded, stemmed, and quartered
2 garlic cloves
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt
Pepper
8 fresh basil leaves
6 cups chicken stock or low-sodium chicken broth
1/2 cup light whipping cream or 1 percent milk
Parmesan cheese, shaved or grated

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F.
2. Place the tomatoes, peppers, and garlic on 2 large baking sheets or roasting pans, drizzle with olive oil, and sprinkle with a pinch of salt and pepper. Roast until the peppers are slightly dark and the tomatoes are bubbling and slightly brown, about 40 minutes. Let the vegetables cool.
3. Once the veggies are cool, put them in a blender, along with the basil, and blend until coarsely chopped.
4. Put the chopped veggies in a large pot and add the chicken stock. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat to a simmer and slowly add the cream or milk. Continue simmering until the soup is hot, about 15 minutes. Carefully spoon the soup into bowls and top with shaved or grated Parmesan cheese.

Teriyaki Salmon Wrap

Aaron Blust, age 9



Aaron tells us that they eat a lot of salmon in Alaska. He and mom Jeanne say these wraps taste great with smoked salmon but you can also use cooked or canned salmon, or other types of fish, such as halibut, rockfish, or even canned tuna. "This is a great way to use up leftover salmon, rice, and whatever vegetables are in the refrigerator," says Jeanne.

Aaron would serve this wrap with a glass of nonfat milk and a bowl of blueberries with 1/4 cup nonfat Greek yogurt and 1 teaspoon of honey.

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

8 ounces cooked, canned, or smoked salmon
3 tablespoons cream cheese
3 tablespoons teriyaki sauce
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
4 (10-inch) corn or whole-wheat tortillas
1 cup cooked brown or white rice, at room temperature
4 leaves Romaine lettuce, cut into thin strips

For garnish:

Thinly sliced raw vegetables such as red bell pepper, cucumber, zucchini, tomato, and red onion

PREPARATION

1. In a large bowl, combine the salmon (if using canned, drain first), cream cheese, teriyaki sauce, and pepper, and stir thoroughly to combine.
2. In a microwave on a paper towel, warm the tortillas for about 10 seconds each.
3. Place the warm tortillas on individual plates and evenly spread 1/4 cup of rice in the middle of each. Spread 1/4 cup the salmon mixture on top of the rice, then top each wrap with lettuce and any sliced vegetables.
4. Tightly roll each tortilla around the filling from bottom to top, overlapping one end, burrito style. Slice the wraps in half if desired.

Quinoa, Black Bean, and Corn Salad



Haile Thomas, age 11

Haile's family gave up eating white rice after learning her dad is diabetic, so they began experimenting with quinoa. Haile's recipe adds the protein-packed grain to the family's favorite black bean and corn salsa, and they serve the salad hot or cold with tacos or just about anything else, like shrimp, chicken, pork, fish, or lean red meats. Haile's mom, Charmaine, reports the secret to its success is that "all the kids love it, the ingredients are affordable, it's easy to make, and it's just plain good."

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 (15-ounce) cans organic black beans,
drained and rinsed
4 cups fresh corn
1 pint cherry tomatoes, quartered
2 cups cooked quinoa
1 medium red onion, chopped
1/2 bunch fresh cilantro or flat-leaf
parsley
1 medium red onion, chopped
2 avocados, pitted, peeled, and cut into
cubes
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 lemon, halved
Sea salt

PREPARATION

In a large bowl, combine the black beans, corn, tomatoes, quinoa, cilantro or parsley, red onion, avocados, and olive oil. Squeeze the lemon halves and add their juice to the bowl. Toss to combine then season to taste with salt and serve.

Cook's Note: To make this dish hot, warm it on the stovetop or in a microwave, or sauté all the vegetables together and add the avocado and cilantro or parsley after it's plated.

Kickin' Chicken Salad

Trey Sims, age 12



"This is one of Trey's favorite salads," says mom Carrie. "We serve it with a whole-grain baguette to get all of the food groups in. This is a great-tasting, healthy lunch that my kids enjoy because there are so many flavors and textures." Trey likes this with raspberry vinaigrette, but a simple olive oil and balsamic vinegar dressing would be delicious, too.

Makes 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

6 ounces fresh baby spinach
1 head lettuce, torn into bite-size pieces
2 cups chopped grilled chicken
1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
1/2 cup sliced strawberries
1/2 cup blueberries
1/2 cup grapes, halved
1/2 cup grated carrots
1/2 cup sliced avocado
1/2 cup sliced cucumber
1 cup mozzarella cubes
1 cup honey-roasted pecans
Low-fat salad dressing

PREPARATION

In a large bowl, combine the spinach, lettuce, chicken, tomatoes, strawberries, blueberries, grapes, carrots, avocado, cucumber, mozzarella, and pecans. Toss to combine, or stack in layers, and serve with your favorite low-fat salad dressing.

3-Pepper Soup

Sean Reichbach, age 9



“I went to the store with my mom and saw a red, an orange, and a yellow bell pepper and had an idea to make a three-pepper soup! The secret is the three peppers and that we use three different kinds of peppers: fresh bell peppers, ground black pepper, and a little chili pepper powder,” says Sean. “When I get a cold, we make this soup and I feel better.” Mom Andrea notes you can use any whole-wheat pasta or soup pasta if you prefer.

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

8 ounces vermicelli noodles, broken in half
2 tablespoons olive oil
3 Roma or plum tomatoes, diced
1 small red onion, diced
1 red bell pepper, diced
1 yellow bell pepper, diced
1 orange bell pepper, diced
1 Idaho or baking potato, peeled and diced
1 1/2 cups baby carrots, diced
8 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 cups organic chicken stock or low-sodium chicken broth
Whole-wheat rolls, for serving

PREPARATION

1. In a large soup or pasta pot, bring salted water to a boil. Add the vermicelli noodles and cook until al dente. Drain and reserve.
2. In the same pot, heat the olive oil over moderate heat. Add the tomatoes, red onion, bell peppers, potato, and carrots and sauté until softened and lightly browned, 5 to 7 minutes.
3. Add the chicken, chili powder, salt, and pepper and sauté until the chicken is cooked through, about 5 minutes.
4. Add the chicken stock and bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 10 minutes.
5. While the soup is simmering, warm the whole-wheat rolls in the oven or toaster oven. Ladle the hot soup into bowls, adding the vermicelli noodles according to people’s taste.

Rainbow Salad with Black Beans, Mint, and Lemon



Aidan Gould, age 12

"It all started when I broke my arm and was feeling forlorn," says Aidan. "I wasn't allowed to play soccer, ride my unicycle, run, or do anything fun. My mom got me four mint plants to cheer me up. I planted them as best I could with one arm. The mint soon filled the pot, and, by the time I got my cast off, even started to flow over the rim. I started to make mint tea, but still had too much mint. So I made up Rainbow Salad for my family. It's a bright and tasty salad that is easy and fun to make because you get to use the food processor to cut the vegetables. I love salad!" Aidan enjoys this with whole-wheat crackers.

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 (15-ounce) cans black beans, rinsed and drained
6 carrots, grated
3 tomatoes, diced
1 yellow bell pepper, sliced
1/4 small purple cabbage, thinly sliced (about 3 1/2 cups total)
1 cup fresh mint, finely chopped
Zest and juice of 3 lemons
1/4 cup olive oil
Salt

PREPARATION

1. In a large bowl, combine the beans, carrots, tomatoes, pepper, cabbage, and mint. Toss to combine.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon zest, lemon juice, and olive oil. Season to taste with salt.
3. Drizzle the dressing over the salad and toss to coat the vegetables in dressing.

Heavenly Lunch Wrap

Betsy DaSilva, age 10



“Every day (and trust me, every day it annoys me) I eat this because it’s good for my health,” says Betsy. “This recipe has one very important and new ingredient, which is quinoa. My mom grew up eating this amazing Incan food. Whenever I eat this food, I know that I’ve been blessed with the energy to focus more at school.” Betsy has this with a slice of watermelon, a hard-boiled egg, some cucumber slices, and low-fat milk.

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (10-inch) whole-grain wrap
- 1 teaspoon mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon cooked quinoa
- 6 fresh baby spinach leaves
- 4 slices tomato
- 3 slices turkey breast

PREPARATION

1. Place the wrap on a plate and evenly spread the mayonnaise over the entire surface. Spoon the quinoa in the middle of the wrap, then top with spinach, tomato, and turkey.
2. Tightly roll the wrap around the filling, from bottom to top, overlapping one end, burrito style.

Stuffed Tomatoes

Jourdann Latney, age 12



“My aunt introduced me to chickpeas, and I grow tomatoes and mint in the yard,” reports Jourdan. “This is a high-protein vegetarian lunch. I serve sliced cucumbers with this, and grapes or orange slices for dessert. Beverage choice is plain or flavored water or seltzer water.”

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 garlic clove
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
Pinch of dried red pepper
Salt
4 medium tomatoes, halved
8 fresh mint leaves

PREPARATION

1. In a blender, combine the chickpeas, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, red pepper, and 1 tablespoon water. Blend until thoroughly incorporated. If the hummus is too thick, gradually add more water to make it slightly thinner. Season to taste with salt.
2. Scoop as much pulp as possible out of each tomato half. Divide the hummus among the tomato halves and garnish with mint leaves.

Mexican Delight

Iliana Gonzales-Evans, age 11



"I came up with my recipe by watching my grandma make tortillas," says Iliana. "One day I came up with the Mexican Delight. To go along with my main course, I would serve a healthy serving of brown rice and a delicious fruit smoothie."

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

For the filling:

- 1 pound turkey bacon
- 1/2 head green leaf lettuce, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 tomato, diced
- 1/2 onion, diced

For the whole-wheat tortillas:

- 2 cups of whole-wheat flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil, plus more for cooking

For serving:

- 3 cups cooked brown rice

PREPARATION

Make the filling:

1. Working in batches, cook the turkey bacon in a large, heavy skillet over moderate heat, flipping occasionally, until brown and crisp, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer to a paper-towel-lined plate to drain, then transfer to a clean plate.
2. Arrange the pepper, tomato, and onion in separate bowls.

Make the tortillas:

3. In a large bowl, stir together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Add 1/2 cup oil and 2/3 cup water, and stir to combine. On a lightly floured work surface, knead the dough until smooth and elastic, about 4 minutes. Dust your hands with flour if the dough is sticky. Divide the dough into 8 equal portions, roll each portion into a ball, and cover with plastic wrap.
4. On a lightly floured work surface, use a rolling pin to roll each ball of dough into an 8- to 10-inch round.

Mexican Delight

Iliana Gonzales-Evans, age 11

5. Lightly oil a large, heavy skillet and place over moderate heat. Carefully place one tortilla in the skillet and cook until it bubbles and puffs, about 45 seconds. Flip the tortilla and cook the other side until it bubbles and puffs. Carefully transfer the tortilla to a plate and cover with foil to keep warm. Continue cooking the remaining tortillas.
6. Set up a buffet with the vegetables, bacon, and tortillas, and let everyone make their own tacos. Serve brown rice on the side.

"Triple F" Fake Fast Food

Deborah Goncalves, age 12



"I came up with this lunch because my grandmother always made this for my mother and taught the recipe to her," says Deborah. She likes to serve this with a baby arugula and greens salad with a blue-cheese vinaigrette and watermelon cut up to look like fries.

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 cups bulgur wheat
1 tablespoon olive oil, plus more for greasing
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1/4 cup finely diced red bell pepper
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
2 pounds lean ground beef
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
Salt and pepper
4 slices melting cheese, such as mozzarella
2 carrots, peeled and grated
2 cups fresh baby spinach, chopped

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F and grease an 8-inch-square baking pan with olive oil.
2. In a medium saucepan, bring 4 cups of water to a boil. Add the bulgur, cover, remove from the heat, and let stand for 15 minutes, then drain in a sieve.
3. In a small skillet over moderate heat, warm the olive oil. Add the onion, bell pepper, and garlic, and sauté, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 4 minutes. Stir in the cumin and cook 2 more minutes. Let cool.
4. In a large bowl, combine the ground beef, cooked onion mixture, parsley, and the bulgur. Season with salt and pepper, and mix until you don't see the difference between the beef and bulgur. Add half of the beef-bulgur mixture to the greased baking pan and press into an even layer. Add the cheese in an even layer on top. Sprinkle the carrot and spinach over the cheese, and season lightly with salt. Crumble the remaining beef-bulgur mixture on top.
5. Bake the casserole until bubbling and lightly browned on top, about 35 minutes. Let rest for 5 to 10 minutes before you cut.

Stuffed Zucchini Boats

Haley Matthews, age 12



Haley was inspired by her garden to create this menu. The family has been growing a summer and winter crop for three years now. "This recipe is fun to make and is fun to serve to my family. It is pretty on a plate and is full of color and flavors." The family likes to serve this with a Caprese Salad, which has fresh mozzarella, tomatoes, and basil, drizzled with olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

4 large zucchini, trimmed and halved lengthwise
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 cup diced red bell pepper
1/2 cup diced yellow onion
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1/2 pound ground chicken sausage or ground chicken
1 cup cooked brown rice
1 large egg
1/2 cup ricotta cheese
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
1 teaspoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup panko breadcrumbs

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Lightly grease a large baking sheet with olive oil.
2. Scoop out the pulp of the zucchini and discard. Place the zucchini boats on the prepared baking sheet with the scooped-out sides facing up.
3. In a large sauté pan over moderate heat, warm 1 tablespoon of the olive oil, then add the red bell pepper and onion and sauté, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté, stirring occasionally, 2 more minutes.
4. In a second sauté pan over moderate heat, warm the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add the ground chicken sausage or ground chicken and sauté, stirring occasionally, until cooked through, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the cooked vegetables, rice, egg, ricotta, thyme, parsley, salt, and pepper. Stir until well combined.
5. Divide the mixture into equal portions and stuff into the zucchini boats.

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Stuffed Zucchini Boats

Haley Matthews, age 12

6. In a small bowl, stir together the Parmesan cheese and panko breadcrumbs. Sprinkle this mixture over the stuffed zucchini boats, then bake until the zucchini are soft and the cheese and crumbs are browned, about 30 minutes.

GEORGIA

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Scrumptious Salmon Salad

Stefani Shimomura-Sakamoto, age 11



"I created this recipe because I love to eat salmon. I decided to combine some of my other favorite foods to make a healthy lunch," says Stefani. "My recipe is served with half a cup of brown rice topped with furikake (seasoned seaweed). I enjoy drinking fruit smoothies, so I blended strawberries, bananas, milk, and some low-fat yogurt!" We're providing both of Stefani's recipes, because her smoothie is a classic recipe that you can improvise on with different fruits as well as by adding wheat germ, flaxseed, or peanut butter.

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon vegetable or olive oil
 1 (4-ounce) salmon fillet
 1 garlic clove, minced
 Salt
 Pepper
 1 cup organic spring greens
 1/2 cup cooked brown rice
 1 teaspoon furikake (seasoned seaweed)

For garnish:

Sliced pineapple, strawberries, seedless grapes, bananas, lychees, oranges, and apples

Strawberryana Smoothie:

1 cup low-fat milk
 1 cup low-fat plain or vanilla yogurt
 1 cup frozen strawberries
 1 frozen banana, peeled

PREPARATION

1. In a large sauté pan over moderate heat, warm the vegetable or olive oil. Add the salmon and garlic, and cook until the salmon is golden brown, about 2 minutes. Flip the salmon and continue cooking until golden brown and just cooked through, about 4 more minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
2. Arrange the spring greens on a plate and top with the salmon. Surround the salad with your favorite fruit or serve separately. Serve with a scoop of brown rice seasoned with furikake.

Strawberryana Smoothie:

3. In a blender, combine the milk, yogurt, strawberries, and banana. Blend until thoroughly combined.

Fiesta Casserole

Elena Guylay, age 11



Elena's mom, Kathryn, tells us this recipe was served for the 5th-grade class at Community School of Sun Valley, Idaho, and the kids all gave it the thumbs-up! Elena uses all different types of beans to keep it colorful (such as kidney, pinto, and black) and serves it with crunchy raw carrots, celery, jicama, and avocado slices, with apple slices for dessert. The recipe can easily be halved to serve a small crowd.

Makes 16 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 cup brown rice
1 1/2 cups quinoa, rinsed
2 (16-ounce) jars your favorite salsa
4 (15-ounce) cans assorted beans, rinsed and drained
2 (16-ounce) containers cottage cheese
Juice of 2 limes
2 teaspoons chili powder
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 bunch fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped
8 ounces shredded cheese of your choice (Elena likes the Mexican blend)
Salt

For serving:

Sliced carrots, celery, jicama, and avocado

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. In two saucepans, cook the rice and quinoa according to the package directions.
3. In a large bowl, combine the rice, quinoa, salsa, beans, cottage cheese, lime juice, chili powder, cumin, and cilantro. Spread the mixture in 2 (9- by 12-inch) baking dishes, cover with foil, and bake until the rice and quinoa are light brown, about 40 minutes.
4. Carefully remove the foil from both pans and sprinkle the cheese on top of each casserole.
5. Return to oven and bake until the cheese is melted and bubbling, about 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt, and serve with sliced veggies.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

2 (9- by 12-inch) baking dishes

Pesto Pasta

Jonah Schaik, age 12



“My mom gave me a recipe challenge to come up with a healthy pasta dish that my little brother with food allergies could eat,” says Jonah. “This recipe is healthy and inexpensive, especially in the summer, when you could grow fresh basil in your yard or in a potting pot on the back porch.” Jonah likes to serve this with a strawberry-banana smoothie made with coconut milk and orange juice.

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

For the pesto:

4 cups loosely packed fresh basil
5 ounces frozen chopped spinach, defrosted and drained
5 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tablespoons olive oil
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper

For the pasta:

1 pound whole-wheat rotini
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 pound ground turkey breast
½ teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 (14-ounce) cans low-fat, low-sodium chicken broth
½ onion, cut into small dice
½ red bell pepper, cut into small dice
3 garlic cloves, minced

¼ cup fresh basil leaves, chopped
¼ teaspoon dried red pepper flakes (optional)

For garnish:

Freshly grated Parmesan cheese

PREPARATION

Make the pesto:

1. In a blender or food processor, combine the basil, spinach, garlic, and olive oil. Blend until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Make the pasta:

2. In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook the pasta until al dente, 8 to 10 minutes. Reserve 1 cup of the pasta cooking water, then drain the pasta and return it to the pot.
3. While the pasta is boiling, cook the turkey: In a large, deep skillet over moderate heat, warm the olive oil. Add the ground turkey and cook, stirring to break up the

Pesto Pasta

Jonah Schaik, age 12

meat, until just starting to brown, about 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, then transfer the meat to a plate and reserve.

4. In the same large skillet over low heat, warm 3 tablespoons of the chicken broth. Add the onions and bell pepper, and sauté, stirring occasionally, until softened, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté, stirring occasionally, 5 minutes. Add the basil and the dried red pepper, and return the cooked turkey to the pan. Add the remaining chicken broth, and simmer over low heat for 10 minutes.
5. Add the pesto to the pasta. Stir well to combine, adding the reserved pasta cooking liquid as necessary to loosen the pesto. Add the turkey sauce to the pasta and cook over low heat, stirring to combine, until heated through. Serve hot, with freshly grated Parmesan on the side.

Vegetable Quinoa Salad with Chicken

Alexander Aylward, age 8



“These are my favorite foods, and we came up with this when we put them all together,” says Alexander. “This is my actual lunch a lot of the time.” While the recipe calls for grilled chicken, you can use any type of cooked chicken or even slices of turkey breast. Alexander likes to have this with milk and some blueberries or raspberries for dessert.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 cups cooked quinoa
6 ounces grilled skinless boneless
chicken or turkey deli meat, cut into bite-
size pieces
2/3 cup chopped fresh spinach
1/2 cup diced tomatoes
1/2 cucumber, peeled and diced
1/2 red pepper, seeded and diced
3 tablespoons homemade or purchased
olive-oil vinaigrette
Salt

PREPARATION

In a large bowl, combine the quinoa, chicken or turkey, spinach, tomato, cucumbers, red pepper, and vinaigrette. Toss to combine, and season to taste with salt.

Yummy Corn Wraps

Ajani Patton-Imani, age 8



“Half of our family is extremely sensitive to sugar. We also have a lot of food allergies among us,” reports Ajani’s mom, Sandra. As a result, they make a lot of things from scratch, because so many processed foods have added sugar. “We like to stuff our wraps with all kinds of stuff, but one of our favorites is cheese, guacamole, black olives, and tomatoes.”

Makes 4 to 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 cups masa, plus more for shaping wraps
Salt
1 cup unsweetened soy milk, at room temperature
2 avocados, pitted and mashed
1 garlic clove, minced
Juice of 1/2 lemon
Dash cayenne pepper
2 cups grated Colby or Jack cheese
1 cup sliced olives
1 cup diced tomatoes

PREPARATION

1. In a medium bowl, combine the masa and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Make a well in the center and pour in the soy milk and 3/4 cup water, then stir with a wooden spoon until the dough comes together. Turn the dough onto a work surface and knead for 1 minute. Cover with a damp towel or plastic wrap for 30 minutes. After the dough rests, divide it into 12 pieces and roll into Ping-Pong-ball-size balls. Cover the balls with plastic wrap as you work.
2. Heat a dry cast-iron skillet or griddle over moderate heat and dust a work surface with masa. Pat 1 ball of dough flat, then use a rolling pin to roll it into a 6-inch round. (You can also use a tortilla press.) Add to the hot skillet and cook for 30 to 45 seconds on each side, until tiny flecks of black appear and you begin to smell corn. Repeat with the remaining balls of dough. Stack the tortillas and wrap them in a towel to keep warm.
3. In a small bowl, combine the avocado, garlic, lemon juice, and cayenne. Season to taste with salt.
4. In each wrap, spoon guacamole, cheese, olives, and tomatoes. Fold in half, and eat over your plate!

Yummy Cabbage Sloppy Joes



Rori Coyne, age 12

“We were making dinner one night, and Mom had a lot of cabbage, which I wasn’t sure I liked. She also had lean ground beef, which I love,” says Rori, who also is a big fan of sloppy joes. “Mom showed me how to make cabbage, beef, and a bunch of other vegetables taste better than a package [of sloppy joes]. She says this is an affordable meal for us, since we can make a pound of beef last several meals. I like mine with fresh fruit.”

Makes 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 pound lean ground beef
1 medium onion, diced
1 medium zucchini, shredded or diced
2 ribs celery, diced
1/2 cup chopped red pepper
1 1/2 cups finely shredded cabbage
1 cup tomato sauce or crushed tomatoes
1 tablespoon brown sugar
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon white vinegar
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon mustard
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
8 sandwich rolls, split (optional)

PREPARATION

1. In a large skillet, cook the beef until cooked through, about five minutes. Drain the fat from the skillet, and reserve the meat on a plate.
2. In the same pan over moderate heat, cook the onion, zucchini, celery, red pepper, and cabbage until all the vegetables are crisp-tender, about 4 minutes. Add the cooked beef to the pan and stir to combine.
3. In a small bowl, combine the tomato sauce or crushed tomatoes, brown sugar, lemon juice, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, salt, and pepper. Pour the sauce into the pan with the beef and vegetables and simmer, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 8 minutes.
4. While the sloppy joes are simmering, toast the buns in the oven or toaster oven.
5. Evenly divide the mixture among the toasted bun bottoms, top with the other halves, and serve.

Perfect Curry Chicken Wraps



Myka Smith-Jackson, age 8

“I was on the Internet, and was thinking, *You know, anything can be made into a wrap.* So I decided that I’d make a curry chicken wrap,” says Myka. “For a side: sliced strawberries and a fruit and yogurt smoothie.” Myka’s recipe calls for grilled chicken, but you can use any kind of cooked chicken.

Makes 2 to 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 grilled skinless boneless chicken breasts, cut into bite-size pieces
2 stalks celery, chopped
1 red apple, peeled and diced
1/4 cup raisins
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/4 teaspoon curry powder
Salt and pepper
2 (10-inch) whole-wheat tortillas

PREPARATION

1. In a large bowl, combine the chicken, celery, apple, raisins, mayonnaise, and curry powder. Stir to combine, and season to taste with salt and pepper.
2. Divide the mixture between the tortillas, and wrap tightly around the filling from bottom to top, overlapping one end, burrito style. Cut the wraps in half to serve.

Fish Tacos

Michael Prados, age 12



"I am the JR. Food Critic from Louisiana," says Michael. "I love to cook with my family and go on food adventures. We made up this fish taco recipe. You can see my other dishes at jrfoodcritic.com."

Makes 4 to 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds fresh mahimahi or other white flaky fish, cut into 8 pieces
2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
1 (14- to 16-ounce) bag shredded cabbage slaw
1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice
1 tablespoon orange juice
1 tablespoon rice-wine vinegar
Freshly ground black pepper
8 whole-wheat tortillas
For garnish: Sliced green apple, guacamole, and salsa

PREPARATION

1. In a large bowl, combine the fish and soy sauce, and stir to completely coat the fish in soy sauce. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour and up to 3 hours.
2. Place the shredded cabbage slaw in a large bowl.
3. In a small bowl, whisk the 1/4 cup of olive oil with the lime juice, orange juice, and rice-wine vinegar. Pour the dressing over the shredded cabbage slaw and toss to combine.
4. In a large saute pan over moderately high heat, warm the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil. Sprinkle the fish lightly with black pepper and sear, turning once, until cooked through, about 2 minutes per side.
5. While the fish is cooking, warm the tortillas in the microwave.
6. On a work surface or individual plates, divide the fish among the 8 tortillas. Top each taco with slaw, and fold or roll up the tacos. Serve with sliced green apple, guacamole, salsa, or other fresh toppings.

Turkey Dumplings

Annalee Carroll, age 12



Annalee's family are big fans of sushi and dumplings, and decided to make them at home. "We make a large batch of dumplings and freeze them on trays so that they are a fast meal choice," says Annalee's mom, Marydale. They also make veggie sushi with carrots, cucumbers, and avocados.

Makes 6 to 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 2 scallions, white and light green parts only, thinly sliced
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 2 cups shredded green cabbage
- 1/2 cup mung bean sprouts (optional)
- 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
- 1/2 pound ground turkey or chicken
- About 32 (3 1/2-inch-diameter) wonton skins
- Rice vinegar
- Sesame oil

PREPARATION

1. In a large nonstick skillet over moderate heat, warm 1 tablespoon vegetable oil. Add the ginger, scallions, and garlic, and sauté, stirring occasionally, until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the cabbage and sauté, stirring occasionally, until wilted, about 4 minutes. Stir in the bean sprouts, if using, then remove from the heat and stir in 2 tablespoons of soy sauce. Let cool, then transfer to a bowl, add the meat, and mix with hands until blended. Wash the skillet.
2. Lay 4 wonton skins on a work surface. Add a scant tablespoon of the filling in the center of each. Brush around the edge of the wrappers with water and then fold the wrappers in half, pinching to seal. Place dumplings, pinched-edge-up, on a wax-paper-lined baking sheet and cover with a damp towel. Continue making dumplings with the remaining wonton skins and filling.
3. Add 1/2 inch of water and the remaining 1 tablespoon vegetable oil to the same large skillet and bring to a simmer over moderately high heat. Add about half the dumplings, cover and cook until the wrappers are tender and the meat is cooked through, about 8

Turkey Dumplings

Annalee Carroll, age 12

minutes. Repeat with the remaining dumplings, adding more water and oil as necessary.

4. In a small bowl, combine the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup soy sauce with 1 tablespoon water, a dash of rice vinegar, and sesame oil. Whisk together and serve with the dumplings.

Sizzling Tofu with Green Onions and Sugar Snap Peas



Samuel Hightower, age 10

“Well, I don’t really eat sandwiches very well, so my mom has to find other things for me to eat for lunch,” says Samuel. “One day I tried tofu and I liked it, so my mom got it. Then my mom was asking me what I wanted for lunch, and I asked her for the tofu. She made it and put it in a thermos. My friends wondered what it was, and a couple of them tried it and really liked it too!”

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil
¼ pound firm tofu, cut into small cubes
1 garlic clove, minced
2 scallions, white and light green parts only, chopped
1 cup sugar snap peas, cut into thirds
½ cup cooked brown rice

PREPARATION

1. In a large sauté pan over moderate heat, warm the oil. Add the tofu and cook, stirring often, until golden brown, about 15 minutes. Add the garlic, scallions, and sugar snap peas, and cook 5 more minutes.
2. While the vegetables are cooking, warm the rice in the microwave for 1 minute on high, then serve the sizzling tofu on top.

Tapenade and Goat Cheese Sandwich



Rachel Goldsmith-Levitt, age 11

"I had a sandwich at a restaurant similar to this and I loved it. However, I thought it could be healthier, so I kept on changing the ingredients and amounts till I got the perfect sandwich," says Rachel. "My dad introduced me to tapenade at a young age, and both my parents are lactose-intolerant, so we have goat cheese at home a lot." Rachel likes to eat this with strawberries and carrots.

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

10 kalamata olives, pitted
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon olive oil
Salt and pepper
2 tablespoons goat cheese
2 pieces of whole-wheat bread
1/2 cup fresh baby spinach
1/2 cucumber, peeled and thinly sliced

PREPARATION

1. In a food processor or blender, combine the olives, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil. Process until a thick paste forms. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
2. Spread the goat cheese on the bread, and top with the olive tapenade, spinach, and cucumber slices.

MICHIGAN

Apple Oat Balls!

Avery McNew, age 8



“We were inspired to make these by one of our equestrian ‘neigh’bors,” says Avery’s mom, Carrie. “My daughter asked her what we could bring her horses for a reward after competing in the horse show, and she told us to ball up some raw oats, apples, and carrots with a dash of brown sugar, and the horses would be thrilled! We rushed home, and our Apple Oat Balls were born when my 2-year-old tried one and exclaimed ‘Yum!’” The family loves to pair these with yogurt. Peanut butter was added to the recipe to make the balls hold together tightly, but you can make it without it.

Makes about 30 (1-inch) balls

INGREDIENTS

6 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
1 carrot, peeled and shredded, or ½ cup shredded carrots (optional)
½ cup pecans, toasted and chopped (optional)
2 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons packed light or dark brown sugar
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 organic apples, peeled
Juice of 1 lemon
½ to ¾ cup creamy peanut butter
3 tablespoons raisins
2 tablespoons dried cranberries

PREPARATION

1. In a large bowl, stir together the oats, carrot, pecans, sugar, brown sugar, and cinnamon.
2. Cut the apples in half and remove the cores. Chop the apples into very small pieces and place in a small bowl. Add the lemon juice and toss to coat the apples. Add the apples to the oats and stir to combine.
3. Add ¾ cup water and stir to wet the ingredients. Add ½ cup peanut butter and stir to thoroughly combine.
4. Using damp hands, form the mixture into 1-inch balls. If the mixture isn’t sticky enough to form balls, add additional peanut butter. Press 2 raisins and 1 dried cranberry into each ball to create a face. Store Apple Oat Balls in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

Stuffed Red Peppers

Riley Sorensen, age 12



“This lunch is so yummy. My mom and I mixed chicken with tomato sauce, and we added spinach and garlic to make it healthy. We thought it would be good to put it in a red pepper for flavor and more nutrients, also to make it fun to eat,” says Riley. She likes to eat this with her famous Banana and Oat Stacks, which combine banana slices topped with a mixture of oats, almonds, flax, coconut, and peanut butter.

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

1 medium red bell pepper, stem and seeds removed
1 scallion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 cup fresh baby spinach
1/2 cup tomato sauce
1 grilled or broiled skinless chicken breast, cut into bite-size pieces
2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup hot cooked brown rice

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 375F.
2. In a pot of boiling salted water, cook the red pepper until slightly soft, about 5 minutes. Drain and let dry.
3. In a sauté pan over moderate heat, cook the scallion, garlic, spinach, and tomato sauce for 5 minutes. Add the chicken and cook, stirring occasionally, until it is heated through, about 3 minutes.
4. Fill the red pepper half way with the chicken-spinach mixture, then add a layer of Parmesan. Fill the pepper with the remaining chicken-spinach mixture and top with the remaining Parmesan. Bake, in an ovenproof dish, until the red pepper is soft, about 15 minutes. Serve atop hot brown rice.

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Tacos

Linda Martinez, age 12



“This recipe is a mixture of my heritage and where I live,” says Linda. “I wanted to combine Mexican food and blend in the culture of the South together.” To include all of the major food groups, Linda serves this with carrots and applesauce. “This recipe has an immense amount of nutrients in it. That is why this meal will help kids to be healthy.”

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

1/2 pound ground turkey
2 teaspoons fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 teaspoon fresh oregano
1 teaspoon cumin
Salt and pepper
4 (10-inch) corn or whole-wheat tortillas
1/4 cup crumbled Feta or shredded mozzarella, plus more if desired
1/4 cup barbecue or tomato sauce (optional)

PREPARATION

1. In a large saute pan over moderate heat, cook the turkey until well browned, about 10 minutes.
2. Drain the fat from the pan and add the parsley, oregano, and cumin. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
3. While the turkey is cooking, warm each tortilla in the microwave for 10 to 20 seconds. Place the tortillas on individual plates and place 1/4 cup of the cooked turkey in the middle of each. Top each taco with 1 tablespoon Feta or mozzarella and 1 tablespoon barbecue or tomato sauce, if desired. Fold the tortillas in half and warm each one in microwave for 20 seconds to melt the cheese. Serve with carrots and applesauce on the side.

Chicken Spinach Pasta

Kyle Moore, age 12



"I was trying to think of something for lunch, and I found these [ingredients] in the fridge and spice cabinets," says Kyle, who recommends serving this pasta with a small fruit salad on the side.

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 pound linguine
3 tablespoons olive oil
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 large tomatoes, diced
2 grilled or cooked skinless chicken breasts, cut into small pieces
3 cups fresh spinach
1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 teaspoon dried basil
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper

PREPARATION

1. In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook the linguine until al dente, 8 to 10 minutes. Drain the linguine and place it in a large serving bowl.
2. While the linguine is cooking, in a large sauté pan over moderate heat, warm the oil. Add the garlic and sauté, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 3 minutes. Add the tomatoes, chicken, spinach, oregano, and basil, and sauté, stirring occasionally, until the tomato has softened and chicken is warmed through, about 2 minutes.
3. Add the chicken-tomato mixture to the bowl with the linguine and stir to combine. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve.

Garden Chicken Pizza

Kayla Wayman, age 9



"I do a lot of cooking with my family, and we do homemade pizza a lot. It's fun, since everyone can choose what they would like on their own pizza," says Kayla. "I always like to use things from my own garden, such as the spinach, basil, and cherry tomatoes." She enjoys this with milk and an apple with cinnamon.

Makes 1 to 2 servings

INGREDIENTS

Whole-Wheat Pizza Crust:

- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup whole-wheat flour
- 3/4 teaspoon rapid-rise yeast (from a 1/4-ounce packet)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/4 cup warm water (105-115°F)

Toppings:

- 2 tablespoons pizza or tomato sauce
- 6 fresh spinach leaves
- 1/4 cup sliced leftover grilled chicken breast
- 1/4 cup shredded part-skim mozzarella
- 4 cherry tomatoes, sliced
- 2 fresh basil leaves, chopped

PREPARATION

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, yeast, salt, and sugar. Add the oil and warm water, and stir with a wooden spoon to form a sticky ball. On a lightly floured work surface, knead the dough, dusting with flour as needed, until smooth and elastic, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let rise in a warm place until nearly doubled, about 25 minutes.
2. Arrange a rack in the bottom of the oven and preheat to 500°F, or preheat a gas grill.
3. Stretch dough to about 9 inches, or in whatever shape you want, and place on a lightly oiled baking sheet.
4. Spoon the tomato sauce on top and, using the back of a spoon and leaving a border of at least 1/2 inch, spread it over the dough. Top with the spinach, chicken, cheese, and fresh tomato. Cook the pizza on the pan in the oven or on the grill, covered, until the crust is crisp and golden and the cheese is bubbly, about 7 minutes. Sprinkle with fresh basil and serve.

Apple Alien

Aaron Beckman, age 8



Dad Kenneth writes: "Operation Apple Alien Status Report. Mission: Make and eat an out-of-this-world lunch that is fun and nutritious:

1. Assemble Apple Alien and place it on launch pad (plate).
2. Remove Apple Alien's antennas and prepare for take-off.
3. Launch a flying object (flying disk wrap, fruit meteor, or veggie asteroid) from antenna and fly it to the mother ship (a hungry tummy).

Final Report: Mission accomplished! Kids had fun flying (eating) the Apple Alien, are reenergized with healthy food and ready for more adventures."

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

1 (10-inch) whole-wheat wrap

¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon ranch dressing
or your favorite homemade dressing

1 1/2 tablespoons cottage cheese

2 slices smoked turkey breast

1 1/2 slices Cheddar or your favorite
cheese

1/4 cup fresh baby spinach

4 baby carrots, cut into slices

6 snap peas, cut in ¼-inch-thick slices

6 grape tomatoes

4 grapes, halved

2 large strawberries, halved

1 large apple

1 teaspoon creamy peanut butter

1 cashew, sliced horizontally in half

¼ cup low-fat vanilla yogurt

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

3 long wooden skewers, 1 short plastic
cup (2 1/2 inches diameter, 1 inch high)

PREPARATION

1. Place the wrap on a plate and spread 1 tablespoon of the ranch dressing in the center, then add the cottage cheese, turkey, Cheddar, and spinach. Tightly roll the wrap into a cylinder, and cut into ¾-inch-thick slices.
2. Thread 8 to 10 pieces of fruit and vegetables (reserving 2 carrot slices), along with the wrap slices, in the

Apple Alien

Aaron Beckman, age 8

desired order on each of 3 wooden skewers, keeping the skewer base empty.

3. Place the base of the apple in the opening of a short plastic cup and push the filled skewers into the top part of the apple to create the alien's antennas.
4. Spread peanut butter on 1 side of each of the 2 reserved carrot slices and the flat side of both cashew halves. Using the peanut butter as "glue," attach the carrot slices as eyes and the cashews as a smile for the apple alien. Serve with the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of ranch dressing and the yogurt, for dipping the fruits and veggies in.

Black Bean and Avocado Burrito with Pineapple Salsa



Ella Barrett, age 8

"I came up with this lunch because I like to eat burritos, and sometimes my Mom packs them for my lunch at school. I serve homemade pineapple salsa with the burrito," says Ella. She likes to have this with a berry smoothie made with Greek yogurt, as well as a side salad.

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

For the pineapple salsa:

1 pineapple, peeled, cored, and cut into small pieces

1/2 red onion, thinly sliced

1 1/2 red, green, yellow, or orange bell peppers, stemmed and sliced

1 jalapeño, seeded and sliced

Fresh cilantro leaves from 6 sprigs

1/4 cup freshly squeezed lime juice

1/2 teaspoon packed brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

For the burrito:

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed

Salt

4 (10-inch) whole-wheat tortillas

1/2 cup grated or shredded cheese of your choice

1 avocado, pitted, peeled, and sliced

Fresh cilantro, chopped (optional)

PREPARATION

Make the pineapple salsa:

1. In a food processor or blender, combine the pineapple, red onion, bell peppers, jalapeño, and cilantro. Blend just until chunky, then transfer to a bowl.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the lime juice, brown sugar, and salt. Drizzle the lime-juice mixture over the salsa, and stir to combine.

Make the burrito:

3. In a small saucepan over moderate heat, warm the olive oil. Add the beans and cook, mashing gently with a wooden spoon, until heated through, about 3 minutes. Season to taste with salt.

Black Bean and Avocado Burrito with Pineapple Salsa

Ella Barrett, age 8

4. Warm the tortillas in the microwave, then place them on individual plates. Evenly divide the beans among the tortillas, then top each with cheese; microwave to melt the cheese, about 20 seconds each. Divide the avocado slices among the burritos, then tightly roll each tortilla around its filling from bottom to top, overlapping one end, burrito style. Serve with the Pineapple Salsa and additional cilantro, if desired.

The Golden Plate

Tarteel Idais, age 9



"I first made this recipe when I was about 4 years old," says Tarteel. "What inspired me to create it is that me and my whole family always loved salmon as our fish of the month. One story I can tell you about this wonderful recipe is that salmon was the first type of fish I ever had." Tarteel serves this with a berry smoothie.

Makes 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

1 pound salmon, divided into 4 (4-ounce) fillets
1 1/2 cups broccoli
1 garlic clove, peeled
1 medium onion, thinly sliced
1 scallion, white and light green parts only, chopped
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/3 cup barbecue sauce
1 cup brown rice

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Place the salmon, broccoli, garlic, onion, and scallions in a greased baking dish. Brush with oil, drizzle with barbecue sauce, and bake until the salmon is cooked through and crispy and the vegetables are soft, about 20 minutes. (You can also grill or broil the salmon.)
2. While the salmon is baking, cook the rice in 2 cups of water. Serve the salmon and veggies atop the rice.

Baked Chicken Wrap with Nectarine Avocado Salsa



Emma Kenney, age 9

"I decided to make this recipe because nectarine salsa is my favorite! I could eat it on anything," says Emma. "I chose a wrap because they are fun to take in my lunchbox." Emma likes to have these with corn-and-black bean salad, blueberries and strawberries, and milk.

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 pound chicken breast tenders, preferably organic
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons ground cumin
Salt and pepper
2 nectarines, diced
1 avocado, pitted, peeled, and diced
1 bunch scallions, white and light green parts only, thinly sliced
1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
Juice of 1/2 lime
4 whole-wheat tortillas
4 cups fresh baby spinach, preferably organic

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. In a large ovenproof dish, drizzle the chicken with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and sprinkle with the cumin. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and gently toss to coat the chicken in the oil and spices. Bake until the chicken is cooked through, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool slightly.
3. In a medium bowl, combine the nectarines, avocado, scallions, and cilantro. Add the lime juice and the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil, and gently toss to combine.
4. Place the wraps on individual plates and evenly distribute the chicken, salsa, and spinach. Roll each wrap around the filling from bottom to top, overlapping one end, burrito style. Slice the wraps diagonally, and enjoy!

Fish-Fueled Pepper Rocket with Kale Chips and Quinoa



Samuel Wohabe, age 9

"I came up with the recipe for Fish-Fueled Pepper Rockets when I was trying to find an interesting way to use a pretty orange bell pepper I saw in the grocery store," says Samuel. "I wanted to make fish that night too, so I decided it would be fun to stuff the pepper with the fish and mix the flavors. When it was done, it looked like a rocket ship. And I've always loved kale chips, and can eat the entire head of kale this way!"

Makes 3 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon olive oil
1/2 pound halibut fillet
Salt and pepper
3 orange bell peppers, stemmed and seeds removed
1 cup shredded Manchego cheese
Kale chips (see below)
1 cup cooked quinoa

For Kale Chips:

1 bunch kale, stems removed and leaves torn into bite-size pieces
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/4 teaspoon salt

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. In a sauté pan over moderate heat, warm the olive oil. Add the halibut and sear, flipping once, until cooked through, about 4 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cut the halibut into bite-size pieces.
3. Stuff each pepper with 1/3 of the cooked halibut and 1/3 of the shredded Manchego cheese. Place the peppers on a nonstick baking pan, open side up, and bake until soft, about 30 minutes. Serve with kale chips and quinoa.

For Kale Chips:

Preheat the oven to 400°F. On a large nonstick baking pan, drizzle the kale with olive oil, season with salt, and toss until evenly coated. Bake until crispy, about 15 minutes.

Vegan Sloppy Joes

Alexea Wagner, age 9



"I saw sloppy joes at school, but I wanted to make sure they were cruelty-free," says Alexea, who serves this with kale salad that has shredded carrot, spicy pecans, and sliced strawberries, and a big glass of soy milk.

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 (8-ounce) package tempeh, sliced
1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
½ onion, diced
2 garlic cloves, peeled and mashed
1 tablespoon diced and seeded jalapeño
1 (14-ounce) can diced tomatoes
¼ cup apple-cider vinegar
1 tablespoon mustard
1 tablespoon maple syrup
½ tablespoon molasses
4 whole-wheat buns
For garnish: Lettuce and slices of avocado

PREPARATION

1. In a large sauté pan over moderate heat, warm the olive oil. Add the tempeh, soy sauce, and ¼ cup water, and cook for 8 minutes, breaking up the tempeh. Add the onion, garlic, jalapeño, tomatoes, apple-cider vinegar, mustard, maple syrup, and molasses, and cook, stirring often, for 10 minutes.
2. While the sloppy joe mixture is cooking, toast the buns in the oven or toaster oven. Divide the sloppy joe mixture among the 4 buns, top with lettuce and avocado, and serve.

Homerun Meatloaf Burger

Sydney Brown, age 11



“My lunch is a healthy and fun take on a hamburger. I came up with this burger because I love meatloaf, and I thought I could show kids how delicious vegetables could be when you think of fun and creative ways to add them to your meal,” says Sydney. She likes to serve this with Baked Zucchini Fries and fresh strawberry lemonade.

Makes 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds lean ground beef

½ cup finely diced green bell pepper

½ cup finely diced zucchini

½ cup finely diced onion

½ cup unseasoned breadcrumbs

1 garlic clove, minced

¼ cup tomato sauce

1 egg

Salt and pepper

½ cup ketchup

½ cup barbecue sauce

Reduced-fat provolone cheese or any other type of melting cheese

8 whole-wheat or multigrain hamburger buns, toasted

For garnish:

Lettuce and tomato slices

For Baked Zucchini Fries:

1 large egg white

1/3 cup milk

½ cup Parmesan cheese

1/2 cup unseasoned breadcrumbs

Salt and pepper

2 large green or yellow zucchini, peeled, trimmed, and cut into (2-inch-long, ¼-inch-thick) strips

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the ground beef, green bell pepper, zucchini, onion, breadcrumbs, garlic, tomato sauce, egg, salt, and pepper. Make patties and place them on a baking sheet.
3. Bake for about 20 minutes, then flip them and cook for another 10 minutes.
4. While the burgers are cooking, make the zucchini fries: Combine the egg white and milk in a small bowl, and combine the Parmesan, breadcrumbs, salt, and pepper in another small bowl.

Homerun Meatloaf Burger

Sydney Brown, age 11

5. Dip the zucchini slices first in the milk mixture and then in the cheese mixture. Shake off any excess, then move to the baking sheet and place in the oven on another shelf while the burgers cook.
6. Mix together the ketchup and barbecue sauce, drizzle on the burgers, and bake for an additional 10 to 15 minutes.
7. Add a slice of cheese to each burger and bake until melted, about 1 minute.
8. Remove the burgers and lightly toasted fries from the oven and place the burgers on buns. Serve garnished with lettuce and tomato and Baked Zucchini Fries.

Turkey Vegetable Soup

Logan Rosene, age 8



Logan's mom says, "Ever since my children have been babies, we as a family have stayed away from the fast foods and frozen foods section of the grocery store. I lost my father at a young age due to health issues from being obese, and I make it a priority to teach my children the importance of healthy eating and longevity of life." Logan likes to round out this meal with whole-wheat bread, milk, and raspberries.

Makes 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 pound ground turkey
32 ounces low-sodium chicken broth
2 cups thinly sliced carrots
6 celery ribs, trimmed and cut into
¼-inch-thick slices
2 cups thinly sliced cabbage
2 (15-ounce) cans kidney beans, drained
and rinsed
1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
Salt and pepper

PREPARATION

1. In a large sauté pan over moderate heat, cook the turkey until browned and cooked through, about 8 minutes.
2. While the turkey is cooking, in a large stockpot, combine the chicken broth with the carrots, celery, cabbage, beans, and tomatoes. Add the cooked turkey and simmer, over moderate heat until the vegetables are soft, about 30 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper

Pitaya Healthy Salad

Esther Huh, age 11



Esther's mom, Dae Young, is a big fan of the high-fiber pitaya fruit (dragonfruit), and happily, so is Esther. They combined it with chicken and cabbage to make a healthy, vibrant salad. They like to layer the salad ingredients when they serve it and if you do this, serve the dressing on the side.

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup diced cooked chicken breast
- ½ pitaya (dragonfruit) or 2 kiwi, peeled and diced
- 2 slices pineapple, peeled, cored, and diced
- ½ head cabbage, cored, cut into ¼-inch-thick slices, and chopped
- 1/3 cup plain reduced-fat yogurt
- 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- Pinch cayenne or minced hot red chile to taste
- 2 teaspoons black sesame seeds

PREPARATION

In a large bowl, combine the chicken, pitaya, pineapple, and cabbage. In a small bowl, whisk together the yogurt, soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, and cayenne. Add the yogurt sauce to the fruit and cabbage, and toss to coat. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve.

Shredded Veggie Wrap

Logan Kendall, age 11



"I came up with this idea one Memorial Day. My grandma made a Veggie Pizza, and when I heard about this contest, I made up my own wrap," says Logan. "I would serve grapes or carrots with this."

Makes 3 servings

INGREDIENTS

8 ounces low-fat cream cheese
½ teaspoon fresh flat-leaf parsley,
minced
½ cup light mayonnaise
½ cup diced onions
¼ cup diced green bell pepper
¼ cup diced celery
1/8 teaspoon each salt and pepper
3 multigrain wraps
1 (12-ounce) bag broccoli slaw (broccoli,
carrots, and red cabbage)
12 slices of turkey pepperoni or turkey
breast

PREPARATION

1. In a small bowl, thoroughly mix together the cream cheese, parsley, mayonnaise, onions, green bell pepper, celery, salt, and pepper. Divide among the wraps, spreading evenly and not getting too close to the edge. Take ¼ cup of broccoli slaw and place on top of cream cheese spread. Top with 4 slices of turkey pepperoni.
2. Roll the wraps up tight, wrap each in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or serve at room temperature.

Power Pesto Pasta

Harrison Booker, age 9



"I like garlic so much I decided to make pesto, and now I like to eat Power Pesto Pasta," says Harrison. "After Thanksgiving I plant my garlic in our garden. I like to plant as much garlic as I can. In the spring I grow basil in our backyard in pots. In the summer we have basil that is ready to be picked and garlic ready to pull out of the ground. The spinach puts Power in the Pesto!"

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces whole-wheat pasta, such as rotelle
- 3 cups loosely packed fresh basil
- 1 1/4 cups fresh baby spinach leaves
- 2 tablespoons walnuts or pine nuts
- 1 garlic clove, peeled
- 1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- Pinch of salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup sliced yellow squash
- 1/2 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 1 cup halved green beans

PREPARATION

1. In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook the pasta until al dente, about 6 minutes.
2. While the pasta is cooking, in a food processor or blender, blend the basil, spinach, walnuts or pine nuts, garlic, 1/4 cup of olive oil, Parmigiano-Reggiano, salt, and pepper. If it's too thick, add a few more teaspoons of olive oil.
3. In a large saucepan over moderate heat, warm the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil, then cook the squash, cherry tomatoes, and green beans until soft and slightly brown, about 4 minutes. Add the cooked pasta and the pesto, and stir to combine.
4. Divide the pasta, veggies, and pesto among four bowls and serve.

Veggie Pizza

Robert Robinson, age 9



Robbie's mom Cassie learned how to make a dessert fruit pizza and began making a vegetable version for her family, including her son Robert. "My children have their own favorite toppings, and we change these based on the season, what is available locally and at our farmer's market. Any of the herbs or vegetables you can grow in your own garden make this more fun to make," she says. The family uses an already-baked thin-crust pizza and puts their just-picked veggies on the pizza. This version is a more traditional way of making pizza, but the Robinsons' version is great for summer evenings, as you don't turn the oven on.

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 (12-inch) thin store-bought pizza crust
 1 tablespoon olive oil
 2 cups finely chopped broccoli florets
 6 scallions, white and light green parts only, chopped
 2 cups local mushrooms, trimmed and sliced
 3 small green zucchini, trimmed and chopped
 3 small yellow squash, trimmed and chopped
 12 grape tomatoes, halved
 1/2 cup reduced-fat cream cheese
 2 tablespoons 1 percent milk or rice milk
 1/2 cup pitted, sliced black olives
 1/2 cup minced fresh basil
 1/2 cup minced chives
 1/2 cup shredded Parmesan

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Lightly oil a large baking sheet or get out a pizza stone.
2. Cook the pizza crust on the pan or stone until lightly brown on top, about 10 minutes.
3. While the crust is baking, in a large sauté pan over moderate heat, warm the olive oil. Add the broccoli, scallions, mushrooms, zucchini, squash, and tomatoes, and cook until just tender, about 5 minutes.
4. Remove the pizza crust from the oven and let cool for 5 minutes, leaving the oven on. In a small bowl, whisk together the cream cheese and milk. Spread on the pizza crust, leaving a 1/2-inch border, and top with the vegetables, olives, basil, chives, and Parmesan. Bake until the cheese is bubbling and lightly brown, about 10 minutes. Serve hot or cold.

Falafel Wrap with Apple, Carrot & Cranberry Slaw

Evan Clark, age 9



Evan's mom, Jami, reports that they have always enjoyed cooking together. "I knew he liked hummus, so I introduced this version of falafel that was not deep-fried," she says. "I offered to make this in pita, but he said he preferred it in a tortilla, which he then assembled with his favorite toppings! We made a healthy, sweet salad to serve on the side as a complement."

Makes 2 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 (15-ounce) can garbanzo beans (chickpeas), drained and rinsed
1 small red onion, finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons sesame tahini
3 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon olive oil
1 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 tablespoons flour, if necessary
Kosher salt
1/4 cup plain nonfat yogurt
2 large multigrain tortillas
1 tomato, thinly sliced
1/2 cup arugula or fresh baby spinach

1 medium carrot, peeled and shredded
Fresh cilantro (optional)

PREPARATION

1. In a medium bowl, mash the beans with a fork. Add the onion, 2 garlic cloves, cilantro, 2 tablespoons tahini, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1 teaspoon olive oil, cumin, coriander, cayenne powder, and baking powder. If the mix is too wet or dry, adjust with flour or water, 1 teaspoon at a time. Season to taste with salt.
2. In a large skillet over moderate heat, warm the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil. Form the bean mixture into four patties and cook, flipping, until lightly browned on both sides, about 6 minutes total. Cut each patty in half.
3. While the patties are cooking, in a small bowl, combine the yogurt, the remaining 1/4 cup tahini, and the remaining 2 tablespoons lemon juice.

Falafel Wrap with Apple, Carrot & Cranberry Slaw

Evan Clark, age 9

4. Place the wraps on individual plates and top with the patties, tomatoes, arugula, carrot, cilantro, and some yogurt-tahini sauce. Roll up the wrap, and slice in half for easier eating.

Sushi for Kids

Ariana Lugo, age 9



Ariana's mom, Tania, says, "Sushi for Kids is a recipe that I have been trying with my kids, and they love it. It's easy to make, healthy, and fun to prepare with the kids," she says. "They usually prepare it and serve a papaya shake on the side."

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

2 slices oven-roasted ham
4 ounces low-fat cream cheese
1 cup cooked white rice
1/2 avocado, pitted, peeled, and thinly sliced
1 small tomato

PREPARATION

On a plate, evenly spread the cream cheese on the ham slices. Divide the rice between the slices and press it into the cream cheese. Place the avocados and tomatoes in the center of each slice of ham. Roll the ham tightly around the filling, and cut each roll into 4 pieces.

Broccoli and Cheese Egg-White Omelet

Caroline Cowart, age 12



Caroline's mom, Jennifer, says, "We came up with this lunch recipe because Caroline prefers egg whites instead of regular eggs, and she likes broccoli quite a bit." They like to serve this with wheat toast and mixed fruit.

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

3 large egg whites
¼ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
¾ cup cooked chopped broccoli

PREPARATION

Warm a nonstick sauté pan over low heat. Add the egg whites and let them set for a minute. Add the broccoli to one side of the egg whites, leaving the other side of the omelet empty. Sprinkle the mozzarella cheese over the broccoli, cover the pan, and cook until the cheese is melted and the eggs are cooked, about 4 minutes. (You can also cook the omelet under the broiler for 3 minutes.) Fold the empty half of the omelet over the broccoli-cheese side and serve.

Fun with Lunch

Lauren Kuperman, age 12



“My daughter Lauren loves Asian cuisine,” says her mom, Faye. “This can be challenging to pack for a lunch. I have come up with this satisfying ‘Asian-style’ lunch for her. I usually cook the noodles the night before. They are very easy to cook: It only takes 2 minutes in boiling water.”

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

1 cup vermicelli noodles
1 cup cooked chopped chicken breast
1 tablespoon chopped red bell pepper
1 tablespoon chopped celery
2 tablespoons chopped peanuts
1 teaspoon chopped onion
Pinch freshly ground black pepper
1/8 teaspoon lime zest
1 teaspoon minced fresh lemon basil
1/4 cup rice-wine vinegar

PREPARATION

1. In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook the vermicelli noodles for 2 minutes. Drain, rinse in cold water, and return the noodles to the pot.
2. Add the chicken, bell pepper, celery, peanuts, onion, pepper, lime zest, lemon basil, and rice-wine vinegar, and stir to combine. Cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, for two minutes. (This can be prepared the evening before.) Serve hot or cold.

Miss Kitty's Egg Salad Sensation

Eva Farley, age 8



Eva's family loves egg salad, but they know it needed "a healthy makeover. Enter Greek yogurt," says Eva. They use yogurt instead of mayo and sour cream. Their egg-cellent sandwich is on whole-wheat bread, and they pair it with fruit kabobs, layering grapes, strawberries, and bananas.

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

8 large eggs
1 cup Greek yogurt
1 teaspoon brown mustard
½ teaspoon dried dill
¼ teaspoon sea salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
4 whole-wheat buns

PREPARATION

1. Fill a saucepot with water and add the eggs. Cook over high heat until the water boils. Remove the pot from the heat and let the eggs sit in the water for 10 minutes. Drain the eggs and place them in a bowl of cool water. In the cool water, peel the shells off the eggs.
2. In a large bowl, combine the eggs, yogurt, mustard, dill, salt, and pepper. Gently mash and stir until well combined. Place ½ cup egg salad on the bottom of each whole-wheat bun, top with the other half of the bun, and serve.

TENNESSEE

Tuna Schooners

Logan Guleff, age 9



"I came up with my recipe by thinking what could I do to my favorite tuna salad to make it healthier and tasty," says Logan. "I decided to try quinoa, a whole grain that I had never had before. I added it to my favorite canned tuna and all my favorite veggies, and WOW, was it good! If you don't like my veggie choices, have fun experimenting with your own." Logan always adds fruit to the side of his plate.

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 cup cooked quinoa, at room temperature
½ cup minced onion
½ cup diced red and orange bell peppers
½ cup diced cucumber
½ cup diced celery
1 (6-ounce) can white tuna, drained
¼ cup low-fat mayonnaise
Salt and pepper
4 long sweet peppers, cut in half lengthwise and seeds removed
2 lettuce leaves, cut in triangles

PREPARATION

In a large bowl, combine the quinoa, onion, bell peppers, cucumber, celery, tuna, and mayonnaise. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and stir well to combine. Divide the salad among the sweet pepper halves, insert the lettuce like a boat's sail, and serve.

Secret Service Super Salad

Michael Lakind, age 9



"I came up with this idea because I love to eat fresh, healthy, and light food. I came up with the name for the salad because I am very interested in the important job of the Secret Service." Michael likes to have this with a tasty carrot soup he calls Bunny Bisque.

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

4 slices whole-grain bread, cut into cubes
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon parsley
3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 cup white-wine vinegar
1 (8-ounce) package fresh baby spinach
2 skinless boneless chicken breasts,
grilled or cooked and cut into thin slices
1 pint strawberries, stemmed and sliced

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 300°F.
2. On a baking sheet, drizzle the bread cubes with butter, stirring so each piece gets a little butter. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and sprinkle with parsley. Bake until the bread is crisp, about 20 minutes.
3. While the bread is baking, in a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil and vinegar. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. In a large bowl, combine the spinach, chicken, strawberries, and croutons. Drizzle with the dressing, and serve

Lentil Veggie Soup

Lahav Ardi, age 9



"I first made this soup when Mom was sick and I was 6½ years old," says Lahav. "I told Mom to 'lay down and rest, I'll make lunch.' I convinced her I could do it. I made this soup, and she felt better that night." Sometimes she adds cut-up skinless, boneless chicken breast slices. Lahav always has this with multigrain bread with gouda and mozzarella melted on top, followed by mixed berries and kiwi.

Makes 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

6 cups vegetable broth, plus more if needed
1 cup assorted lentils (red and green)
1/3 cup barley
½ onion, peeled and finely chopped
¼ cup finely chopped celery
4 small red potatoes, cut into ½-inch cubes
6 carrots or 12 baby carrots, peeled and thinly sliced
1 cup fresh or frozen peas
1 cup fresh or frozen corn
1 cup sliced white mushrooms
1/2 teaspoon parsley
1/2 teaspoon oregano
½ teaspoon basil
½ teaspoon cilantro
½ teaspoon sage
Salt and pepper

PREPARATION

In a large stock or soup pot over moderate heat, combine the vegetable broth, lentils, barley, onion, celery, potatoes, carrots, peas, corn, mushrooms, parsley, oregano, basil, cilantro, and sage. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and gently simmer, stirring occasionally, until the lentils and potatoes are fully cooked, about 45 minutes. Serve hot.

Backyard Garden Salsa Tortillas

Laura Printon, age 9



Laura took a cooking class in the third grade, which inspired her desire to pick “salsa ingredients” from the garden, reports her mother, Catherine. Because Laura’s brother likes soft tortillas, Laura incorporated chicken or tofu tortillas into the meal along with serving beans and fruit, like kiwi.

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

For the Salsa:

4 beefsteak tomatoes

2 Roma tomatoes

2 plum tomatoes

1 green bell pepper

1 yellow bell pepper

1 medium or large Spanish onion

1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro

2 tablespoons lemon or lime juice

For the Tortillas:

6 whole-wheat flour tortillas

3 (4-ounce) skinless boneless cooked chicken breasts or tofu, cut into bite-size pieces

1 cup canned black beans, drained and rinsed

1 cup shredded mozzarella and Cheddar cheese

2 cups of shredded romaine lettuce

1 Granny Smith apple, diced

1 avocado, peeled, pitted, and sliced

PREPARATION

For the Salsa:

1. In a food processor or blender, combine all the tomatoes, bell peppers, onion, cilantro, and lemon or lime juice. Blend until the ingredients are well combined but the salsa is still chunky.

For the Tortillas:

2. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Top each tortilla with equal amounts of the chicken, beans, and cheese, and bake until the cheese is melted and the chicken is warm, 10 to 12 minutes. Just before serving, add the lettuce, apple, and avocado, and serve with the salsa.

Vegetarian Lasagna

Gabriel Reed, age 11



“We grew fresh greens at Gabriel’s school,” reports his mom, Vanessa. “We chose kale, tomatoes, and basil from the garden, and made lasagna. We served samples to 84 fourth-graders, and they loved it!” Gabriel often has this with fresh slices of mango and milk.

Makes 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

3 pounds ripe tomatoes, chopped
1 (24-ounce) jar marinara sauce
1 cup shredded fresh basil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
9 whole-wheat lasagna noodles (about half a 1-pound box)
4 bunches kale (about 3 pounds total)
1 (15-ounce) container part-skim ricotta cheese
1 pound part-skim mozzarella cheese, shredded
¼ cup finely grated imported Parmesan cheese
1 large egg

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F.
2. In a large saucepan over moderate heat, combine the tomatoes, marinara sauce, and basil, and bring to a simmer. Cover the pot, then transfer it to the oven to cook gently, stirring once or twice, until the tomatoes are tender, 2 to 2 ½ hours.
3. Carefully remove the pot from the oven. Transfer the tomato sauce to a food mill set over a large saucepan, and force the sauce through the mill to remove the skins. Discard the skins. (If you don’t have a food mill, skip this step.) Season to taste with salt and pepper, and let cool. (You will have about 4 cups of sauce.)
4. In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook the lasagna until al dente, about 10 minutes. Drain and rinse.
5. While the lasagna is boiling, fill a second large pot halfway up with water and bring to a boil. Add half the kale and cook, stirring occasionally, until wilted, 3 to 4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove the kale from the water, place it in a colander, and rinse with cold water until cool. Repeat with the remaining kale. Using a clean towel, squeeze excess moisture from the cooked kale then coarsely chop it.

Vegetarian Lasagna

Gabriel Reed, age 11

6. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
7. In medium bowl, stir together the ricotta , 3/4 cup mozzarella, the Parmesan, and the egg. Season lightly with salt and pepper.
8. Lightly oil a 13-by-9-inch baking dish. Add 1 cup of the tomato sauce to the bottom, tilting to coat. Arrange 3 cooked lasagna noodles in the bottom of the pan, then top with 1 cup tomato sauce. Top with about a third of the kale then dot with about a third of the cheese mixture. Repeat with 2 more layers. Cover the lasagna tightly with foil and bake 45 minutes. Remove the foil, sprinkle the lasagna with the remaining mozzarella, and continue baking until the cheese is melted and the lasagna is bubbling, 10 to 15 minutes. Let stand for 20 minutes before serving.

Fish Chowder

Madeleine Steppel, age 9



“Senator Mark Warner’s recipe for ‘creamless’ Asparagus Soup, which I found in the Celebrate Virginia Cookbook, inspired me to create a chowder recipe,” says Madeleine, who used milk in this recipe because it is the State Beverage of Virginia. She would serve this with a fruity salad of spring greens, cherry tomatoes, strawberries, dried cranberries, and a citrus vinaigrette, with whole-grain bread.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

3 white potatoes (about 12 ounces total),
peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes

1 pound bag frozen peas and carrots,
thawed

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 small onion, finely chopped

1 garlic clove, minced

¼ cup all-purpose flour

4 cups low-fat milk

½ to 2 pounds skinless white fish fillet,
such as bass, tilapia, or flounder, cut into
2-inch pieces

Salt and white pepper

PREPARATION

1. Place potatoes in a large glass microwave-safe bowl. Add enough cool water to just cover the potatoes, and microwave on high for 4 minutes. Add the peas and carrots, and microwave on high until the vegetables are tender, about 3 minutes. Drain the vegetables and set aside. (Or, boil the vegetables until soft, about 8 minutes.)
2. In a large saucepan over moderate heat, melt the butter. Add the onion and garlic, and sauté, stirring occasionally, until golden, 4 to 5 minutes. Lower the heat to moderately low, add the flour, and whisk for 2 minutes to make a roux. Gradually whisk in 1 cup of milk and stir until hot and creamy, making sure to whisk out any lumps. Gradually whisk in the remaining 3 cups milk and cook, whisking, until steaming hot, about 5 minutes.
3. Add the fish and the cooked vegetables, and cook over moderate heat, stirring often, until the fish is cooked through and flaky. Season to taste with salt and white pepper.

Salad Noodle Wraps

Arla Sutton, age 9



Arla reports that her recipe won a school student chef competition, part of the Farm-to-Cafeteria (F2C) program. “I love F2C because we get to go outside in our school garden and also cook and try yummy recipes like kale chips, nettle tea, and apple muffins,” says Arla, who likes to serve this with an apple and milk.

Makes 6 servings (12 wraps)

INGREDIENTS

For the peanut dipping sauce:

1 (3-inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled and minced (about 2 tablespoons)

1/2 cup creamy peanut butter

4 tablespoons rice vinegar

2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce

2 tablespoons white miso paste

1/4 teaspoon dried red pepper

For the salad noodle wraps:

4 ounces rice noodles

12 rice paper rounds

2 carrots, peeled and cut into matchsticks

1/2 cucumber, peeled, seeded, and cut into matchsticks

1 cup snap peas, trimmed and cut into matchsticks

1 cup cooked shredded chicken

1/2 head green leaf lettuce, cut into strips

1/2 cup fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped

1/2 cup fresh mint, coarsely chopped

Optional:

Avocado, bell peppers, zucchini, and sprouts

PREPARATION

Make the peanut dipping sauce:

1. In a small bowl, combine the ginger, peanut butter, rice vinegar, soy sauce, miso paste, red pepper, and 1/4 cup hot water. Whisk until smooth. The sauce can be made several hours in advance and kept, covered, in the refrigerator.

Make the salad noodle wraps:

2. In a pot of boiling salted water, cook the rice noodles until al dente, 3 to 4 minutes. Drain, rinse in cold water, and drain again.
3. Fill a shallow baking pan with warm water. Soak 1 rice paper round in water until soft, 30 seconds to 1 minute.

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Salad Noodle Wraps

Arla Sutton, age 9

Transfer the rice paper round to a work surface, and in the lower third of the round, pile a small amount of the rice noodles, carrot, cucumber, snap peas, chicken, lettuce, cilantro, and mint. Roll the bottom of the rice paper round gently and tightly around the filling, then fold each side toward the center. Continue rolling the bottom toward the top, as gently and tightly as possible, until completely rolled. Place the wrap, seam-side-down, on a plate. Repeat with the remaining rice paper rounds and fillings.

Cook's Note: The wraps can be made several hours in advance and kept, covered in a damp paper towel and plastic wrap, in the refrigerator.

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Golden Moroccan Butternut Stew



Alexis Nelson, age 10

“One of my favorite vegetables is butternut squash. My mom uses Moroccan spices to add flavor to our meals, and this inspired me to make this stew,” says Alexis. “This butternut stew has all my favorite vegetables and spices; this stew is pretty much me in a pot.” Alexis serves this on top of couscous and likes to have low-fat Key lime pie yogurt for dessert.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 1 cup finely chopped shallots
 4 garlic cloves, minced
 1 (14-ounce) can crushed plum tomatoes
 1 whole cinnamon stick
 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
 1 teaspoon garam masala
 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
 1 medium butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch pieces
 1 (16-ounce) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
 3 1/2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
 1/2 cup golden raisins
 3 cups chopped fresh baby spinach

2 cups cooked couscous
 Juice of 1/2 lime
 1 tablespoon golden honey
 Salt and pepper

For garnish:

Fresh cilantro
 slivered almonds

PREPARATION

1. In a large saucepan over moderate heat, warm the olive oil. Add the shallots and sauté, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 6 minutes. Add the garlic, tomatoes, cinnamon, ginger, cumin, coriander, garam masala, and crushed red pepper. Cook until the cinnamon stick unfurls and the tomatoes are cooked down, about 4 minutes. Add the butternut squash, chickpeas, vegetable broth, and raisins, and bring to a simmer. Cook, partially covered, until the butternut squash is

Golden Moroccan Butternut Stew

Alexis Nelson, age 10

tender, about 20 minutes. Add the spinach and cook until wilted, about 2 minutes.

2. While the stew is simmering, warm the couscous in the microwave.
3. Add the lime juice and honey to the stew, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Divide the hot couscous among four bowls, top with the stew, garnish with cilantro and toasted almonds, and serve.

Barbecue Cheddar Chickpea Burgers

Finwe Wiedenhoeft, age 9



Finwe's mom, Kristina, says, "When my oldest son left for the U.S. Navy in September 2011, we showed solidarity by going on a strict vegan diet for the duration of boot camp, and stuck to it faithfully until we saw him at boot camp graduation. We ate (and loved) a lot of beans! I wanted to make a well-rounded recipe using readily available, affordable ingredients like broccoli and cauliflower stems, which might not otherwise be used." Finwe likes to have this on a whole-grain bun with lettuce, and fresh fruit on the side.

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
1/2 cup minced broccoli stems
1/2 cup minced cauliflower stems
3 tablespoons whole-wheat flour
3 tablespoons cornstarch
1/2 cup finely shredded Cheddar cheese
1/2 cup small-curd cottage cheese
1/2 cup barbecue sauce
1 large egg
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
For serving: Whole-wheat buns, toasted

PREPARATION

1. In a food processor or blender, blend the chickpeas so they are crumbled but not yet a paste, or mash with a potato masher. Transfer the chickpeas to a large bowl and add the broccoli and cauliflower stems, flour, cornstarch, Cheddar cheese, cottage cheese, barbecue sauce, egg, salt, and pepper. Stir to thoroughly combine.
2. In a large skillet over moderate heat, warm 1 tablespoon oil. Scoop three slightly heaping 1/2 cup portions of the chickpea burger mixture and drop them into the skillet. Using a spatula, shape and flatten the burgers so they will fit on the buns. Cook for 10 minutes, then flip, flattening the burgers slightly, and continue cooking until golden brown and cooked through, about 10 more minutes. Repeat with the remaining oil and burgers. Serve on hot toasted buns.

Macaroni Casserole

Grace Ratchford, age 12



"I love pasta, and I wanted to come up with something filling and healthy at the same time. Adding protein and a vegetable to one of my favorite dishes made it creative, healthy, and delicious," says Grace. She likes to serve this with a side of fruit, such as grapes or watermelon.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

8 ounces whole-wheat elbow macaroni
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 cup 1-percent milk
2 1/2 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3 organic turkey hot dogs, boiled and cut into bite-size pieces
1 small bunch broccoli, steamed and cut into bite-size pieces
1/2 cup crushed cornflakes
1 to 2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and grease a 9- by 13-inch baking pan.
2. In a large saucepan of boiling salted water, cook the macaroni according to the package directions. Drain in a colander and rinse with cold water until cool.
3. In the same saucepan over moderate heat, melt the butter. Add the flour and stir for 1 minute. Gradually add the milk and cook, whisking, until hot and thick. Add the Cheddar cheese, salt, and pepper and whisk to combine. Remove the sauce from the heat and add the noodles, stirring well to combine. Stir in the hot dogs and broccoli.
4. Transfer the noodle mixture to the greased pan and sprinkle with cornflakes and parsley. Bake until bubbly, about 20 minutes, and serve.

