

Can't get kids to eat string beans? Try to toss them with pork in a sweet sauce

By Gretchen McKay
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

It can be tough to get kids, along with some picky grown-ups, to eat string beans. But char the colorful veggie in a hot skillet, toss it with ground pork in a sweet and savory sauce and watch the beans disappear — maybe even before the dish makes it onto the table.

This tasty stir-fry is super simple and super quick — it will take longer to boil or steam the rice it's served alongside than to cook the meat and beans. I used home-made teriyaki sauce to make it gluten-free, but it's perfectly acceptable to substitute bottled sauce. Red pepper flakes add a touch of heat, cutting the sweetness of the sauce. Don't forget the pickled jalapenos for a crunchy finish.

TERIYAKI PORK STIR-FRY

For pork
1 pound ground pork

2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon peanut or vegetable oil
2-3 large handfuls thin green beans (about 12 to 16 ounces)
Crushed red pepper flakes
Sesame seeds, for garnish
Sliced pickled jalapenos, for garnish
Cooked white or brown rice, for serving

For sauce
½ cup gluten-free soy sauce (such as La Choy)
2 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons maple syrup
1-inch knob fresh ginger, peeled and finely minced
Pinch red pepper flakes
1-2 tablespoons water, or more to taste
A few drops of toasted sesame oil
2 teaspoons cornstarch

Brown ground pork and garlic in large nonstick skillet over medium heat, stirring often, until meat is no longer pink. Season

to taste with salt and pepper, then remove from pan to bowl and wipe pan clean with a paper towel.

Heat oil in pan, then add beans and stir-fry until tender and slightly charred, 4-5 minutes. Add meat back in pan and season with a pinch or two of chili flakes.

Make teriyaki sauce by stirring together soy sauce, honey, maple syrup, ginger, a pinch of red pepper flakes and 1 or 2 tablespoons of water. Taste and adjust seasoning to make it sweeter or spicier by adding more water, pepper flakes, maple syrup or honey. Add a few drops of sesame oil, then whisk in cornstarch.

Add half the teriyaki sauce to the pan with meat and beans, tossing to combine. Add more if you like a saucy stir fry.

Serve immediately, spooned over cooked rice. Garnish with sesame seeds and sliced pickled jalapeno.

Serves 4.

— Gretchen McKay

Salty and sweet treat

By Genevieve Ko
Los Angeles Times

This is for chocolate-peanut-butter lovers everywhere. A salty-sweet spin on the sugar-coated cereal snack known as muddy buddies, this version adds pretzels and salted peanuts to the mix. If you want to package these like a box of chocolate, form the mix into clusters in the variation below.

SALTY-SWEET NUTTY BUDDIES

15 minutes. Makes about 8 cups.

1½ cups semisweet chocolate chips
½ cup crunchy peanut butter
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
3 cups small pretzels, such as snaps, sticks or minis
2 cups lightly salted roasted peanuts
2 cups rice Chex or Crispix cereal
1½ cups packed powdered sugar
1 cup peanut M&Ms (optional)

Combine the chocolate chips, peanut butter and butter in a very large microwave-safe bowl. Microwave in 20-second increments, stirring between each, until just smooth. Alternatively, melt the chocolate chips, peanut butter and butter in a large, wide pot over low heat, stirring occasionally, until just smooth. Remove from the heat. Add the pretzels, peanuts and cereal and fold gently until evenly coated

Divide the powdered sugar between two gallon-sized resealable plastic bags, then divide the pretzel mixture between the bags. Seal the bags and shake until evenly coated. Transfer to a large bowl to serve as a snack mix, adding the peanut M&Ms if you'd like.

Variation

Nutty Buddy Clusters: Omit the butter and powdered sugar. At the end of step 1, drop the mixture by spoonfuls onto parchment-paper-lined baking sheets to form clusters. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt if desired. Refrigerate until firm, at least 10 minutes.

Make Ahead

The nutty buddies can be stored in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

OLYMPICS

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But since the skiing is far from the Olympic headquarters, we got to stay in the Tokyu Hotel near the picturesque village of Hakuba.

I had to have a roommate and the beds had genuine rice pillows, but there was access to a marvelous Japanese bath the size of a swimming pool.

At these sort of events, we received per diem, which we could keep if we didn't spend it. We were so busy working that I always had considerable left over. At this Olympics, I was able to buy a pearl necklace for my wife at the hotel gift shop.

Snowstorms sweeping in from the Sea of Japan hammered the mountains while we were there, pouring down like Portland rain. Only it was snow.

When it subsided, the competition was intense. The courses are covered with what we would call ice, not snow, and crashes are common.

At the downhill in Hakuba, Austrian great Hermann Maier sailed off the course, landed on his head and careened through both safety fences and tumbled again before finally coming to rest. Amazingly, he was not seriously hurt. (You can see the crash on YouTube.)

We tracked him down later and asked it. "Not Lufthansa, but not bad," he said.

In blizzard conditions, we moved 70 miles or so across a valley for the slalom and giant slalom races. At the wheel was the jolly driver for the AP bureau chief in Tokyo, on loan to us for the Olympics. "Banzai" he would say, laughing, through a particularly treacherous stretch of road.

It was in Shiga Kogen, where the slalom and giant slalom were held, that I had my own "Olympic moment."

I was in the press center typing on deadline when a young woman and man approached saying we had to pay for the phone line. I assured them the AP was good for it, but they kept coming back and I finally shouted "GO AWAY."

They did, and I felt horrible about it. So the next day, I asked for an interpreter and went to where the volunteers were gathered. I apologized to them for my outburst. When I finished, to my great surprise and slight embarrassment, they burst into applause.

When the Olympics ended, I took the bullet train across the country so I could spend a couple of days in Tokyo. I really liked Japan, and was able to go back in 2006 for the

world track and field championships in Osaka.

My boots' second Winter Olympics were much closer to home. But there wasn't much glamour for us in the early part of Salt Lake City Olympics. We stayed at a Super 8 motel adjacent to a truck stop in Ogden because it was relatively close to the downhill course. I'm sure it's a very nice city, but from our view, it was the "Land of Og."

I said it made Salt Lake City seem like Paris.

Fortunately for us, we switched our lodging to a small hotel in Park City, a wonderful mountain town, for the slalom and giant slalom.

Finally, there were the Turin Games. I stayed at a small hotel in Sestriere, nestled in the Alps of northern Italy. At some places, you could see into France and the mountain passes where Hanibal drove

his elephants.

I covered Bode Miller's Olympics that featured a lot of partying and little success, as well as surprise gold medals for Americans Ted Ligety and Julia Mancuso. I was there for Lindsay Vonn's heartbreaking crash in a downhill practice run. She had to be airlifted by helicopter to a hospital.

With the snow-caked

mountains as a backdrop, it was the most beautiful of the three Winter Games and one of the most beautiful places I have been — period.

Those boots were a little stained when I put them on after it snowed a couple of weeks ago, but were none the worse for wear.

And they bear witness to footprints they left in the Olympic snow.

WASTE

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In 2015 the U.S. set a goal of reducing food waste by 50% by 2030 and the USDA announced a food waste challenge which now has over 4,500 participants including large companies like General Mills and Kellogg. Program participants are reducing waste by improving infrastructure for storage, processing and transport. Many cities are stepping up with innovative solutions from using damaged, oddly shaped, and surplus food at pay-what-you-can cafes to using a slurry of degrading food as a power source.

Locally, Baker Sanitary Service is about to begin a really exciting composting program for organic matter. It will begin in April as a three- to six-month pilot program collecting food from local stores and restaurants. The food will be combined with yard debris and composted at the landfill using a system from Sustainable Generation. See sustainable-generation.com for detailed information. The program eventually will be extended to all commercial and residential customers.

Baker Sanitary has done a lot of research to find the best

program for our city. It will be great to see something we consider waste turned into a valuable soil amendment. We'll be writing more about the program as it develops.

Local grocery stores are also working to reduce food waste. The Baker Food Co-op discounts food as it reaches the sell-by date and gives older produce to co-op members for their use and for their chickens and pigs. The Grocery Outlet does the same while also donating food to The Salvation Army and local churches. They estimate that only about 10% of unsellable food goes to the landfill.

By now I hope that you are thinking about what you can do to reduce food waste. After all, wasting food is wasting money, and none of us want to do that. Here are some very doable suggestions.

1. TRACK what you throw away to determine what and why waste is generated. Are you being too optimistic about how many vegetables you will actually eat or are you storing food improperly causing it to go bad quickly?
2. PLAN so that you will only buy what you need.
3. FREEZE what you can't use up.
4. REPURPOSE by getting creative with food scraps.

Stalks and stems are just as nutritious as leaves and can be roasted or shaved into salads. Save scraps in the freezer until you have enough to make a vegetable stock.

5. GO TO savethefood.com for awesome tips on food storage and recipes for cooking with food scraps and food that is past its prime. I noticed a recipe for chocolate mousse using over-ripe avocados. It looked yummy.

6. IGNORE sell-by dates. These dates are not expiration dates. If the food item looks and smells OK most likely it will be fine.

7. COMPOST produce scraps or give them to a neighbor who raises chickens.

8. ORDER CAREFULLY at restaurants. If you aren't going to eat the tomatoes or pickle ask for them to be left off your order. Bring your own to-go container for leftovers.

Cultural paradigms around waste are shifting. People want to see the resources it takes to produce, process, package, store, and transport food to be used wisely. When we work together to reduce food waste the whole community reaps the rewards of reducing food insecurity, making progress on sustainability goals, and minimizing what goes into the landfill. Get creative with your own food waste solutions and

see if you can inspire your friends and neighbors.



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