



BETWEEN THE ROWS
WENDY SCHMIDT

Keep your social distance, and grow food for others

With all the social distancing, one of the favorite pastimes has become poking around in the yard and garden. Why not pick up a packet or two of vegetable seeds and plant an extra row for the hungry? There is a charity by that name. Extra produce can be given to food banks.

Gardening is the perfect way to do your best social distancing.

To donate the best possible quality vegetables, pick them as early as possible in the day. Refrigerate or keep them in the shade until used or given away.

There are many sources of online gardening DIY classes in propagation of plants, seeds, grafting methods, disease control, irrigation methods, cultivation and more. Many videos exist online which actually demonstrate how to do what gardeners do.

If you live in an apartment with no yard and you miss gardening, you can use these videos to watch someone else do the work. You could also watch the garden shows on public television. Spring fever makes people need to be outside — even if you just have to be outdoors by watching others do their yard work.

Garden chores

- Examine shrubs for winter injury. Prune all dead and weakened wood.
- Start cucumber, summer squash, cantaloupe and watermelon seeds indoors in peat pots now.
- Plants started indoors should be hardened off outdoors in cold frames before being transplanted into the garden.
- Finish transplanting broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower plants into the garden. High-phosphorus fertilizers help get transplants off to a quick start.
- Make succession sowings of cool-season crops.
- Try an early sowing of warm-season crops such as green beans, summer squash, sweet corn, spinach or cucumbers.

If you have garden questions or comments, please write to greengardencolumn@yahoo.com. Thanks for reading!

Cooking With What You Have At Home



Gretchen McKay/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette-TNS

Tomato curry is made with canned tomatoes, red onion and coconut milk.

PANTRY PICKINGS

■ Great recipes that use staple ingredients you might have stocked up on

By **Arthi Subramaniam** and **Gretchen McKay**
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Food brings comfort, which is much needed in these unsettling days.

So how about turning to the pantry to find that comfort in the staple canned, bottled, boxed and bagged items that you might already have or that you stocked up on when the COVID-19 news broke?

As long as your cool and dry cupboard has a decent variety, you will be able to whip up family favorites and even prepare a surprise or two while you are all hunkered down at home.

In the event you don't have something called for in a recipe, don't rush out to the store to get it. Social distancing and substitution should be your mantra. Be creative and make do with what you have. Use water for stock, combine flours if you run short of one, replace one spice with another of your liking and don't get hung up over the type of rice or fret over the shape of pasta as they matter only to some degree.

Here are some essential pantry items, with a good shelf life, which can be used in a range of recipes that provide comfort.

Canned tomatoes

They are a popular pantry staple because they're super inexpensive and come in many different varieties — whole peeled, chopped,

fire-roasted, pureed. They're also versatile, adding a bright, zesty flavor to meat vegetarian and vegan dishes. And leftovers freeze well if you don't need to use the whole can. They're perfect for Italian sauces, Indian curries, Mexican salsas and all sorts of soups and chilis.

Canned vegetables

Even those living in a cave know by now that the beloved green bean casserole swears by three items — green beans, mushroom soup and fried onions — and they are all from cans. Sweet peas, carrots and corn are key players in casseroles like potpies, and can be tossed with salads and pastas, tucked into tacos and used for bulking up soups. The dinner-savers also are relatively inexpensive.

Lentils and beans

Variety is boundless when it comes to the size and color of lentils and beans. Grab a pot, some stock and add lentils to make a soup or combine them with roasted vegetables or meats. Or smash canned beans or cooked dry beans to make a burger patty. Then there are the rice and bean combos, bean dips, and lentil and bean salads. The results are not only tasty but packed with protein, fiber and nutrition.

All-purpose flour

It's the rare cook who doesn't have a bag of

all-purpose flour at the ready. It's an essential ingredient in baking products, from cakes to cookies to pies to biscuits, and a cornerstone for bread from every part of the world. Flour also is what gives fried foods a crispy crust. Remove it from its paper bag and store it in an airtight container to protect it from humidity.

Rice

It often gets a bad rap, especially from ketonians and Atkin-heads, for being carb heavy. But think of how versatile rice is and how handy it comes in for making a quick pilaf, risotto or simply mixing with tomatoes, lemon juice or yogurt. Whether it is long-grain, short-grain, black, brown, red or nutty, it can be served as a meal in itself, as a side and even dessert. When cooking rice, typically the ratio of water to rice is two to one.

Pasta

Everyone has at least one box of dried noodles in their pantry, right? From elbow macaroni and egg noodles to dried spaghetti, penne, rigatoni and mini or jumbo shells, pasta is the ultimate comfort food. Even better, it has a super-long shelf life and is inexpensive. All you need is a pot of boiling water and a simple sauce — or maybe even just butter and grated cheese — and voila, dinner is ready.

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Pizza flavor spices up chicken burgers

By **Linda Gassenheimer**
Tribune News Service

Two of America's favorite foods, pizza and burgers, combine in this pizza chicken burger. This quick dinner takes only 10 minutes to cook.

The burger uses ground chicken. Make sure the package says made from chicken breast meat only. If it says ground chicken, then skin, fat and dark meat can be used.

Helpful Hints

- Other pasta sauce can be used instead of pizza sauce.
- Any type of cheese slices can be used.
- Any type of olive can be used.

Countdown

- Make salad and set aside.
- Make burgers.

Shopping List

- To buy: ¾ pound ground chicken breast meat only, 1 bottle pizza sauce, 1 package part skim milk mozzarella cheese, 1 small container black olives, 1 package whole wheat or whole grain hamburger rolls, 1 bunch fresh basil, 1 bag washed ready-to-eat salad, 1 large tomato and 1 bottle reduced-fat vinaigrette dressing and 1 can olive oil spray.
- Staples: salt and black peppercorns.

PIZZA-FLAVORED CHICKEN BURGER

Recipe by Linda Gassenheimer

- ¾ pound ground chicken breast meat only
- ½ cup bottled pizza sauce, divided use
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Olive oil spray
- 2 slices part skim milk mozzarella cheese, about 1 ounce total
- 6 pitted black olives, sliced
- 2 whole wheat or whole grain hamburger rolls
- Several basil leaves



Linda Gassenheimer/TNS

Pizza-flavored chicken burgers and salad.

Mix chicken with 2 tablespoons pizza sauce and add salt and pepper to taste. Shape into two burgers about 4-inches in diameter and ¼ to ½ inch thick. Heat a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Spray with olive oil spray and saute burgers 5 minutes. Turn and saute 3 minutes. Place a cheese slice over each burger. Cover with

a lid and cook 2 to 3 minutes. A meat thermometer should read 165 degrees. Place burgers on bottom half of each roll. Mix olives into remaining pizza sauce and spoon over the burgers. Place several basil leaves over the sauce. Close with top of the roll.

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