

Eat well efficiently and flexibly

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As part of my role as consulting nutritionist for Siletz Tribal Head Start, I offer practical nutrition information. This issue shares three basic recipes that can be used many different ways to make it look like you are serving a different meal each time.

This all starts with three basic recipes – roasted vegetables, simple greens and a roasted chicken. These recipes are building blocks to be used as ingredients to make additional meals throughout the week.

Menu suggestions are gluten-free, wholesome and taste good too. Furthermore, these foods can be considered nutritionally equivalent to traditional foods.

Our emphasis on “efficiency” means less preparation time, yet still uses colorful, nutrient-dense foods to boost nutrition and offer variety. “Flexible” is the attitude we bring to menu planning.

The amount you make depends on the size of your family and what foods are available. The roasted vegetables you choose likely will vary with the seasons. Your choice of greens also will vary based on price and availability.

One roasted chicken can go a long way to feed a family when used creatively with vegetables. The next week, you may want to do something similar with a pork roast.

In fall and winter, I tend to roast more roots and squash. In the spring and summer, I roast more delicate vegetables such as asparagus, zucchini, peppers, green beans and cauliflower. The meals I make with roasted vegetables are flexible based on what and how much is left.

When I use starchy roots, I enjoy adding the leftovers to soup with meat or vegetable broth and additional greens. I also enjoy serving roasted vegetables as hash with breakfast meat or eggs.

I may incorporate the more delicate and flavorful vegetables into a lasagna-type meal. Imagine roasted bell peppers, diced fennel bulb, garlic, zucchini and cauliflower layered over corn polenta with marinara sauce and a drizzle of olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

These very same roasted vegetables would make an excellent topping for tossed salad. For interest, re-warm the vegetables before placing them on the salad. Vinaigrette would be my choice for the dressing. Protein can include diced chicken, pine nuts or a hard cheese, such as parmesan.

Cooked greens are a staple in my house. I’m able to grow greens in my garden year-round. I also buy them at the store.

Some dark leafy greens are tough and they require longer cooking (collard greens). Others are delicate and cook very quickly (spinach and Swiss chard).

If greens require different cooking times, I usually stagger when I put them in the cooking water or I cook them separately.

I don’t steam my greens. I actually boil them in 1-2 inches of water in a covered pot. I always save my cooking water for soup.

When serving greens as a side dish, seasoning is very important. Some people find the bitterness of greens hard to like. Salt, acid and fat are part of the “magic” to make them delicious. Remember, you can’t receive the nutritious benefits of greens if you don’t like them because you won’t eat them.

For acid, I like to add raw apple cider vinegar or lemon. The quality of the vinegar makes a difference in flavor.

For fat, I like good quality butter, ghee (clarified butter) or olive oil. If I’m going to eat any of it cold later, I use oil instead of solid fat.

I always try to make more than I can eat in one meal because I want leftovers. I especially like to serve my meals on a bed of greens. One of my favorite breakfasts is poached egg on a bed of greens.

Cooked, or even raw, greens go well in soups while increasing the nutrient content dramatically (without being very noticeable). Greens are a welcome addition to quiche or an egg-filled muffin cup.

Cooked greens also can be combined with other vegetables for a cold salad.

A whole new flavor can be created with roasted sesame oil and seeds, and can be served with soba noodles.

Chicken can be roasted and handled as described in the recipe that follows. Remember to ask this question each time: “What vegetables or sauce can I serve to make this feel like a new menu item?”

Cashew mushroom gravy can easily be made with the pan drippings. Use a blender to puree ½ cup cashews (either raw or roasted, salted) with 1 cup water. Pour mixture into the pan with the chicken drippings and thicken over low heat to make delicious gravy. If mushrooms are added, it becomes another savory sauce.

This also can make the base for a creamy soup (without milk or wheat). Chicken can be served with this sauce on a bed of rice with a convenient canned or frozen vegetable.

Diced chicken pieces come alive for a very different flavor when curry powder is added to mayonnaise and mixed in with celery, green onion and apples, or other dried fruit such as cherries. Serve this in a sandwich, over lettuce greens or on a lettuce boat (romaine leaf).

Think flexibly! And eat well!

In the interest of space, only the basic recipes are included. For the other recipes and menu ideas, please contact me at creativeenergy@nancyludwig.com.



Roasted Vegetables

4-5 pounds vegetables (roots below ground and others above ground)
8-12 cloves garlic, fresh-peeled
¼ cup olive oil, extra virgin or herb infused
As desired – fresh herbs, chopped

Wash and chop all vegetables into similar sizes, approximately ½ inch diameter (but not all the same shapes for interest). Peel whole garlic cloves and add to vegetables. Coat vegetables and garlic with olive oil.

Place on a baking sheet in a single layer. Bake at 350 F for approximately 1 hour. Stir every 15 minutes. Vegetables are done when they are tender and some parts browned or crispy. Add herbs last. Hold warm or serve immediately. Salt if desired.

Please note: As your vegetables vary with the seasons, what you roast will change. Root vegetables often are more dense than above-ground vegetables and can have longer cooking times. As you place them on the baking sheets, you may want to roast them separately.

The following roots can be included – potatoes (various varieties), yams, sweet potatoes, carrots, rutabaga, turnip, parsnip, beet, Jerusalem artichoke, onion, garlic, etc.

Above-ground vegetables that roast well – fennel bulb, zucchini, eggplant, winter squash (butternut or acorn), asparagus, cauliflower, bell peppers, green beans, etc.

Serving ideas include in soups, as breakfast hash with poached eggs, an interesting topping for tossed salad or in a main dish of vegetables on polenta with marinara sauce.

Simple Greens

Bunch fresh greens, chopped
1 tablespoon olive oil, butter or margarine
1-2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

Clean and chop fresh greens. Add approximately 1 inch of water to a large stockpot. Add the greens. Bring the water to a boil and watch the greens shrink. Reduce heat and simmer until tender to the bite (5-15 minutes).

Drain nutrient-rich water and reserve in the freezer for soup stock. Add oil, butter or margarine to the warm greens. Add apple cider vinegar to taste. Season with salt and pepper if desired and serve. It is amazing what a little vinegar does to improve the flavor of greens.

Please note: Seasoning with salt, vinegar or lemon, and oil or butter is important when eating the greens as a side dish. Greens can be served hot or cold. If greens might be eaten cold, liquid oil would be the best choice.

Additional serving ideas include in soups, as a bed for poached eggs, in quiche or mini egg muffins, or in a cold salad with additional vegetables.

If you have not sent in an application for your child to attend **Siletz Tribal Head Start**, it's not too late. Call 541-444-2532 or 800-922-1399 to request that an application be sent to you.

Applications also are available on the Tribal website (ctsi.nsn.us) and at the Siletz, Salem and Portland area offices.

Roasted Chicken

1 whole chicken, bone in, giblets saved
To taste – salt

Bake whole chicken at approximately 350 F until it reaches a minimum temperature of 165 F. Depending on the size, this may be 40-60 minutes. If chicken is in pieces rather than whole, it can be cooked in 30-40 minutes. Chicken also can be cooked in a slow cooker.

Siletz Tribal Head Start offers my time to support family nutrition over the telephone (503-588-5446). Please contact me if you have nutrition concerns about your Head Start child.

Openings for Siletz Tribal Court Judges

An announcement accepting applications for the judges' positions in the Siletz Tribal Court will be released in March for those interested in applying.

All judge positions are coming to term end on June 30, 2015, so recruitment for the positions of chief judge, associate judges and appellate judges for the Tribe's District Court, Gaming Court and Community Court will occur.

Applications will be available on the CTSI website (ctsi.nsn.us) in the Employment section or by contacting the Tribe's Human Resources Department at 541-444-2532 or 800-922-1399.

Get the most out of your chicken

To use every bit of the chicken, you might want to serve the first meal as sliced roasted chicken (without the bone).

When the chicken cools enough to handle it, remove the chicken meat from the bones. Save the meat in a clean storage container or bag and refrigerate for later.

Place the bones and skin in a large pot with cool water. Bring it to a boil and reduce to simmer for 2 hours up to 24 hours. This also can be done in a slow cooker. To increase the amount of minerals extracted from the bone, you can add 1 teaspoon of vinegar to the broth.

If you saved the giblets, simmer them in water separately and then combine broth if you like the flavor. Decide whether you consume the giblets or whether you share them with your animals. They contain valuable nutrients – some people find the flavor too strong.

When your broth has simmered long enough to extract flavors and nutrients, strain it and save in glass jars to make soup. If you won't be making soup right away, freeze the jars, but first make sure to use wide-mouth jars and fill to a level below the curve of the jar to prevent breakage.

The remaining bones, meat and skin can be sorted further. The chicken can be added back into your soup or shared with your animals.

Discard the bones carefully. At my house, I avoid animal products in my composting.

Additional serving ideas include many types of soup using chicken broth, curried chicken salad and mushroom cashew gravy (above) with chicken over rice.