



OCTOBER 2010

**Wibaux County
Extension Office**

Dear Homemakers,

I can't believe that October is already here and school has been in session for over a month. I am constantly asking myself where the summer went. I hope that you had an enjoyable summer and are looking forward to the beautiful colors of Fall.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to those who volunteered their time and talents to the 2010 Wibaux County Fair. We had great attendance once again, beautiful weather, and a harvest of wonderful exhibits. Thanks also for sharing your talents by exhibiting. It's support such as yours that makes our fair a success.

Finally, if anyone would like to receive the newsletter by e-mail rather than regular mail, please let me know. Remember to check out our new website at www.wibauxextension.com.

Sincerely,

Patti A. Goroski
Administrative/Program Assistant



*Montana State University,
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ESTATE PLANNING WORKSHOP SCHEDULED Wednesday, November 3, 2010

Do you know who will receive your property if you pass away without a will? Do you know when a will has control over your property and when it doesn't? Plan to attend the session on Wednesday, November 3rd, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., to be presented by Marsha Goetting, MSU Extension Family Economics Specialist. The cost to attend will be \$5.00 per person and lunch will be served.

Dr. Goetting will also explore how you can avoid probate with payable on death designations (PODs), transfer on death designations (TODs), and other beneficiary designations. She will share how Montana law provides a method of distributing items that do not have title such as jewelry, dishes, and heirlooms. She will highlight the Beneficiary Deed law that was passed by the Montana legislature. Although Congress has not enacted a new federal estate tax law she will share "what is" and "what will be" if a new law isn't passed by the end of the year. Finally she will respond to questions about trusts, power of attorney, and other estate planning tools.

If you are interested in attending the session on Wednesday, November 3rd, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., please contact the Wibaux County Extension Office at (406) 796-2486 as soon as possible. We would like to get an approximate count for lunch.

All interested persons are encouraged to attend.



Prairie Fare: Slow Cookers Help Busy People

By Julie Garden-Robinson, NDSU Extension Food & Nutrition Specialist

Having food ready when we all arrive home after school and work makes family mealtimes possible. Eating together as a family is well worth the effort. Children who eat regularly with their families eat more healthfully, do better in school and are less likely to participate in risky behavior, such as smoking, drinking alcohol or taking drugs.

Slow cookers were introduced in the early 1970s, and many sizes, shapes and brands of slow cookers now are available. The capacities vary from 2 cups to more than 7 quarts. Many of the brands have several heat settings.

How much do you know about slow cookers and their use? Try this quiz.

1. True or false: Using a slow cooker uses less electricity than an oven.
2. True or false: The low cooking temperature allows less expensive cuts of meat to tenderize.
3. True or false: You should fill the slow cooker no less than half full and no more than two-thirds full because cooking too little or too much food in the slow cooker can affect cooking time and quality.
4. True or false: Always thaw meat and poultry in the refrigerator before cooking in the slow cooker to help ensure complete cooking.
5. True or false: Keep the lid in place at all times because removing the lid slows cooking time.
6. True or false: If you are not home during the entire slow-cooking process and the power goes out for an undetermined length of time, throw away the food even if it looks done.

All of these statements are true. While we may think of slow cookers more often during fall and winter months, slow cookers are handy all year long.

Slow cookers allow one-step preparation. You can place all the ingredients in the slow cooker and allow them to cook all day while you are gone. Most slow cookers operate at temperatures between 170 and 280 degrees. The long, slow cooking time tenderizes the meat and allows for less shrinkage.

Be sure to thaw meat or poultry before placing it in the slow cooker because slow cookers may take several hours to reach bacteria-killing temperatures. Cut large chunks of meat into smaller pieces to ensure thorough cooking.

Here's an easy slow cooker recipe to enjoy with corn muffins or baked corn chips.

Slow Cooker Taco Soup

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 (16-ounce) can chili beans, with liquid
- 1 (15-ounce) can kidney beans, with liquid
- 1 (15-ounce) can whole-kernel corn, with liquid
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 2 c. water
- 2 (14.5-ounce) cans peeled and diced tomatoes
- 1 (4-ounce) can diced green chili peppers
- 1 package taco seasoning mix

In a medium skillet, cook the ground beef until browned over medium heat. Drain thoroughly. Place the ground beef, onion, chili beans, kidney beans, corn, tomato sauce, water, diced tomatoes, green chili peppers and taco seasoning mix in a slow cooker. Mix to blend, and cook on low setting for eight hours.

Makes 10 servings. Each serving has 220 calories, 2.5 grams (g) of fat, 29 g of carbohydrate, 8 g of fiber and 870 milligrams of sodium.

Prairie Fare: Help for Food Preservation Questions Available

By Julie Garden-Robinson, NDSU Extension Food &
Nutrition Specialist



"I found my great-grandma's canned green bean recipe. It says to process them in a water-bath canner. Is it safe to use?"

"I bought some one-piece zinc reusable canning lids at a garage sale. Can I use them as covers on my home-canned food?"

"I don't know why my jars of salsa didn't seal. I really tightened them. Should I tighten them more next time?"

"Someone said I could can food in my oven. Is that safe?"

I can always tell when August and September arrive. The food preservation questions fly into Extension Service offices state- and nationwide.

By the way, the answers to the opening questions are all no, but some need a bit more explanation as to why.

Canned food recipes in Great-grandma's handwriting are nice to have, but you might want to frame them as mementoes instead of use them. Since the early days of home canning, the equipment has changed and advances have been made in the processing methods.

Some old food preservation methods stand the test of time, but most have been modified to be safer.

Low-acid foods, such as green beans and other vegetables, meats and many mixtures of foods, must be canned in a pressure canner to ensure safety. A pressure canner allows the temperature to reach a high enough level to kill bacterial spores, which could produce a toxin if the spores are not inactivated.

Unless you process home-canned foods following current recommended methods and use tested recipes, you could put yourself at risk for botulism, a potentially fatal form of foodborne illness.

Using proper equipment ensures a safe, high-quality product, too. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends using two-piece lids and buying only the quantity of lids that you will use in a year.

Don't use your muscles when tightening canning jars. The lids should be finger- tip tight. Be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's directions. After the jars of food have cooled, remove the screw bands. Otherwise, the lids can rust onto the jar. You can reuse the screw bands but not the lids.

You may hear about innovative uses of your appliances to can food. Food safety experts do not recommend that you can food in your oven, microwave or dishwasher.

If you are surfing the Web for food preservation information, you may encounter some "interesting" canned food recipes along the way. Be sure to go to reputable sites that provide research-tested recipes.

You can learn more about canning equipment and processing acidic and low-acid foods, pickling, making jelly, sauerkraut and freezing a wide variety of foods at the NDSU Extension Service website at www.ag.ndsu.edu/food. If you forget the Web address, try the key words "NDSU Extension food preservation" on Google and you should find the site, too.

The MSU Extension website has food preservation resources listed on the following page: <http://www.msuextension.org/nutrition/Food%20Pres.html>. Several useful Mont Guides are also listed on the resource page. Please contact the Wibaux County Extension Office if you would like copies.

Prairie Fare: Keep Your Eyes On Potatoes

By Julie Garden-Robinson, NDSU Extension Food & Nutrition Specialist

The popularity of potatoes suffered during the most recent "low- carb" diet craze and some people turned up their noses at them. As study after study shows, we need to pay more attention to calories for weight management instead of following the latest diet fad.

A potato the size of a computer mouse (5 ounces) only contains about 100 calories. To put this calorie content in perspective, think about the Nutrition Facts labels found on most food products. Nutrition Facts labels are based on a 2,000-calorie daily diet. Some of us need fewer calories than this to maintain our weight; others need more.

If you were to eat all your calories in potatoes, you would be having 20 potatoes in a day. Of course we in the nutrition field recommend a varied diet, not a one-food diet. The bottom line is potatoes are not particularly high in calories and they provide a lot of nutrients and versatility on your menu.

The complex carbohydrates in potatoes provide energy to fuel our muscles and brain. Potatoes also provide vitamin C, potassium and fiber (if you eat the skin). They contain no fat, no sodium and no cholesterol.

To retain nutrients, cook potatoes in their skins and eat the skin or peel it as thinly as possible. Many of the nutrients are directly beneath the skin in an area known as the "cambium." To help prevent nutrient loss during boiling, use as little water as possible and a tight-fitting lid to avoid loss of water during cooking.

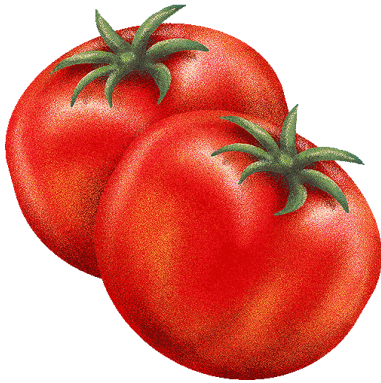
Potatoes won't break your budget, either. On average, a potato costs about 25 cents a serving.

Keep your eyes on your tater toppings, though. Consider using "reduced fat" or "light" products or use smaller amounts of higher-fat/calorie toppings. For example, a 100-calorie potato with no fat becomes a

"stuffed potato" with 463 calories and 35 grams (g) of fat when you add 2 tablespoons of butter, 1/4 cup of cheddar cheese and 2 tablespoons of bacon bits. Through time, excess calories from any source can result in weight gain. **EAT RIGHT MONTANA NEWSLETTERS AVAILABLE ON THE FOLLOWING WEBSITE:**

www.eatrightmontana.org





Prairie Fare: Tomatoes Offer Versatility and Nutrition

By Julie Garden-Robinson, NDSU Extension Food & Nutrition Specialist

I noticed the lineup of fully ripe, plump tomatoes on my countertop the other day. Someone in my house had been harvesting our garden. I went outside and saw dozens of more nearly ripe tomatoes of various sizes and shapes waiting to be plucked, prepared or preserved.

I probably should have plucked a few volunteer plants that grew from composted tomatoes from last season, I thought to myself. Tomatoes have nearly overtaken our garden, but I'm not complaining. Bountiful harvests

are welcome.

Whether you enjoy plum, grape, cherry, slicing or any of the other tomato types, these members of the nightshade family are highly versatile and nutritious.

As we were enjoying some fresh salsa in my home the other day, one of my kids posed the typical question: "Is a tomato a vegetable or a fruit?"

If we think like botanists, we would call a tomato a fruit or a "true berry" of the plant. In the nutrition field, though, tomatoes are considered vegetables because of the way they are used on menus.

If we think back in history, until the 19th century, the tomato was considered poisonous. Now we know that tomatoes are good sources of potassium and vitamin C and A, while containing few calories. One medium tomato has just 25 calories.

Tomatoes are an excellent source of lycopene, which is a powerful antioxidant compound. Lycopene is the pigment responsible for giving tomatoes their orange- red appearance, and this compound may play a role in protecting us from diseases, including cancer.

If you have prolific tomato plants this year, consider some different ways to prepare them. Homemade spaghetti sauce, salsa and grilled kabobs certainly are tasty, but try some other ideas, too.

- * Make some cool soup, such as gazpacho, pronounced guh-spah-choh.
- * Slice tomatoes and top the slices with crushed seasoned bread crumbs and shredded cheddar cheese or another cheese of your choice. Top with chopped fresh or dried herbs, such as basil or oregano. Broil until the cheese melts for a tasty side dish.
- * Add some thinly sliced tomatoes to pizza, grilled cheese sandwiches or panini sandwiches. Sprinkle with some chopped fresh herbs for extra flavor pizzazz.
- * Marinate tomato wedges and cucumber slices in your favorite zesty salad dressing and serve as a side salad.
- * Stuff tomatoes with tuna salad or chicken salad and use the insides of the tomatoes to add nutrition to the salad.

Along with multiple uses on your menu, tomatoes can be canned, frozen or dried to enjoy this winter. Wouldn't homemade tomato juice, spaghetti sauce or chili made with home-grown canned tomatoes taste good next January?

If you choose to can tomatoes or salsa, be sure to add the recommended amount of lemon juice so they reach a safe acidity level. For more information about food preservation, visit the North Dakota State University Extension Service website at <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food>.

RECIPE CORNER

Slow Cooker Sloppy Joes

\$2 lbs. lean ground beef
\$1 small onion, chopped
\$1 small green pepper, chopped
\$1½ tsp. chili powder
\$¼ cup sugar
\$¼ cup vinegar
\$3 Tbsp. prepared mustard
\$1 cup ketchup
\$1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
\$¼ cup rolled oats, quickly cooking or regular
Brown ground beef in skillet; drain any fat. Put ground beef, onions and green pepper into 2½ quart slow cooker. Add all other ingredients, except rolled oats. Stir well. Cover and cook on low for 6 hours. Stir in rolled oats. With quick oats, serve immediately. With regular rolled oats, stir in and continue cooking for 10 minutes.
Yield: 8 servings (½ cup)

Roasted Root Vegetables

\$4 medium-sized root vegetables (choose a variety from potatoes, rutabagas, turnips, parsnips, beets, sweet potatoes, etc.)
\$2 chopped carrots
\$1 medium chopped onion
\$3-4 Tbsp. vegetable or olive oil
\$3 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese
\$Season with your favorite spices
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut vegetables into large chunks. Place in a medium bowl and pour oil over top. Add Parmesan cheese and seasonings. Mix well. Spread an even layer on a baking sheet. Bake for about 1 hour or until tender. Start checking the vegetables at about 45 minutes to see if they are the proper texture.
Yield: 4 servings (1 cup).



Pumpkin Gingerbread

3 cups sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
4 eggs
2/3 cup water
1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin puree
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground allspice
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground cloves
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease two 9x5 inch loaf pans.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine sugar, oil and eggs; beat until smooth. Add water and beat until well blended. Stir in pumpkin, ginger, allspice cinnamon, and clove.
3. In a medium bowl, combine flour, soda, salt, and baking powder. Add dry ingredients to pumpkin mixture and blend just until all ingredients are mixed. Divide batter between prepared pans.
4. Bake in preheated oven until toothpick comes out clean, about 1 hour.