

March 8, 2021

Release Date: March 10, 2021

Deborah Rhoades, MA, RD, FAND
Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Sciences

PERSONALIZE YOUR PLATE DURING NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH™

Developing a healthful eating pattern is not a one-size-fits all endeavor. The key is tailoring your favorite foods to meet your individual nutrient needs.

In March, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics focuses attention on healthful eating through [National Nutrition Month®](#). This year's theme, *Personalize Your Plate*, promotes creating nutritious meals to meet individuals' cultural and personal food preferences.

"America is a cultural melting pot, so you can't expect everyone's food choices to look the same," said registered dietitian nutritionist Su-Nui Escobar, a national spokesperson for the Academy. "Eating is meant to be a joyful experience. As supermarkets increasingly diversify their shelves to meet the needs of their customers, it's becoming easier to create nutritious meals that align with a variety of cultural preferences."

During National Nutrition Month®, the Academy encourages everyone to make informed food choices and develop sound eating and physical activity habits they can follow all year long. The Academy encourages seeking the advice of registered dietitian nutritionists (RDN's) – the food and nutrition experts who can help develop individualized eating and activity plans to meet people's health goals.

"Variety is the spice of life and that's how people should view their meals," Escobar said. Spice up your menus with the foods and flavors you enjoy and add new flavors to spark excitement in your cooking. "Developing healthful eating habits does not require drastic lifestyle changes. A RDN can help you incorporate the foods you enjoy into your life." They can help clients fine-tune traditional recipes, provide alternative cooking methods and other healthful advice for incorporating family-favorite foods into everyday meals. To find a registered dietitian nutritionist near you, use the Academy's online Find An Expert service at <https://www.eatright.org/find-an-expert>

Enjoy these spicy recipes to *Personalize Your Plate!*

PERUVIAN GRILLED CHICKEN WITH GREEN SAUCE

This recipe is shared from Open Book Farm in Middletown, Maryland; from 2020 Pasture Raised Meats and Dairy Calendar, November 2020

1 whole chicken – 4 to 5 pounds, butterflied

THE RUB

4 teaspoons kosher salt
2 tablespoons ground cumin
2 tablespoons paprika
1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
3 medium cloves garlic
2 tablespoons white vinegar
2 tablespoons vegetable oil

GREEN SAUCE

3 whole jalapenos, remove seeds & chop
1 cup fresh cilantro
2 medium cloves garlic
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup sour cream
2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
1 teaspoon white vinegar
2 tablespoons olive oil
Kosher salt
Freshly ground pepper to taste

THE RUB

Combine salt, cumin, paprika, pepper, garlic, vinegar, and oil in a small bowl and mix until it becomes a smooth paste.

WHOLE CHICKEN

Place chicken, breast side down, on cutting board. Using sharp shears, remove the backbone by cutting on either side of it. Turn chicken over and press firmly on the breast to flatten chicken. Add the Rub all over the chicken.

THE GREEN SAUCE

Combine jalapenos, cilantro, garlic, mayonnaise, sour cream, lime juice, and vinegar in a blender. While running blender slowly add olive oil until smooth. Add salt and pepper to taste. Place in refrigerator and sauce will thicken.

COOKING CHICKEN: Turn on grill, have one side on low heat and the other medium heat. Place chicken, skin side up, on the cooler side of the grill with legs facing the hotter side. Cook for 20 minutes then flip chicken over and cook until the temperature in the thickest part of the chicken reaches 150 °F. Remove chicken from grill and let rest for 5-10 minutes. Carve and serve with Green Sauce

CRUNCHY BARLEY SALAD

SALAD

1 2/3 cups chicken broth (canned or homemade)
1 1/3 cups water
1 cup barley, rinsed
1 cup diced green pepper (1 large)
1 cup thinly sliced carrot (1 large)
1/2 cup diced red onion (1 medium)
1/2 cup thinly sliced radishes
1/4 cup chopped fresh dill *or* 1 tablespoon dried dillweed
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley (optional)

DRESSING

1 large clove garlic, peeled and flattened
1/2 teaspoon salt, if desired
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons olive or salad oil
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar

In a heavy, medium saucepan, bring the broth and water to a boil, and add the barley. When the boiling resumes, reduce the heat to low, cover the pan, and simmer barley for 40 to 45 minutes or until it is tender (check after about 30 minutes, and add more water if the barley is dry).

While the barley cooks, in a large bowl whisk together all the dressing ingredients.

When the barley is done, remove the garlic from the dressing, and add the barley to the dressing while the barley is still hot. Toss the ingredients to mix them well. Cover the mixture, and refrigerate it for 1 hour or longer.

Before serving, add green pepper, carrot, onion, radishes, dill, and parsley. Toss the salad well.

FISH WITH MANY HERBS AND SPICES

Spice Mixture

1 tablespoon fennel seeds
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3/4 teaspoon paprika
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground thyme

Herb Mixture

3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
2 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives

Fish

1 tablespoon olive oil *or* canola oil
2 teaspoons minced garlic
2 pounds white fish (cod, tilapia, Pollock) fillets
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

FISH WITH MANY HERBS AND SPICES (continued)

Heat the oven to 400°F. In a small bowl, combine all the ingredients for the spice mixture. In another small bowl, combine all the ingredients for the herb mixture.

In a baking dish large enough to hold the fish in one layer, place the oil and garlic. Sprinkle one-third of the spice mixture over the garlic. Then sprinkle one-third of the herb mixture over the spice mixture. Arrange the fish on top of the spices and herbs, and sprinkle the fillets with the lemon juice. Then sprinkle the remaining spice mixture over the fillets, followed by the remaining herb mixture. Place the dish in the hot oven, and bake the fish for about 10 minutes (less if the fillets are less than 3/4 inch thick at their thickest part). Turn the heat up to broil, and cook the fish in the oven about 1 minute longer. Makes 6 servings.

TABBOULEH WITH ORANGES AND SUNFLOWER SEEDS

3/4 cup uncooked bulgur or cracked wheat
2 cups boiling water
2 navel oranges
1 tablespoon sugar
1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
3/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
3/4 cup chopped fresh mint
3/4 cup diced, seeded, and peeled cucumber
1/2 cup coarsely chopped red onion
2 navel oranges, cut crosswise into 10 (1/4 inch thick) slices
2 tablespoons sunflower seeds

Combine bulgur and boiling water in a large bowl. Cover and let stand 30 minutes; drain. Peel and section 2 navel oranges over a bowl; squeeze membranes to extract juice. Set sections aside; reserve 1/4 cup juice. Discard membranes. Combine reserved orange juice, sugar, oil, salt, and pepper; stir well with a whisk. Add orange sections, parsley, mint, cucumber, and onion to bulgur mixture; stir well. Add orange juice mixture; toss gently to coat. Cover and chill at least 2 hours. Arrange the orange slices on each of 5 plates; top with tabbouleh. Sprinkle evenly with sunflower seeds. Serves 5.

For more information about the University of Maryland Extension Frederick County Office check out our website <http://extension.umd.edu/frederick-county> University programs, activities, and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, religion, protected veteran status, genetic information, personal appearance, or any other legally protected class.

Deborah Rhoades, MA, RD, FAND, is a licensed Registered Dietitian, Fellow of the Academy of Nutrition Dietetics, and Extension Educator in Family and Consumer Sciences.

DR:ls