

Mamma Mia! Camerota's Cupboard May, 2012

Mother's Day this Sunday is right in the middle of spring, the perfect time to take advantage of local produce at its freshest. All three recipes this month are from AICR (American Institute for Cancer Research). I made no changes because I didn't want to affect their nutrient analyses. Feel free to tweak them to your own taste so the recipes become your own.

Asparagus and Scallion Soup with Almonds

This bright-colored soup is a great start to a Mother's Day lunch. AICR reports: The vivid colors in vegetables like asparagus indicate disease-fighting phytochemicals that protect our health in different ways. Research has shown that foods high in folate, such as asparagus, probably protect against pancreatic cancer. Asparagus is also a good source of vitamins A and C as well as thiamin, making it a great healthy choice to fill up on.

Makes 6 servings.

Per serving: 146 calories, 3 g total fat (<1 g saturated fat), 24 g carbohydrate, 9 g protein, 5 g dietary fiber, 304 mg sodium.

1/4 cup sliced almonds, for garnish	1/2 tsp. dried thyme, to taste
1 Tbsp. olive oil	Salt and white pepper, to taste
2 medium leeks, white part only, thinly sliced	1 1/2 lb. asparagus (stem ends trimmed), thinly sliced
6 scallions, thinly sliced, 2 reserved for garnish	1 can (15 oz.) white beans, such as cannellini, rinsed and drained
2 cans (14 oz. each) fat-free, reduced	

sodium chicken broth

- If using garnish, place almonds in large saucepan over medium heat. Toast nuts until golden, shaking pan occasionally to prevent burning, about 5-6 minutes. Transfer nuts to paper towel and set aside.
- In same pan, heat oil over medium heat. Add leeks and 4 chopped scallions. Cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 5-6 minutes. Add broth, thyme, salt and pepper, and bring to boil. Add asparagus and beans.
- Bring back to boil, then immediately reduce heat and simmer, partially covered, until vegetables are soft, 12-15 minutes. Remove from heat and cool slightly.
- Purée soup in blender (or use immersion blender in pan) until smooth. Pour back into saucepan over medium heat. Heat through. Ladle into serving bowls. Garnish with toasted almonds and remaining scallions.

Cherry Salsa

This spicy-sweet condiment is perfect for lean chicken, turkey or white-fleshed fish. It also makes a great spread for whole-grain crackers. Cherries are the attraction here with their beta carotene, which may play a role in protection against esophageal cancer. According to AICR, research has shown that cherries are a source of anthocyanins, a phytochemical that is credited with giving the fruit its notable red hue and recognized for its antioxidant power.

Makes 8 servings, 2 Tbsp. each.

Per serving: 15 calories, 0 grams of fat (0 g saturated fat), 4 g carbohydrates, 0 g protein, 1 g dietary fiber, 0 mg sodium.

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| · Tomatillos, chopped* | 1 tsp lemon juice |
| 1 Tbsp. water | 1 cup dark sweet |
| 3 small scallions,
green and white parts
separated, thinly sliced | cherries (frozen or
fresh), pitted, chopped* |
| | 1 pinch of ground
black pepper or 1/8 tsp
Tabasco sauce |

- In nonstick skillet, heat tomatillos with 1 tbsp. of water for approximately 3 minutes.
- Add scallion whites and cook one minute. Add lemon juice, cherries and pepper and cook additional minute. Remove from heat; add scallion greens.
- Refrigerate for at least one hour.
- If using with poultry or fish, bring to room temperature or reheat before serving.
- *Tomatillos and cherries can be **chopped separately** in a food processor.

Oatmeal Carrot Muffins

These healthy, flavor-filled muffins suggested by AICR include whole-wheat flour, oats and carrots – all cancer-fighting foods rich in phytochemicals and fiber.

The pineapple and brown sugar provide sweetness, and the raisins add more. For a deluxe version, add coconut. Perfect for Mother's Day!

Makes 12 muffins.

Per serving (1 muffin): 196 calories, 6 g total fat (<1 g saturated fat), 32 g carbohydrates, 4 g protein, 2 g dietary fiber, 148 mg sodium.

Canola oil spray
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
3/4 cup whole-wheat flour
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
2/3 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup canola oil
2 large eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 cup uncooked rolled oats
1 1/2 cups shredded carrots
1 cup canned crushed pineapple, drained
1/4 cup coconut, optional
1/2 cup raisins, optional

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly spray muffin tin with canola oil spray. In large bowl, mix flours, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon. Make well in center of mixture and add brown sugar, oil, beaten eggs and vanilla. Mix until evenly moist. Fold in oats, carrots, pineapple and raisins and coconut if using. Fill each muffin cup about 2/3 full with muffin batter. Bake 25 minutes or until wooden toothpick inserted in center of muffin comes out clean.