



Ontario Home Economics Association

Ask A Professional Home Economist

For Immediate Release

Easy Meals for Busy People Tips & Tricks from Ontario Professional Home Economists

- **Keep It Simple!** If you are already on a tight schedule, this is not the time to choose complicated menus. Collect recipes that you or your family can prepare quickly. *“The 250 Best 4-Ingredient Recipes”* (Robert Rose) by **Margaret Howard, R.P.Dt., P.H.Ec.**, offers great recipes for busy people who are not willing to compromise on great taste.
- **Plan It & Post It!** Plan menus for the week and purchase groceries accordingly. **Anne Lindsay, P.H.Ec., C.M.**, author of *“Anne Lindsay’s New Light Cooking”* (Ballantine Books) suggests that if menus are posted and ingredients are on hand, preparing dinner is much faster. Family members can begin to prepare the meal in your absence when your instructions are available.
- **Stock A Pantry!** Having emergency ingredients on hand for quick meals is essential. Eggs, cheese, pasta, tomato sauce or paste, canned tuna, salmon or chick peas are just some ingredients that come to the rescue quickly when time is at a premium.
- **Fish Is Fast!** Fish cooks very quickly and offers excellent nutritional benefits. Experiment with new recipes such as the *Steamed Fish with Couscous* in this handout, or add a can of baby clams to your next chunky tomato sauce served over fat noodles. Tuna melts served on a whole grain bun with a fresh salad are another way to make a meal in a hurry.
- **Serve It Raw!** Fruits and vegetables don’t always need to be cooked. To save time, serve raw vegetables with tonight’s dinner and a bowl of sliced bananas topped with fresh blueberries for dessert. Fresh strawberries with yoghurt dip make a fast snack.

- **Use A Slow Cooker!** This advice is from **Donna-Marie Pye, P.H.Ec.**, author of “*The Best Family Slow Cooker Recipes*” (Robert Rose). She is a very involved home economist and mother of two who has a real understanding of how slow cookers can benefit the lives of busy people. See her recipe for *Ginger Pork Wraps* in this handout.
- **Maximize Freezer Use!** Wise freezing can save time and money and is ideal for today’s busy lifestyle. Double the recipe of your favourite dish on the weekend then freeze one for later use, suggests, **Jan Main, P.H.Ec.**, teacher and author of “*The Best Freezer Cookbook*” (Robert Rose).
- **Pasta Is Perfect!** Pasta cooks quickly. Try the attached pantry-based *Italian Flag Pasta* by **Amy Snider, P.H.Ec.**, author of “*Fibre Boost: Everyday Cooking for a Healthy Long Life*” (Key Porter), a brand new cookbook to be released in the Fall 2004.

Serves 4 STEAMED FISH WITH COUSCOUS

From: *The 250 Best 4-Ingredient Recipes* cookbook (Robert Rose)
by **Margaret Howard, R.P.Dt., P.H.Ec.**

This fish dish is cooked in parchment. It makes easy work of both the serving and the clean up, which is an important time saver.

Nonstick cooking spray
Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C)

1	onion, thinly sliced	1
1 cup	couscous	250 mL
¾ cup	tomato juice	175 mL
4	sole or haddock fillets	4
	salt and freshly ground pepper	

1. Cut four pieces of parchment paper or foil 4-inches (10 cm) larger than fish fillets. Lightly spray with cooking spray. Divide onion equally on the four pieces of parchment. Add ¼ cup (50 mL) couscous to each.
2. Combine tomato juice with ½ cup (125 mL) water and a small amount of salt and pepper. Pour evenly over each portion of couscous. Top with fish.
3. Fold long ends of paper or foil twice so that mixture is tightly enclosed. Lift short ends, bring together on top and fold twice. Place seam-side up on a baking pan.
4. Bake for 20 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork and onion is tender. Remove from oven and let stand for 5 minutes or until couscous has absorbed all liquid. Open each package and serve contents on dinner plates.

A green vegetable, such as peas, green beans or sautéed zucchini, is a good accompaniment. Serve with a crisp green salad and a slice of fresh ripe melon for dessert.

Tip from a P.H.Ec.

Remember the rule of not overcooking fish. Since the packets are left to stand for 5 minutes, fish continues to cook enclosed in the foil or parchment.

Serves 4

ITALIAN FLAG PASTA

From: *Fibre Boost: Everyday Cooking for a Healthy Long Life*
by **Amy Snider, P.H.Ec.** (to be published by Key Porter, Fall 2004).

Red, green and white vegetables are the highlight in this simple pantry-based pasta dish. This pasta tastes just as good cold as warm, so pack up the leftovers for tomorrow's lunch.

2 cups	whole wheat penne or rotini	500 mL
3 cups	lightly packed chopped rapini	750 mL
2 tbsp.	extra virgin olive oil	30 mL
4	cloves garlic, minced	4
1 jar	marinated artichoke hearts	170 mL
4	jarred, roasted red peppers	4
¼ cup	dry white wine	50 mL
2 tsp.	Dijon mustard	10 mL
2 tsp.	liquid honey	10 mL
¼ cup	crumbled feta cheese, optional	50 mL
	salt and pepper	

1. Cook the pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water according to package directions. During the last 4 minutes of cooking add the rapini. Drain pasta and rapini and keep warm.
2. Drain the artichoke hearts, reserving the liquid, and chop into bite-sized pieces. Drain the roasted red peppers, discard liquid and chop into bite sized pieces.
3. Heat the oil in a large skillet set over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute or until fragrant. Stir in the reserved artichoke liquid, white wine, Dijon mustard, and honey. Bring to the boil and reduce heat. Stir in the artichoke hearts, red peppers, pasta and rapini and cook, stirring, until heated through, about 3 minutes. Sprinkle with feta cheese, and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Serve with your favourite green salad, whole wheat rolls and a baked apple for dessert.

Per serving: 424 calories, 18 g fat, 13 g protein, 56 g carbs, 8 g fibre, 234 mg sodium. A very high source of fibre. Excellent source of vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E, folate, thiamine and magnesium.

Tip from a P.H.Ec.

Rapini

With its unique, slightly bitter flavour, rapini or broccoli rabe is gaining popularity in North American supermarkets. Resembling a leafy version of the traditional broccoli, it can be used in a similar fashion. It is also a part of the brassica family, so it contains phytochemicals that help to prevent cancer.

Serves 6

GINGER PORK WRAPS

From: *The Best Family Slow Cooker Recipes* (Robert Rose)
by **Donna-Marie Pye, P.H.Ec.**

¼ cup	hoisin sauce	50 mL
3 tbsp.	grated gingerroot	45 mL
3 tbsp.	liquid honey	45 mL
1	2 ½ lb. (1.25 kg) boneless pork loin rib end roast, trimmed of excess fat	1
2 ½ cups	shredded cabbage	625 mL
½ cup	shredded carrots	125 mL
3	green onions, finely chopped	3
2 tbsp.	rice vinegar	25 mL
10 - 12	10-inch (25 cm) flour tortillas	10 - 12

1. In a bowl, combine hoisin sauce, gingerroot and honey.
2. Place pork roast in slow cooker stoneware and brush with sauce to coat completely.
3. Cover and cook on **Low** for 8 to 10 hours or on **High** for 4 to 5 hours, or until meat is very tender.
4. Transfer pork to a bowl and pull meat apart in shreds using two forks. Skim fat from sauce. Return meat to slow cooker.
5. In a bowl, combine cabbage, carrot, green onions and vinegar.
6. Wrap tortillas in foil and heat in a preheated 350°F (180°C) oven for 10 minutes.
7. To serve, spread about 1/3 cup (75 mL) pork mixture down centre of each warm tortilla. Top with ¼ cup (50 mL) cabbage mixture. Roll up each tortilla tightly.

Use whole wheat tortillas for this recipe. Serve with carrot and celery sticks. For dessert, invite your family to choose a thoroughly washed fresh fruit from a colourful centrepiece bowl.

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***The Ontario Home Economics Association**, a self-regulated body of Professional Home Economists, promotes high professional standards among its members so that they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life.*

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