Chocolate Analysis

One of the dilemmas that I have encountered with the rules of my project is chocolate. Can I have it? Today I will exam 3 different chocolate bars that my mother mailed to me.

Green & Black's Organic Dark Chocolate (70% Cacao)

- Ingredients: Organic bittersweet chocolate (organic chocolate, organic raw cane sugar, organic cocoa butter, soy lecithin (emulsifier), organic vanilla extract)
- Cocoa, cane sugar, vanilla are traded in compliance with Fair Trade Standards
- Certified organic by the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF)
- Fair Trade Certified

Theo Organic Fair Trade pure 85% dark chocolate

- Ingredients: Cocoa beans, sugar, ground vanilla bean (all organic and fair trade)
- Made in Seattle
- Certified Organic by QAI
- Certified Fair Trade by IMO
- Non GMO Project Verified
Endangered Species Chocolate - natural dark chocolate with forest mint (72% cocoa)

- Ingredients: bittersweet chocolate (*chocolate liquor, cane sugar, *cocoa butter, soy lecithin, vanilla), natural mint flavor
- *Cocoa comes from rainforest alliance certified farms
- Rainforest Alliance Certified cocoa
- Non GMO Project Verified
- 10% of net profits are donated to help support species, habitat, and humanity

Most important to me is the amount of ingredients, which Theo wins hands down with the simplest list. I also want no GMOs in my food, so Theo and Endangered Species are better in this regard. I value fair trade over organic, therefore Theo is better than Green & Black in this respect. I like how the Endangered Species chocolate donates 10% of their profits towards helping the environment through the Rainforest Alliance. Of all the chocolate I was given, Theo was the best for the criteria of my project. It is also made in the USA. I am going to go ahead and eat all three, chocolate should not go to waste, and it is much better than Hershey's. A girl needs her chocolate. :)

What do you think? What kind of chocolate do you like? Do you think I am bending my rules to far? Are there any of these certifications that you would like to know more about?

Sources:

Comments:

Jane - August 24, 2013 at 10:19 AM

First, way to go, Gail, for sending Chris down this path.

I think by your standards any of the three work well (once again, good job Gail), and I like your logical consideration. And yes, a girl needs her chocolate.

And I don't think you're bending the rules. I think one needs to consider all types of food for a project like this, because this is what real people eat. If you're exploring a far-out diet, that would be different. Are you going to consider the cost for something like that -- I realize these were a gift but I am sure there will
be future chocolate consumed. Oh! Do you have a way to keep track of "gift" costs -- close amounts they would have cost had you bought them -- to include in your accounting?

Christine Kincaid - August 24, 2013 at 1:48 PM

So far I had not plans for calculating costs for gifts. The cost tallying part of this project is already a monster of its own. I can keep a separate list of gifts and approximate values, but my theory is all college students receive free food or gifts at some point, and it will even out.

Mary - August 24, 2013 at 2:25 PM

I would choose the Theo chocolate since it is the one that is soy free. I've heard that soy often contains GMOs. How do we know that the soy from which the soy lectin was made was not genetically modified?
Saturday, August 24, 2013

What Should I Make for Dinner?

Today I am going to try something different. I need to make a large dish that I can portion out over one week in lunches and perhaps dinner as well. I plan to cook it tomorrow afternoon. But, here is the thing; I have most of the ingredients but not the idea. What should I make?

I have:
- 1 lb. ground turkey
- Parmesan cheese
- mozzarella cheese
- 3 oz. portabella mushrooms
- green beans
- onion
- garlic
- lasagna noodles
- wagon wheel noodles
- salt, flour, sugar, etc.

Please leave a comment below!!

Comments:

Esther - August 24, 2013 at 7:59 PM

I would suggest a chili or thick stew/gumbo type dish with all the veggies and the wagon wheel noodles in it. Or turkeyloaf

Christine Kincaid - August 24, 2013 at 8:00 PM

Is turkey loaf like meat loaf? I was kinda thinking lasagna but I have no experience with it.

Esther - August 24, 2013 at 8:02 PM

Yeah, a meat loaf but with turkey instead

Catherine - August 24, 2013 at 8:54 PM

You could do a pasta primavera with the noodles and veggies. You could make turkey burgers with the turkey. I also like Esther's suggestion of chili or soup because that is very easy to reheat if you have leftovers in the fridge or the freezer.
Turkey Lasagna Test

I decided what to do with my 1lb of ground turkey... make lasagna. Thank you so much for the input, chili is now on my to-cook list for this project! I decided to go with lasagna because it seemed easier (it wasn't) and to take less ingredients (it didn't).

I was able to get my cheese and noodles from an Amish market called Fountain City Acres. They had a really good selection of bulk foods. The ingredient list on each product was short which also made me happy. (The shorter the list, the fewer ingredients, and the smaller the chance it is processed.) I got mozzarella and parmesan cheese along with dehydrated portabella mushrooms and lasagna noodles for this dish.

I based my lasagna recipe on some that I found online. I tried to follow the direction but I forgot to put in the seasoning (I did remember salt in the sauce) and was rather loose on my measuring of the cheese. I also added squash, as I had a week old one that I needed to get rid of. I got my ground turkey from Becker Farms at the farmer's market. It was $6.50 per pound, which seemed expensive to me, especially for one dish. I was surprised that it did not impact the overall cost of the product as much (more on that in a minute). I also accidentally made way to many lasagna noodles, so it looks like I will be eating them for a few meals with some salt and extra cheese.
Now I know what you want to know, how much did this dish cost? As a whole, it cost $22.60. I made my white sauce from scratch and did not include the extra help I got from my friend Jenna. She really helped by grating all the cheese for me. I cut the pan into 12 slices; therefore, each slice costs $1.88. That is not too bad for a main course for lunches and things. It also means less cooking for an entire week for me!!

I have not tasted it yet; I will let you know tomorrow after lunch what the verdict is.

UPDATE: The lasagna was delicious!! It did not need seasoning, I added a bit of salt. It tasted like souped up macaroni and cheese. I just wish I had brought a bigger piece with me!

Source:
What is Safer, Your Food or Another's?

After a discussion in class today, I have become more interested in the sanitation of our food. I am wondering if prepackaged and restaurant food is safer than the food that you prepare in your own home?

For the level of work put into each meal, a meal at a restaurant requires less work of me than if I were to cook it myself. For cleanliness, all I need to do is wash my hands and hope that the workers have done the rest. I am realizing at home how much cleaning is involved to keep a kitchen healthy. You need to wipe down the counters daily with antibacterial wipes, wash your hands a lot. Make sure the dishes are clean by washing by hand or by using a dishwasher. The parts I am struggling with is sampling the food as I cook (that could spread germs) and leaving food out unrefrigerated and a few hours later thinking it is still ok to eat.

In *Food Policy in the United States* by Parke Wilde, he says, "packaging can block harmful contamination". I would have to agree, that prepackaged food might be cleaner then what is made in a typical kitchen. He also discusses that most of the food we consume has been manufactured.

So right now, I am torn if the food I cook is safer in terms of pathogens then what can be purchased at a restaurant or grocery store. What do you think?

Source:
Comments:

Tina - August 26, 2013 at 11:09 PM

I think it really depends on how you view bacteria and other pathogens. We don't use antibacterial anything in our house. I won't let my kids lick a raw piece of chicken, but I also don't panic if the pizza we made last night is eaten in the morning without refrigeration. If anyone in my family had a compromised or weakened immune system, I might be more rigorous, but as it is, we do just dandy living with our germies.

Ellen - August 26, 2013 at 11:17 PM

I once saw a video (maybe it was a show, or a commercial, promotional event, or something, I forget) where health inspectors came into average people's kitchens and rated them as though they were inspecting a restaurant. The kitchens weren't horrible, but they were all somewhere in the 60-80% range. I think you pose a good question. Is it really more sanitary to do it yourself, or to eat out? It probably depends on how willing you are to keep the kitchen really very tidy. It'd be hard to maintain restaurant-quality cleanliness all the time, that's for sure!

Mary - August 27, 2013 at 7:08 PM

I agree with Tina. I don't use antibacterial anything and I think my immune system is stronger for it. We need some of our good bacteria to fight off the bad bacteria. I think that the food you cook is probably safer that pre-packaged stuff because you know what is in it. Perhaps the packaging is blocking contamination, but do the amount of preservatives and extra crap in the food outweigh the risk of contamination?
Wednesday, August 28, 2013

Do We Truly Want to Know What is in Our Food?

I read an interesting article on CNN today "Do consumers really want to see where their food comes from?" The author, Ryan Goodman, primarily focuses on slaughterhouses on both small and large scale. He voices that transparency between the manufacturer and the consumer should increase as a form of education to both sides.

He briefly mentions how in the slaughtering process, the manufacturers make a point to keep the animals as calm as possible. The main argument that I have heard against slaughterhouses is that they are inhumane. I believe that we have done pretty well to find a humane way to process the animals. I am actually visiting a processing plant next week; let me know if you are interested to hear about my experience.

In terms of more transparency, I would like to have a better grasp of what "spices", "artificial flavoring", or "seasoning" means on the end of the ingredient list. Companies claim that these are their secret recipes. I hope this wall will be the next to come down, for the sake of those who have allergies. I am allergic to pepper, such as bell pepper. A company could have red pepper included in "spices" and as the consumer; I would be none the wiser. If I ate that product, I would get sick. This is why the consumer deserves to know what is in their food and how it is made.

Companies are responding; even the largest meat producer such as Cargill is slowly allowing images of their factories to surface. When the public becomes more knowledgeable, they will act on that knowledge. If we know something is not right, now we can change it.

Would you like to visit the factory that makes your favorite food or would your rather not know?

Source:
Pickles Revisited

Remember when I made pickles almost 2 weeks ago? If you don't read about it on page 19.

Today is the day I decided to try them. One problem... I took them out of my fridge and they were frozen solid :(.
Fortunately, for me a friend advised me to soak the container in hot water to thaw them.

They are now thaw, so here it goes!!

There is a crunch. Oh my, that is a LOT of vinegar!! I thought I made the sweet form of pickles?!? Maybe I let them sit too long? I don't know. Whoo!! They are strong!

Verdict: I still do not like pickles, but if anyone near me would like to try them! Then I will know if they are any good.

Is there any way to make them less potent?

Comments:

Esther - August 28, 2013 at 8:43 PM

I ate one of your pickled radishes from last month today. It had turned black, was soft, and tasted mostly of salt and dill. But, I am still here! ;}
Thursday, August 29, 2013

Packing a Lunch

Today we are going on another fieldtrip with my seminar. We are going to visit several dairies, two that are large scale and on small Amish dairy. We were told to pack a lunch and I figured that there would not be refrigeration, so I had to prepare the night before for a cold lunch.

I did not have any bread, so sandwiches were a no go. I thought boiling beets was a good idea. They turned out well, a bit more pink then I would like. The color bled out when boiling through tears in the skin. I also included some portioned out trail mix made of soy nuts (good for protein) and dried cranberries. I have also had a head of cabbage sitting around, so I sliced some up raw. Add an apple and some green beans and I am done!

Cost:
• 1 boiled beets.......$0.50
• Trail mix.................$0.45
• Cabbage.................. $0.15
• Apple......................$0.36
• Green beans..............$0.50
• Half a watermelon... free (from a kind Amish family)

Total = $2.46 $0.95

It is a little more expensive than some meals that I have had but for all of it being fresh, I think I did pretty well! Everything is from the farmers market except the trail mix. Do you like my lunch?

Edit: I wrote this the evening before and discovered that I did not eat as much of my lunch due to being full with watermelon :).
Stuck at the Airport

Labor Day weekend has barely begun and I have reached my first hurdle. I went home to my parents' house for the weekend and we soon headed to the airport to pick up my sister and her boyfriend. We got here and her flight was delayed due to rain. After an hour, I needed dinner, hopefully following my rules for this project.

It was actually easier than I thought. First stop was Starbucks as my mom had mentioned that there were Kind bars. They are GMO free. I got the Blueberry Vanilla & Cashew variety for $1.95. To drink I got Naked green machine for $4.29. They are also biotechnology free, no added sugars, and no preservatives. It also uses Rainforest Alliance Certified Bananas, which sounds good. Overall, it is a tasty meal that is healthy too!!

Comments:

Esther - August 30, 2013 at 9:34 PM

What does the cost of the airport meal look like, compared to the others (with serving sizes, etc. thrown in)? I'm just curious how expensive the airport really is...I know it is a lot :)
Weekend at Home

I have made a decision. For today and tomorrow, I'm not sticking by my rules. I am home and it is wise and cost effective to accept the wonderful hospitality of my parents. And let's face it; the calculations for costs of meals would be very difficult to do.

So what have I been eating? Lots of milk, pears from the farmers market, granola, soy nuts, and dried cranberries. With all of that, I felt fine. Tonight I went to an outdoor concert my family. We ran short on time so opted for the concession stand for dinner. I got the only salad on the menu, thinking that it would be the least processed. I assume that the chicken on it was pretty processed and probably not cooked on site. I also munched in my sister's fries and my Dad's kettle corn.

I learned something interesting while eating my dinner; processed food is starting to disagree with me. My body does not like it. I do not feel horrible by any means but I would not have expected this change so quickly. I wonder how I will react in December. What do you think?
The Zucchini Ran Away!!

Today was baking and cooking day. Thankfully, I had my family to help me. My mom paid for the food and ingredients. I think this is pretty typical for the parents to feed their children when they come home from school and to send leftovers back with them.

My awesome sister helping me cook!!

First, I started making French bread. It has over two and a half hours of rise time alone, so I wanted to get it started early. While this was rising, I started the chicken noodle soup. I use a recipe my friend Leander created, and it has always been amazing. As a shortcut, my mom got a rotisserie chicken from Earth Fare, eliminating the step of cooking the chicken. Yes, this means it is more processed, but it was free to me.

Chicken Noodle Soup
I was able to take the chicken and vacuum seal it into eight packages of two cups each. They are now in the freezer and should last me a few weeks or months (I say the shorter time because it is so yummy!).

So, about the zucchini, this evening I decided to make zucchini bread with the zucchini I bought yesterday at the market here in town. One problem, we could not find the zucchini. Anywhere! We looked in every cabinet to no avail. I eventually had to go to Marsh to get two more. After that, the recipe I used is written for a higher altitude, so my sister helped me adjust it. I also decided to change from bread to muffins, as it is easier to portion control with muffins. The end result...42 zucchini muffins.

End result:
- 8 servings of chicken noodle soup
- 1 1/2 loaves of French bread
- 40 zucchini muffins (my family ate two)

Any other ideas for things that I can make and freeze in bulk?
Tuesday, September 3, 2013

Am I Hungry or Not?

So, I was one of those kids who just ate whenever. I never really paid attention to "feeling" hungry or recognizing that sensation. Now I hear people say to only eat when you are hungry and to be honest I do not feel hunger pangs or have my stomach growl very often. So today I decided to do some research of what other signs your body gives you that you are actually needing nourishment.

I started with WebMD to research:
You have a hunger hormone in your blood called ghrelin. It helps transmit the "I'm hungry" signal from the empty stomach to the brain. Similar nerve endings signal the brain when you are full, but they take up to 20 minutes to complete their mission.

Another site, self.com (which I am uncertain how reputable it is), states feeling of hunger, emptiness in the stomach, and inability to focus. Another possibility is if you are thirsty and feeling weak.

For me, I typically feel light headed (unable to focus) along with a headache and thirst.

Isn't it interesting how our bodies can notify us that we are hungry in different ways?

Sources:
Thursday, September 5, 2013

Update: 3 Weeks In

So people have started asking, "How are you doing?" or "Is the project hard?" etc. So I thought an update was appropriate as I am over 1/6 of the way through.

So, what are my impressions? Well, I find by cutting out processed food, I am forced to eat a lot healthier. For once I do not have junk food to snack on, instead I have apples, carrots, and from a recent shopping trip, strawberries!! If I get hungry, typically, it will be 30 minutes until a meal or snack is put together. For example, today I made rice, but I had to cook it for 30 minutes on the stovetop. No instant food here.

On that note, I am really really really missing convenience when it comes to food. Currently, I need to wake up earlier to make breakfast and pack my lunch for later. Coming home, I need to set aside at least 1 hour for dinner (cooking and eating). On a college schedule, that is a lot of precious time that could be spent doing homework or sleeping. I may be saving money by cooking everything from scratch, but it takes more time. So I guess what it comes down to is what is more valuable, time or money?

Another interesting change is that I have lost weight. About 5 lbs. so far. This is unintentional but a side effect of eating healthier food. My food is also less calorie dense then processed food. Which leads to how I have been feeling today, Hungry. Ironically, the more I eat, the hungrier I feel. I am not sure if this will continue or go away.

I hope I get a routine down, that I can cook food in bulk ahead of time to spend less time cooking every day. I also want to learn to cook more things and to cook with people. So, if you ever want to come over and cook with me, let me know!!
Comments:

*Tina* - September 5, 2013 at 11:17 PM

Great fast, cheap breakfast: oatmeal! Soak some steel cut or rolled oats overnight, then start it simmering in the morning before you get dressed. 5-10 minutes tops, add whatever toppings you want. We add fruit, honey, butter and sometimes peanut butter (my favorite)

The soaking helps make the oats digest easier, cook faster, smoother texture, etc.

And if you have leftovers you can make muffins or use it as an additive to a bath for dry skin. :)

Another super fast real food breakfast, apple and peanut butter. (You can easily make your own nut butters at the beginning of the week and keep them in the fridge, just remember to stir before scooping. OR you can just buy the peanut/almond butter from the grinder in the bulk section of most stores.)

Rethinking what makes a meal can really shift how much time it takes to survive on non-processed foods.
Friday, September 6, 2013

Is Your Food Real??

My friend Esther sent me an interesting article to read, *Fake Foods You are Eating.* This also goes along with some articles I read in my seminar today about processed food and salt. This article opens with "Cheese faking is as art nearly as popular as cheesemaking". Oh yikes! I would encourage you to read the article then come back and finish this blog post.

My initial reactions:
- Yes fake cheese should be called "embalmed cheese", at least that would be a deterrent from eating it.
- There is no vanilla in Nilla Wafers :(. That makes me sad.
- No milk in the cream in Oreos and chocolate is the last ingredient in the cookie? I wonder what they would taste like made out of real ingredients.
- My sister and I had a peanut butter debate a few days ago when she had sugarless peanut butter for the first time. The verdict: she did not like it because there was nothing to mask the peanut flavor (she is not fond of nuts).
- There is chocolate milk sold that contains no milk!!

It still surprises me what can qualify as food but yet, it does not contain really food items. Which food on this list surprises/disgusts you the most?

Source:

Comments:

*Petunia* - September 6, 2013 at 7:37 PM

My son spilled his chocolate milk at a popular fast food place a few months ago. The napkins would not soak it up; they pushed the milk across the table. I was horrified.

*Christine Kincaid* - September 6, 2013 at 7:41 PM

Oh my, that is just weird
Saturday, September 7, 2013

Change of Plans

As some of you know, I am traveling to Washington DC for the next four days. I will be putting my thesis on hold, at least the full-blown restrictions. I am still going to try to eat less processed food, but I want to keep expenses in mind. I may blog while I am there, but expect a full update once I return.

I anticipate limitations in my options in food as well as all food being more expensive. The main goal is to have fun and to not get sick.

Any recommendations of where or what I should try to eat?
Sunday, September 8, 2013

DC Day 1: Traveling

Today I had breakfast at home, granola, and milk.

For lunch, we stopped in Ohio at a Blimpie. I got a turkey and provolone on wheat sandwich and lays original chips. The sandwich was ok but very filing. I had an interesting revelation with the chips. My favorite part of them was the crunch. Not the salt or fat content. They seemed too greasy. I did not even finish the small bag.

I had two insomnia cookies for a snack and Panda Express for dinner. Not the greatest choice but it was the only economical option closest to DC. I really did not want to pay over $10 for dinner. Right now, I am craving water, apples, and carrots.

Hopefully tomorrow will bring healthier choices.
Monday, September 9, 2013

DC Day 2: Better Food

What did I eat today? Well for breakfast, we had a free buffet at the hotel. I had a waffle with cream cheese and some apple juice. I opted to not have the fake maple syrup that had nothing from a tree in it.

For lunch as a group, we went to Potbelly's. It is a sandwich shop. I got a mushroom and cheese sandwich on wheat and a banana smoothie. Honestly, the sandwich as bland and tasted like cardboard. (I am really starting to appreciate my own cooking.) The smoothie was good, more like banana ice cream but good.

In comparison to my other two meals, dinner was awesome! A group of us went into Chinatown to Chop’t Creative Salad Co. You made your own salad, picking out the ingredients that you wanted and they chopped it together. I got romaine with bacon, carrots, edamame, and cheese. It was refreshing and healthy!

We decided to get desert at a frozen yogurt place. Chocolate and cake batter with chocolate chips and sprinkles was a good way to end my day. I think today was pretty successful in the food area. Here is to a good tomorrow!!
Favorite Place in DC: The USDA

My favorite part of this week was the visit to the USDA. Honestly, I thought it was not going to be very cool and I was satisfied seeing the garden and a part of the building on Monday evening. But I agreed to visit.

Propaganda poster from 1914-1918 in the exhibit.

So why was it so cool?

First there was a good amount of exhibits going over the history of the USDA. The walls were covered with old posters and propaganda. I actually did not have as much time to look at these, as I wanted because I spent so much time talking to the lady who worked there. She was so thrilled to have visitors (they don’t get many through there) and it was even better that we were interested in science and agriculture.

I got some pamphlets, magazine, and other free goodies to study when we get back. Let me know if you would like to see them.

I am also impressed how kind they were, the people at the USDA. I think it is good to remember that they are people to, so the department is not a heartless, faceless entity.
First, I apologize for the lack of posts the past few days. When a squirrel chews through your cable cord, the Internet tends to not want to work. Today is the first day since I got back from DC (Wednesday night) that I have had reliable Internet. Huzzah!

Anyway, back to my overview of DC. It was a great trip. I actually really enjoyed being to eat what I wanted instead of being restricted to my diet. I tried to post some of what I eat, so you should check out those posts.

I did find by day 4, I was feeling bloated and sick. The food still tasted great and fulfilled the cravings I was having, but I just did not feel well. I spent most of Thursday curled up feeling ill and sleeping. Friday was better, however my appetite was not back. I felt ok today, however the cravings for sweet and salty have not gone away. Stay tuned to some revelations in that area in the next post.

Overall, it was nice to take a break from my project, almost too nice.
Saturday, September 14, 2013

I Made a Mistake

So, I alluded earlier that stuff went down after my DC trip. No, it is not that bad, but in hindsight I am thinking I should have not been as liberal with allowing myself to eat processed food on the trip. The problem is, now I crave processed food. It is like starting over. To be honest I am losing my motivation to continue this diet (I am not saying I will quit, but it is getting hard).

Here are the issues I am having:

- I want to eat multi ingredient foods. Not just boiled beets or carrots.
- I want my food to be quick and easy when needed.
- I want sweets such as ice cream.
- I miss having flavor!! Food should make you drool and not be bland.
- I need calories and fruits and veggies are just not very calorie dense.

Tonight I went out to dinner with two dear friends of mine. Yes, I broke my rules, and to be honest I did not care. It was worth not having to stress about the content of my food. I think that is a major thing I am learning, you should not have to stress about where your food is coming from and how much it costs, it takes away the joy of eating. Breaking my "rules" was a mistake, but it is making me decide that I need to define them more clearly both for you, my reader, and myself. So, stay tuned for rule related posts.

Starting tomorrow, I will officially be back on the bandwagon regarding eating non-processed food. By telling you, it will hold me accountable. I appreciate any advice you have regarding the concerns I have so far. I do not mean to complain, but I see this as an opportunity to grow and learn from others.

Comments:

Jane - September 15, 2013 at 7:38 AM

The problem with this experimenting this far is that it is not impossible for the short term but almost impossible to maintain. You can get multi ingredient food but they take a lot longer (duh), and a diet as lacking in protein that you've been doing is very difficult to maintain (and not super healthy). I still think you need to find ways to incorporate more meats, but if not meats, more legumes and ornery protein sources. Also remember that flavor doesn't have to be sacrificed, but that you have to work harder to find the slices and additions that you enjoy. Cooking with butter, using herbs you can grow, etc. are legitimate ways to flavor your food locally.

Christine Kincaid - September 15, 2013 at 10:25 AM

I have been improving in the protein realm by having more peanut butter. I have some frozen chicken noodle soup that I made while at my parent's house. Honestly, cooking meat is my weakest link, I am always afraid that I will undercook it. I also am slowly learning which herbs will go well with what dish, I think that is an art
You are right that the experiment feels impossible to maintain right now, I feel like I am always cooking or thinking of what my next meal will be.

Elizabeth - September 15, 2013 at 1:38 PM

I have discovered that fruit sorbet is a pretty good substitute when I crave ice cream or frozen yogurt. For a wedding shower gift Colin and I got this thing called a Yonannas machine, and it makes frozen banana chunks into a pretty legitimate ice cream-esque concoction. I think a regular food processor or blender would do the same thing- and you can add things like other frozen fruit or chocolate to it :)

Anonymous - September 15, 2013 at 4:17 PM

I will pray for you to keep it up and not become discouraged. And I hope that you will be able to find ingredients to make the natural foods tasty! I have some recipe books I can share with you if things get difficult - a lot of them allow for non-processed ingredients.

Jane - September 16, 2013 at 9:09 PM

Buy yourself a decent meat thermometer -- they can be had very inexpensively in the kitchen section of your local store, and the price can go up from there -- and then look in the meat section of your cookbook for the cooking temps. Most meats are very forgiving -- ground meats are done when they're brown, chicken at the given temps, and pork can even go as low as 140 and still be safe these days.

MEAT!!! MEAT!!! I WANT TO SEE MORE MEAT!!! (Yes, this is Mama Carnivore writing you.)
Sunday, September 15, 2013

Learned Something New - Kale Chips

This morning/afternoon I went over to my friend Ellen's apartment. We made crêpes to celebrate her birthday and afterwards she offered to teach me how to make kale chips.

Her recipe:

- Grease pan with olive oil
- Rip kale into 2 inch pieces
- Sprinkle olive oil onto kale pieces
- Add salt
- Bake at 350 for 7-10 minutes

This is the first time that I have had kale chips, and I have to admit they were pretty tasty. Maybe I can get some kale from the farmer's market on Wednesday. It will help add some variety to my diet.

Comments:

Elizabeth - September 15, 2013 at 7:37 PM

Kale chips are the answer to everything. I've discovered that if you want a lower-fat version, you can sub out vinegar for the olive oil. I imagine you may still have to grease the cookie sheets, though. I'm lucky enough to have some pretty nifty non-stick ones.
Kale at the market is amazingly cheap if you get it at the right place- last week Colin and I got a pound of it for two dollars.
Defining Processed Food

So today, I made my own first batch of kale chips. A little too salty but that will be easily fixed the next time. I also had rice and beans for dinner, with some saved for later. They taste briny. I guess that is because I got canned kidney beans (only beans and salt). I thought they would be easier to cook (less time). I am still learning how to cook them properly.

On that note, I need to define the processed food that I am avoiding.

The USDA defines processed food as “any food other than a raw agricultural commodity and includes any raw agricultural commodity that has been subject to processing, such as canning, cooking, freezing, dehydration, or milling.”

I have discovered that even the organic flour that I buy is considered processed by this definition. I cannot afford to harvest my own wheat and grind it into flour. I have been doing a lot of thought this week of how to redefine and solidify my definition of processed so that I am not over limiting myself.

I am allowing whole foods, such as fruits, vegetables, milk, meat etc. I am also going to allow products that are made of only whole ingredients. This includes canned beans (beans and salt), cheese (milk, enzymes, and salt), and other such products. Does that make sense?

I am eliminating things that should not be there such as chemical preservatives and additives. I am also going to avoid products that have more than five ingredients (even if they are all whole) as that defeats the purpose of this project.

Source:

Comments:

Jane - September 16, 2013 at 9:11 PM

I always always always rinse my canned beans (even the "organic" or whatever) ones -- the rinsing also seems to make them less, er, troublesome to the digestive system. It would also take away the briny taste, I’m sure.

I would recommend giving soaking methods a try. Check out America’s Test Kitchen and Cook’s Illustrated for the best ways to cook dry beans -- they are totally cooking nerds and I think you could get behind it. Your local library probably has back issues available.
Elizabeth - October 6, 2013 at 6:27 PM

I recently saw "processed food" defined as something that you can't make in your own kitchen with standard ingredients and equipment. I thought that was a really interesting way of putting it.

Christine Kincaid - October 6, 2013 at 6:33 PM

That is interesting. I think that definition is even wider than mine.
The Price of Money

So far, in my project, I have been preoccupied with how much I am spending. It is one of the goals of this project to live off of a college budget for food. From some brief inquiry on Google, college students can average $100 to $300 a month on groceries. So far, I have spent $271.49 on food (this does include starting with a bare kitchen). Of food I have consumed, I am averaging $4.67 per day. This means on average $32.70 per week or approximately $130 per month.

I think in this first month that it is possible to survive on organic whole non-processed food while keeping a strict budget. The key word here is survive. In the next weeks, I am still going to tally everything I eat as detailed as ever, but I am going to start incorporating in more expensive items, such as meat (yes Jenny, I will eat meat). I need to focus on creating a balanced diet now, which requires more expensive fats, oils, and protein. This means my expenses will go up and I hope to still stay under $200 a month.

On a side note, here at Ball State, students in the resident halls have meal plans. They come in 10, 14, 18, or 21 meals a week. Consider a student that plans to eat all their meals on campus (21 meals). The breakfast swipe is worth $4.45 (note this is almost as much that I spend per day on average), lunch is worth $7.85, and dinner is worth $7.85. That means the student is spending at least $20.15 per day. I say at least, because as a former meal plan user I tended to go over my allotted swipe and would use my dining plus (extra money allotted by the meal plan) to pay for it. Back to calculations, the student spends $141.05 (how much I spend in a month) per week, and $564.20 per month. I am saving 75% on my food by making it myself. Given the example I gave was the extreme one, I would still be saving money compared to the 10 meal plan.

How do you save money when you cook?

Source:

Comments:

Mary - September 19, 2013 at 8:22 PM

Here is a low cost pulled chicken recipe I recently made. It was pretty good, though not what I was expecting. According to the site it is about $2.91 per serving :)

Savory Sweet Potatoes

So, I have been trying new recipes today. This one comes from the blog Our Savory Life. I came across this recipe through a Google search, trying to find something to do with the sweet potatoes I bought a few days ago from Meijer.

The recipe is pretty simple to make.
- 2 sweet potatoes
- 1 ½ Tbsp. thyme
- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 2 cloves garlic cooked down in 1 Tbsp. olive oil

It probably took me 20 minutes (I forgot to time it). It was also really easy to mix all the ingredients in.

Now the important question: how did it taste? Savory but still sweet. The thyme gave it good flavor and I actually did not taste the garlic. I have three servings made, each costing $1.07. I think that is pretty good, however this is not a main dish. There is no protein involved, so it makes an expensive side dish.

What do you like to do with sweet potatoes?

Source:

Comments:

Catherine - September 24, 2013 at 1:45 PM

People always do sweet things with sweet potatoes like add brown sugar or marshmallows. Savory sweet potatoes sounds good though. I'll have to try it :)}
Wednesday, September 18, 2013

Ewww....Yuck... Food Waste

After some cooking, I got into a cleaning mood today. Thought it was fair time I clean out my fridge, see what had sunk into the depths after one month. Here is what I found...

- Old cabbage
- Boiled beets gone gelatinous and slimy
- Vegetable mush
- Cucumber gone yellow

I have to admit, some of these things have been in my fridge for over a month. Why, you ask? Well honestly, I forgot about the cabbage, cucumber, and beets. The vegetable medley was just kinda gross and not palatable with the eggplant. I am not very good at forcing myself to eat something I do not like. I am keeping a running tally of how much food waste is costing me. So far, it is approximately $17.62 lost in throwing away food whether from spoilage or bad cooking. This is 6% of my total spending on food. I am not sure if that is good or bad.

Now I am more aware I need to try to eat things I do not like. I am also being careful of food spoilage, as I do not want to make myself sick. That is one issue of having no preservatives, food spoils much faster. Do you have any recommendations to keep food longer?

Source:
Foodengineeringmag.com for the lemon photo

Comments:

Elizabeth - September 18, 2013 at 10:39 PM

I always make sure I have eaten as much of my fresh produce (or other perishable items like bread) as possible before breaking into too much of my dried or canned food. You can also check your fridge temperature- you are supposed to keep it below 5 degrees Celsius/41 degrees Fahrenheit.

Also, if you are buying packaged produce that is sold in its own bag, keep it in said bag/package/whatever up until you are absolutely ready to use it. Most packaging manufacturers design the packaging in such a way as to keep food optimally fresh.
If you have leftovers, freeze them instead of just refrigerating them if you think you won’t want it again for a bit.

Finally, go through your fridge and freezer every couple days to make sure things don’t get forgotten in the back :)

This is all kind of common sense stuff though, so pardon me if I am just saying stuff you already might do
Bakin' Old Fashioned Biscuits

Today I decided to try a new biscuit recipe out of my oldest cookbook. We used this at Conner Prairie in our 1886 Liberty Corner site. The book is *Tried and Approved. Buckeye Cookery and Practical Housekeeping Complied from Original Recipes*. The quote on the front of the book says, "Bad dinners go hand and hand with total depravity, while a properly fed man is already half saved." This cookbook was originally published in 1877 and is chocked full of interesting and good recipes. For example, have you ever wanted to make Coffee Jelly, Boiled Beef Tongue, Celery Soup, or Butter Taffy this is the book for you.

Concerning biscuits, there are seven different types listed. I opted to try the South Carolina Biscuit, contributed by Mrs. Colonel Moore. Here is the recipe; it may be different than you are used to.

A bit different, isn't it. I figured out that enough flour is 10-11 cups. This recipe made a LOT of biscuits, 27 to be exact.

One note to make is to use a blender or soften the butter before putting it in, cutting while mixing does not really work. Oh and next time I would add more than 1 Tbsp. baking powder, as they did not rise much.
I cooked each batch at 400 degrees for 25 minutes.

Hopefully, these biscuits will last me a week. What is your oldest favorite recipe?

Source:

Comments:

*Jane* - September 21, 2013 at 7:35 PM

Ummm, DUH, KELLY ISLAND CAKE!!!
Invasion of the Beans!

Friday, September 20, 2013

So today, I finally have protein, in the bean form anyway (meat is coming tomorrow, stay tuned). My friend Elizabeth came over this afternoon to teach me how to make hummus and lentil soup.

We first went to Meijer where I got some ingredients: lentils, garbanzo beans, a lemon, and Tahini. This is the first time I have purchased Tahini; it is mechanized ground up sesame seeds. It is a component in the hummus.

The hummus
- 2 cans of garbanzo beans.....$3.18
- 1/2 juiced lemon.................$0.40
- 1/4 cup tahini.....................$0.71
- 1 tsp. garlic........................$0.14
- 1/8 tsp. salt........................$0.00075

Total is $4.43 and it is $0.37 per 1/4 cup serving. Elizabeth said I could put it on veggies or bread or just eat it plain. So far, I have had it with scrambled eggs and plain. There is at least 4 grams of protein per serving.
Now onto the lentil soup, it has more ingredients so I will list them and give you the total cost. The ingredients are: onion, carrots, olive oil, potatoes, garbanzo beans, lemon juice, water, lentils, garlic powder, thyme, cilantro, parsley, basil, and salt. It cost $7.19. With 14 servings of 1 cup each, they cost $0.51 per serving.

Here is the soup before I blended it:

Here is the after. I blended it because I prefer my food to have a smooth even texture.

Tomorrow I am going to the Farmer's market. I want to get meat, veggies, and apples. Any other recommendations?
The Cost of Things

So far, it seems that this project is pretty cost effective. As I mentioned in an earlier post, I am between $30 and $40 a week or around $5 a day. This seems to be proving my point that eating organic and healthy is possible on a college student’s diet. There are two factors I am neglecting so far, meat/protein and calories. I will tackle the calorie issue tomorrow, so tonight we will talk about meat.

Since the beginning of this project, I do not think I have been getting enough protein. For someone my size, I need 40-60 grams of protein a day. (Just take your weight in pounds and multiply by 0.37). I had been incorporating eggs and milk into my diet, but with each egg having 6g and milk having 8g per cup, I would need to eat a lot of them to meet my requirements.

What about meat you ask? To follow the confines of my project (not processed, preferred GMO free, antibiotic free, hormone free, free range, grass fed), meat is expensive. This means about $7 a pound for most cuts of chicken or for ground beef. Knowing protein is a problem; I purchased 3 lbs. of boneless skinless chicken breasts and 1.2 lbs. of ground beef from Becker Farms at the farmers market yesterday. This cost about $33, about the same that I would spend on an entire week!!

Right now, the meat is in my freezer as I devise how to incorporate it into well-rounded dishes. That will make the meat/protein stretch longer than just making a hamburger out of it. What ideas do you have? I am considering something with a crockpot that can cook all day.
Monday, September 23, 2013

Energy and its Costs

As promised, today's post is going to be on calories. I have been concerned that I have not been getting enough calories while on this diet. I have not been monitoring them for the duration so far. So today I used a website called myfitnesspal.com to estimate how many calories I have been eating in the past week. I am shocked at the results. I averaged 1566 calories and 54 grams of protein per day. I thought I was around 1,000 calories a day.

I discussed yesterday that I should be having 40-60 grams of protein a day and I was between 32 and 70 each day, so I am actually fine. I did have a bean or meat dish everyday (that certainly helps). My lowest calorie intake was 1,222 and the highest is 1,945.

Let's refer to some science to see if these numbers are alright. I am going to use the USDA's myplate.gov to figure this out. How many calories should I have? According to the chart, I need to be having around 2,000 calories, and that is if I am not physically active (which I am, I biked 5 miles round trip to class today).

So why was I wondering about calories in the first place? I feel my diet is out of whack in the proportions of things. I am also considering ending my experiment early at six or 8 weeks, as I am worried about health risks and honestly, I am sick of calculating how much everything costs every day. What do you think?

Source:
Comments:

Mary - September 26, 2013 at 12:44 AM

It sounds like you are figuring things out for the project and that things are getting easier. I wonder if some of the not feeling well is partly detoxing all those preservatives and chemicals out of your body?

Christine Kincaid - September 26, 2013 at 1:53 PM

The idea that my body has been detoxing is an interesting one? Could a detox last for 6 weeks?

Mary - September 28, 2013 at 11:27 AM

Probably not for six weeks, but anytime you took a break I think would be a start over point

Christine Kincaid - September 28, 2013 at 1:43 PM

That is an interesting way to think about it. Every time I eat something processed, my body has to detox again.
Tuesday, September 24, 2013

R.I.P. Kale

This morning I got up and started fixing breakfast. I grabbed some biscuits and humus from the fridge when I noticed an odd smell. Something sweet but slightly off. I managed to narrow it down to the veggie drawer, so I pulled it out and set it to the side. It contained broccoli, carrots, and kale. The first two smelled fine, but the kale... was interesting. I decided that fresh air would do it good, so I left it out of the fridge until this evening when I thought it might be a good idea to check on it. What do I see? This:

The kale that used to be a luscious green is now a yellow color.

Now why am I bringing this up? It is a learning opportunity for me to learn about the expiration of fruits and veggies. According to the website Still Tasty, kale can last 5-7 days in the refrigerator (which I was on the tail end of) or 10-12 months in the freezer. Wow! I bought this kale back on September 16th (8 days ago). Moral of the story is use your kale quickly or freeze it.

So what about the other fruit and veggies that I have in my fridge?

- Beets - 2 weeks fridge, 12-18 months freezer
- Carrots - 3-4 weeks fridge, 12-18 months freezer
- Broccoli - 3-5 days fridge, 12-18 months freezer
- Apples (not in the fridge) - 1-3 days pantry, 3-4 weeks fridge, 10-12 months freezer
  
  Note: I leave my apples sitting out for at least a week before they start being questionable

- Cantaloupe (cut up) - 3-4 days fridge, 10-12 months freezer

The site also gives information on how to prepare the foods for the refrigerator or freezing so that they will last the longest. They also have an iPhone app for $1.99. I think it might be worth trying out. It also looks like I will have lots of cantaloupe and broccoli tomorrow before they go bad. I also want to get kale from the market, but I will cook it into chips (which will hopefully last longer, at least I will eat them quicker).

Do you have any food saving tips? How far would you go with something that was "going bad"?

Source:

70
**Wednesday, September 25, 2013**

**Food Spoilage is No More**

Update: I have been putting all of my perishable food into the Still Tasty App. I feel much more confident that I will not have food spoiling on me anymore. It even sends me notifications when the food is about to expire.

I am also getting motivation to use my food before it expires (since I now know the time crunch). For instance, tonight I baked beets, therefore when I want to eat them I will just have to microwave the container (much quicker). It should last 3-5 days in my fridge.

Here is another piece of good news. I am going to a nutritionist appointment next week to have a dietitian evaluate what I have eating so far. This should help me make sure I am eating a balanced diet. With this information it will also make is easier for me to take this experiment to the end of the semester.

Comments:

*Jane* - September 25, 2013 at 9:12 PM

You know which part of this I like best. And it’s not the beets. :) Love Mama Carnivore
Sometimes You Need Something Sweet

So, by the end of today I was just starting to feel tired and craving sugar. My first thought to remedy this with just to eat some straight sugar on a spoon. A spoonful of sugar does help the medicine go down. Not that I need any medicine.

Hearing the wisdom of my many mothers in my head, I decided to be a bit more productive my sugar consumption. I made 44 sugar cookies instead. So far, tonight I've eaten five. I am having a large glass of milk with them, makes them healthier I think. They only cost eight cents per cookie. The generic recipe I found the bit too buttery but I can deal with it.

I think I will make peanut butter cookies next time, or ones with chocolate (but that could get really expensive). With the peanut butter, I could get some protein in the cookies that could make them "healthier". What is your favorite treat her food that picks you up?
Saturday, September 28, 2013

A Shifting Mentality

First thing this morning I went to the Minnetrista Farmer's Market. This trip is starting to become part of my schedule. Mentally, my perception of the farmer's market is starting to change. I am planning what to get, focusing on the farmer's market as my main source of food. This week I got beets and kale, I could have gotten potatoes, but I already have some and want to use them before they go bad.

Yes, I found kale, I did two laps around the market until I found the vendor selling it of a cooler. One pound cost me $2. All of it has already been made into chips, which I have been enjoying all afternoon. This would be a great way to get your kids to eat their greens.

The Farmer's market is no longer a novelty for me. It is where my food comes from. I have talked with friends and family how they view the market, and it is a special occasion for them. May if they are cooking a special dinner on Saturday they will go to the market for some of the ingredients. I wish the mentality, at least for the summer, would switch to one that relied on the market for fruits and veggies. They taste better and are cheaper then a lot of retail stores.

I think that shopping at farmers' markets will continue after my project is done. How often do you buy food directly from the farmer?
Saturday, September 28, 2013

Why I Like Kale

Kale. As of a few months ago, I had never eaten it. It was one of those perceived icky bitter greens that I would never want to touch (yes I can be a picky eater at times). By now, I have had kale chips and a spinach kale soup. So why is kale good for you? Maybe I can convince you to try it!

1. It is high in vitamins. Vitamins C and K in particular. Vitamin C is good for immune system (think orange juice and other citrus) and vitamin K helps in bone health, preventing blood clotting, and may protect you against some cancers.
2. Calcium. There is more calcium per calorie in kale then there is in milk. We all know calcium is good for your bones.
3. Kale can also help detox your body and keep your liver healthy.
4. It is full of fiber.
5. One cup is about 35 calories, and you can get more than a daily serving of Vitamin C, K, and A in that cup.
6. It can help lower cholesterol and heart disease.
7. It is available a lot of the year, even into the fall and early winter.

I feel like I need to make a disclaimer that I am not a medical professional and you will reap the benefits along with a healthy diet (especially #2, 3, and 6). I love how kale chips taste, and this makes me feel even better when I snack on them.

What other super foods do you know of?

Sources:

Comments:

Mary - October 1, 2013 at 11:26 PM

I like kale a lot but get stuck on how to prepare it. Do the kale chips keep well? Or are they best eaten right after they are made?

Christine Kincaid - October 2, 2013 at 6:53 AM

They should be eaten the same day you make them. I heard that you can store them in a air tight container for 2 days, but I found my got a bit limp and chewy.
Monday, September 30, 2013

Shopping with Friends

Yesterday after work, my friend Esther and I went to Earth Fare in Noblesville. It was time for me to stock up on some essentials and some treats. I got Wholesome Sweeteners Evaporated Cane Juice Organic Sugar that I was talking about in a previous post about sugar. It is on page 22. We will see how it bakes in a bit. On the sugar treat, I found some drinking chocolate mix. It is called Silly Cow Farms All Natural Hot Chocolate. It was the most economically friendly and climate friendly of my options.

I also got some multicolored carrots (for the life of me I cannot figure out why carrots are not at the farmers market, can anyone fill me in?). I also got cheese, but I am going to eat it more as a delicacy instead of a condiment. Think of it this way, I may have a tablespoon of cheese every few days. Makes me appreciate it more, since I love cheese.

I also treated myself to some Trader's Point Creamery Raspberry Yogurt. If you have never tried their yogurt, you should. It is amazing, especially on oatmeal. (One of the only ways I can get myself to eat oatmeal.)

On another note, I go to the dietitian tomorrow, so we shall see what happen.

Comments:

Mary - October 1, 2013 at 11:31 PM

Do the carrots all taste the same despite their color?

Esther - October 1, 2013 at 11:38 PM

Don't forget your awesome new flour! :)}
The Dietitian

So, as some of you know, I have been having some health issues with my diet. I am concerned if I am getting enough vitamins (although I take a multivitamin. I am also wondering if I get enough calories and protein each day. So, this morning was my appointment with a dietitian/nutritionist, hoping to find some answers.

Unfortunately, I was not that lucky. At the end of the meeting, the dietitian told me that they had learned a lot for me (that was not reciprocated). I was unable to describe my definition of processed food and how I was avoiding it, which led to some miscommunication. They showed me the myplate.gov site that I discussed in an earlier post on page 68. Oddly enough, it worked this morning even with the government shutdown, even though it is offline now. I was told I was getting enough fruits and vegetables but no dairy (this assessment was based off of one day, even though I had data for many days). To sum it up, the appointment was no help and my questions are still unanswered. If you have any ideas on how to help let me know.

On a happier note, I made hot chocolate today with milk and it was amazing! I think I found the perfect cold weather drink. I also made more hummus today!!

Comments:

Elizabeth - October 1, 2013 at 7:41 PM

Another girl I know had a similar problem of miscommunication with the dietitian. I get the impression that she really wants to help students, though, so it might not hurt to try to schedule a second appointment and explain to her again what it is you need help with.

Tina - October 1, 2013 at 11:40 PM

nourishing herbal infusions. http://nourishingherbalinfusions.com/ I have found them to be far better for myself, my husband, my father in law and my kids than the very high quality vitamins we used to take.
1886 Bread

Last night and today, I made some yeast bread. This is the first time I have made bread on the project and the first time I have used yeast. This is primarily because this type of baked good takes longer to make. I got the recipe from *The Buckeye Cookery*, which we used in the 1886 Liberty Corner site at Conner Prairie.

"In summer take three pints of cold or tepid water, four tablespoons of yeast, one tea-spoon of salt; stir in four enough to make a thick sponge (rather thicker than griddle-cakes). Let stand until morning, then add more flour, mix stiff, and knead ten minutes; place in a pan, let rise until light, knead for another ten minutes; mold into four loaves, and set to rise, but do not let it get too light; bake in a moderate oven one hour. If bread is mixed at six o'clock in the morning, the baking ought to be done by ten o'clock."

I did half a recipe, which gave me two loaves, each costing $1.60. The bread is soooooo good, with a nice crunchy crust!

I also tried my purple carrots. They taste like carrots, just a little less sweet. I was also intrigued that the purple did not go all the way through.

Comments:

*Elizabeth* - October 3, 2013 at 9:20 PM

Holy cow, 4 tablespoons of yeast! I've never used more than one tablespoon per loaf. How much flour did you end up having to use?

*Elizabeth* - October 3, 2013 at 9:22 PM

I might have to try this recipe, I'm looking for a good bread that has very few ingredients.

*Christine Kincaid* - October 3, 2013 at 9:23 PM

I made 1/2 recipe. It made 2 loaves, and it used 8 cups of flour.
Thursday, October 3, 2013

Benefits of Beets!

For dinner tonight I had a boiled beet. I am acquiring a taste for them but still had to make myself finish my plate before I could get more food. I think they were even my first baby food. So why go through that arduous task?

1. They contain a ton of vitamins and minerals
   - Iron
   - Potassium
   - Folate
   - Magnesium
   - Phosphorus
   - Vitamins A, B, and C
   - Beta-carotene
   - Beta-cyanine

2. Good for your liver and can help prevent cancer.
3. Can lower your blood pressure.
4. The betaine in them can help depression.
5. They can be red, white, or yellow. (I have only had the red and yellow varieties.)
6. They have high sugar content for a vegetable, but this sugar is released slowly unlike chocolate.

I think this vegetable is one that is good to learn to love. I am getting there, right now, I eat them boiled and diced. I am unsure how to make them differently, perhaps adding butter or salt. They have plenty of flavor on their own. Do you eat beets?

Sources:
Comments:

Elizabeth - October 3, 2013 at 9:07 PM

I roast them whole, skin still on, in a casserole dish at 425 degrees for 30-40 minutes, depending on the size of the beet. Then I slice them and eat them (skins, too!) with salt, and mayyybe a little bit of olive oil, if I’m feeling daring. The oil/beet flavors really complement each other, I find. I’ve also had them with some thyme sprinkled on the slices.

Elizabeth - October 3, 2013 at 9:07 PM

If you roast them in the skin and eat the skins as well, it helps keep a lot of the nutrients in.

Christine Kincaid - October 3, 2013 at 9:09 PM

I tried roasting them once, and it did not cook as thoroughly as boiling. I boil them with the skin on, roots on, and about 1” on greens on so that they do not bleed out. Then all the nutrients stay in.
Sunday, October 6, 2013

Popcorn is Deceiving

My first visit to the farmer's market (over 2 months ago) I bought popcorn, a 1 lb. bag of kernels. I was anticipating this to become a go to snack early on in my project. I never made any of it until yesterday. You need popcorn when you are going to watch a movie.

I have only made stovetop popcorn when I was little on special occasions with my dad. That consisted of me watching while he made it.

Never fear, I discovered that stove top popcorn is very easy to make. I did not even burn my first batch!! Unfortunately, I have no photographs as proof; you will just have to believe in me. I just heated the oil until a few kernels popped, added in enough kernels to cover the bottom, covered it, and let them pop.

It was so easy that I made popcorn again tonight. One-quarter cup of kernels makes plenty of popcorn for one person.

What is your favorite kind of popcorn?

Comments:

Ellen - October 7, 2013 at 1:26 AM

Honestly, when you said, "let's make popcorn!" I thought that it would be all gross because it wouldn't have any of the good ultra buttery and salty stuff that's so bad for you. But girl, was I wrong! That stuff was so good! And it didn't make the top of my mouth all greasy and yucky like microwave popcorn does. And best of all, I didn't feel like I just ate a ton of lard after. The stuff you made definitely tasted better, and made me feel better about eating it. I'm going start making my own popcorn from now on. :)

Mary - October 9, 2013 at 12:09 AM

We have so much Boy Scout popcorn. We use coconut oil to pop ours. What kind of oil did you use?

Christine Kincaid - October 9, 2013 at 6:55 AM

I used olive oil, it may not be the best but it was what I had on hand.