

Cafeteria Connection

January 2025

National Soup Month!

With January being one of the coldest months of the year, it makes sense for it to be national soup month! Enjoying a cup of soup is a great way to stay warm in winter. There are so many different types of soup. Here are some tips on how to make your soup healthier and more nutritious:



- Watch out for sodium content. Canned soups are high in sodium, so try making your own soup at home from scratch with low-sodium broth. Eating high-sodium foods regularly can make your body hold on to extra water and puts you at risk of having high blood pressure.
- Substitute cream with starchy vegetables. If you love creamy soups more than broth-based soups, you can substitute the cream for a starchy vegetable such as a potato or butternut squash. When blended with the soup, they act as a thickener and give the soup the creamy consistency you like without needing to add any cream!
- Add an array of vegetables. Adding different vegetables to your soup ensures that you get a mixture of vitamins and minerals that your body needs. Be creative and try different vegetable combinations that you haven't tried before!
- Soups are versatile and diverse, with flavors ranging from sweet to savory. Whatever your preference is, there's a soup crafted just for you!

REFERENCES:

- Is Sodium the same as Salt?
- How to make a Healthier Soup!



Perfect Baked Sweet Potato Serves 4

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 Sweet Potatoes, scrubbed clean
- Olive Oil, optional
- 4 tbsp. Butter
- Kosher Salt
- Freshly Ground Black Pepper



INSTRUCTIONS:

Step 1

Preheat oven to 425°. On a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil, prick sweet potatoes all over with a fork. Rub the outsides with a small amount of olive oil if you intend to eat the skins.

Step 2

Bake until tender, 45 to 50 minutes.

Step 3

Let cool, then split the tops open with a knife and top with a pat of butter.

Step 4

Season with salt and pepper before serving.

Enjoy!

January Holidays

National Soup Month	
National Oatmeal Month	
Jan 1	New Year's Day
Jan 1	Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God
Jan 3	Most Holy Name of Jesus
Jan 4	National Spaghetti Day
Jan 5	The Epiphany of the Lord
Jan 6	National Bean Day
Jan 11	National Milk Day
Jan 12	The Baptism of the Lord
Jan 12	National Curried Chicken Day
Jan 14	National Hot Pastrami Day
Jan 15	National Bagel Day
Jan 18	Winnie the Pooh Day
Jan 20	National Cheese Lover's Day
Jan 20	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Jan 21	National Granola Bar Day
Jan 23	National Pie Day
Jan 25	The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle
Jan 29	Lunar New Year
Jan 30	National Croissant Day
Jan 31	National Hot Cocoa Day

Dietitian's Pick

Sweet potatoes are a root vegetable that come in different colors such as white, yellow, orange, red or even purple. Sweet potatoes are high in beta-carotene which is converted to vitamin A in our body. They are also high in potassium which balances the fluids in your body, is important for normal blood pressure, muscle growth and the functioning of the brain and nervous system. Baking sweet potatoes preserves their natural sweetness making them a delicious choice for a nutrient-dense side, snack or main course!



Who needs a gluten-free diet?

We've all heard the term gluten-free before, but what does it actually mean? In honor of gluten-free month, let's explore what gluten actually is and who needs a gluten-free diet.

Gluten is a protein naturally found in some grains such as wheat, barley and rye. You can expect to find gluten in breads and baked goods, but it is also added to a lot of other food products to change the texture and taste of food. For example, gluten could be used in sauces, soups and even in some seasonings.

For the majority of the people, this isn't a problem. But for those who suffer from celiac disease or gluten-sensitivity, they must follow a gluten-free diet. The good news is, there are a lot of naturally gluten-free foods like most fruits and vegetables. Some examples you will find on our school lunch line are baby carrots, tomatoes and fresh fruits.

When people with celiac disease or gluten-sensitivity eat foods that contain gluten, they get uncomfortable symptoms such as gas, bloating and diarrhea. The only known way to avoid that is by eating foods that don't contain gluten, and that's why those with celiac or gluten-sensitivity diseases need a gluten-free diet!

REFERENCES:

- Does My Child need a Gluten-Free Diet?