



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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## Exotic ingredients, creative combos liven up winter menus

*By Kay Blakley,  
DeCA home economist*

**FORT LEE, Va.** – Tired of the same old soups, stews and casseroles that typically anchor winter menus? Kick it up a notch or two with unusual ingredients and creative combinations that are sure to keep all those at your dinner table begging for more. This week’s recipe collection features out-of-the-ordinary ingredients you might have never tasted before. Some might seem a little pricey at first glance, but they’re all affordable if you get them at the commissary.

Fuyu persimmon, for example, is gaining in popularity, but if you’ve never tasted one, do it now. It plays a leading role in the Persimmon and Pomegranate Salad with Pecan-Coated Goat Cheese recipe. That name alone just oozes “healthy,” doesn’t it? Be sure to choose a Fuyu persimmon for this dish – it will look like an orange tomato. Fuyu persimmons have an apricot-like, sweet taste even when they’re still firm and crisp, while other varieties are sure to cause a decided pucker unless they are totally ripe and soft.

The goat cheese this recipe calls for can be found, usually vacuum packed, in a log shape. Its dense, smooth texture and tangy taste pair perfectly with toasted pecans, which you roll the cheese in before warming shortly in the oven. The dressing is based on extra virgin olive oil, which your commissary is sure to stock, and champagne vinegar, which they might not have. Substitute white wine vinegar instead, if needed.

The fontina cheese in the Fontina and Basil Pizza recipe may be hard to find. Be sure to check your commissary's deli selection, if you don't find it on the refrigerated aisle with other cheeses. It is well regarded for its mild but interesting flavor, and it melts like a charm, making it a good ingredient for pizza. Substitute mozzarella or even provolone, if needed.

You'll also need ricotta cheese, but be sure to put any that's left over to good use right away, as it will only keep for a day or two after opening. Did you know you can eat it straight from the tub with fresh fruit? It's sweeter and smoother than cottage cheese and is higher in calcium, as well.

Other exotic ingredients you'll need for these recipes include fish sauce and oyster sauce, which we have plenty of in the Asian section of your commissary's international aisle, as well as Asian chili sauce, which we also carry. Look for a red sauce in a see-through bottle with a white rooster on the label, and the word Sriracha. It's a key ingredient in the Chicken-Stuffed Spuds recipe. Sriracha has been described by some as the Asian ketchup, so it will come in handy anywhere you want to add a spicy zing.

Come to Kay's Kitchen at <http://www.commissaries.com> and check out our featured recipes for Persimmon and Pomegranate Salad with Pecan-Coated Goat Cheese, Fontina and Basil Pizza, Chicken-Stuffed Spuds, Scallops in Sage Cream and Thai-Style Chicken with Basil.

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**About DeCA:** *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,300 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*