



NEWS RELEASE

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Skinny dishes for new year, new you

*By Kay Blakley,
DeCA home economist*

FORT LEE, Va. – Have you hopped on the “lose weight” band wagon yet this year? Lots of folks do lots of crazy things to follow a diet that promises quick loss of an unbelievable number of pounds. If you’ve ever survived for three to four days on undressed salad with saltine crackers and water in order to squeeze into a favorite outfit for a special occasion, you know that sometimes miracles do happen. But, boy at what a cost!

Such efforts just aren’t sustainable. Once the goal is met, you’re so starved for real food you end up gaining back all that was lost plus a few pounds more. Slow and steady is a much better way to go. What you need are satisfying meals that are low in calories, but high in nutrients and especially high in flavor.

All the recipes in this week’s collection were chosen on that basis. Ranch Ham and Cheese (306 calories per serving) is comfort food in skinny format, with Jiffy Pork Skillet (263 calories per serving) coming in a close second. Squash Apple Soup and Special Occasion Salad are less than 100 calories each. And you’ll swear diet time is over when you taste the Meyer Lemon Pudding Cake recipe — just 170 calories per serving, but very rich and satisfying.

To make sure all the weight lost comes from the spare tire around your middle rather than from your wallet, shop the commissary for all the ingredients. To check out the recipes mentioned and listed here, along with the rest of our collection of low-calorie recipes, come to Kay’s Kitchen at <http://www.commissaries.com>.

Squash Apple Soup (Serves 7)

This soup is rich and creamy without the addition of cream, which keeps the calorie count nice and low.

Ingredients:

3 ribs celery, chopped
1 large apple, peeled and chopped
1 small onion, chopped
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon butter
1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 teaspoon poultry seasoning
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 (14.5-ounce) cans chicken broth, divided
2 (12-ounce) packages frozen cooked winter squash, thawed
Salad croutons and grated Parmesan cheese, optional

Directions:

1. In a large saucepan, sauté the celery, apple and onion in oil and butter until tender.
2. Stir in garlic, poultry seasoning, salt and pepper; cook 1 minute longer.
3. In a blender, combine 1 cup broth and the vegetable mixture; cover and process until smooth.
4. Return to saucepan; add squash and remaining broth. Heat through.
5. Serve with croutons and cheese, if desired.

Nutrient analysis: Per 1 cup serving (without croutons and cheese) – 97 calories; 4 g. total fat, (1 g. saturated fat); 7 mg. cholesterol; 620 mg. sodium; 15 g. carbohydrate; 4 g. fiber; 2 g. protein.

Special Occasion Salad

(Serves 16 as a 3/4-cup side-salad or 6 to 8 as a main dish)

Ingredients:

1 (6-ounce) package fresh baby spinach
1 (5-ounce) package fresh arugula
1/2 cup dried cherries
1/3 cup sliced almonds, toasted
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 cup crumbled goat cheese

Directions:

1. In a small bowl, combine the spinach, arugula, cherries and almonds.
2. Combine the oil, vinegar, salt and pepper; drizzle over salad and toss to coat well.
3. Sprinkle with goat cheese and serve immediately.

Nutrient analysis: Per 3/4 cup serving – 83 calories; 7 g. total fat (2 g. saturated fat); 9 mg. cholesterol; 121 mg. sodium; 5 g. carbohydrate; 1 g. fiber; 2 g. protein.

Ranch Ham and Cheese Pasta (Serves 10)

If you're a comfort food craver, but still want to watch your weight, try this updated, lighter version of Mac and Cheese. A one-cup serving weighs in at a very respectable 306 calories. Fill the rest of the plate with plain, steamed vegetables or salad and you'll be in great shape.

Ingredients:

- 1 (16-ounce) package penne pasta
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 cup fat-free milk
- 2 teaspoons dried parsley flakes
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 teaspoon salt-free lemon-pepper seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon dried minced onion
- 1/2 teaspoon dill weed
- 1/4 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 cup (8-ounces) reduced-fat sour cream
- 2 cups cubed fully cooked lean ham
- 1 1/2 cups (6-ounces) shredded reduced-fat Mexican cheese blend
- 1/4 cup shredded Parmesan cheese

Directions:

1. Cook pasta according to package directions; drain.
2. Meanwhile, in a Dutch oven, melt butter; whisk in flour until smooth.
3. Gradually add milk and seasonings. Bring mixture to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened.
4. Reduce heat; fold in sour cream until blended.
5. Add ham and cooked pasta; cook until heated through.
6. Remove from heat; stir in Mexican cheese blend until melted.
7. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, and serve.

Nutrient analysis: Per 1-cup serving: 306 calories; 9 g. total fat (5 g. saturated fat); 27 mg. cholesterol; 612 mg. sodium; 38 g. carbohydrate; 2 g. fiber; 20 g. protein.

Jiffy Ground Pork Skillet (Serves 6)

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups uncooked penne pasta
- 1 pound ground pork
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can stewed tomatoes
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce

- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 medium zucchini, cut into 1/4-inch slices

Directions:

1. Cook pasta according to package directions.
2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, cook pork and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain.
3. Add the tomatoes, tomato sauce and Italian seasoning. Bring mixture to a boil.
4. Reduce heat; cover and cook for 5 minutes to allow flavors to blend.
5. Drain pasta; add to skillet. Stir in zucchini. Cover and cook for 3 to 5 minutes or until zucchini is crisp-tender.

Nutrient analysis: Per 1 1/4 cup serving – 263 calories; 12 g. total fat (4 g. saturated fat); 50 mg. cholesterol; 339 mg. sodium; 22 g. carbohydrate; 2 g. fiber; 18 g. protein.

Meyer Lemon Pudding Cakes (Makes 8 cakes)

As its name implies, this recipe highlights the sweet-tart taste of Meyer lemons. Many commissaries do carry them, but if yours doesn't, regular lemons can be used instead. This dessert is light and lovely and weighs in at only 170 calories per serving. It's a clear chemistry lesson, too. Since the acid in the juice can't bind with the egg whites, the dish divides into a citrusy cake and a creamy custard. Bottom line is – it's very, very good!

Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup sugar (plus additional for ramekins)
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 Meyer or regular lemons (up to 3)
- 3 large eggs, separated
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted and cooled
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 pint raspberries, for garnish
- Fresh mint sprigs, for garnish

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease eight 4- to 5-ounce ramekins or oven-proof custard cups; sprinkle with sugar to coat bottoms and sides. Shake out any excess.
2. On a sheet of waxed paper, using a fork, combine flour, 1/3 cup sugar and salt.
3. Grate 1 1/2 tablespoons peel from lemons and squeeze 1/2 cup juice.
4. In a large bowl, whisk together the egg yolks, lemon peel and lemon juice.
5. Whisk in melted and cooled butter and milk. Gradually whisk in flour mixture.
6. In another large bowl, with electric mixer on medium speed, beat egg whites until foamy. Gradually beat in remaining 1/4 cup sugar until soft peaks form when beaters are lifted, about 2 to 3 minutes.
7. Add one-third of beaten egg whites to yolk mixture; stir gently with a rubber spatula until incorporated. Gently fold in remaining whites until just incorporated. Ladle evenly into prepared custard cups or ramekins.

8. Arrange ramekins 1 inch apart in large (17×13-inch) baking pan. Fill pan with enough hot water to come halfway up sides of ramekins. Carefully transfer pan to oven and bake 30 to 35 minutes or until cakes are golden brown and tops rise 1/2 inch above rims.
9. Cool cakes in pan on wire rack 5 minutes. Using a sturdy metal spatula, carefully remove ramekins from pan with water and transfer to wire rack to cook 15 minutes longer.
10. Run thin knife around edge of ramekin. Place small serving plate on top of ramekin and invert plate and ramekin together; remove ramekin. Repeat with remaining ramekins.
11. Garnish each cake with raspberries and mint sprig. Serve warm.

Nutrient analysis: Per 1 cake serving – 170 calories; 6 g. total fat (3 g. saturated fat); 92 mg. cholesterol; 145 mg. sodium; 25 g. carbohydrate; 3 g. fiber; 4 g. protein.

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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 more than \$4,400 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.*