



Buzz, Body & Bites

A newsletter for actively aging adults
Virginia Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences
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Fuel for the Future

National Nutrition Month, sponsored by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, is in March and brings together people from across the country to focus attention on eating for health. This year's theme, "Fuel for the Future," challenges everyone to think on the importance of fueling our bodies through good food choices, and making those choices with the environment in mind. If you have never thought about how your personal dietary choices impact the local, national, and global environment, this is the month to do so.

Sustainability is a major theme of the campaign. Agricultural sustainability balances economic, social and environmental considerations. The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines sustainable agriculture as an integrated system of plant and animal production that satisfies human food needs, enhances environmental resources, uses nonrenewable resources efficiently, sustains farm economic viability, and enhances the quality of life of farmers and society as a whole.

Here are some quick facts about U.S. sustainable agriculture efforts:

- The Clean Water Act in the U.S. dates back to 1948 and has the objective to ensure clean, abundant water supplies.
- Since the 1950s, all Alaska seafood is harvested on a sustainable yield principle as mandated by the State of Alaska Constitution.
- The U.S. Dairy sector has reduced dairy-related greenhouse gas emissions by 63% over the past 60 years.
- From 1980 to 2015, U.S. rice and corn producers improved resource "efficiency," with decreases in land use; soil erosion; irrigation water use; energy use; and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Certified organic cropland acres in the U.S. increased by 79 percent (to 3.6 million acres) between 2011 and 2022.
- The organic marketplace has more than doubled in size, growing from \$24.9 billion in sales in 2010 to \$55.1 billion across all retail channels worldwide in 2019.

Bonus fact: 99% of farms in the U.S. are owned and operated by families.

US food producers are doing their part to ensure the population has access to a sustainable food supply. As consumers, we have a part to play, as well. Take stock of your food-related choices and behaviors. How are those impacting your personal health, as well as the natural environment?

Tips for an Environmentally Friendly Diet

- Buy locally produced foods
Foods produced locally use fewer resources in transportation. You support your local food producer when you purchase their products.
- Shop for fruits and vegetables in season

Choose fruits and vegetables that are in season locally. This reduces the need for transportation across long distances, or processing and packaging.

- Purchase foods in bulk when available
- Bring your own reusable bags to pack and carry your groceries home
- Frequent your farmer's market
Farmer's markets are a great place to find local produce, and get to know your local food producer. Many farmer's markets now accept EBT cards.
- Produce your own food by gardening.
- Drink filtered water from your tap rather than purchasing bottled water.

African Style Pumpkin and Peanut Stew

This hearty flavorful stew is made with fragrant spices, pumpkin seeds and peanuts, which are staple foods of West Africa.

Source: eatright.org

Ingredients (Makes 12 servings):

- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, cut in ¼-inch dice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons minced peeled ginger root, or 2 teaspoons powdered ginger
- 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 3 cups low sodium vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 (15-ounce) can solid pack pumpkin
- 2 medium sweet apples (e.g. Gala, Honey Crisp), cut in ½-inch dice
- 2 medium carrots, cut in ¼-inch rounds
- 2 medium red potatoes, cut in ½-inch dice
- 1 large stalk celery, cut in ½-inch dice
- ¾ cup chunky reduced-fat or regular peanut butter
- ¼ to ½ teaspoon hot sauce
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Crushed peanuts or pumpkin seeds, for garnish
- Chopped herbs (cilantro, parsley, or chives), for garnish

Instructions:

1. Heat the oil in a large non-stick saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic; cook and stir for about 5 minutes, until the onion is softened. Remove from the heat. Stir in the ginger root, brown sugar, cinnamon and curry powder, allowing them to blend for a fragrant aroma.
2. Add the broth and pumpkin; blend well. Mix in the apples, carrots, potatoes and celery. Reduce the heat to simmer; cover and simmer for about 25 minutes, until the vegetables and apples are tender.
3. Remove from the heat; cool slightly. Stir in the peanut butter. Season with hot sauce, salt and pepper.
4. To serve, garnish with crushed peanuts or pumpkin seeds and herbs. Serve over rice or quinoa.

Achieving the Physical Activity Guidelines: Move Your Way

Physical activity can make your daily life better! When you're active and strong, it is easier to do everyday tasks, keep up with your grandkids, and stay independent as you age.

Moving your way means doing activity you enjoy. Being active doesn't have to feel like exercise.

Walking your pet, biking, playing pickleball, doing housework, or playing with grandchildren, are all ways of being physically active.

Choose the activity that fits your lifestyle. Then get a little more active each day to move your way!

How much activity do you need?

150 minutes a week of activity that gets your heart beating faster.

2 days a week of activity that makes your muscles work harder.

Resources

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:

www.eatright.org/national-nutrition-month-2023

U.S. Sustainability:

www.thesustainabilityalliance.us

USDA:

www.usda.gov/oce/sustainability

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Community Services:

www.vdacs.virginia.gov/vagrown

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