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June is Dairy Month. Now that kids will be home for the summer, the Dairy Council of Nebraska recommends you put them to work in the kitchen. They advise kids have a lot of choices, so it's important they learn nutritious food can be cool and convenient, too.

Here's a recipe from the Dairy Council. Served with fresh fruit, you will get all five Food Groups. For more nutrition and recipe ideas from the Dairy Council of Nebraska, visit their Web site at [www.drinkmilk.org](http://www.drinkmilk.org).

### Cheese Crust Taco Pizza

Prep time: 30 minutes

- 1 (10-oz) can refrigerated pizza crust
- 1 (8-oz) package string cheese
- 1 bag (about 2 cups) of frozen red, green, yellow peppers & onion stir fry mix, chopped
- 1 (15-oz) can Mexican flavored chili beans, undrained
- 1 (14.5-oz) can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 (6-oz) can tomato paste
- 1/2 cup frozen corn
- 2 cups shredded Mexican blend cheese

1. Heat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Grease 13 x 9 inch pan.
3. Unroll dough and place in greased pan.
4. Starting at center, press out dough with hands over the bottom and 1-1/2 inches up sides.
5. Place string cheese, end to end, around edge of dough, cutting to fit, if necessary. Keep any remaining cheese.
6. Fold edge of dough over cheese; pinch to seal under cheese.
7. Bake at 425 degrees for 10 minutes.
8. Meanwhile, heat a non-stick large skillet over medium heat until hot.
9. Add onions and bell pepper.
10. Cook 5 to 7 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally.
11. Add beans, tomatoes, tomato paste and corn; mix well.
12. Bring to a boil.
13. Reduce heat to medium; cook 6 to 8 minutes or until slightly thickened.
14. Reduce oven temperature to 375 degrees.
15. Spoon bean mixture evenly into partially baked crust.
16. Sprinkle with Mexican blend cheese & remaining string cheese.
17. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes or until crust is deep golden brown and cheese is melted.
18. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

### Web Resources of the Month



Check out our NEW and IMPROVED "Food Safety for Home Cooking" section on our Food Web site. Find information for everything from storing to preparing foods safely at [lancaster.unl.edu/food/foodsafety.htm](http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/foodsafety.htm).

Protect yourself from the danger of possible Salmonella infection by using a homemade ice cream recipe made with a cooked egg base, commercial PASTEURIZED egg substitutes or without eggs. Find three possible recipes for you to use at [lancaster.unl.edu/food/icecream.htm](http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/icecream.htm).

If you weren't able to attend the recent Extension "Healthy Cooking with Spices & Herbs" class at BryanLGH, view some of the slides and download some of the handout materials at [lancaster.unl.edu/food/spiceherb-slideshow.htm](http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/spiceherb-slideshow.htm).

To keep up-to-date on new tips, resources and recipe ideas to help you prepare healthy foods in a hurry, sign up for our monthly Cook It Quick e-mail messages at [lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciquipdat.htm](http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciquipdat.htm)



## Healthy Cooking with Fresh Herbs

Alice Henneman and Sarah Browning  
Extension Educators

Whether you plant them or pick them up at the grocery store or farmers' market, adding fresh herbs is a quick way to transform ordinary meals into extraordinary meals.

Besides helping flavor foods when cutting back on salt, fat and sugar, herbs may offer additional benefits of their own. Researchers are finding many culinary herbs (both fresh and dried) have antioxidants that may help protect against such diseases as cancer and heart disease.

Take some thyme (pun intended!) to cook with fresh herbs. Here are some tips to help you enjoy the flavor and health benefits of fresh herbs in your cooking.

### When Substituting Fresh Herbs for Dried Herbs

A general guideline when using fresh herbs in a recipe is to use three times as much as you would use of a dried herb. When substituting, you'll often be more successful substituting fresh herbs for dried herbs, rather than the other way around. For example, think potato salad with fresh vs. dried parsley!

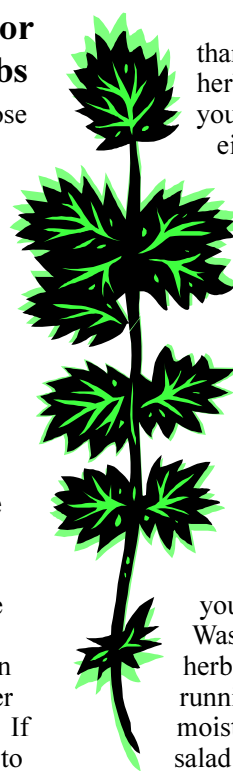
### When to Pick or Purchase Herbs

Purchase herbs close to the time you plan to use them. When growing herbs in your own garden the ideal time for picking is in the morning after the dew has dried but before the sun gets hot. This helps ensure the best flavor and storage quality.

### How to Store Herbs

Fresh herbs can be stored in an open or a perforated plastic bag in your refrigerator crisper drawer for a few days. If you don't have access to commercial perforated bags, use a sharp object to make several small holes in a regular plastic bag. To extend the freshness of herbs, snip off the ends of the stems on the diagonal. Place herbs in a tall glass with an inch of water, like cut flowers. Cover them loosely with a plastic bag to allow for air circulation. Place them in the refrigerator and change the water daily. Herbs may last a week or more stored this way.

Note: The flavor of herbs may diminish the longer they're stored.



If you have more herbs than you can eat, enjoy herbal bouquets throughout your house. You can use either single herbs, combinations of herbs or you can use the herbs as greenery mixed in with other flowers. To help preserve the aroma and color of your herb bouquets, place them out of direct sunlight.

### How to Wash Herbs

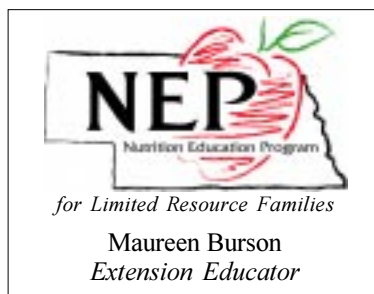
Wash herbs when you are ready to use them. Wash smaller amounts of herbs thoroughly under running water. Shake off moisture or spin dry in a salad spinner. Pat off any remaining moisture with clean paper towels.

If you're washing a larger amount of herbs at one time, treat them as you would salad greens. Place in a clean sink or deep bowl filled with cold water and swish around. Lift from the water and transfer to another bowl so dirt and grit remain in the water. Pour out the water and repeat the washing process in clean water until dirt and grit are gone and the water is clear.

Note: If you plan to harvest

see FRESH HERBS on page 12

## Who Wants to be a Milk-i-naire?



### Q. Which snack food costs the least?

- a. Soda (12 ounces)
- b. Bag of chips (1.5 ounces)
- c. String cheese (1.5 ounces)
- d. Bag of fruit snacks (2.5 ounces)

What do you think? This is just one of the questions which students explore through the Nutrition Education Program (NEP). The "Who Wants to be a Milk-i-naire" interactive game in which participants are in "the hot seat" is one of many ways in which NEP professionals share how vital it is to have 2-4 servings of dairy products each day. The program also includes the importance of weight bearing activities in maintaining strong bones.

People of all ages have tried new ways to eat and drink more dairy products as a result of NEP programs. Two snacks which have received rave reviews from students and adults are peanut butter bites and yogurt parfaits.



Fifth graders from West Lincoln Elementary School create Yogurt Parfaits through NEP/4-H School Enrichment Program

Both are rich in calcium. The yogurt parfait recipe was featured in the January 2003 Nebline (archived online at [lancaster.unl.edu/nebline/2003/jan03/page06.pdf](http://lancaster.unl.edu/nebline/2003/jan03/page06.pdf)). "Peanut Butter Bites" are quick, nutritious, economical and tasty. Take a few minutes to prepare these with your children or grandchildren this summer. They will take pride in using their math and reading skills while making a special treat for family and friends.

(Answer: c — String Cheese)

### Peanut Butter Bite(s)

- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon dry milk
- 1/2 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon oatmeal
- 1 tablespoon raisins

Mix peanut butter, dry milk and honey. Add oatmeal, a bit at a time. Stir in raisins. Make into a ball. Wrap in wax paper and keep refrigerated.

For family size (or 16 servings):  
2 cups peanut butter  
2 cups dry milk  
2 cups oatmeal  
2 cups raisins  
1/2 cup honey

Play "Who Wants to Be a Milk-i-naire" with your family, 4-H club or friends. Materials can be found online at [lancaster.unl.edu/nep/resources.htm](http://lancaster.unl.edu/nep/resources.htm) or call 441-7180 for more information.