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Here's a quick treat to make for children coming home from school and adults, too!

For quick and healthy snacks in reasonable portion sizes, try homemade popsicles. Just fill popsicle molds with your favorite concoction. To unmold, briefly hold base of mold under running water to loosen the edges. Enjoy!

Here are some easy ideas for fillers for popsicle molds:

- 100% fruit juice (orange, apple, pineapple, grape).
- Instant pudding, any flavor. Make with skim milk according to package directions.
- Your favorite smoothie recipe. The popsicles in this picture are made with the smoothie recipe below.



Peach-Raspberry Smoothie

(Serves 1)

Three common ingredients, unlimited variations and full of healthy fruits and calcium-rich yogurt! This smoothie recipe, courtesy of the National Cancer Institute's Eat 5 to 9 A Day program, may become your favorite, too! For more recipe ideas featuring fruits and vegetables, visit <http://www.5aday.gov>

1 cup unsweetened, frozen raspberries
3/4 cup 100% orange juice (if you use frozen juice, don't forget to dilute first)
1/2 cup fruit-flavored, low-fat yogurt (try peach)

DIRECTIONS

Blend all ingredients well in blender and drink!

VARIATIONS

- Frozen strawberries, blueberries, mixed berries, mango or peaches
- Pineapple juice, orange-tangerine juice and other 100% juice blends
- Different yogurt flavors

Chill for Food Safety

“Keep it cool” — check your refrigerator temperature to keep bacteria away — that's the message U.S. Department of Agriculture is broadcasting as part of its national campaign to spread the word about ways to reduce cases of foodborne illness.

The refrigerator temperature should be 40 F. or below. Recent studies show the risk of listeriosis, caused by the bacteria *Listeria monocytogenes*, could be reduced by two-thirds if foods are chilled to a safe temperature.

Use an Appliance or Refrigerator Thermometer to Check the Temperature

Most people assume the internal refrigerator temperature control dial is good enough. Only 30 percent of consumers have heard they should use a separate tool — a refrigerator thermometer — to check the temperature and only 20 percent of consum-

ers say they actually use one, according to a recent national study.

Relying on the “built-in” refrigerator temperature control dial is not effective. Instead, use a separate refrigerator thermometer to check the internal refrigerator temperature and help keep food safer. If the refrigerator thermometer shows a temperature too high — above 40 F. then adjust the refrigerator's control dial. You can buy a refrigerator thermometer at many



grocery, hardware or kitchen specialty stores. Using a separate appliance or refrigerator thermometer is especially critical during power outages. Checking the temperature is the only way to deter-

mine if the refrigerator stayed cold enough to keep foods safe to eat or if they need to be discarded.

BAC Down!

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is working with The Partnership for Food Safety Education, a non-profit organization that brings together government agencies, industry associations, consumer and public health groups to promote the BAC Down! Campaign. The BAC Down! Campaign encourages consumers to slow the growth of harmful bacteria in food by keeping refrigerator and cooler temperatures in the safe range — 40 F. or below. Visit <http://www.fightbac.org> for more tips.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture May 2005 News Release http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_051905_01/index.asp

The Cool Rules

Use This Tool To Keep It Cool. Use a refrigerator thermometer to be sure the temperature is consistently 40 F or below.

The Chill Factor. Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods and leftovers within two hours of purchase or use. Always marinate foods in the refrigerator.

The Thaw Law. Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator. For a quick thaw, submerge in cold water in an

airtight package or thaw in the microwave if you will be cooking it immediately.

Divide and Conquer. Separate large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.

Avoid the Pack Attack. Do not over-stuff the refrigerator. Cold air must circulate to keep food safe.

Rotate Before It's Too Late. Use or discard chilled foods as recommended in the USDA Cold Storage Chart

found at <http://www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/f01chart.html>

Don't Go Too Low.

As you approach 32 F, ice crystals can begin to form and lower the quality of some foods such as raw fruits, vegetables and eggs. A refrigerator thermometer will help you determine whether you are too close to this zone.

Source: Partnership for Food Safety Education at http://www.fightbac.org/chill_facts.cfm

The Underappreciated “Mad Apple”



for Limited Resource Families
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Do you know mad apple is another name for eggplant? Eggplant is known by many names. It's known as mad apple by Europeans; eggfruit by Australians; garden fruit by Africans; aubergine by English; and betenjan by Middle Easterners. While eggplant is considered the number one vegetable in the Middle East and Africa, it is also one of Japan's five most important vegetables. Unfortunately, it is not popular in the United States, particularly in Nebraska. Eggplants in the United States are pear shaped, shiny, deep purple colors and weigh about one pound. The flesh is creamy white and turns

brown when cooked.

Eggplant is considered a vegetable, but it is, in fact, a fruit containing many valuable nutrients. USDA nutrition facts show one-cup of boiled, drained eggplant contains 35 calories and 2.5 grams of fiber. It also can be counted on to deliver plenty of vitamins and minerals such as vitamins A, C, K, and folate, and the minerals potassium, phosphorus, magnesium, calcium and iron.

Eggplant has many medical benefits, according to the National Cancer Institute. It contains phenolics, which potentially aid in preventing heart disease and Alzheimer's. It might also slow down the aging process. Researchers also found consuming blue and purple fruits and vegetables such as eggplant may be beneficial in reducing the risk of cancer. These foods potentially prevent the oxidation of cells that lead to cancer growth.

Unlike many vegetables

and fruits, eggplant is not harmed by cooking for long periods of time, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Therefore it can be cooked in various ways with or without skin, grilled, roasted, stuffed, marinated, boiled, baked, sautéed, braised, steamed, fried, in a casserole, in stews, in soups or on brochettes. Eggplants can be served cold or hot, as a main dish or as an appetizer, pickle or dessert. To get a delicious eggplant dish and to enhance its flavor, combine with tomato, onion, garlic, lemon juice and herbs.

Eggplants are available all year in stores and are in season in Nebraska in July, August, September and October.



Eggplant Casserole

1 large eggplant, sliced into one-inch rounds
1 pound ground lean beef
1 large onion, sliced into one-inch rounds
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 ripe tomato sliced into one-inch rounds
1 teaspoon salt
1 green bell pepper, sliced into one-inch rounds
1 8-ounce can tomato sauce or 2 tablespoons of tomato paste

DIRECTIONS

Roast eggplant slices or fry until golden brown (see roasting method below). Brown meat along with onions; season with salt. In a medium-sized glass baking dish, place half of tomato slices in one layer, then half of eggplant slices in another layer. Top with browned meat mixture and a final layer of eggplant. Pour tomato sauce over casserole. Arrange remaining slices of tomato and place bell pepper slices on top. Bake in a 350 F oven approximately 20 minutes or until bubbling and bell peppers on top are softened. Serve with rice.

ROASTING EGGPLANT

Spray cookie sheet with nonstick cooking spray. Place eggplant slices in a single layer on a cooking sheet, broil 5 to 6 minutes until golden brown, turn on other side, spray with nonstick cooking spray again and broil another 5 minutes.