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Add "Star" Appeal to Fruit Dishes

Sprinkle your fruit dishes with "stars" to add "star" appeal.

Use a star-shaped ice cube tray to form the stars. The stars in this picture were made by using a food processor to mix two parts fruit (fresh or frozen) to one part flavored yogurt. Don't



worry about overestimating the amount you'll need to make — any remaining mixture makes a good snack!

If necessary, stop the food processor occasionally to push the mixture down the sides.

Fill ice cube tray with mixture. Freeze until firm, about 3 hours. Stars maintain their shape best if left in the ice cube tray until served. Cover with plastic wrap and freezer foil after they are frozen, if you plan to use them a day or so later.

If stars don't pop out of the ice cube trays right away, let them sit a minute or so to warm slightly and loosen.

Experiment with different fruit and yogurt combinations. Pineapple and vanilla-flavored yogurt would make attractive white stars to toss in with a mixture of red and blue berries for the Fourth of July. Several shapes in addition to stars are available in local stores and Internet sites selling kitchen wares.



Photos by Alice Henneman

Fresh Food, Fun, Friendly People: Farmers' Markets!

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Farmers' Markets offer a variety of fresh, locally-produced fruits, vegetables, bakery and meat products in a festive atmosphere. Visit our local Farmers' Markets and check out the many locally produced foods, such as those shown here. Keep the farm-fresh flavor at its peak with the following tips:

Go directly home from the market! Avoid side trips. Foods will decline in quality and perishable foods like meats and eggs can pose food safety problems if left sitting in your car.

Different fruits and vegetables require different temperature and humidity levels for proper storage. Some foods that taste best stored at room temperature include: melons, onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes and winter squashes. Store them in a clean, dry, well-ventilated place,

away from direct sunlight and away from areas where meat is prepared.

Some produce can be ripened on the counter and then stored in the refrigerator. Examples include: nectarines, peaches, pears and plums. Avoid placing produce in a sealed plastic bag on your countertop. This slows ripening and may increase off-odors and decay from the accumulation of carbon dioxide and depletion of oxygen inside the bag.

Refrigerate fruits and vegetables in perforated plastic bags to help maintain moisture yet provide air flow. Unperforated plastic bags can lead to the growth of mold or bacteria. If you don't have access to commercial, food-grade, perforated bags, use a sharp object to make several small holes in a food-grade plastic bag (about 20 holes per medium-size bag).

Wash produce thoroughly. Wash produce before you use it, NOT when you bring it home! Fresh produce has a natural protective coating that helps

keep in moisture and freshness. Washing produce before storage causes it to spoil faster. Remove and discard outer leaves. Rinse under clean, running water just before preparing or eating. Don't use soap or detergent as it can get into produce and make you sick. Rub briskly — scrubbing with a clean brush or hands — to clean the surface. Dry with a clean cloth or paper towel

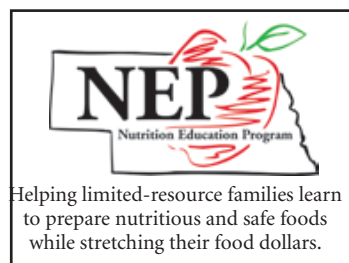
Rinse produce even when the peel is removed — such as for melons.

Bacteria on the outside of produce can be transferred to the inside when produce is cut or peeled. Once you have cut through the protective skin of fruits and vegetables, bacteria can enter. Refrigerate cut or peeled fruits and vegetables within TWO hours!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

"The Garden Grocery: Food Safety & Selection at the Farmers' Market" PowerPoint presentation, online slide show and handout is available at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/farmar.shtml>

\$tretch Your Food Dollar by Using Dry Milk



Helping limited-resource families learn to prepare nutritious and safe foods while stretching their food dollars.

Mary Abbott
UNL Extension Associate

Instant nonfat dry (powdered) milk is a nutritious, convenient and economical alternative to fresh milk. Powdered milk contains calcium, protein, vitamin A and vitamin D. It is

also low in fat and cholesterol. Using powdered milk costs 20 percent less than fresh milk. This is a savings of over 70 cents a gallon.

Dry powdered milk is easily reconstituted by mixing 1/3 cup with 1 cup water to equal 1 cup. The milk can be used for drinking or baking.

The taste of reconstituted milk improves when the mixture is chilled well. Add milk powder to increase nutrition in cream soups, cereal, beverages and yogurt.

The following recipe is great for the summer while providing calcium, protein and vitamins.

Frozen Fudge Bars

(Makes 8 bars, 4 ounces each)

- 4 cups hot water
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons cocoa
- 2 cups instant nonfat dry milk powder
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Put water in medium sauce pan and bring to a boil. While water is heating, measure sugar, flour, cornstarch, salt, cocoa and milk powder in a medium bowl and mix well. When water boils, add the milk/cocoa mixture and beat well. Adjust heat so mixture simmers and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and add vanilla. Pour into molds or small cups and insert a handle or spoon. Freeze.

FOOD "BYTES"

<http://lancaster.unl.edu/food>

New or updated resources added to the FOOD Web pages include:

- ❖ **Basic Foods for Fridge, Freezer and Cupboard (1 page grocery list)** <http://lancaster.unl.edu/FOOD/BasicFoodsforCupboard.pdf>
- ❖ **Healthy Cooking with Fresh Herbs** <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/cookingfreshherbs-color.pdf>
- ❖ **Food Safety Myths (slide show)** <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/myths-ss/index.htm>
- ❖ **Name that Food! (slide show)** http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/name_that_food/index.htm
- ❖ **Temperature Conversion: Fahrenheit and Celsius** <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-celsius.shtml>
- ❖ **Ingredient Substitutions** <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciqsubs.shtml>
- ❖ **Now, You're Cooking with Brown Rice!** <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-brown-rice.shtml>
- ❖ **Grill It Safely** <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/grill-flyer.pdf>
- ❖ **Cracking the Date on Egg Cartons** <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-egg-dates.shtml>
- ❖ **Put in the Big Rocks First** <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciqc.shtml>