

Daily Union Article

Saturday, July 21, 2018

Title: "Dog Days of Summer" Snacks

If you are like me, you are likely struggling to continue marching through the month of July amidst the dry ground, humid air, and above average high temperatures. It's no wonder as we are in the middle of the "Dog Days of Summer."

As a child, the term "Dog Days of Summer" meant that there would be a sidewalk sale in downtown Marysville, the snow cone vendor would have a mile long line, and the swimming pool would be packed more than usual.

In reality, the term "Dog Days" is based on astronomy. In fact, according to the Old Farmer's Almanac, the timing of this 40 day stretch of time during the summer begins on July 3 and concludes August 11, and coincides with the heliacal rising of the Dog Star, Sirius. Granted, we have hot weather in abundance after August 11, but the history of this phrase is tied back to the ancient Egyptians – long before our contemporary meteorologists. The people of that era recognized that the rising of the Dog Star, Sirius marked the soon to arrive season of flooding from the Nile River. Thus, the star was used as their "watchdog" for this annual weather-related event.

As we approach the midway point of the Dog Days of Summer, you might be finding yourself struggling to find new fresh, cool, and easy ideas for summer meals and snacks.

Here are some recipe ideas that might offer a change-up in your existing snack options:

Mango Salsa*

Serves 6, 1/2 cup per serving

Ingredients

2 large ripe mangoes
1 small cucumber
2 medium green onions
1 medium jalapeño pepper
2 medium limes
½ teaspoon salt
Pinch of cayenne pepper

Optional Ingredients:

1 medium bell pepper
¼ cup fresh cilantro

1. Rinse mangoes, cucumber, green onions, jalapeño pepper, limes, and bell pepper, if using.
2. Peel mangoes. Cut mango flesh from the pits.
3. Cut cucumber in half lengthwise. Remove seeds. If using bell pepper, cut in half

lengthwise. Remove stems and seeds.

4. Dice mangoes, cucumber, and bell pepper, if using. Finely chop green onions.
5. Cut jalapeño pepper in half lengthwise. Remove stems and seeds and dice.
6. If using, rinse and chop cilantro.
7. Cut limes in half. Squeeze juice from each half into a medium bowl. Discard seeds.
8. Add mangoes, cucumber, green onions, jalapeño, salt, and cayenne pepper to bowl with juice. If using, add bell pepper and cilantro. Mix well.
9. Cover and refrigerate for at least one hour before serving.

Nutrition Facts: Each serving provides 80 Calories, 0g Total Fat, 0g Saturated Fat, 200mg Sodium, 20g Total Carbohydrate, 2g Dietary Fiber, 1g Protein.

Spicy White Bean Dip*

Serves 6, 1/4 cup per serving

Ingredients

2 cloves of garlic
1 (15 1/2 oz.) can cannellini beans
1/3 bunch fresh parsley
1/4 cup water
1 Tablespoon canola oil
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

Instructions

1. Peel and mince garlic cloves.
2. Drain and rinse cannellini beans.
3. Rinse and chop parsley.
4. In a blender, add garlic, cannellini beans, water, canola oil, salt, ground black pepper, and cayenne pepper. Blend until smooth.
5. Transfer dip to medium bowl. Top with parsley and stir.

Preparation and Serving Alternatives

- Use 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder in place of minced fresh garlic cloves.
- Use 2 teaspoons dried parsley in place of chopped fresh parsley.
- Serve with whole wheat pita bread, tortilla chips, or cut-up fresh veggies.
- For a chunkier dip, or to make without a blender, mash beans, oil and water together with a fork until well blended. Stir in rest of ingredients.

Nutrition Facts: Each serving provides 100 Calories, 2.5g Total Fat, 0g Saturated Fat, 260mg Sodium, 14g Total Carbohydrate, 3g Dietary Fiber, 5g Protein.

Tabbouleh* (A Lebonese vegetarian salad)

Serves 6, 2/3 cup per serving

Ingredients

2 medium lemons
1 cup bulgur wheat
1½ cups boiling water
1 cup fresh parsley
3 green onions
1 large tomato
1 small cucumber
2 Tablespoons canola oil
¾ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
Pinch ground cayenne pepper or paprika

Optional Ingredients:

4 ounces feta cheese
¼ cup mint leaves

Instructions

In Advance:

1. Rinse and cut lemons in half. In a medium bowl, squeeze juice. Discard seeds.
2. Add bulgur and boiling water to lemon juice. Cover and let rest until bulgur is soft and chewy, about 30 minutes.

Preparation:

3. Rinse parsley, green onions, tomato, and cucumber. If using mint leaves, rinse now.
4. Chop parsley. If using mint leaves, chop now.
5. Trim ends off green onions. Thinly slice, using white and green parts.
6. Remove core from tomato. Dice.
7. Slice cucumber in half lengthwise. Scoop out seeds with a spoon and discard. Dice cucumber.
8. If using feta, dice now.
9. In a colander, drain excess liquid from bulgur mixture. Return bulgur to bowl.
10. Add parsley, green onions, tomato, cucumber, and remaining ingredients to bowl. Mix well to combine.
11. If using feta and mint leaves, add now. Mix gently before serving.

Preparation and Serving Alternatives

- For best flavor, let tabbouleh rest in the fridge overnight before serving.
- Serve over grilled fish or meats, with hummus and pita, or as a stuffing inside fresh tomatoes.
- Try using 3 cups of other cooked whole grains in place of the bulgur. You may like brown rice, couscous, or wheat berries.

Nutrition Facts: Each serving provides 130 Calories, 5g Total Fat, 0g Saturated Fat, 300mg Sodium, 20g Total Carbohydrate, 5g Dietary Fiber, 4g Protein.

**Recipe Source: <http://cookingmatters.org/recipes>*

During these Dog Days of Summer, try something new with your snacking habits and sit back and wait for the rain (or, at least I hope the rain comes!) Until next time, keep living resourcefully!