

Cafeteria Connection

DECEMBER 2024

National Cocoa Day

Sipping a cup of hot cocoa on a cold December night...can it get any better than that? Did you know that 2,000 years ago, the Mayans were the first to create a chocolate beverage? They called it xocolātl, which means bitter water. This bitter water was a cold, frothy beverage. It was Spanish explorer Hernán Cortés, who brought the cocoa beans and special chocolate-making tools back to Europe where Spanish monks modified the recipe by adding sugar and spices to create the "hot cocoa" version we know today.

Today, more than 4.5 million tons of cocoa are consumed all over the world every year. Cocoa powder, especially if it is at least 72% cocoa, has several health benefits. Cocoa is rich in iron, zinc and selenium which are needed to help your body function. Some studies suggest that cocoa powder may help improve your attention and working memory. Cocoa powder also contains polyphenols which are antioxidants that help to improve cholesterol, blood sugar levels and reduce the risk of heart disease. Remember to try and use dark chocolate (or high percentage cocoa powder) when making hot cocoa to receive all of its nutritional benefits!

Pear-fectly Fun:

Exploring the Sweet World of Pears!

Pears are ancient fruits that have been cultivated for more than 4,000 years. They grow on trees and are a relative of the apple. Pears are sweet and are available in different varieties. Pears are also rich in potassium and vitamin C, which your body needs. They are usually picked before they're ripe but if you want to speed up the process of ripening, you can always place them in a paper bag at room temperature. Most people enjoy eating pears fresh but have you ever tried grilling pears? Pears can also be enjoyed in pies, sandwiches, salads and even in soups. Did you know that December is National Pear Month? Join the celebration and try including pears in your meals this month!

Dietitian's Pick

Roasted cabbage and apples make a delicious and nutritious dish. Cabbage is actually one of the oldest vegetables and is high in vitamin C which we need to maintain a healthy immune system and produce collagen. Apples, on the other hand, contribute natural sweetness along with an extra boost of fiber. Together, these ingredients form a dish that's not just tasty but also packs a lot of nutrients, so make sure to give this recipe a try!



Roasted Curry Cabbage

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium head Green Cabbage
- 1 Yellow Onion, sliced into thick wedges
- 2 Granny Smith Apples, peeled and sliced into eight wedges each

- 2 tablespoons Olive Oil
- 1 tablespoon Curry Powder, hot or mild
- Kosher Salt and Ground Black Pepper
- 1/4 cup Currants
- Lemon Wedges, to serve

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Heat the oven to 400° F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil.
- Cut the cabbage into quarters, then cut out the thick stem and core from each piece and discard. Slice each quarter into 4 wedges for a total of 16 pieces.
- In a large bowl, combine the cabbage wedges with the onion and apples, then drizzle with the olive oil and toss gently to coat. Sprinkle the curry powder over everything, coating all sides of the cabbage mixture.
- Season with salt and pepper. Transfer the mixture to the prepared baking sheet. Bake until tender and all sides are golden, about 20 minutes, turning halfway through.
- Sprinkle the currants over the cabbage, then toss lightly to mix.
- Serve with lemon wedges.

