

Bringing Families Together In The Kitchen

Family Features

It's not always easy to make healthy food choices, particularly if it involves changing your eating habits. Start by bringing your loved ones together in the kitchen – studies have proven that cooking together as a family not only strengthens the bond between parents and children, but encourages healthy eating habits.

Allowing kids to help in the kitchen and get their hands dirty by washing, measuring and mixing teaches them where their food comes from and builds a sense of accomplishment. Cooking healthy meals together is the perfect family activity to encourage healthy habits and reinforce family time. The trick is finding recipes that encourage participation from children of all ages and make parents happy with good healthful nutrients and flavor.

“Cooking recipes that include whole grain ingredients like rice can lead to better meal options for your family as it attracts healthier, more colorful foods such as vegetables and fruits,” says Chef Chris Skolmutch, Culinary Innovation Manager for Mars Food USA and participant in the Chefs Move to Schools campaign. “Rice serves as the perfect kitchen ingredient because kids enjoy making and eating meals that are simple yet tasty, while parents want to make sure they’re eating something full of proteins, fiber and vitamins.”

For families looking for ways to get together in the kitchen and start cooking, here are a few tips provided by Rachael Ray's Yum-O, a non-profit which empowers kids and their families to develop healthy relationships with food and cooking:

- Measuring: Allow your kids to measure ingredients using traditional tools (i.e. cups and teaspoons), and nonconventional methods (i.e. pinch and dash), to build their own sense of taste.
- Knives and cutting: Instruct your children on how to use kitchen shears instead of knives to cut things like herbs and soft fruits and vegetables until they (and you) are comfortable with them using knives.
- Clean up time: Teach your children the importance of cleaning cutting utensils and cutting boards after finishing up, especially when handling raw meat or poultry.

For more recipe ideas and information, visit www.UncleBens.com or www.Facebook.com/UncleBens.

Chicken And Rice Pot Pie

COOK TIME: 1 HOUR, 50 MINUTES
MAKES: 8 SERVINGS

- 1 cup Uncle Ben's Converted Brand Rice, dry
- 3 1/2 cups frozen carrot, peas and corn blend
- 1/4 teaspoon cracked black pepper
- 2 cans (15 ounces) cream of chicken condensed soup
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 pound chicken breast, 1/2-inch dice
- 1 sheet puff pastry, commercially prepared

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 375°F. Mix rice, vegetables, pepper, soup, water, milk and chicken in a casserole dish.
- Cover in foil and bake in oven for 45 minutes.
- Uncover and top with puff pastry dough, and bake for another 30 minutes or until top is golden brown.
- Serve warm and enjoy together.

Beef And Rice Casserole

SERVES: 4
PREP TIME: 45 MIN

- 8 oz. sour cream
- 1 cup cheddar cheese shredded
- 2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 lb. ground meat
- 1 can chopped tomatoes undrained
- 1/2 bag frozen vegetable mix cooked
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup UNCLE BEN'S® ORIGINAL CONVERTED® Brand Rice

INSTRUCTIONS

- Cook rice according to package instructions.
- While rice is cooking, season ground meat with garlic powder, salt and pepper to taste. Brown ground meat in a large nonstick skillet.
- Add vegetables, tomatoes and sour cream to ground beef and cook until just heated through.
- Combine with cooked rice and mix thoroughly. Transfer to a casserole dish and top with cheese.
- Place in a preheated 350 de-

gree F oven until warmed through and cheese melts, about 20 minutes. Serve warm.

Ham And Cheese Bake With Broccoli

SERVES: 4
PREP TIME: 25 MIN

- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup grated Swiss cheese
- 1 1/2 cups UNCLE BEN'S®

- ORIGINAL CONVERTED® Brand Rice
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 lb. ham cubed
- salt and pepper
- 1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 1 large broccoli cut into florets

INSTRUCTIONS

- Cook rice according to package instructions.
- Sauté ham and broccoli in

- pan until broccoli is crisp/tender and ham has browned.
- Combine all the cheeses. Reserve 1/2 cup of cheese mixture and toss remaining cheeses with rice. Stir-in ham and broccoli, then transfer to a casserole and top with reserved cheeses.
- Pour milk over top and cook in a preheated 350 degree F oven until heated through and cheese has melted about 15 minutes.



Chicken And Rice Pot Pie

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