

SportsNutrition

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The Athlete's Kitchen

"I dread the Holidays. I get bombarded with chocolates and cookies, and of course, I eat them all." ... "I have no idea what to give my training buddy for a Christmas present. He doesn't need anything." ... "I'm low on money, but I want to give gifts to my friends. I need some ideas..."

This holiday season, as you search for the "perfect gift," remember that active people welcome gifts of good health—a loaf of bread warm from the oven, a tasty homemade dinner, a nutrition book. Here are a few recipes and book ideas. The recipes are from the new 2008 edition of my *Sports Nutrition Guidebook*, a popular gift in itself!

Banana Bread

This is an all-time favorite banana bread recipe. Its key to success is using well-ripened bananas that are covered with brown speckles. Especially yummy for a pre-exercise snack.

3 large well-ripened bananas	1 teaspoon salt
1 egg or 2 egg whites	1 teaspoon baking soda
2 tablespoons oil, preferably canola	1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/3 cup milk	1 1/2 cups flour, preferably
1/3 to 1/2 cup sugar	half whole-wheat, half white

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Mash bananas with a fork. Add egg, oil, milk, sugar. Beat well.
3. Gently mix in the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Stir just until moistened.
4. Pour into a 4" x 8" loaf pan that has been lightly oiled, treated with cooking spray, or lined with wax paper. Bake 45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted near the middle comes out clean.
5. Let cool for 5 minutes before removing from the pan.

Yield: 12 slices Total calories: 1,600

135 calories per slice; 24 g Carb; 3 g Protein; 3 g Fat

Gourmet Lasagna

This "company is coming" lasagna has a wonderful flavor and is a nice variation from standard lasagnas. The winning ingredients are sun-dried tomatoes and pine nuts.

15 lasagna noodles
8 to 9 sun-dried tomatoes
1/2 cup pine nuts (pignoli nuts)
1 to 3 cloves garlic, peeled, finely chopped
1 teaspoon oil, preferably olive or canola
1 pound ricotta cheese, part-skim or nonfat
4 to 8 ounces shredded lowfat mozzarella cheese
1 to 2 dashes nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon oregano
1 10-ounce package frozen spinach, thawed and drained
1 28-ounce jar spaghetti sauce
Optional: 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese

1. Cook the lasagna noodles according to the package directions.
2. Put the sun-dried tomatoes in a small bowl. Cover with boiling water and set aside for 5 minutes if oil-packed, 10-15 minutes if dried. Drain, cool, and chop finely. Set aside.
3. Toast the pine nuts in the oven at 350°F for 5 minutes or on the stovetop in a skillet over medium-high heat for 2 to 3 minutes.
4. In a separate skillet, saute the garlic in oil for 2 minutes. Do not brown. Set the pan aside.

Holiday Nutri-Gifts

5. In a large mixing bowl, combine the ricotta, mozzarella, nutmeg, oregano, spinach, sun-dried tomatoes, pine nuts, garlic.
6. In a 9" x 13" pan, pour enough tomato sauce to coat the bottom. Cover with lasagna noodles; add a layer of ricotta mixture, then spaghetti sauce. Repeat, making 3 layers of ricotta, and ending with noodles and tomato sauce. Sprinkle with parmesan, as desired. Cover; bake at 350°F for 30-40 minutes.

Yield: 8 servings Total calories: 3,600

450 calories per serving; 53 g Carb; 21 g Protein; 17 g Fat

Sugar and Spice Trail Mix

Here's a tasty pre-exercise snack that's sweet, but not too sweet. Put it in small baggies tied with a bow, and you'll have gifts for the whole team!

3 cups oat squares cereal
3 cups mini-pretzels, salted or salt-free, as desired
2 tablespoons tub margarine, melted
1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup dried fruit bits or raisins

1. Preheat oven to 325°F.
2. In a large resealable plastic bag or plastic container with a cover, combine the oat squares and pretzels.
3. In a small microwavable bowl, melt the margarine; add the brown sugar and cinnamon. Mix well; pour over the cereal.
4. Seal the bag or container and shake gently until the mixture is well coated. Transfer to a baking sheet.
5. Bake uncovered for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring once or twice.
6. Let cool; add the dried fruit. Divide into 10 baggies.

Yield: 10 servings Total calories: 2,000

200 calories per serving; 40 g Carb; 5 g Protein; 2 g Fat

Recipe courtesy of the Amer. Heart Assoc. (www.deliciousdecisions.com)

Recommended Reading

Helpful books can be a welcome gift. Here are a few suggestions for your active friends and family members. Of course, I recommend these books that I have written:

Nancy Clark's Sports Nutrition Guidebook, 4th Edition (2008)

The sports nutrition bible for learning how to eat to win.
The Cyclist's Food Guide: Fueling for the Distance

For cyclists who are doing long rides or tours.

Food Guide for Marathoners: Tips for Everyday Champions

Perfect for novice marathoners who fear hitting the wall!

Excellent books by other authors include:

American Dietetic Association's Complete Food and Nutrition Guide
by Roberta Duyff

What to Eat: An Aisle-by-Aisle Guide to Savvy Food Choices and Good Eating by Miriam Nestle

Vegetarian Sports Nutrition by Enette Larson-Meyer

Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family by Ellyn Satter

Healthy Homestyle Cooking by Evelyn Tribble

Nancy Clark MS RD CSSD counsels sports-active people at Healthworks, the premier fitness center in Chestnut Hill, MA (617-383-6100). For her *Sports Nutrition Guidebook* (2008), *Cyclist's Food Guide*, and *Food Guide for Marathoners* see www.nancyclarkrd.com. Also visit sportsnutritionworkshop.com for online education.