

Improving School Food - Beyond the Salad Bar by Stephanie Rivers

Improving school food is a popular topic these days. Unfortunately, most programs focus on increasing the vegetables and whole grains while decreasing the fat. While we applaud moving away from processed foods, we would like to see our schools offer the nutrient dense animal fats and traditional foods that can truly nourish young students. We must work to educate our schools about the benefits of serving real butter; replacing factory farmed meats with local, pastured meats and organ meats; avoiding soy; avoiding genetically modified foods; avoiding processed vegetable oils; avoiding irradiated meat; and preparing whole grains in traditional ways to make them more digestible.

Resources:

www.theslowcook.com – This blogger does a WAPF-friendly food appreciation class for students. – This is a great way to get your foot in the door of your local school!

www.momsforsafefood.com – A campaign to get GMO's out of our school lunches.

www.farmtoschool.org – A program that focuses on connecting schools with local produce farmers.

www.childrenshealthfoundation.net/about-us/change-school-lunch/lunch-for-life-program - A program in CO with a focus on replacing processed and canned foods with made from scratch and fresh foods.

www.wholefoodsmarket.com/schoollunchrevolution/ - A program through whole foods to improve school lunches.

www.thelunchbox.org – A beginning program that promises to help schools convert to meals made from scratch.

www.westonaprice.org/modernfood/irradiatedmeat.html - An article on the dangers of irradiated meat.

www.foodandwaterwatch.org/food/foodirradiation - Resources to help you keep irradiated meat out of your school lunches.

www.foodandwaterwatch.org/food/school-milk - Resources to help you get rBGH milk out of your school.

Recipes:

www.mass.gov/agr/markets/Farm_to_school/farm_to_school_cookbook.pdf - Some of the recipes use vegetable oil, but most use real food ingredients. Every state needs a cookbook like this for schools to prepare local foods from scratch!

www.thelunchbox.org/content/menus-recipes/ - Unfortunately, these recipes also use vegetable oil. They also seem to think couscous and puff pastry count as whole grains. Still, they are designed for a large scale and will help train school food workers to cook meals from scratch.

See "Cooking for Sequoia Academy" in the Fall 2008 issue of Wise Traditions for more recipes.

Kid-Pleasing Pizza with Organ Meats

2 pounds grass-fed beef (85/15 preferably)
1 pound organ meats, ground
1 Tablespoon sausage spices
2 large onions, chopped
6 - 8 carrots, shredded or chopped
6 cloves garlic, crushed (optional)
1 cup spinach leaves
4 jars strained tomatoes or tomato sauce
2 small jars tomato paste
3 Tablespoons oregano
3 Tablespoons basil
Salt to taste (2-3 teaspoons)

2 pounds shredded cheese or goat cheese

Sourdough pizza dough, flatbreads or tortillas (sprouted grain or brown rice)

If making crust from dough, roll out dough to ¼ inch thickness and press into pans. Let the dough rise in a warm place while making sauce. If using flatbread or tortillas, skip this step. In a stainless saucepan, gently cook the ground beef and organ meats with the onion and carrot. Cook, stirring, until the onion is translucent. Stir in the garlic and spinach and cook for one minute more, just until the spinach is wilted. Add the remaining ingredients except the crust and cheese. Transfer the mixture to a food processor and puree in batches until smooth. Return the pureed sauce to the pan and cook gently for about 20 minutes to allow the flavors to meld. If making crust from dough, poke holes in the rolled crust with a fork. Prebake the crust in a 350° oven for 15 minutes. If using flatbreads or tortillas, skip the prebake. Top each crust with sauce and then cheese. Bake in a 350° oven for about fifteen minutes or until the cheese is melted and bubbly. Allow to cool slightly before slicing and serving.