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#OlderAmericansMonth



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Non-Metro New Mexico Area Agency on Aging

May 2024 Nutrition Corner

Older Americans Month

The 2024 theme is “Powered by Connection”. This is a great opportunity to promote the benefits of connecting with others.

- ◆ Share facts about mental, physical, and emotional health benefits of social connectedness.
- ◆ Encourage the older adults in your area to participate in the congregate meals at your center. Have special social events such as an ice cream social, dance, or game night.
- ◆ Host a community project such as a fundraiser walk, picking up litter, or collecting donations for a need in your area.

For More Information regarding Older Americans Month go to the Administration of Community Living website:

<https://acl.gov/oam/2024/older-americans-month-2024>

Senior Center Spotlight: Munson Senior Center



The Munson Senior Center in Las Cruces, New Mexico celebrated a momentous occasion with the ground-breaking ceremony for the expansion of the center last week. Construction kicks off the first week in May and the project is slated for completion by mid-February 2025. With the expansion, Munson Senior Center, will boast a dedicated space for a variety of fitness classes and exercise equipment, ensuring our seniors have access to top-notch facilities for staying active and healthy. The Munson Senior Center is located at 975 S. Mesquite and is one of five centers available to Las Cruces residents. The staff serves to assist and improve the life for the elderly in the areas of good health maintenance through nutrition, home care, mobility, community service, and informational services. The Munson Senior Center was the first accredited senior center in New Mexico from the National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC), which is part of the National Council on Aging (NCOA).



The Blue Zones

In January, the Aging and Long-Term Services Department began the “[Blue Zones Bound: Live to 100 in New Mexico](#)” initiative. The Blue Zones framework is based on studies by Dan Buettner in five places of the world where people live the longest, healthiest lives. The studies found a large population of centenarians (people who are 100 or more) in Okinawa, Japan; Sardinia, Italy; Nicoya, Costa Rica; Ikaria, Greece, and Loma Linda, California, living healthy, productive lives. Buettner found the following commonalities in these people’s diets:

1. Mainly fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, and nuts
2. Limit eggs, red meat, dairy, sweets, and processed foods
3. Fish one or two times per week

There are a number of similarities between the Blue Zone framework and the Mediterranean Diet. Both diets are combined with physical activity and social connections.

For more information on the Blue Zones, go to: www.bluezones.com or read [The Blue Zones](#) by Dan Buettner (2008)

Vegetable of the Month: Sweet Potato

Sweet potatoes with their orange flesh are highest in beta-carotene. Purple sweet potatoes are rich in anthocyanins.

Beta-carotene and anthocyanins are naturally occurring plant “phyto” chemicals that give plant their natural colors. These phytochemicals are being researched for their role in disease prevention and human health.

The sweet potato are different from yams. Sweet potatoes are the edible root from the morning glory family, while yams are edible tubers from the lily family and native to Africa and Asia. True yams are distinguishable by their blackish/brown, bark-like skin and white or purple-toned flesh.

Sweet Potatoes are good sources of:

Vitamin A: in the form of beta-carotene
Vitamin B-6
Vitamin C
Potassium
Fiber

Sweet potatoes should be stored in a cool dry place. Use them within a week of purchase.

You can add cooked sweet potatoes to soups or salads.

For a quick meal, slice a baked sweet potato in half and top with cooked beans, broccoli and feta cheese or Greek Yogurt.

For roasted sweet potato wedges: Wash and cut a medium sweet potato into wedges. Coat with olive oil and spread in a single layer on a baking sheet. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt and herbs or spiced if desired. Bake at 375F for 25-35 minutes or until the insides are tender and the outsides are crisp.

Sweet potatoes. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public health. Accessed on April 30, 2024.

Available at: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/food-features/sweet-potatoes/>

Spiced Sweet Potato Pancakes

Serves 6

Ingredients:

- 2 eggs
- 1 c Skim Milk
- 2 ½ TBSP Canola oil
- 1c Baking mix
- 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg or to taste
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon or to taste
- 1 1/2c Boiled mashed sweet potatoes



Instructions:

1. Whisk together the eggs, milk, and canola oil in a mixing bowl.
2. In another bowl, stir together the baking mix, nutmeg, and cinnamon.
3. Add the dry mixture to the wet and whisk until smooth.
4. Fold in the sweet potato and set aside Heat a non skillet over medium heat.
5. Spoon about 1/4c cup of bater onto the hot skillet. Let the pancakes cook until the batter begins to bubble on the surface 1 to 2 minutes.
6. Carefully flip the pancakes and cook for 1 to 2 minutes more, or until the underside is lightly browned.
7. Transfer the cooked pancakes to a plate, cover them to keep warm. Repeat until all batter is used.
8. Serve the pancake with 1/2c mixed berries or other fruit.



“The Mediterranean Diet for Everyday”