EAT RIGHT BOSTON NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2016

Photo courtesy of Alison Dowd

With the cold weather upon us here in New England, we tend to put our salad spinners away and take out our crock pots. Not so fast! Have you ever tried a winter salad? Adding roasted, caramelized fruits and vegetables on top of a bed of salad greens is the perfect marriage between comfort foods and great nutrition!

Slice up an assortment of winter vegetables like sweet potatoes, parsnips, turnip, carrots, or beets; add sliced pears and apple. Arrange on a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Roast in a 450º oven for 20-25 minutes. Let them cool and add to salad greens. Top off with a warm vinaigrette dressing, goat cheese, and slivered almonds. YUM!

Out for a walk along the beach! Enjoy the newsletter!

Sophie Kamveris

GRASS FED BEEF- IT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER

According the National Cattlemen's Association, the total U.S. beef consumed in 2015 was 25.5 billion pounds. Over the past decade, grass fed beef is growing at a rate of 25% per year. While only once available at specialty markets like Whole Foods, farmers markets and CSA's, grass fed meats are filling the shelves at many large supermarket chains like Wegman's and Market Basket. Nutrition and humane practices are two of the biggest reasons why this select beef is becoming more popular. To understand why, you need to know their differences.

Both grass fed and conventional calves are raised the same, initially. After being weaned from their mothers, all of the calves are sent out to pasture at 6-10 months of age. Conventional beef are then moved into feedlots (where they live in pens with minimal amount of space between them) at 12 to 18 months old. For the next 4 to 6 months, they are fed a grain-based (usually corn) diet. It's in these pens that antibiotics are administered to prevent infection and to speed up their growth.

Grass fed beef, on the other hand, stay out in the grass pastures for their entire lives. Antibiotics and hormones are not administered. To meet USDA standards to be labeled *grass-fed* they can only eat grass; forage, which are herbs other than grass; and cereal grains in their vegetative, pre-grain states. They must have continuous access to pasture during the growing season. During the winter months they feed on hay on the farms. They cannot be fed wheat or corn byproducts.

Nutritionally, grass is low in carbohydrate and high in protein, while corn is high in carbohydrate. Grass fed beef also has a healthier fat profile than conventional beef. It has less saturated fat, higher amounts of omega-3 fatty acids, more polyunsaturated fats, more Vitamin E, and is higher in a good fat called conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) versus conventional beef. Salmon still is a better source of omega 3 fatty acids; 3 ounces of wild, raw salmon has 1700 milligrams of omega 3 fatty acids versus 21 milligrams in the grass fed beef.

The balance between omega 6 fatty acids (found in grains) and omega 3 fatty acids in the American diet is a controversial topic. Some proponents believe that higher intakes of omega 6 fatty acids can promote inflammatory states, which may be a contributor to chronic ailments like heart disease. Many researchers dispute these findings and feel they are based on minimal evidence.

The concept of grass fed versus grain fed fosters many ethical debates, including less stress on grass fed animals. The pasture cattle have more room to roam. For the farmer's advantage, grass fed cattle live longer than conventional cattle and are more economical, as they are less expensive to feed.

Environmental impact is another concern. Pollution and pesticides are present with conventional cattle raising, while grass fed use more water than grain fed cattle. Grass fed cows produce 40-60% more methane gas, and more green house gasses leads to global warming.

Because grass fed beef has less fat in it, it is trickier to cook. Cooking at a lower heat ensures it's not overcooked. It does taste different. I liken it to a gamey taste, as a wild animal might taste. I also find it much denser than conventional beef. There are trade-offs but either choice, the beef industry still recommends that beef contributes important nutrients like protein and iron to ones diet and should continue to be a part of a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

WALK THIS WAY!

Ever wonder where that magic number “10,000” in step counting came from? According to Catrine Tudor-Locke, director of the Walking Behavior Laboratory in Baton Rouge, it started in Japan in the 1960’s when pedometers were marketed under the name “manpo-kei,” which translates to “10,000 steps meter.” Interesting tidbit for sure!

Tudor-Locke cites that adults in the U.S. average 5000 to 6000 steps per day and encourages people to double that; with at least 3000 of those daily steps to be of a higher intensity. That translates to a hundred steps per minute, or to the equivalent of taking a brisk walk.

There's no downside to walking. It enhances people’s moods, increases flexibility, builds stronger bones, and increases longevity. According to a researcher at the University of Calgary, there's consistent evidence that exercise helps to reduce the risk of some cancers that include breast and colorectal.

During the five-year Women's Health Initiative Observational Study (which tracked 74,000 U.S. women, ages 50 to 79) they found those who exercised the equivalent of 75 to 150 minutes of brisk walking/week had an 18% lower risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer. Brisk walking also lowered risk of recurrence or progression of prostate cancer in men.

Walking three to five times a week can actually reduce the pain of arthritic knees by about 30% according to researchers at Wake Forest University. A combination of walking with weight loss can improve pain up to 50%.

There's no doubt that regular exercise strengthens the heart; allowing it to pump more efficiently. One of the longest epidemiological studies, the Nurses’ Health Study tracked more than 72,000 women between the ages 40 to 65 over an eight-year period. There was a 35% reduction in likelihood to have a heart attack or die from coronary heart disease in those who walked briskly for three or more hours a week. For those with heart disease, always check with your physician before starting a program, or consult a cardiac rehab program where health professionals teach you how to safely exercise.

Engaging in an exercise program can also avoid diabetes, as physical activity helps to improve insulin sensitivity in the muscles. Muscles use the sugar in blood for energy, which means lower blood sugars. The Nurses’ Health Study also found that the risk of developing diabetes was reduced by 30 percent.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends adults get:

- 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity/week, which includes: walking briskly at 3 mph or faster, water aerobics, bicycling, doubles tennis, or ballroom dancing.

- Or to get 75 minutes vigorous-intensity aerobic/week like race walking, jogging, running, swimming laps, singles tennis, aerobic dancing, bicycling 10 mph or faster, jumping rope, or hiking uphill.

- To improve your health even more, increase (above) activities to 300 minutes a week of moderate-intensity or 150 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity.

The CDC also recommends adults do muscle strengthening activities that work all major muscle groups on two or more days a week.

The Mayo Clinic recommends that people set short-term goals, such as taking extra 1,000 steps daily for one week, and then slowly building up to a long-term goal of 10,000 over time.

SPROUTED GRAINS ARE POPPING UP

I'm a huge fan of artisan breads, as I reported on my visit to the Nashoba Brook Bakery in Concord, MA in October. But sprouted grains are quickly becoming one of the biggest food trends on bread shelves these days and are forecasted to be one of the big sellers in 2016.

Touted as being minimally processed, these intact, whole grains are very good for you. Remember, whole grains are defined as still containing all of its seed components-the bran, germ and endosperm. How can you go wrong with that? Barley, wheat, millet, quinoa, and farro are all examples of whole grains that can be sprouted.

Sprouted grains are what they seem to be; seeds that have been soaked and left to germinate. The grains are soaked, rinsed, drained, and kept moist. Because of this method, manufacturers control sprouting techniques to reduce the risk of bacteria, and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services recommends cooking all sprouts before consuming them.

Sprouted grains often are sweeter tasting because the seeds' starches are broken down into sugar during the sprouting process. Because of this, there's less gassiness and bloating associated with eating this type of bread. Some of the starchy portion of the grain will be digested by the young shoot to fuel its growth, rendering the bread a little higher in protein and lower in carbohydrates than other breads

Sprouted grains are nutritionally superior in some of their key nutrients including protein (this occurs because the starch content is reduced), B vitamins, vitamin C, folate, and are higher in soluble fiber. Sprouted grains can be eaten whole but most often they are used to make cereal, bread, and pasta.
Food for Life's Ezekiel 4:9

brand uses sprouted wheat, spelt, barley, and lentils to manufacture their products. *Way Better Snacks* is another company that uses sprouted beans and quinoa.

My experience with sprouted bread is that it is a little drier and more crumbly and doesn't make for the best sandwich bread but is great toasted. It is generally sold frozen and can be found in the specialty sections of super-markets.

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