



Food and Fitness

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Who says the Fountain of Youth is in Florida?

For older adults who want to stay healthy, the fountain of youth may be found at the neighborhood gym or on a favorite walking trail. Exercise not only helps seniors stay independent by maintaining strong hearts, lungs, muscles and bones, it also helps guard against mental decline.

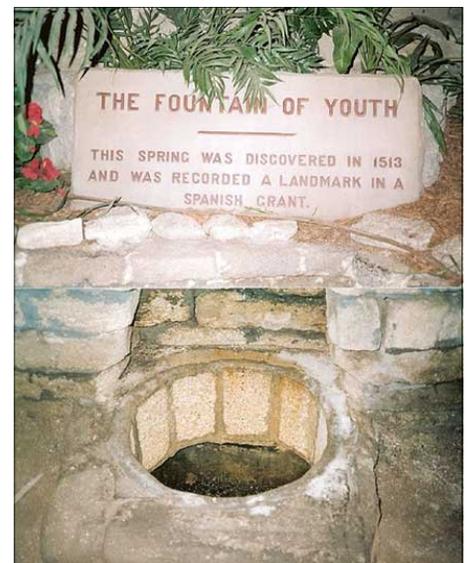
A Korean study published in the *International Journal of Sports Medicine* found “daily exercise improved mental ability by 30 percent over a one-year period in older people with dementia”.

Ready to hit

the gym? The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recommend four types of exercise:

Aerobic exercise— also called endurance exercise. Includes walking, swimming, stationary biking, and water aerobics. You increase your heart rate for a sustained period of time, ideally 30-60 minutes.

Strengthening exercise – builds and maintains muscle mass. Includes lifting light handheld weights, using weight machines at your local gym, using elastic exercise



bands, lifting household items such as soup cans or milk jugs. All help to strengthen muscles. This also increases your metabolism, which helps you to lose weight and aids in blood sugar control. Most important strengthening exercises help you to stay
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Web sites of Interest:

- acsm.org
- nih.gov
- chocolateusa.org

Chocolate: Not Just for Dessert Anymore!

Chocolate is the third and final member of the “culinary trinity” in traditional Mexican cooking. (Remember that peppers and corn were the first two.) Most people think of chocolate as a dessert or beverage, but in Mexican cuisine it plays a prominent role in a sauce called *mole*.

In Mexico *mole* sauces are widely popular and particular to the region from which they derive. This month we will talk about the history of chocolate, share some recipes for a dessert, a beverage, and a slightly more complicated recipe for *mole*.

Although Christopher Columbus was the first European to see and

taste chocolate, the Spanish explorer Cortez actually introduced it to Europe. In 1519 Cortez witnessed a strange ceremony at the court of Montezuma, the Aztec emperor from 1502-1520.

Montezuma drank a dark brown foamy beverage called *chocolatl* from a golden goblet. The beverage was made from ground cocoa beans mixed with water and fermented corn. It was whipped

to a froth using a molinillo, a wooden stick with a fluted head.

When the Indians served the Spanish the same bitter drink, they said that



"The divine drink, which builds up resistance and fights fatigue. A cup of this precious drink [cocoa] permits a man to walk for a whole day without food." Montezuma II (1502-1520)

the seeds came from paradise, and promised that each sip would bring supreme wisdom and knowledge. The Indian *chocolatl* was often made by mixing the beans with wine or fermented corn mash. Montezuma is said to have drunk 50 cups a day!

The Aztec cocoa beans con-



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Obesity Epidemic Blamed on Diet

While the prevalence of obesity in the USA has grown by leaps and bounds in the last 30 years, there has not been a decrease in levels of exercise. So say researchers at the World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Obesity Prevention.

They name eating too many calories as the culprit. Tips to cut your calorie intake:

- Check the calories per serving on the package before rather than after eating the food.
- Check online websites for calories of fast foods before buying.
- Serve yourself smaller portions at home.
- In restaurants ask for a “to go” container when ordering food. When served cut portion in half and put in “to go” box to take home.



Chocolate: Not Just for Dessert Any More! (Continued)

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tained the stimulants caffeine and theobromine and were probably more potent than today’s cultivated beans. Food scientists now recognize the health benefits of eating small amounts of dark chocolate. Why is it considered healthy?

Chocolate is made from a plant, which means it con-

tains many of the health benefits of colorful vegetables. The benefits are from flavonoids, which act as antioxidants.

Antioxidants protect the body from aging caused by free radicals. Free radicals cause damage that can lead to heart disease. Dark chocolate contains a large number of antioxidants (8 times that found in strawberries).

Flavonoids also help lower blood pressure through the production of nitric oxide, and balance certain hormones in the body.

The key to obtaining health benefits from a food like chocolate is to consume it in moderate amounts. Plan the fat and carbohydrate content from your chocolate treat into your diet!

Article “Chocolate: Not Just for Dessert Any More” and chocolate recipes in recipe Corner contributed by Catherine M. Townsend.



Recipe Corner

Flan a la Chocolate

1/2 cup sugar
 4 oz. dark unsweetened chocolate (60% cacao)
 1 can condensed milk
 1 can evaporated skim milk (12 oz.)
 4 oz. reduced fat cream cheese
 5 eggs, beaten
 1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Caramelize sugar in a heavy skillet by melting, stirring, and browning it until it liquefies and turns medium brown. Then pour the liquid into the bottom of a glass or ceramic casserole and set aside. (It will quickly harden.)

Melt chocolate over double boiler or in the microwave on reduced power and set aside. In a mixer or blender blend eggs and both cans milk

together. Add vanilla and melted chocolate, blending again.

Pour this custard mixture over caramelized sugar and cover with aluminum foil. Place glass casserole in a baking pan containing hot water. Use enough water to reach half the distance of the height of the glass casserole.

Bake in conventional oven for approximately 50 minutes. Cool completely then remove from pan. To do this, first dip casserole in a bath of hot water then insert edge of knife blade around edge of casserole dish. Invert onto a serving dish with a lip to hold the caramelized sugar in place.

Note: Can also be prepared in the traditional way without chocolate. Flavor with coffee or ama-

retto for a special treat! Epicureans may enjoy using vanilla beans for a distinctive flavor.

Café Frio con Chocolate

1 cup coffee, frozen into ice cubes
 1 cup skim milk
 2 Tablespoons Hershey's unsweetened cocoa powder
 1 pkt. sugar sub.

Freeze coffee ahead in an ice tray. Put coffee ice cubes into a blender with milk, cocoa and sugar substitute. Blend on high speed about one minute, or until ice has been fully integrated. Garnish with light whipped cream and syrup, if desired. It's easy to prepare, economical and tastes great on a hot summer afternoon.

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Recipe Corner (continued)

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Mole Rosa-Negro

For this recipe you need about three hours and at least three saucepans, but the results are sensational and well worth the time invested. I recommend preparing the sauce the day before serving, and adding the chicken the next day.

THE SAUCE:

First step:

- 4 large chiles (peppers) arbol
- 4 large chiles (peppers) cascabel
- 1 cup water

Remove stems and seeds from the chiles. Rinse in cold water then soak in 1 cup hot water for thirty minutes.

Second step:

- 1 small white onion, sliced thickly

- 6 small cloves garlic, peeled

- ½ pound fresh tomatoes, thickly sliced

Place these ingredients on a tray and under broiler for about five minutes until charred slightly. Set aside.

Third step:

One by one, pan-fry the following ingredients in a small skillet that has been sprayed generously with High Heat Pam. Drain each ingredient and set aside.

- ¼ cup sesame seeds
- ¼ cup shelled peanuts
- ¼ cup almonds
- ¼ cup raisins
- 1 plantain, peeled and sliced

Fourth step:

Strain chiles and place in a blender. Add the following ingredients:

- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme or 4 springs

- fresh, leaves only

- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano

- ¼ teaspoon marjoram or 4

- sprigs fresh, leaves only

- ¼ teaspoon allspice

- 4 whole cloves

- ½ teaspoon cinnamon

Process the above ingredients.

Fifth step:

Add sesame seeds, peanuts, raisins and almonds, along with 1 cup water reserved from chiles; process



Enchiladas de tres moles—with 3 mole sauces—is a popular Mexican dish.



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Recipe Corner (continued)

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all ingredients until nearly smooth.

Sixth step:

Place charred vegetables in heavy skillet with 4 Tablespoons vegetable oil; cook ten-fifteen minutes, reducing liquid. Add these vegetables to blender and process. Pour this mixture into heavy saucepan where mole will be cooked.

Seventh step:

Two corn tortillas
3 slices French bread
1 cup chicken broth

To make the sauce thicker, pan fry two corn tortillas and toast French bread. Use processor or blender to make a mixture that resembles bread crumbs. Add this to the sauce, along with chicken broth, and stir. Cook for about thirty min-

utes.

Eighth step:

2 oz. unsweetened Mexican chocolate or
2 oz. unsweetened baking chocolate
1 cup chicken broth
Salt to taste

Break chocolate into pieces and add to sauce. Add the additional chicken broth. Cook over low heat for an additional thirty minutes. Salt to taste. Sauce tastes *muy sabrosa* (very tasty!) if it is allowed to be refrigerated an extra day before serving.

THE CHICKEN

2 small white onions
2 cloves garlic
3 sprigs fresh mint
1 baking hen, skinned, defatted, and cut into serving size pieces
Chicken broth to cover chicken

Salt and black pepper

Put all ingredients into heavy saucepan with lid. Cook until broth bubbles, then cover. Turn heat to medium-low and simmer for about thirty minutes.

Drain chicken pieces, (you can save the liquid for another soup) and add to the mole sauce. Cook an additional 30 minutes before serving. Buen provecho! Enjoy!



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Who says the Fountain of Youth is in Florida?



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independent.

Balance exercise – Building strong leg, abdominal, and back muscles helps to prevent falls. The NIH says US hospitals have 300,000 admissions for broken hips each year. Falling is the

main cause of these debilitating fractures.

Stretching exercise – helps to prevent injury and maintain range of motion around the joints.

If you do not have a regular exercise program, check with your doctor before you begin. Always begin a new exercise program

slowly, gradually increasing your exercise time over a few weeks. If you are not sure how to begin, go to your local community center or gym to get advice from an exercise professional. Best of all, exercise is fun! Get out there and enjoy yourself.

By Betsy Greer

Exercise Physiologist

