Crispy Veggie Pizza Squares

1 prepared pizza shell (pre-baked)
1 package low-fat cream cheese (8 ounces)
1 package original flavor ranch dressing mix (dry)
1 tablespoon light mayonnaise
1/2 sweet onion, chopped
1/2 head broccoli flowerets, chopped
1/2 tomato, diced
2/3 cup shredded carrot (any other of your favorite veggies can be substituted)

Beat low-fat cream cheese with dry dressing mix; add light mayonnaise. Beat until smooth; set aside. Cut up veggies into small pieces (shred carrots); set aside.

Spread cream cheese mixture over pre-baked pizza shell and top with cut up fresh veggies. Cut into squares and serve. Refrigerate leftovers.

Variation: Pizza sauce can be substituted for the cream cheese mixture.

Calzones

One recipe or bag of pizza dough
Spinach Filling:
10 ounces spinach, cooked
4 ounces shredded mozzarella cheese, part-skim milk

1 pound ricotta cheese (or cottage cheese)
1 small onion (1/3 cup chopped)
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

Drain frozen spinach thoroughly, pressing spinach against a colander with the back of a spoon; set aside. If using fresh spinach, wash well and remove stems. Put in microwave safe bowl and microwave 1-2 minutes or until wilted - squeeze out liquid.

On a lightly oiled cookie sheet, pat dough to fit. With a sharp knife, cut into 4-6 squares.

Heat vegetable oil in a medium frying pan; add onion, pepper, and garlic powder. Sauté until onion is softened, about 3 minutes. Add spinach; sauté until well mixed and heated, about 3 minutes. Mix in ricotta cheese and shredded mozzarella cheese. Divide filling into 4-6 portions and place on dough squares.

Fold dough over filling by folding two corners of each square together to make a triangle; using the tines of a fork, press edges firmly together to seal securely. The edges will seal easier if the filling is not spread too close to the edges.

Bake until golden, about 15 to 20 minutes at 375°. Refrigerate leftovers.

Pizza Braid

1 recipe pizza dough, bag of pizza dough or thawed loaf of frozen bread dough

Filling:
spaghetti or pizza sauce
8 oz. shredded mozzarella

Use all or any combination of the following:
- sliced peppers and sliced onions (cooked in microwave until crisp-tender)
- cooked and well-drained sausage or sliced pepperoni, optional. Put pepperoni between paper towels - microwave until almost crisp.
- mushrooms

On a lightly oiled cookie sheet pat out dough as you would a pizza. In a large bowl, mix filling. To desired filling ingredients (peppers, onion, etc.) add shredded cheese and just enough spaghetti sauce to moisten (do not make this soupy). Pour down center of dough, cut edges in strips 1” apart. Fold over filling in a crisscross fashion. Let stand 10 minutes. Bake 350° until crust is brown (25-30 minutes). Refrigerate leftovers.
Food Safety Reminders

- Always wash hands before and after handling food.
- Don’t cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat, poultry, fish, and their juices away from other food. After cutting raw meats, wash hands, cutting board, knife, and countertops with hot, soapy water.
- Marinate meat and poultry in a covered dish in the refrigerator.
- Sanitize cutting boards by using a solution of 1 teaspoon chlorine bleach in 1 quart of water.

Household Helpers

- Clean garden tools effortlessly. Pour some used motor oil into a bucket of sand. Mix well. Plunge tools into sand mixture; repeat until clean. The oil will also help prevent rusting.
- Easy Microwave Cleaning: In busy households where the microwave sees a lot of use, people sometimes forget to cover a dish when reheating food. This results in splatters inside the oven. Scrubbing is tedious and has the potential to damage the interior surfaces. Here’s a simple cleaning method. Place a microwave-safe bowl full of water in the oven and heat it on high for 10 minutes; the steam loosens dried food particles so they can be wiped off with ease. Add a little lemon juice for a fragrant odor.

Milk Carton Birdhouse

You will need:
- scissors
- thin wire
- push pin
- milk carton
- 3/16" dowel (4" long)

Wash and dry an empty cardboard milk carton. Cut squares away from the front and side area to make windows. Make 2 small holes on either side of the carton. Fit dowel through the holes to make a perch for the birds.

To attach birdhouse to a pole or a tree:
- Use a push pin to make 4 holes in the back of the carton. Loop a length of wire through 2 holes. Do the same with the other 2 holes. Wrap wire tightly around pole and tie tightly.

Stretching Your Food Dollars

Convenience foods like fried chicken and T.V. dinners are expensive. Those frozen entrees are a big expense ranging from $1.39 to $4.59. Face the facts. They are often loaded with fat and salt, have a small serving size, and do not taste as good as homemade. Make your own. Double a recipe - prepare for evening meal; freeze the remainder. You will have a quick and easy meal all made.

Make and freeze extra pancakes, waffles and French toast. Wrap individually to store. Reheat in toaster.

Rotate foods on hand with newly purchased foods so that older items are used first.

Reseal food packages tightly after opening. Transfer foods such as flour to tightly closed containers. Store whole wheat flour in refrigerator or freezer for best quality.

For more information, call Cornell Cooperative Extension at 315.866.7920 and ask for the free fact sheet "Stretching Your Food Dollar".

Free Nutrition Education Programs

Nutrition Teaching Assistants are available to help limited income individuals and families throughout Herkimer County stretch their food dollars to feed themselves and their families better.

Lessons can take place in participants homes or worksites as well as at community centers. Newsletters and other resources are also available by mail.

Contact:
Cornell Cooperative Extension
5657 State Route 5
Herkimer, NY 13350
315.866.7920