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Dec 09/Jan 10

Give Your Brain a Boost

Stuck in the dreary doldrums of winter? Clear out the cobwebs collecting in your mind by focusing your attention on some brain-boosting grub. Start your day with whole-grain cereal and a glass of O.J.—both are loaded with folic acid, which aids memory function and keeps neurons firing fast. Snack on some peanuts; they contain choline, which is known to enhance mental energy. Fruits and veggies—especially berries, grapes, apples, plums, broccoli and spinach—help protect against memory loss. And don't forget the fish oil, which is also good for your brain. Get the essential omega-3s from fish such as salmon, sardines and herring, or take a fish-oil supplement to keep you thinking clearly.



Word for December: Joy

When skies are gray and cold winds whip through the trees, we gather inside for laughter and good cheer. The "Merriam-Webster Dictionary" defines "joy" as "a source or cause of delight," and December delivers with holiday festivities, family dinners and finding the right gift for that special someone. Get wrapped up in the magic of the season and help bring a little joy to the world.

Before You Head Home!

Before you leave for winter break, please make sure your doors and windows are securely locked. Also, make sure to leave your heat set to 60 degrees to prevent any pipes from freezing. Have a safe and happy holiday!

What You Should Know About the National Do Not Call Registry

The National Do Not Call Registry gives you a choice about whether to receive telemarketing calls at home (or on your cell). Within 31 days after registering your number on www.DoNotCall.gov, most telemarketers should not be calling. If they do, you can file a complaint at the same government web site where you register. Even better, your registration won't expire. Telephone numbers placed on the National Do Not Call Registry now remain on it permanently due to the Do-Not-Call Improvement Act of 2007, which became law in February 2008.

Stay Healthy

Cover your coughs and sneezes and wash your hands often. Sing "The Alphabet Song" as you scrub to ensure you thoroughly lather away the germs.



Environmental Advice: Talkin' Tires

Next time you need new tires for your automobile, consider radial tires. They have less rolling resistance, which improves their overall gas mileage and makes them cost-effective.

Thought for the Month

"Write in your heart that every day is the best day of the year."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Fitness Tip: Be a Clean Machine

You may not always enjoy cleaning where you live, but its health benefits should put a smile on your face. That's because a 155-pound person can burn 246 calories in an hour of cleaning, according to www.NutriStrategy.com. So go ahead and put some elbow grease into your scrubbing. The advantages are worth it in more ways than one.

Management Team and Office Hours

Monday–Friday: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday: Noon to 4 p.m.

Sunday: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Susan Trabosh—Senior Prop. Manager

Roger Varner—Asst. Prop. Manager

Lisa Shaffer—Marketing Manager

John Taylor—Maintenance Supervisor

Trivia Whiz

Bringing Life to Snow

Adorned with a cornucob pipe and a button nose, this frosty friend warmed the soul as a symbol of our youth. Some snowman trivia:

- It was the Dark Ages, not the Ice Age, when the first snowman was built, according to Bob Eckstein's book "The History of the Snowman."
- The world's tallest snowman was just over 122 feet tall. It was constructed in Bethel, Maine, in March 2008. It didn't completely melt for four months.
- Gene Autry's rendition of "Frosty the Snowman" hit the airwaves in 1950. In the song, Frosty was a "jolly, happy soul."
- Michael Keaton awakens as a snowman after dying in an auto accident in the 1998 film "Jack Frost."
- The Abominable Snowman is a creature said by some to roam mountainous regions of Nepal and Tibet.



Festive Food From All Four Corners

When Americans think of holiday foods, mashed potatoes, ham and gingerbread houses typically come to mind. Cultures around the world celebrate differently, of course, and the element of food is no exception.

Because the eve before a holiday is considered a fasting day in many religions, fish is often included with a meal. In fact, many countries celebrate with a strictly seafood menu. In Italy, for example, the main course on Christmas Eve is a fish stew called *zuppa di pesce*, made with shrimp, clams and cod. It is often part of a seven- or 12-course all-fish dinner. In Irish, Mexican and Danish communities, oyster stew is typically served for

dinner and occasionally reheated and served as breakfast the next morning. Armenians enjoy stuffed trout and *gata* (bread sweetened with sugar), and revelers in the Czech Republic eat pea soup and fried carp.

As Americans are accustomed, many cultures highlight meat as the main course over the holidays. In Denmark, roast goose is a favorite, served with cabbage, prunes and apples. Greeks consume leg of lamb roasted with potatoes, and in Hungary the favorite is a comfort food called chicken *paprikash*, made with a creamy, paprika-flavored sauce. Venezuelans prepare *hallaca*, plantain leaves stuffed with beef, pork, olives, raisins and capers.

Not all cultures put the focus on meat or fish, however. The traditional dish served during Hanukkah is *latkes*, or fried potato pancakes. Folks in Finland feast on rice porridge and rutabaga casserole.

Game On

Bowled Over

If you love college football bowl games, thank James Wagner for making the passion possible. As president of the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, Calif., Wagner suggested a post-season game to help draw attention to the parade. So, in 1902, the Tournament East-West Football Game was played. Michigan destroyed Stanford 49-0 that year, setting the table for what we have today: a glut of games that continue long after what used to be the traditional grand finale.

The holiday bowl menu is stuffed: 34 games in all, starting Dec. 19 with the New Mexico Bowl and the St. Petersburg Bowl and ending Jan. 7, 2010, with the Bowl Championship Series national title game in Pasadena.

The football landscape looked nothing like this in 1930 when the Rose Bowl served as the only bowl. In fact, the term "bowl game" comes from the Rose Bowl. The Orange Bowl and Sugar Bowl came aboard in 1935, followed by the Cotton Bowl in 1937.

Conferences began aligning themselves with bowl games as early as 1947 when the Big Ten and Pacific Coast Conference (now the Pac-10) sent their champions to the Rose Bowl. The post-World War II era saw an explosion of bowls, including the Salad Bowl, which was played from 1948-52 in Phoenix. And who can forget some of the more memorable bowl game sponsors, such as the Poulan Weed-Eater Independence Bowl and the Brut (think men's cologne) Sun Bowl?





The One Minute Chef

Get a Jump on Your 2009 Taxes

Even with April 15 months away, take steps before the end of the year to potentially increase your tax returns and decrease the amount you'll owe.

Kiplinger.com and *SmartMoney.com*

recommend these actions before Dec. 31:

Donate money to charity. If (and only if) you itemize, you can see big returns on charitable giving. Be sure, however, to make the donation well ahead of the end of the year, or do so with a credit card, to ensure the donation clears before Dec. 31.

Take a good look at your portfolio. While many people hold on to losing stocks hoping to one day recoup the loss, selling now could help offset any capital gains you did make. (For more help understanding capital gains and losses and other complicated tax code, go to www.SmartMoney.com.)

Use up all the money in your Flexible Spending Account (money your employer allows you to set aside tax-free to cover things such as medical expenses). These plans stipulate that you "use it or lose it." That means your employer, not you, will get back any money you've not spent. Check whether medication, contact lenses or certain elective procedures (such as a colonoscopy or teeth cleaning) are covered to use the money you already set aside.

Consider all federal tax credits for which you may qualify. If you need to purchase a major appliance, look into energy-efficiency credits. If you're in the market for a new car, consider a more fuel-efficient model to get the maximum federal rebate.

Contribute to your child's 529 college savings plan. Many states allow parents to deduct up to a certain amount of the contribution. To see your state's qualifications, go to www.CollegeSavings.org.

Don't wait until April to get your taxes in line. A few moves now will not only make for a more organized tax season, but should make it more profitable, too.



Ham & Cheese Brunch Squares

Ingredients:

- 10 frozen hash brown patties, thawed
- 2 c. grated Colby and Monterey Jack cheese blend, divided
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 12 eggs
- 1/2 t. coarsely ground black pepper
- 8 ounces thick-sliced deli ham
- 4-5 green onions with tops, divided
- 3 plum tomatoes

Directions:

Preheat oven to 450° F. Oil baking pan. Crumble hash browns over bottom of pan; press gently into an even layer. Sprinkle half of the cheese over hash browns. Bake until crust starts to brown and cheese melts. Meanwhile, in medium bowl, whisk cream cheese until smooth. Gradually add eggs and black pepper. Coarsely chop ham. Slice green onions; reserve 1/4 c. for garnish. Saute ham and green onions over medium heat 2-3 minutes. Stir ham mixture into egg mixture. Remove pan from oven. Pour egg mixture over crust. Return pan to oven; bake 6-8 minutes or until center is set. Meanwhile, slice tomatoes in half, discard seeds and dice. Remove pan from oven; top with remaining cheese, tomatoes and reserved green onions. Cut into squares and serve.

Source: *The Pampered Chef*. Find recipes or a consultant at www.PamperedChef.com.

Wit & Wisdom

"The worst gift is a fruitcake. There is only one fruitcake in the entire world, and people keep sending it to each other."

—Johnny Carson

"The easiest way to make a fruitcake is to buy a darkish cake, then pound some old, hard fruit into it with a mallet. Be sure to wear safety glasses."

—Dave Barry

"Reality is like a fruitcake; pretty enough to look at but with all sorts of nasty things lurking just beneath the surface."

—A. Lee Martinez

"For months they have lain in wait, dim shapes lurking in the forgotten corners of houses and factories all over the country, and now they are upon us, their massive bodies bulging with strange green protuberances, attacking us in our homes, at our friends' homes, at our offices. There is no escape! It is the hour of the fruitcake."

—Deborah Papier

December 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 DECEMBER		1 Rent is Due!	2	3	4	5
6 Late Fees Assessed	7	8	9	10 	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 FIRST DAY OF WINTER 	22	23	24	25 Christmas	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Happy New Year!

Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

Solution:

7	5	4	9	6	8	3	2	1
9	6	7	4	3	8	5	1	2
4	8	3	5	7	2	1	9	6
2	8	7	3	9	4	1	5	6
3	4	2	7	8	1	5	6	9
9	6	9	5	2	9	3	1	4
8	7	6	5	2	9	3	1	4
6	5	8	9	7	4	2	3	1
7	3	1	6	5	2	9	4	8
2	9	4	1	3	8	6	7	5

2		4	1					
				5				
		8	9				3	
	7		5					4
	4	2				5	6	
9					3		8	
	6				5	8		
				4				
					6	4		7