

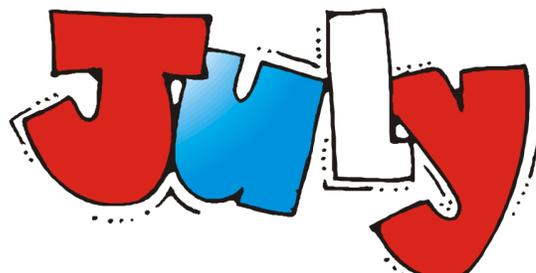
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### FUN FACT

The largest bald eagle nest ever recorded was 10 feet wide and 20 feet high, and weighted two tons!



### Holiday Calendar Closing

The office will be closed on Wednesday, July 4th. We'll miss you!

## Don't throw it out—oven-dry it!

Oven-drying has many benefits as a form of food preservation.

- Oven-drying removes the liquid from the food, preventing bacterial growth and ensuring a long shelf life without need for refrigeration.
- Fruits, vegetables, and even meat can be oven-dried.
- Oven-drying doesn't require any specialized and expensive equipment.
- And most importantly, oven-drying makes delicious food!

## How to oven-dry fruits and vegetables

1. Choose ripe fruits and vegetables.
2. Wash in cold water, then remove any blemishes, pits or stones, and stems.
3. Cut into even slices. If you want to remove the skins, score the skin and parboil the fruit for 30 seconds, then put in cold water and peel it off.
4. Soak the fruit for ten minutes in water with lemon juice.
5. Preheat an oven to 130 to 160 degrees Fahrenheit.
6. Put parchment paper on top of sheet pans, and layer fruit on top of paper without letting them touch. To prevent fruit slices from curling up, add a silicone pan liner or a heat-resistant heavy sheet on top.
7. Place in the oven and rotate pans every two hours.
8. When fruit feels like pliable leather, in at least six hours and usually more, remove from the oven and leave in the open for four or five days to finish evaporating.
9. Keep at room temperature for TEN MONTHS!

# What's Cooking in Gale's Kitchen?

## Blueberry Sauce

July is National Blueberry Month. Loaded with antioxidants, fiber and important nutrients, blueberries are a summer favorite. When blueberries are in season and you've had your fill of eating them out of hand, try making this delicious homemade Blueberry Sauce. Its sweet flavor makes it an excellent accompaniment to pancakes, waffles, crepes, ice cream, stirred into plain yogurt, spread on your morning toast, or even as a filling or topping for cakes.



## Ingredients

- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 2/3 cup water
- 1 pound or 3 cups of fresh blueberries (can also use frozen blueberries)
- 1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest (outer yellow skin)
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice, or to taste

## Instructions

1. Place the sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, salt, and water in a medium sized saucepan and stir until smooth.
2. Gently stir in the blueberries and place the saucepan over medium heat.
3. Cook (simmer) the sauce until the liquid thickens and becomes clear, stirring occasionally (about 12-15 minutes).
  - Some of the blueberries will break down but others will remain whole.
  - The longer you cook the sauce the thicker it will become.
4. Remove from heat and stir in the vanilla extract, lemon zest and juice.
5. Taste and add more lemon juice if needed.
6. Let cool and then cover and refrigerate for up to a week.
7. Makes about 3 cups.

## *Isaac's Dish-of-the-Month*

### **All American Macaroni Bean Salad**

On this continent we've been eating beans since the Native Americans were the only Americans. They're high in protein, high in fiber, and (most importantly) high in deliciousness. My dish-of-the-month, which contrasts the soft savory taste of red beans with the chewiness of pasta, makes a perfect side dish for a picnic in the July sun, or just alongside a simple tuna sandwich on a relaxing summer evening.



### *Ingredients*

- 1 can red beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 tablespoons vinegar (apple cider or red wine)
- 1 red bell pepper, diced (optional)
- 1 stalk celery, diced (optional)
- 2 cups rotini, penne, fusilli or other short pasta
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons mustard
- 3 green onions, sliced thin
- Salt and pepper to taste

### *Instructions*

1. Soak the beans (and the pepper and celery, if using) in the vinegar.
2. Bring a pot of lightly salted water to a boil.
3. Cook pasta in boiling water, stirring occasionally, until cooked through but firm.
4. Drain and rinse with cold water.
5. Combine all ingredients in a bowl until well mixed.
6. If possible, chill for at least two hours before serving.

# HOW SAFE IS YOUR MICROWAVE?

## DO MICROWAVES EMIT RADIATION?

Microwaves do leak some radiation, but before you panic, read on. To put things in perspective, your laptop, cordless phone and cellphone all leak electromagnetic radiation, too. The FDA has strict limits on the amount that can leak from a microwave oven throughout its lifetime, and it is far below the amount known to harm people. Part of the requirement is that the appliances are built with double “interlock” systems that stop the production of microwaves as soon as the latch is released. The level of normal exposure also drops dramatically as you move away from the oven – so, to be extra cautious, simply stand away from it while it’s on. Microwaves turn on and off like a light bulb: when they are off, no waves are emitted, and microwave energy cannot linger in the oven or in food.

Although there is no clear evidence of harm, many people are concerned that low levels of electromagnetic radiation may impact human health over a long time. It is certainly something that needs to be studied. The thing is, when you consider the persistent and cumulative exposure from all your WiFi-enabled devices and the multitude of other radiation sources we have around us, the occasional microwaving of some leftovers seems the least of the problem, if there is one at all.

## HOW DOES MICROWAVING AFFECT NUTRITION?

Microwaving is one of the most healthful ways to cook vegetables because it cooks them quickly and without a lot of water, much as steaming does. To “steam” a vegetable in your microwave, just wash it, pat it dry, place it in a microwave-safe bowl, cover tightly and microwave it for the same amount of time you’d steam it – 4 minutes for a cut-up head of broccoli, for example. The result will be bright green, crisp and nutrient-rich.

## IS IT SAFE TO HEAT PLASTIC CONTAINERS?

Takeout containers, foam trays or any plastic storage not specifically designed for microwave use can melt and leach into food. Use plastic containers only if they are explicitly labeled microwave-safe. It’s best to look for a label on paper plates, too. Thick, non-decorative glass, wax paper, parchment paper and white (undyed) paper towels are all fine in the microwave.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

Microwaving can be a healthful, convenient way to cook. Just be sure your appliance is in good repair and use a microwave-safe container. The biggest health risk involved is probably the foods you choose to microwave. Rather than use it for heating hyper-processed salty meals and snacks, try it out with more healthful items, such as fresh vegetables.



**- Gale Cohen, RD**