

Cooking Corner

Pairing Beef And California Avocados Creates Craveable Dishes

(NAPSA)—Recently, numerous home cooks competed in the 2013 National Beef Cook-Off contest, funded by The Beef Checkoff. This year, contestants were challenged with a new recipe category—Craveable Fresh Beef and Fresh California Avocado. Contestants developed flavorful and nutritious dishes that paired delicious lean beef and creamy California avocados.

Many experts say lean beef—filled with protein, iron and B vitamins—can help satisfy you and maintain a healthy weight, build muscles and fuel an active lifestyle. California avocados are also nutrient dense, in that they provide substantial amounts of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients with relatively few calories. In fact, one-fifth of a medium avocado (1 oz.) has 50 calories and contributes nearly 20 vitamins and minerals and phytonutrients.

Take This To Heart

Research also shows that eating lean beef, even daily, as part of a heart-healthy diet and lifestyle improved cholesterol levels. A 3-oz. serving of lean beef provides 25 g (about half) of the daily value for protein, which is one of the most satisfying nutrients.

In a study published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, researchers from Penn State University found that people who consumed lean beef daily as part of a heart-healthy diet experienced a 10 percent decline in LDL “bad” cholesterol.

California avocados also fit into a heart-healthy diet, providing “good fats,” 0.5g polyunsaturated fat, 3g monounsaturated fat, and no cholesterol per 1-oz. serving. Additionally, a 1-oz. serving of avocado contains 26 milligrams of beta-sitosterol, a natural plant sterol that may help maintain healthy cholesterol levels.

Healthy Cravings

The theme of this year’s National Beef Cook-Off contest was “Making the Most of My Plate,” which encouraged delicious, nutritious recipes using ingredients from a variety of food groups. Here are two of the delectable recipes that were created by finalists in the Craveable Fresh Beef and Fresh California Avocado recipes category.



Pairing California avocados and lean beef in this craveable salad gives your body more of the nutrients you need.

Tuscan Burgers & Avocado-Tomato Spread

Total preparation & cooking time:

30 minutes

Makes 4 servings

- 1 ripe, fresh California avocado, peeled and seeded
- 2 Tablespoons finely chopped, oil-packed, sun-dried tomatoes
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 pound ground beef (95% lean)
- ½ cup basil leaves, divided
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 4 whole-grain hamburger buns, split
- ½ cup finely chopped fresh fennel bulb (core removed)

1. Mash avocado in small bowl (should be chunky, not smooth). Add sun-dried tomatoes and half of garlic; mix well. Set aside.

2. Combine beef, remaining garlic, 2 tablespoons minced basil leaves and salt in medium bowl, mixing lightly but thoroughly. Lightly shape into four ¼-inch-thick patties.

3. Heat large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Place patties in skillet; cook 10 to 12 minutes to medium (160° F) doneness, turning occasionally. Remove patties from skillet. Place buns, cut side down, in skillet; cook 1 minute or until lightly toasted.

4. Place burgers on bottom of buns; top each with equal amounts avocado-tomato

spread, fennel and remaining basil leaves. Close sandwiches.

Cali-Avocado Steak Salad

Total preparation & cooking time:

30 minutes

Makes 2 servings

- 1 boneless beef top sirloin steak, cut 1-inch thick (about ½ pound)
- 6 teaspoons olive oil, divided
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided
- ¾ teaspoon pepper, divided
- 1 large navel orange
- 1 large ripe, fresh California avocado
- 2 loaves naan bread (about 3 ounces each)
- 4 cups mixed salad greens

1. Rub both sides of beef steak with 1 teaspoon olive oil; sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper.

2. Cut bottom and top off orange. Remove remaining skin from orange; cut into segments; reserve. Cut avocado in half; remove seed, but do not peel. Squeeze juice from two cut ends of orange over cut sides of avocado, then brush with 1 teaspoon olive oil. Sprinkle with remaining salt.

3. Brush both sides of naan bread with 2 teaspoons olive oil.

4. Place steak on grill over medium, ash-covered coals. Grill, covered, 11 to 15 minutes (over medium heat on preheated gas grill, covered, 13 to 16 minutes) for medium rare (145° F) to medium (160° F) doneness, turning occasionally. During last 2 to 3 minutes of grilling, place avocado, cut side down, and naan bread on grill; turn bread once.

5. Toss salad greens with remaining olive oil and pepper. Add orange segments to salad. Remove skin from grilled avocado. Cut avocado into slices; add to salad and toss gently. Carve steak into thin slices; place on top of salad. Cut naan into wedges; arrange around salad.

To learn more, visit www.beefcookoff.org and www.CaliforniaAvocado.com.