

Cooking Corner

Mangos Make The Meal

(NAPSA)—As temperatures drop and schedules get busier this season, warm, hearty comfort food feels like a necessity. With a few new ideas and versatile ingredients, satisfying dishes can avoid the unhealthy pitfalls of typical heavy fare. Including fresh fruits and vegetables, such as the sweet, tropical mango, can add a burst of flavor and a nutritious twist to your favorite family meals.

Chicken with Spiced Mango Rice fits the bill for a hearty, flavorful weeknight dinner. With just five minutes of hands-on preparation and 15 to 20 minutes of cooking, this sweet and savory meal is ready in less than half an hour. It is also a well-rounded meal of protein, whole grains and fresh produce all in one dish.

Mangos, one of this dish's key ingredients, provide more than 20 essential vitamins and minerals, are an excellent source of vitamins A and C, and are rich in fiber—all for just 100 calories per serving. In fact, mangos provide 100 percent of daily vitamin C, an antioxidant that promotes healthy immune function, which is important for busy families during cold season.

Since mangos are available year-round, they are an exciting addition to the cozy staples of autumn and winter. Their natural sweetness is a versatile and welcome counterpart to seasonal favorites like sweet potatoes, slow-cooked beef and pork dishes, or winter squashes. Warm spices like cinnamon and nutmeg also complement the fruit's distinct sweet-floral and tropical flavor.



Pretty, hearty and wholesome, Chicken with Spiced Mango Rice makes a great meal in minutes.

When selecting a mango, color is not always the best indicator of ripeness. Instead, squeeze the mango gently. A ripe mango will give slightly, similar to a ripe peach or avocado. Keep unripe mangos at room temperature on the countertop and they will continue to ripen, becoming sweeter and softer over several days.

Once ripe, mangos may be moved to the refrigerator, where they will keep for up to five days. Mangos can also be peeled, cubed and stored in an airtight container in the freezer for up to six months. When cutting a mango, always wash the fruit and use a clean cutting board and knife.

Many filling foods may satisfy a craving yet fall short in providing healthy fuel for this hectic time of year. Instead, make over family dinners with fresh mango, using these simple and familiar techniques to create crave-able, exciting and wholesome meals.

Chicken with Spiced Mango Rice

Servings: 4

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cook time: 15 to 20 minutes

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, flattened if very thick

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

1 (8.8-ounce) package wild rice, such as Uncle Ben's Ready Whole Grain

Medley Brown & Wild Rice
2 large, ripe but firm mangos, peeled, pitted and diced

1 green onion, thinly sliced
½ cup shelled roasted and salted pistachios

3 tablespoons dried cranberries

½ teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon allspice

Season chicken on both sides with salt and pepper. Stir together rice, mango, onion, pistachios, cranberries and spices in a medium foil pan or on a very large piece of heavy-duty foil. Place about ½ cup of rice mixture in the center of each chicken breast. Bring in the ends and sides to enclose, then tie with kitchen string to seal in filling. Grill over medium-high heat for 5 minutes on each side, then place chicken on top of remaining rice mixture. Cover with foil or seal foil package, leaving room for air to circulate. Grill for 5 minutes more. If desired, slice chicken into medallions to serve.