

HEALTHFUL EATING



An Onion For The Whole Family

(NAPSA)—Here's sweet news everyone in the family may find easy to swallow: Because of their high sugar and low acid content, sweet onions are mild enough for the whole family, yet still pack enough zest to satisfy a flavor-craving palate. Served raw, in ceviche, salsas, fresh relishes and salads, they have a crisp texture—like celery—and add just enough bite. Cooked, they hold their shape in stews and soups, but melt delightfully into sweet, golden caramelized onions.

Onions are the most popular vegetable in the world, possibly because of their flavor and versatility. A surprising bonus is that they are healthful, as well. Onions contain fiber, calcium, iron, several B vitamins and more vitamin C than apples. They are rich in flavonoids, particularly Quercetin, an antioxidant compound that evidence indicates may reduce cholesterol, decrease tumor formation, heal stomach ulcers and inhibit proliferation of cultured ovarian, breast and colon cancers. The organosulfur compounds in onions are also believed to have anti-cancer effects, reduce symptoms associated with diabetes, have anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial properties and seem to have anti-platelet effects that protect against coronary heart disease.

Sweet onions have been part of the national food vocabulary since Vidalia onions first became popular in the 1970s. But Vidalias are a summer crop, only in season from April to June. Maui sweet onions then extend the season with availability from mid-February through late-November. During the winter months, OSO Sweet onions, grown in the rich,



Fresh sweet onions are crisp, mild and remarkably healthful.

volcanic soil at the foot of the Andes, are the premier onion on the market and the sweetest of all. According to sweetonion source.com, OSO Sweet onions, available from January through March, have shown the highest recorded sugar content, some as high as 16 percent, more than double that of Vidalias.

That extra sweetness, along with the lower acid, makes sweet onions a healthy vegetable the whole family can enjoy together. Kids won't protest "no vegetables!" when they taste these sweet sweet onions. In fact, they might not even know that they are eating a vegetable at all. Adults with acid reflux or other digestive sensitivities won't holler "no way!" as they do with higher-acid regular onions. According to a White House Council of Economic Advisors' report, teenagers who had dinner with their parents five nights a week were far more likely to avoid smoking, drinking, violence, suicide and drugs. This holds true for single-parent and two-parent families, across all income and racial groups. One way to get the family to the din-

ner table is with this recipe for southwestern-style pasta.

Southwestern Pasta

3 large OSO Sweet onions
(about 2¼ lbs. total)

¼ cup olive oil

1½ teaspoons ground cumin

1½ teaspoons chili powder

¾ teaspoon salt

Dash of cayenne pepper

1 can (14.5 ounces) diced tomatoes, drained

¾ cup frozen corn kernels

1 can (14.5 ounces) chicken broth

12 ounces fettuccine, cooked as package directs

1 cup shredded Monterey jack cheese

2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro (if desired)

Peel sweet onions and cut into ¼-inch thick rings. In a large deep skillet, heat olive oil over medium-low heat. Add onions, cumin, chili powder, salt and cayenne pepper and cook, covered, 10 minutes. Uncover and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until onions are soft and golden, 15 to 20 minutes.

Stir in the tomatoes and corn, cook 2 minutes longer. Pour in the chicken stock and increase heat to high. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the sauce thickens slightly, 5 to 10 minutes.

Add the cooked pasta to the sauce and cook one minute, stirring to coat the pasta with the sauce. Stir in the cheese. Serve on warm dishes and garnish with cilantro, if desired.

Yield: 4 to 6 servings.