

Kitchen Quickies

Speed Scratch Cooking Can Be Scrumptious

(NAPSA)—You don't have to start from scratch to stir up something delicious, say fans of "speed scratch" cooking.

Combining fresh ingredients with canned or prepared ones, speed scratch cooking cuts preparation time down to a fraction of what it normally would be while providing you and your family with a home-cooked meal. Typical speed scratch items include roasted chicken from a deli, packaged salad and pre-cut or canned fruits and vegetables.

Pantry staples such as Pacific Northwest canned pears can be used in any dish to add subtle sweetness with no measuring, peeling, dicing or slicing required. Always ripe and ready, canned pears can be found year-round at the supermarket.

The best part of using canned fruits like pears is that they retain their nutrients throughout the canning process, making them an easy and healthy way to get part of the recommended five fruits and veggies a day. Plus, canned pears contain zero fat or cholesterol and are a good source of friendly carbohydrates, potassium and fiber.

Picadillo Pear Olé is a tasty example of the kind of flavor pears can add to family favorites.

PICADILLO PEAR OLÉ

- 1 pound lean ground beef**
- 1 cup chopped onion**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 1 teaspoon cumin**



Canned pears can be used to add delectable flavor and a dose of sweet nutrition to many quick-fix dishes.

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- ½ teaspoon salt**
 - 1 14½ oz. can diced tomatoes**
 - 1 15 oz. can pears, drained and diced**
 - 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar**

In skillet or large saucepan, cook ground beef and onion until meat is browned and onion is tender. Drain. Stir in sugar, cinnamon, cumin and salt; mix well. Cook 2 minutes. Stir in undrained tomatoes, diced pears and vinegar. Cook 3 to 5 minutes to heat through.

Serving Suggestions: Serve as a filling for tacos, burritos or as an entrée with rice and a vegetable.

Yield: ⅓ cup each for 12 taco shells, 12 servings

⅔ cup each for 6 burritos, 6 servings

1 cup each per ¾ cup rice, 4 servings