



Patti Bivens and daughter Jenny Gelsinger, Julie Eshelman, and Joann Williams spice up the low-sodium canned vegetables for a delicious "Lighter Mexican Meatloaf".



Mikey Lynch joins his mom, Michele, and Joanne Williams in chopping carrots, onion and garlic for the "Mexican Confetti Rice."

Everyday Chef Class #1

Delicious and Easy on a Budget

By Barbara Carstensen

"Start preparing your dishes using the ingredients and recipes at your stations," directed Chef Jim Butler as he opened this winter's series of "Everyday Chef" classes by MACWell.

Teams of two or three people at each station sprang into action, while the chef and his band of sous chefs (previous class attendees Barb and Neil Carstensen and Gary Parker) roamed about, answering questions and offering suggestions. Each station was responsible for two preparations emphasizing interesting, healthy dishes that are both economical and easy to produce.

This week's recipes include Baked Sweet Potatoes & Honey, Lighter Mexican Meatloaf, Italian Turkey Meatloaf, Roasted Vegetables and Couscous, Mexican Confetti Rice and Lentil Loaf. The recipes can all be found on MAC4Wellness.org. Scroll down to Every Day Chef in "Our Activities" tab.*

Chef Butler spiced the time spent in preparations with valuable discussions of topics including effective shopping techniques, alternate ingredient options, and selections for a limited but useful spice shelf. One highlight was when he explained how he almost was fooled into buying the store brand of one product instead of the brand name of the same food in the same size box. He read the box's label to discover that the cheaper box had much less food in it - along with some unwanted ingredients - not at all a bargain! He noted that even an 'expert' has to be a careful shopper.

The recipes saved shopping dollars by using fresh in-season

vegetables, and frozen or canned items for those not in season. Turkey was used as a lower fat alternative to beef. Some recipes utilized beans (a/k/a legumes) as a highly nutritious, low fat, excellent protein source. Chef Butler described how to soak dried beans (which are very gentle on the pocketbook). He noted that the many varieties of low sodium canned beans are also very easy to have handy in your cupboard as the start of a great meal any time.

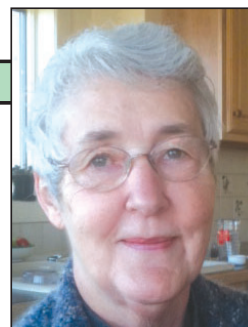
Participants concluded the evening by savoring the flavors of the dinner prepared, and left with the supplies needed to reproduce some of the meal at home. They are enthusiastic about what they accomplished and looking forward to Chef Harry McCullough's guidance through the world of pizzas and salads next week. The classes will continue for the next three weeks.

Classes are held at the well-equipped kitchen of the First United Methodist Church, with the wonderful support of volunteer Susan Stuff. Classes are supported by gifts made in memory of Naomi Weller, who was the "behind the scenes" coordinator for previous series. Many thanks to instructors Jim Butler (Sage Dining Services) and Harry McCullough (Romeo's) for their creativity, energy and sharing of their talents! Also, thank you to Julie Eshelman, JBMS health class teacher, for her dedication to teaching "nutrition fun" to her students. Thank you to all the volunteers who make "Everyday Chef" possible!

*Two of the recipes listed above, from the MAC4Wellness.org website:

LENTIL LOAF

- 1 1/2 cups lentils
- 3 1/2 cups water or vegetable broth
- 2 onions, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 cups pre-cooked rice
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 ketchup or bbq sauce
- 1/2 tsp sage
- 1/2 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.
- 2. In a large soup or stock pot, simmer the lentils in water or vegetable stock until cooked, about 30 mins. Drain thoroughly, then mash the lentils until they are half-mashed.
- 3. Sauté the onions and garlic in olive oil for 3 to 5 minutes or until soft.
- 4. Combine the onions, garlic and olive oil with the mashed lentils and add the rice, salt, ketchup or bbq sauce, sage and Italian seasoning.
- 5. Gently press the mixture into a lightly greased loaf pan. Drizzle a bit of extra ketchup on top if desired.
- 6. Bake for 1 hour. Allow to cool slightly before serving, as this will help the lentil loaf to firm up.



BARBARA CARSTENSEN

MEXICAN CONFETTI RICE

- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 cups long-grain white rice
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 3 cups canned low-salt chicken broth
- 1/4 cup tomato sauce
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 cups thinly sliced, peeled carrots
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels
- 1/2 cup frozen peas
- 1. Heat oil in heavy large pot over medium heat.
- 2. Add rice and stir, 5 minutes
- 3. Add onion and garlic. Sauté until onion is slightly softened.
- 4. Add broth, tomato sauce and salt.
- 5. Bring to a boil over medium heat.
- Boil uncovered until half the liquid is gone. At 10 minutes, add the carrots, corn and peas to rice.
- 6. Cover pot; reduce heat to very low.
- 7. Cook until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed, about 15 minutes.
- 8. Remove from heat; let stand covered 10 minutes before serving.