Fiesta Mexican Lasagna

ITHACA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Ithaca, New York

Our Story

At the Ithaca City School District in picturesque Ithaca in upstate New York, their mission is to educate every student to become a life-long learner. The team's chef is a co-owner of a local restaurant which is considered one of the "pioneer" restaurants for preparing and serving healthy, local, plant-based meals.

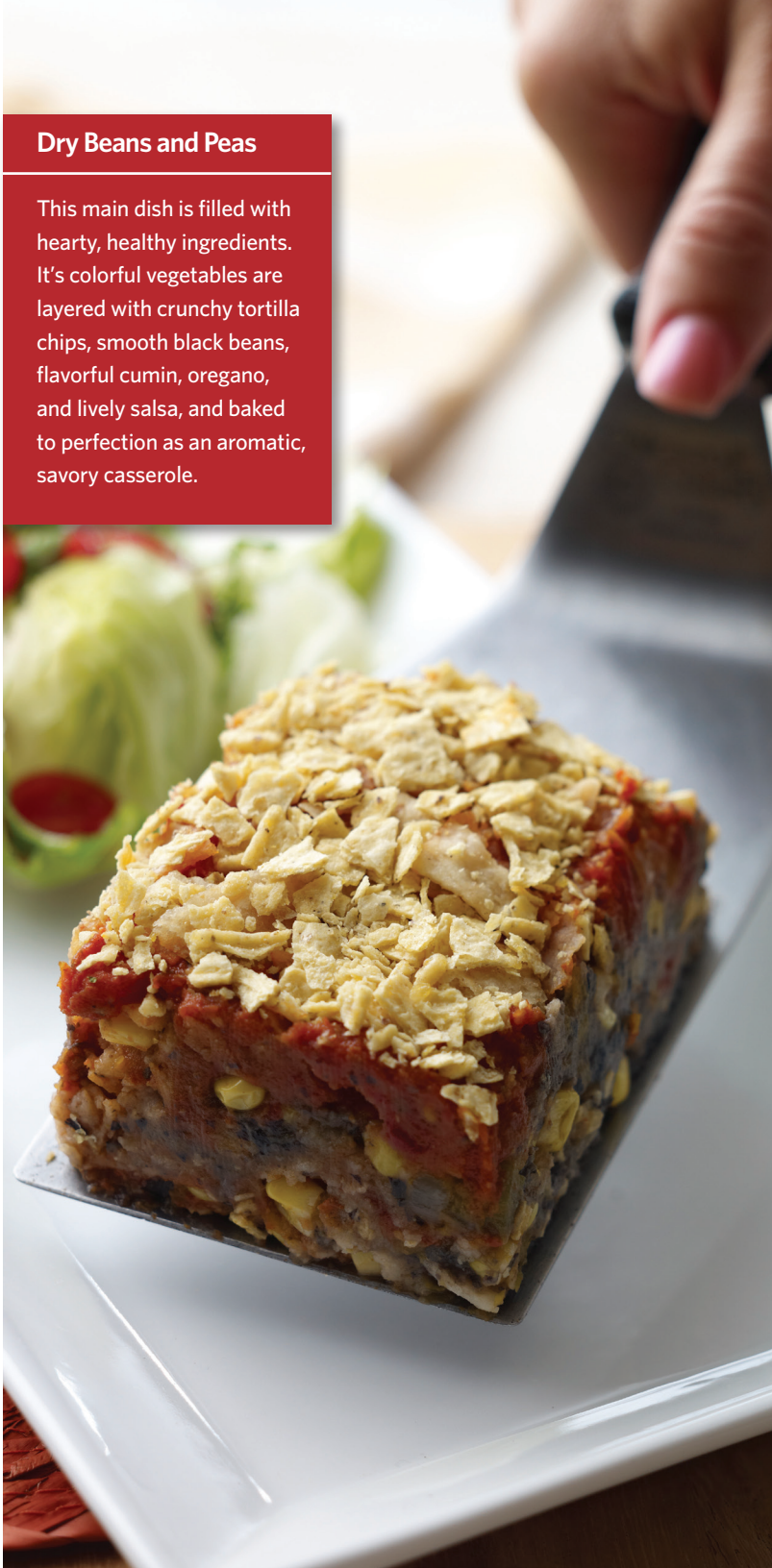
For its entry in the *Recipes for Healthy Kids* Competition, the team worked to create Fiesta Mexican Lasagna and conducted numerous taste tests with students. This hearty main dish features golden butternut squash, corn, and peppers roasted until sweet and the natural flavors caramelize together. This deliciously spicy spin on an Italian classic will leave your kids wanting more!

School Team Members

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROFESSIONAL: Denise Agati (Food Service Director)
CHEF: Wynnie Stein (Chef, Moosewood Restaurant)
COMMUNITY MEMBERS: Amie Hamlin (Executive Director, New York Coalition for Healthy School Food) and Eric Smith (Owner, Cayuga Pure Organics)
STUDENTS: Alyia C. and Josie W. (Middle School Students)

Dry Beans and Peas

This main dish is filled with hearty, healthy ingredients. It's colorful vegetables are layered with crunchy tortilla chips, smooth black beans, flavorful cumin, oregano, and lively salsa, and baked to perfection as an aromatic, savory casserole.



Fiesta Mexican Lasagna

Ingredients

66 chips Low-sodium tortilla chips (about 12 oz)
2 tsp Canola oil
¼ cup Fresh green bell pepper, seeded, diced
1 cup Canned low-sodium corn, drained, rinsed
1 cup Fresh onions, peeled, diced
2 cups Fresh butternut squash, peeled, seeded, cubed ½"
½ tsp Ground oregano
½ tsp Ground cumin
½ tsp Granulated garlic
½ tsp Chili powder
½ tsp Paprika
½ tsp Salt
2 ½ cups Canned low-sodium black beans, drained, rinsed
1 ¼ cups Low-sodium meatless spaghetti sauce
1 cup Low-sodium salsa, mild

Preparation Time: 30 minutes
Cooking Time: 60 minutes
Makes six servings

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.

2. Divide chips evenly into three bowls (about 22 chips per bowl). Crumble one bowl of chips and reserve remaining two bowls of whole chips for use during the layering process.

3. In a medium mixing bowl, combine canola oil, green pepper, corn, and ½ cup of onions, reserving other half of onions for step 6. Toss to evenly coat with oil. Transfer vegetables to a large baking sheet. Roast uncovered at 350 °F for 15 minutes or until vegetables are slightly brown around the edges.

4. Steam squash in a steam basket over high heat for 15 minutes or until soft. Place squash in a large mixing bowl and mash until smooth.

5. Add roasted vegetables to squash. Mix well. Add ¼ teaspoon oregano and ¼ teaspoon cumin, reserving remaining spices for step 6. Mix well and set aside.

6. In a medium skillet coated with nonstick cooking spray, cook remaining onions, cumin, and oregano with garlic, chili powder, paprika, and salt over medium heat for 5 minutes or until the onions become translucent and soft.

7. Purée cooked onions and black beans in a food processor or blender until smooth. If needed, add 1-2 tablespoons of water to make the purée smoother.

Nutrients Per Serving: Calories **264,** Protein **9 g,** Carbohydrate **52 g,** Dietary Fiber **9 g,** Total Fat **4 g,** Saturated Fat **< 1 g,** Cholesterol **1 mg,** Vitamin A **3769 IU (180 RAE),** Vitamin C **16 mg,** Iron **2 mg,** Calcium **120 mg,** Sodium **425 mg**

Directions for Fiesta Mexican Lasagna (continued)

8. To make the sauce, combine spaghetti sauce and salsa in a bowl and set aside.

9. Layer ingredients in an 8" x 8" nonstick baking pan sprayed with nonstick spray.

a. 1 cup sauce
b. Bowl of whole chips (about 22 whole chips)
c. 1 ¼ cups bean mixture (a rubber spatula dipped in water helps to spread the mixture evenly)
d. 1 ⅛ cups squash/vegetable mixture
e. Bowl of whole chips (about 22 whole chips)
f. 1 ¼ cups bean mixture
g. 1 ⅛ cups squash/vegetable mixture
h. 1 ¼ cups sauce
i. Bowl of crumbled chips

10. Cover with aluminum foil and bake at 350 °F for 30 minutes until thoroughly heated.

11. Remove from oven. Uncover and allow to rest for 15 minutes before serving.

12. Cut into six even portions. Serve hot.

One piece provides:

Legume as Meat Alternate: 1 oz equivalent meat alternate, ⅜ cup red/orange vegetable, ⅛ cup starchy vegetable, ¼ cup other vegetable, and ¾ oz equivalent grains.

OR

Legume as Vegetable: ¼ cup legume vegetable, ⅜ cup red/orange vegetable, ⅛ cup starchy vegetable, ¼ cup other vegetable, and ¾ oz equivalent grains.

Legume vegetable can be counted as either a meat alternate or as a legume vegetable but not as both simultaneously.