

Food

WEDNESDAY
JUNE 16, 2010

A medley of marinades



CHERRIES

Cherries, particularly tart cherries, can slow the formation of HCAs, according to a study at Michigan State University. When researchers added ground pitted cherries to ground beef (about 12 percent of the total weight) in hamburger patties, HCA levels were reduced by 90 percent. Other fruits, such as blueberries and plums, have also shown promising results when mixed with ground meats.



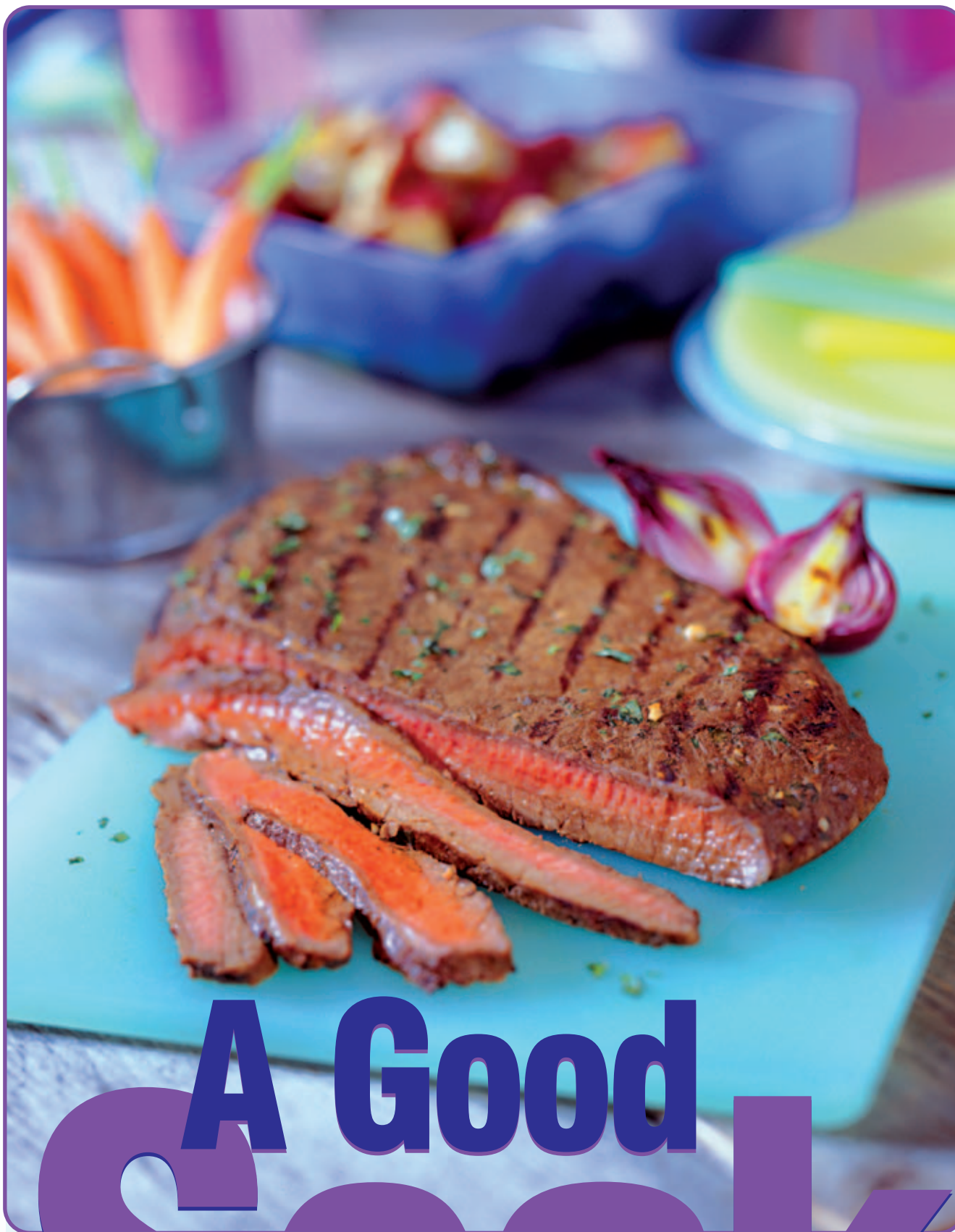
ROSEMARY AND OTHER HERBS

An antioxidant called carnosol, found in Mediterranean herbs such as rosemary, thyme, sage, oregano and basil, seems to be particularly effective at reducing HCA levels. In a Kansas State University study, rosemary extract applied to the surface of hamburgers before pan-frying reduced HCAs by up to 90 percent. Saudi Arabian researchers got results almost as good when they tested rosemary on grilled chicken.



OLIVE OIL, GARLIC, LEMON JUICE

Used separately or together, these popular marinade ingredients have been shown to reduce HCAs. In a 2007 study, German researchers concluded that all three added to the effectiveness of the marinade, but garlic was the most powerful of all (and the more garlic, the better). As for olive oil, its HCA-inhibiting effects are greater if the bottle was recently opened, since olive oil oxidizes quickly when exposed to air.



A Good Soak

Keep cancer-causing compounds away from your cookout by marinating meat before grilling.

By **BETTY CICHY**
STAFF WRITER

Beef and beer make a welcome pair at many Father's Day cookouts.

But if you're planning to grill a steak for Dad on Sunday, do him a favor and don't just serve him a beer or two with dinner.

Soak the steak *in* beer before you cook it.

Do that and you'll cut down on some cancer-causing compounds often found in grilled meat.

When meat is cooked over high heat (on a grill, under a broiler or in a hot pan), a chemical called creatine found in muscle tissue reacts with amino acids to produce compounds called heterocyclic amines, or HCAs.

Studies by the National Cancer Institute and other research groups suggest that consuming HCAs can increase the risk of breast, stomach, pancreatic and colorectal cancer.

But marinating the meat in beer or red wine first can significantly lower the amount of HCAs, according to a recent study by Portuguese researchers.

And if you don't keep alcohol in the house, you can get almost the same results with green tea.

What beer, wine and green tea have in common is a high level of antioxidants. Scientists suspect these antioxidants may inhibit the formation of HCAs, though they're not sure how.

Marinades made with other antioxidant-rich ingredients also show protective effects.

The classic combination of olive oil, lemon juice and garlic reduces HCAs, as do more exotic marinades like jerk and teriyaki. And store-bought marinades seem just as effective as homemade ones.

Herbs, especially Mediterranean ones like rosemary and oregano, are also powerful HCA inhibitors. So are some spices, particularly turmeric, which makes a great marinade when mixed with yogurt, garlic and hot pepper.

If you're making burgers, which don't stand up well to marinades, mix some of these herbs or spices with the ground meat, or rub them on the outside of the patties.

According to researchers at the University of Kansas, rosemary and turmeric can reduce HCAs in hamburgers by as much as 40 percent.

Taking the time to marinate or rub is a simple and healthful thing to do for Dad on Father's Day.



BEER AND WINE

Last year, Portuguese researchers found that marinating beef in beer or wine reduced HCA levels by up to 88 percent. Leaving the meat in the marinade for 6 hours produced the best results, but also caused some undesirable changes in the meat, especially when red wine was used. Marinating for two hours works almost as well, and doesn't affect the meat.



GREEN TEA

As a follow-up to their study on wine and beer marinades, Portuguese researchers experimented to see if green tea, which is very high in antioxidants, would also reduce HCAs in pan-grilled beef. It did, cutting levels up to 75 percent after six hours. The marinade, made by steeping 1 gram of green tea in 125 grams of water, didn't affect the flavor or texture of the meat.



SPICES AND SPICY SAUCES

Several studies have found that store-bought marinades can reduce HCA levels. Teriyaki marinade and Caribbean jerk-style marinades are particularly effective, as are Indian-style marinades made with turmeric and garlic. But barbecue sauces made with honey, ketchup, corn syrup or other sweet ingredients can actually raise HCA levels, probably because sweet sauces burn easily.

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Baked potato salad — loaded or lean?

By **BETTY CICHY**
STAFF WRITER

Which would Dad rather have with his Father's Day steak — baked potatoes or potato salad?

Make a potato salad inspired by "loaded" baked potatoes — with bacon, cheese and sour cream — and he'll have the best of both worlds.

But there's still a choice to make.

Since it's Father's Day, should Dad be able to forget about calories and fat and enjoy a creamy, indulgent salad studded with bacon in every bite?

Or would he be just as happy — and better off, diet-wise — with a slimmed-down but still tasty version of baked potato salad, made with a smattering of bacon, lowfat cheese and yogurt instead of sour cream?

You decide. Here are two very different recipes for baked potato salad from groups that represent the country's potato growers.

The Idaho Potato Commission doesn't offer a calorie or fat count for its Loaded Baked Potato Salad, but, with a full pound of bacon and plenty of sour cream and cheese, this dish is definitely not low-cal.

The Quick and Healthy Potato Salad from the United States Potato Board has 240 calories and 4 grams of fat per serving.

LOADED BAKED POTATO SALAD

- 4 pounds Idaho potatoes, peeled
- 1 pound bacon, crisply cooked, and chopped into ½-inch pieces (fat reserved, if desired)
- 4 ounces unsalted butter, softened
- ½ cup chopped green onions
- 2 cups grated or shredded cheddar cheese
- ½ cups sour cream (regular or low-fat)
- 1 tablespoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt

Cook whole potatoes in boiling, unsalted water until tender. Refrigerate until chilled, then chop into 1-inch pieces.

Transfer the potatoes to a large bowl along with the remaining ingredients and thoroughly combine. Add some of the reserved bacon fat if desired.

Chill at least 2 hours before serving. Adjust the seasoning prior to serving.

Note: Any condiments or toppings typically added to a loaded baked potato may be used for this recipe.

Makes 2 quarts (about 8 to 10 servings).

Recipe by Chef Kenny Bowers for the Idaho Potato Commission



PHOTO FROM THE IDAHO POTATO COMMISSION
Loaded Baked Potato Salad combines two of Dad's favorites in one dish.



PHOTO FROM THE UNITED STATES POTATO BOARD

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