

# Teaching Appalachian Heritage Cooking to Children, Part II

Kelly Hicks, WVU Extension Agent – Hampshire County

Margaret Miltenberger, WVU Extension Agent – Mineral County

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*Teaching youths about our Appalachian heritage while preparing traditional foods together is an opportunity to strengthen the connections between the past, present and the future.*

Appalachian heritage foods continue today as a part of West Virginia communities, festivals and culture. Youths and adults can learn about our heritage through preparing these foods and understanding why they were used. Many recipes are useful today and can be adapted to be a part of a healthy diet. Teaching youths about Appalachian heritage while preparing traditional foods together is an opportunity to strengthen the connections between the past, present and the future.

## Food Preservation Key to Survival

To survive the harsh winters, people preserved what they couldn't eat immediately. Family members worked together to plant, harvest and preserve foods. Foods were dried, pickled, canned, salt cured, smoked and buried; nothing was wasted. Many crops were also stored in cellars along with canned goods.

## Fried Potatoes

### Ingredients:

4 medium potatoes, washed and sliced thin  
2 tablespoons canola oil  
1 small onion, sliced  
1 medium green pepper, sliced (optional)  
Seasoning of choice

### Directions:

Wash and slice potatoes. Peel potatoes if preferred, but there is nutritional value in the skin. Pre-heat skillet on medium heat. Slice onions and green peppers. Test skillet for temperature by adding the oil. Turn down the heat if oil is bubbling too much. Add the potatoes. Sprinkle with seasoning. Cover with a lid. Cook on medium low heat for 7 to 10 minutes. Check bottom layer of potatoes for doneness. Flip potatoes. Sprinkle with more seasoning. Add onions and green peppers on top. Cook



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for 7 to 10 more minutes. Check for doneness. Cook 3 to 5 minutes more if needed. Enjoy as a hot addition to any meal. Makes four servings.

**Potato Seasoning Variations:** Old Bay; salt, pepper, garlic powder and onion powder; salt free seasoning mixes; rosemary, garlic powder and onion powder; or your favorite seasonings!

Recipe Source: Margaret Miltenberger, WVU Mineral County Extension Agent

## The Essential Garden

The original kitchen gardens were popular across Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Kitchen gardens migrated with immigrants into the Appalachian Mountains. These gardens contained herbs for eating, flavoring foods and sometimes medicinal purposes, as well as vegetables, fruits and flowers for pollination. They were separate from other gardens and crops, and were located close to the dwelling for easy access.

Rhubarb has long been a favorite throughout Appalachia. It can be cooked, sweetened and used in a variety of recipes that include pies, breads, cakes, jellies and sauces.

## Rhubarb Sauce

### Ingredients:

½ to ¾ cup sugar  
½ cup water  
1 pound rhubarb,  
cut into 1-inch  
pieces  
Ground cinnamon,  
if desired

### Directions:

In a 2-quart saucepan, heat sugar and water to boiling, stirring occasionally. Stir in rhubarb; reduce heat. Simmer uncovered about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until rhubarb is tender and slightly transparent. Stir in cinnamon if desired, and serve sauce warm or chilled on a variety of foods. It's especially good on vanilla ice cream.

Recipe and photo source: [www.bettycrocker.com/recipes/rhubarb-sauce/b3bd81e0-8cfd-4c44-a6d5-0b79e86ed706](http://www.bettycrocker.com/recipes/rhubarb-sauce/b3bd81e0-8cfd-4c44-a6d5-0b79e86ed706)



Pickled foods were an important method to preserve food for the winter. There are many home canned heritage recipes. Be sure that current guidelines and processing times are being followed for pressure cookers and hot water baths.

## Refrigerator Garden Pickles

### Ingredients:

6 cups water  
6 cups vinegar  
¼ cup celery seed  
¼ cup mustard seed  
2 tablespoons canning salt  
3 medium cucumbers, sliced  
3 medium sweet red peppers, sliced  
2 large onions, halved  
1 bunch green onions  
10 medium carrots,  
halved lengthwise and cut in 2-inch pieces



### Directions:

In a Dutch oven, combine first five ingredients, bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve sugar. Meanwhile, place remaining ingredients in a large bowl.

Pour hot liquid over vegetables; cool. Transfer to jars, if desired; cover tightly. Refrigerate for 6 to 8 hours before serving. Store in refrigerator for up to one month.

Recipe and photo source: Taste of Home: ([tasteofhome.com](http://tasteofhome.com))

## Plant a Garden at Home

Consider planting a garden at home. Garden plans are available online. Gardening is a great way to incorporate fruits and vegetables into your diet, enjoy locally grown products, help you be more physically active, save money, be more self-reliant and spend time with family.

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