

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for January 29, 2024
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about sheet pan meals, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

Sometimes we get into a recipe rut at our house. Looking for some recent inspiration, I turned to some internet resources and quickly found myself exploring a variety of sheet pan meal recipes. I have long been a fan of sheet pan pancakes (a recipe I found from Ree Drummond, The Pioneer Woman). It is equally as convenient and delicious to approach dinner with the one pan mindset.

I love the time factor and nutrition boost that comes from these sheet pan meals. Usually, there is about 15 minutes of prep time and then around 45 minutes of baking/roasting time in the oven. Typically, the meals consist of a protein and a variety of vegetables with some type of seasoning from herbs and spices to enhance the flavor. Virginia Cooperative Extension has great tips to build a sheet pan meal in just three easy steps.

The first step is to pick a protein. They suggest chicken, Italian sausage, pork loin, salmon, or another convenient meat choice. The key is making sure it reaches the proper temperature for food safety. Poultry needs to reach 165 degrees F, sausage 160 F, and cuts of meat and fish 145 F. You can also pick high protein beans and legumes like edamame, garbanzo beans, or tofu.

The next step is to select your vegetables. This is when you can go with familiarity or stretch your palate a bit and be adventurous. A medley that they suggest is sweet potatoes, potatoes, broccoli, and carrots. It really is hard to go wrong. This is a great time of year for root vegetables like turnips and parsnips and beets or winter squash like butternut and acorn. Aim to get different colors. As you chop the vegetables into bite-sized pieces, try to make them uniform as this will help them cook more evenly. As an alternative to starchy vegetables like potatoes, you could add a pasta like gnocchi (potato dumplings).

Once the meat and veggies are chopped, its time to put them on the pan. A sheet pan measures 13 inches by 18 inches. This is technically a half sheet pan by commercial standards, but most of us don't have full sheet pans hanging out in our home kitchens. I encourage you to put down a sheet of parchment paper first to make clean up even easier.

At this point you should plan to drizzle about 1 to 2 tablespoons of olive oil over everything. This will aid in cooking the vegetables and keeping them from drying out. A little salt and a lot of fresh ground pepper may be all you need. But I love to add herbs (either fresh or dried) and even some spice blends I stumble upon here and there. Check out the label to make sure the blend is not mainly salt. There are many good low-sodium blends that can add flavor without too much heat. Toss everything to coat with the oil and seasonings.

Then it is time to put it in a 375 F oven. Cooking time will vary but will be approximately 45-55 minutes. You will know it is done when your protein has reached the proper internal temperature.

Some people just like a recipe. Following general meal creation guidelines is not your preference. If that is you, then check out our website for sheet pan meal recipes at coshocton.osu.edu. Just click on Family and Consumer Sciences and then Cooking Tips and Recipes.

And now let's see what's new from OSU Extension: The next series of ServSafe Manager training will be February 7, 14, and 21 with the proctored exam on February 28. Registration for this program and more is available on our Facebook page or our website coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and empower our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!