



Fun and Games

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This year, we will connect your family with games, old and new. If your family has a favorite, original game, please tell us how you came to know it and of course, how to play it!

Enter a drawing: We will have random drawings and send you a small token of our thanks if you describe your favorite family game. We will feature one game per month in 2022. To enter, fill out this online form: <https://forms.gle/PhX6A5jvs9Amka4SA>



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EAT

Technology is part of our lives and can be useful as we plan meals. Maybe you have a favorite recipe app for your computer, phone or tablet.

In the online “app store,” you can search for some titles. “SuperCook” allows you to upload your existing ingredients. “AllRecipes Dinner Spinner” provides inspiration for meals with its 50,000 recipes, while “Epicurious” allows you to explore 35,000 recipes. MyPlate at www.choosemyplate.gov has a free app to help you plan a healthier diet based on age.

As you explore online recipes, keep these tips in mind:

- Look for nutrition information included with the recipe. Be sure to check the serving size. If you eat three servings, you are getting three times the calories, protein, carbohydrate, fat and other nutrients.
- Check out the recipe ingredients. Aim for variety. Try to include a vegetable, fruit, protein, grain and milk on your lunch and dinner menus and at least three of the five food groups on your breakfast menu.
- Opt for healthier cooking methods such as baking, grilling and broiling instead of frying or deep-frying. However, stir-frying is a low-fat method because a small amount of oil or broth is used.

In honor of January as National Soup Month, search online for a new soup recipe or try this one featuring fiber-rich recipes. Depending on their age, children can help rinse, peel or chop vegetables or measure ingredients. Older youth can find the recipes.



Red Lentil Soup

8 cups chicken broth, low-sodium
2 cups red lentils (dry)
4 medium carrots, diced (about 2 c.)
1/2 teaspoon cumin
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1 large onion, diced (about 2 c.)
1 to 2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 chicken bouillon cubes, reduced sodium
1 (10-ounce) can diced tomatoes and green chilies, drained
1 lemon, juiced (about 1/3 c. juice)
Fresh parsley (optional, for garnish)
Optional: 1 cup roasted chicken, diced

Sort, then rinse lentils. Add to broth and bring to a boil. Add diced carrots. Cover; cook for 30 minutes while stirring occasionally. When lentils are tender, add dry spices, bouillon cubes and diced tomatoes. Saute onion and garlic in a frying pan using olive oil. When golden brown, add to soup mixture. Add chicken if desired. Simmer for five minutes. Turn off heat and add lemon juice to pot; stir. Garnish bowls of soup with parsley if desired.

Makes 12 servings (3/4 cup each). Each serving has 190 calories, 4 grams (g) fat, 13 g protein, 26 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber and 125 milligrams sodium.

Connect

The Family Table is a great place to connect with a game as well as a meal and great conversation. When the family table is a fun place to linger, bonds are formed and good will is developed between parent and child as well as siblings and other household members. Start short and simple. You may not even want to announce “family game night” if you think the eye rolling and groaning will be too much. In that case, just sprinkle out a few “Would you rather?” or trivia-type question cards around the table and ask a few questions in the spirit of fun.

“Would you rather?” questions are good for nearly every age. You might start with “Would you rather have a pet dog or cat?” “Eat soup or hot dish?” “Live in a big city or on a farm?” “Vacuum or dust?” “Excel at science or math?” Ask those questions that fit your family. By asking general questions in a relaxed way, you might learn a great deal about your older youth, far more than you would by asking, “How was school? What did you learn? Do you have homework?” Alternately, have everyone ask and answer questions. Young children can be very inventive which adds to the fun.

Trivia questions can come from a variety of sources. Check your closets or thrift stores for old trivia games and harvest cards for this informal game.

Make your own game with family trivia. Collect fun family facts from your own little family and also ask grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins to share about themselves. Make cards with a question and three possible answers on one side and the correct answer on the other side. It’s another way to share your family history.

Speaking of cards, you may want to use The Family Table conversation starters: www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/family-table

The wonderful thing about this type of game is that the cost can be little to nothing, the time frame can be minutes to hours, and in the end, everyone wins if they participate in any way. If you’d like to “sweeten the pot,” the prize could be a little dessert for everyone.

Savor (the Savings)

Exploring online resources can help you put your ingredients to good use and avoid wasting valuable ingredients in your cupboard or refrigerator. Sometimes you can substitute an ingredient you have on hand for an ingredient that you need. Search online for “NDSU Extension Ingredient Substitutions” for a convenient guide.

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