

COOKING GREEN

Breakfasts for a Healthy Environment

by Kay Bushnell

Rather than skip breakfast why not consider some easy options that fit into a busy schedule. Mental motivation helps to set environmentally friendly guidelines. Traditional breakfast menus rely heavily on eggs, dairy products, and pork, foods whose production in today's animal factories causes serious water and air pollution. The factory style method of raising animals today also incorporates widespread use of antibiotics, contributing significantly to the proliferation of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. To form new breakfast habits it may be helpful to change habitual perceptions of what constitutes a good breakfast. New habits can define plant foods as breakfast standards. Here are a few ideas.

Breakfast on a rushed morning need not be haphazard. Nancy Berkoff, R.D., a professional chef, suggests filling a blender with nourishing ingredients the night before, refrigerating it overnight, then blending it for a minute or two in the morning. Nutrient-packed combinations of frozen strawberries, wheat germ or ground flax seeds, chunks of fresh orange, soy yogurt, rice milk or soy milk, fresh or canned pineapple, applesauce, peanut or almond butter, apple juice concentrate, and fresh fruit in season make delicious breakfast smoothies. If you choose to take the smoothie with you, pour it into a thermos, where it will be kept cold as you sip it throughout the morning. Whole grain muffins can accompany the smoothie to create a healthful beginning to any day.

Whole grain hot or cold cereal is another excellent choice for breakfast and can be topped with a plant-based "milk". These delicious beverages, now common in mainstream markets, are made with soybeans, rice, oats, or nuts and are surprisingly tasty. Try a variety of plant-based beverages until you discover your favorites. Some people have made the tasting of plant-based milks the focus of a social event, a memorable and educational experience for all.

Both of the following recipes conform to The American Dietetic Association's recommendations for healthful eating. The recipes' ingredients are mostly whole and unprocessed, rich in naturally occurring beneficial plant chemicals and antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Both recipes can be made ahead and will be ready to nourish busy people as they start their day.

