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Your Corner...

Here we are heading for springtime and summer. Frequently we will once again include the humble 'Bircher müesli' in our menu plans as is custom in Switzerland and in many other countries.

You may have your own 'composition of the Bircher müesli', but here is one that stood the test of time in our household:

50 gr Rolled Oats
60 gr Raisins or Sultanas
200 ml Milk or Condensed Milk
40 gr nuts, walnuts or almonds
100 ml apple cider or juice
3 or 4 grated apples
1 or 2 grated pears
or any other fruit of the season
juice of 1 lemon or/and orange
small carton of yoghurt
4 to 7 tablespoons of
sugar/or honey
Mix all ingredients and enjoy !

A recent publication supplied by SRI - swissinfo.org

Swiss Bircher müesli enters Guinness Book of Records

Bircher müesli was developed by a Swiss physician, Maximilian Oskar Bircher-Benner. Switzerland's world famous dish, Bircher müesli, has entered the Guinness Book of Records after more than a tonne of the stuff was mixed and eaten in Zurich.

Four hundred kilos of müesli, 425 litres of milk, 20 litres of orange juice and 20 litres of lemon juice, 80 kilos of strawberry yogurt, 200 kilos of sliced apples, 50 kilos of bananas, and 75 kilos of strawberries went into the record-breaking mixture.

Happily for the organisers, more than 5,000 people arrived armed with spoons to polish off the mammoth Bircher müesli.

The dish was developed in Zurich at the turn of the last century by a Swiss physician, Maximilian Oskar Bircher-Benner. He created müesli after noticing that many of his patients, both rich and poor, suffered from an unbalanced diet. Benner was born the son of a lawyer in 1867 in canton Aargau. He went to medical school in Zurich, before setting up his own business in the working class area of Aussersihl. The Aargau physician soon found that many of his patients suffered from malnu-

trition. Benner grew convinced that the best way to change this situation was to invent a preparation based on raw cereals, fruit and vegetables, instead of relying on meat. He named his recipe "Apfeliätspeise", or "Dietary Apple Meal". In a book about müesli, Albert Wirz wrote that friends of Benner's said he found inspiration for his recipe while visiting huts in the mountains. But other researchers say the origins of the dish lie in Pakistan's Himalayas. Initially, Benner did not have any success with his nutrition theory. In 1900, the physician was publicly discredited by the Zurich medical profession after disclosing his innovative concept.

Good health in those days was considered to result from a sufficient amount of meat and milk. However far from being discouraged, Benner continued to treat his patients with müesli at his sanatorium. He also encouraged physical exercise.

Today, müesli is mainly considered as a breakfast dish. It contains ground cereals mixed with fruit and nuts. The various types of müesli available on the market, however, no longer reflect the original dish, which is considered too sour for contemporary tastes. Added to this, many brands and substantial amounts of sugar, turning the dish into a calorie bomb.

Good news for Lovers of Chocolate

The power of Chocolate

Here is some good winter news! Two Australian scientists, Dr. John Ashton and Suzi Ashton have recently written a book called 'A Chocolate a Day Keeps the Doctor Away'. Now this is a change from the 'apple a day'! In this book it is claimed that:

* A piece of chocolate a day is even better than a glass of red wine a day. Apparently chocolate is very rich in antioxidants that may protect against cancer. (Better for driving a motor car too!)

* Chocolate is neutral to heart disease and can improve cholesterol levels.

* Chocolate is an outstanding source of chromium, which is important in the metabolism of carbohydrates, and magnesium.

How much should you eat?

Well, no 'pig outs' are allowed - the recommendation is for max. of 50 gr per day. And unlike red wine, you can have it in the morning, in your car, in your desk drawer or on the run! (But of course it should be Swiss chocolate by preference! Ed.) Enjoy the rest of the winter and the start of Spring!

Trudy and Doris.

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