Study: Diet contributes to laziness

By Elise Craig, Outside

A study out of UCLA suggests that eating a consistent diet of processed foods and carrying extra weight causes people to become tired and inactive—not the other way around. But on the upside, it indicates that a few processed food binges isn't enough to impair our motivation.

Researchers fed 32 rats two different diets – one a normal diet of foods like ground corn and fish meal, the other a processed diet with ingredients like corn starch, sucrose, and soybean oil. After three months, the rats on the processed diet had grown obese; they also took much longer breaks during tasks than the leaner rats.

After six months, the rats switched diets for nine days. The obese rats' weight and responses to tasks didn't improve, but the leaner rats' weight stayed about the same, and their responses to the tasks weren't impaired.

Read the whole story

K's Kitchen: Forever meringue challenged

By Kathryn Reed

I am so meringue challenged it’s scary.

I tried channeling my mother, but instead I just heard laughter of my three older sisters. Not good when one is in the middle of baking.

When mom was in Tahoe for a few weeks last summer one of the things I wanted to do was make a lemon meringue pie with her. This is because I can never get the meringue to seal on the crust. It always pulls away.

Mom has been my baking teacher since I was a little girl standing on a chair pouring ingredients into the mixer.

So, last summer we went about making the pie. I watched intently as she put large dollops of meringue near the edge of the pie. I listened to her advice. I was sure I had it.

Wrong.

I just made a pie on my own this week because I was given lemons from a friend in the Bay Area. (It’s so hard to pay grocery store prices for lemons after you grow up with a lemon tree out back.)

The pie tastes good. It’s just not pretty. And apparently it is not something I’m going to make for others. Of course that means more pie for us, so it’s the not the worst thing in the world.

I make my pie crust from scratch. A store bought one will suffice.

**Lemon Meringue Pie**

1 9-inch baked pie shell

1½ C sugar

1/3 C cornstarch

1½ C water

3 egg yolks, slightly beaten

3 T butter

4 T lemon juice

1 1/3 T grated lemon rind

Mix sugar, cornstarch and water in saucepan. Stir until mixture is thick and boils.

Add egg yolks. Mix for about 1 minute

Remove from heat. Add butter, lemon juice, rind. Stir until butter is melted.

Pour into baked pie shell. Top with meringue. Bake at 400 degrees for 8-10 minutes, until peaks are brown.

Serve once it cools.

Meringue

3 egg whites

¼ tsp cream of tartar

6 T sugar

Beat all ingredients together until stiff.

Whole grains are not all the same

By Allison Aubrey, NPR

We've all heard the advice to eat more whole grains, and cut back on refined starches.

And there's good reason. Compared with a diet heavy on refined grains, like white flour, a diet rich in whole grains – which includes everything from brown rice to steel-cut oats to farro – is linked to lower rates of heart disease, certain cancers and Type 2 diabetes.

So when it comes to choosing bread, experts say, you want to move away from the white loaves in the grocery aisle. That's because white flour is a high-glycemic food– like sugar.

"That white bread is going to digest much more quickly, leading to a surge and crash in blood sugar that may stimulate hunger later in the meal, but also raise risk for diabetes and heart disease," says David Ludwig, physician of Boston Children's Hospital.

But when you start looking for alternatives, it's worth noting that not all loaves labeled "whole grain" or "whole wheat" are

created equal. And that’s because wheat is milled in different ways.

Read the whole story

Food fraud a growing concern for U.S. consumers

By Jennifer Schlesinger and Sheila Dharmarajan, CNBC

From meatballs made with horse to fake extra virgin olive oil and salmonella in peanuts, food fraud has been grabbing national headlines. And, according to experts, the problem is only increasing with rising food costs and more widespread importation of food.

The Food and Drug Administration says 15 percent of the U.S. food supply is imported and experts say food fraudsters are using the difficulty in tracing foreign imports to their advantage. The largest food fraud in U.S. history was when Chinese honey was shipped through other Asian nations to disguise its origins and evade import duties of $180 million, according to the Department of Justice.

The Department of Agriculture predicts food prices will rise between 2.5 and 3.5 percent this year. And while the consumer price index was up 0.1 percent in February, the food index rose more sharply, at 0.4 percent. The March consumer price index will be released on April 15.

Read the whole story

Dieters move away from calorie counting

By CBS News

The calorie counting that has for decades defined dieting is giving way to other considerations, like the promise of more fiber or natural ingredients. That shift in focus is chipping away at the popularity of products like Diet Coke, Lean Cuisine and Special K, which became weight-watching staples primarily by stripping calories from people's favorite foods.

Part of the problem is that "low-calorie" foods tend to make dieters feel deprived. Now, people want to lose weight while still feeling satisfied. And they want to do it without foods they consider overly processed.

It's not that people don't care about calories anymore. Nutrition experts still say weight loss comes down to burning more calories than you eat.

But dieters are sick of foods that provide only fleeting satisfaction and seem to leave them hungrier. The new thinking is that eating foods with more protein or fat will make dieters less likely to binge later, even if they're higher in calories.

Read the whole story

Mobile food pantry to stop in South Lake Tahoe

The Food Bank of El Dorado County will be in South Lake Tahoe to host a hunger response network meeting April 23 from 10-11am at the American Legion Hall.

Hunger response agencies, organizations and individuals in South Lake Tahoe who would like to attend this meeting are asked to contact Carey Fong at 530.621.9950 or cfong@foodbankedc.org.

The Food Bank is seeking assistance from the South Lake Tahoe community to conduct a hunger study to be able to understand the area's needs and how the Food Bank can better serve the Tahoe community.

The Food Bank will bring its Mobile Food Pantry that day, too. It will be at the American Legion while others are meeting.

The Food Bank will provide one allocation of groceries per household.

Each week the Food Bank travels to a different city within the county distributing enough food for up to 150 families.

For more information on how to give or get help, call us at 530.621.9950 or email info@foodbankedc.org.

Nevada food exports hit a

record

Nevada’s food and agricultural exports have surged by 17 percent in the last two years.

Food and agriculture products are Nevada’s ninth largest export category followed by precious metals and stones. The top four markets for Nevada food and agriculture products in 2013 were Canada, China, Mexico and Japan.

The majority of these exports – 94.8 percent – comprise 10 product categories that include cereals, flour and starches, beverages and spirits, grains and seed, fruits and vegetables, trees, plants and sugar-based products.

Export sales in 2012 were $117.4 million, while 2013 exports were $137 million.

“This is great news for Nevada’s food and agriculture industries,” Jim Barbee, director of the Nevada Department of Agriculture, said in a statement. “We look forward to further growth and increased job creation throughout the sector.”

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, for every $181,000 in export sales, one job is created and pays 17 percent better than a job not associated with exporting. In Nevada, that means 756 high end jobs were created in 2013 due to the state’s food and agriculture exports.

State exports in 2013 for all industries totaled $8.7 billion, down from $10.26 billion in 2012. The largest decrease was seen in precious metals and stones, which could be explained by a drop in the price of gold.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Study: Coffee linked to lower risk of liver cancer

By Karen Kaplan, Los Angeles Times

In their continuing quest to prove that coffee is indeed a health food, medical researchers analyzed the health records of nearly 180,000 Americans and determined that the ones with a daily java habit were less likely to get a common type of liver cancer than their less-caffeinated counterparts.

The study, presented this week at the American Association for Cancer Research's annual meeting in San Diego, may not be enough to get your coffee break covered by your health insurance, but the results were striking.

Compared with people who drank no more than six cups of coffee per week, those who drank one to three cups per day were 29% less likely to develop hepatocellular carcinoma, or HCC, which is the most common form of liver cancer. Serious coffee drinkers – those who downed four or more cups per day – were 42 percent less likely to be diagnosed with the disease.

Read the whole story

Beef prices sizzling in the

U.S.

By David Pierson and Tiffany Hsu, Los Angeles Times

Come grilling season, expect your sirloin steak to come with a hearty side of sticker shock.

Beef prices have reached all-time highs in the U.S. and aren't expected to come down any time soon.

Extreme weather has thinned the nation's beef cattle herds to levels last seen in 1951, when there were about half as many mouths to feed in America.

The retail value of "all-fresh" USDA choice-grade beef jumped to a record $5.28 a pound in February, up from $4.91 the same time a year ago. The same grade of beef cost $3.97 as recently as 2008.

Read the whole story

K's Kitchen: 3 Pepper Pasta

By Kathryn Reed

Easy, tasty meals are ideal during busy weeks.

The recipe below is one of my go-to dishes when I don't have a lot of time to be in the kitchen. And it's also one of those recipes where there are leftovers.

It has been years since I've bought prepared pesto from the store. Instead, I make a ton of pesto at the end of summer or early fall and then freeze it so I have it on hand throughout the winter/spring until the farmers' markets start up again so

I can get fresh basil. This isn’t to say prepared pesto should not be used.

The peppers can be of any color. And you don’t have to use three different colors. But the more color, the prettier it is going to be. Red, yellow and orange peppers are all naturally sweeter than green bell peppers.

Chop all the veggies into bite size or smaller pieces.

I use spaghetti for the pasta, but I’m sure a different type would be just fine.

The most difficult thing about this recipe is mixing the ingredients together so there is a little of everything in each bite.



3 Pepper Pasta

Olive oil

1 medium onion, chopped

1 each green, yellow and red pepper, chopped

1 14½-ounce can chopped tomatoes

1 tsp basil

½ tsp oregano

Pepper

¼ C pesto

Pasta

Cook pasta according to directions.

Coat saucepan with olive oil. Add onion and peppers. Cook until soft. Add tomatoes and seasoning. Cook another five minutes.

Drain pasta. Add pesto. Thoroughly coat pasta.

Return pasta to pan. Add vegetable mixture to pasta. Mix and serve.