



Media Alert (Feb. 9, 2011)
For Immediate Release

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SPAM® Recipe Sends Montana Mom & Daughter to SPAM JAM® Waikiki

Wheat Farmer Wins National Honors with State Fair "SPAMARONI™ & Cheese Swaddlers"

Linda Graft of Montana has won the "Great American SPAM® Championship," an annual recipe competition held at state and county fairs across the country. The competition called for creative macaroni and cheese-inspired SPAM® dishes. Over 800 people participated.

Graft's "SPAMARONI™ & Cheese Swaddlers" won out of 26 finalist recipes, blue ribbon winners from the state fairs of Minnesota, Texas, New York, New Mexico, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and others. Contenders included SPAM-APOLIS™ Quesadillas, a Mac & Bleu Cheese SPAM® Torte, Smoked SPAMICOTTI™, Tuscan SPAM® Pasta Pizza, and SPAMTASTIC™ Turkey Tetrazzini, among others.

Hormel Foods Test Kitchen Professionals conducted the grand prize judging at year-end and ranked Graft's dish the highest in key criteria: Taste, Originality and Presentation. She wins an all-expense-paid trip for two to SPAM JAM® Waikiki on April 30, 2011.

The contest asked participants to spice up their "mac 'n cheese" with SPAM® products, limiting the ingredients to 10. For her delicious dish, Graft combines SPAM® Classic with Cheddar and Monterey Jack cheeses, elbow macaroni, evaporated milk, and green chilies for a kick. She "swaddles" her mixture in crescent roll dough and tops the pockets with egg white and sesame seeds. She says they're tasty, hearty and portable.



Graft became a SPAM™ fan through the Montana State Fair's annual best SPAM® recipe contest in Great Falls. She confesses that at one time, the only thing she could cook was spaghetti. Graft crafted her kitchen skills after marrying her husband, David in 1975. She moved from her self-described "California country-club life" to a large Montana ranch. With the help of her mother-in-law, she learned to prepare a variety of meals for a varying number of people. She looks forward to her Hawaii trip she will take with her daughter.

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**LINDA GRAFT'S
SPAMARONI™ & CHEESE SWADDLERS**

Ingredients:

1 cup dry small elbow macaroni
1 (12-ounce) can SPAM® Classic, minced
1 cup evaporated milk
2 tablespoons chopped green chilies
1 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
1 cup shredded mild Cheddar cheese
4 slices Pepper Jack cheese, chopped
2 (8-ounce) cans crescent seamless dough sheets
(or 2 cans crescent roll dough)*
1 egg white, beaten
Sesame seeds

Cooking Directions:

Cook macaroni for 10 minutes; drain. In bowl, combine macaroni with SPAM® Classic, evaporated milk, green chilies and the shredded and sliced cheese. Stir mixture for 2 minutes to soften the cheese; set aside. Remove crescent dough sheets from packages and cut each rectangle into 4 squares (you should have a total of 8 squares). Place 1/2 cup of the macaroni mixture in the center of each crescent square. Pull up corners, pinch seams together and twist tops ends. Place filled squares on ungreased baking sheets. Brush each square with egg white and sprinkle with sesame seeds over the top. Bake at 375 degrees F for 15 minutes or until golden brown. Serves 8.

* If using crescent roll dough, roll out crescent rolls (2 triangles together) to make a square.



Background

- Fun Fact: Placed end to end, east to west and above the mountains, how many cans of SPAM® products would it take to stretch across the entire state of Montana?
Nearly 8.9 million cans of SPAM® products. (Specifically: 8,854,560 cans!)
- Graft enjoyed SPAM® products as a kid and "re-discovered" them through the fair's contest. Her first-ever entry was a SPAM-CHILADA™ Casserole. While she still makes the dish to this day, in 2004 it did not make the judges' cut. Actually, winning completely eluded her for six years, until 2010.
- When Graft isn't out on the ranch, she is in the kitchen cooking for up to 10 hired hands. "Day to day life is all 'very western,' up here." she shares. "My inspiration was wanting something both hearty and portable." About her grand prize swaddlers she offers this added tip: "Use a box mac and cheese. It saves time, money and makes this recipe easy enough for an 8-year-old to make!"
- As the national SPAM® Champion, Graft could have selected the alternate award, a \$3,000 cash prize, but chose the trip to attend her first-ever SPAM JAM® event! She's bringing her daughter Arin, who lives in Austin, Texas.
- Graft's grand prize winning recipe now ranks alongside past national winners such as: SPAM® Fusion Fajitas (from a San Diego stay-at-home mom); Mini SPAM® Nacho Burgers (Colorado software engineer); SPAM® Cupcakes (made in the back of a Kansas woman's RV); SPAMSGIVING™ Day Delight (Minneapolis artist); SPAMIGO™ Green Chili Stew (Los Angeles lawyer); and Island Teriyaki Bites (Texas Mom and Beastie Boys fan).
- The contest began in 1991, marking 2010 as the 20th anniversary of the SPAM® contest. This is the first time a grand prize winner hails from Montana.
- Host fairs include Graft's Montana State Fair and 24 other large state and county fairs across the U.S. First place means a blue ribbon, a cash prize (up to \$150) and a shot at national honors.

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Photos, recipes and press release available for download at www.blueribbongroup.net:
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