

Have a Healthy Holiday Season

Thoughts from our Dietitian - Sara Meloy

Holiday foods are often riddled with guilt, whether it comes from portion sizes, high sugars, or overall calories. There are some simple ways to help to feel better in control of our choices as we gather for a season of quality time with loved ones in an atmosphere of gratitude, without feeling like we're depriving ourselves of all the fun and tasty eats.

1. **Include Extra Vegetables** - To follow the healthy eating plate guidelines for Americans, it is recommended to make half of your meal fruits and vegetables. This can include a beautiful variety of colors by including squashes, carrots, zucchini, brussels sprouts, broccoli, beets, and so many more. These are foods that provide a robust variety of vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals, but also important fiber to keep the digestive tract healthy. This fiber also helps us to feel better satisfied with smaller helpings and keep us satisfied for longer periods of time.
2. **Don't Skip Meals** - Skipping meals is a common practice on holidays to help manage calorie intake, or allow adequate room for our favorite foods. Skipping meals can actually work against these goals. This has detrimental affects on our metabolism and more likely increases the calories we consume at meals later in the day.
3. **Stay Hydrated** - Don't forget to drink plenty of water. With the special holiday foods, also tends to come special holiday beverages. Increases in caffeine and alcohol intake can cause more dehydration. Holiday foods also tend to have higher levels of sodium which cause more fluid retention and bloating. Drinking plenty of water helps to balance out these symptoms.
4. **Try Some Recipe Alterations** - Simple swaps can help to make recipes healthier and lower calorie. Substituting plain Greek yogurt for sour cream in recipes reduced saturated fat and increases protein significantly. Using low sodium broths and canned goods reduces sodium content by at least 25% of the original product. Switching from white bread products to whole grain increases fiber to help you feel full longer and keep you gut microbiota healthy. These are just a few among many others to consider.
5. **Savor** - Take time to eat slowly and enjoy when you finally get to sit down to eat. Eating quickly causes symptoms of bloating, indigestion, and reflux. It can also allow for larger portions to be consumed at one time. It is recommended to take at least 20 minutes to finish the meal and allow for 15 minutes to pass before deciding on second helpings or desserts.



6. Get up and move - Activity is another great way to spend time together with friends and family. Whether it's taking a walk in the neighborhood, tossing a football, or dancing to your favorite holiday songs, activity is also a great way to help you feel your best during the season. Activity helps to raise metabolism and aids in digestion. Studies also show that individuals who include exercise regularly in their routine feel that they better manage their stressors... and who said the holidays are stress free?

Check out some fun and different recipes to add a little more variety to your holiday meal from The Pioneer Woman

Ultimate Winter Salad

YIELDS:	PREP TIME:	TOTAL TIME:
4 - 6 serving(s)	20 mins	20 mins

FOR THE SALAD:

- 6 oz. shredded kale
- 1/2 small lemon, juiced
- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 oz. shredded vegetables, such as Brussels sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots
- 2 medium apples, cored and diced
- 1 1/2 c. candied pecans
- 4 oz. crumbled goat cheese
- 1 1/2 c. roasted butternut squash
- 1/2 c. pomegranate arils

FOR THE DRESSING:

- 1/2 c. red wine vinegar
- 4 tsp. whole grain or dijon mustard
- 4 tsp. pure maple syrup
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1/2 c. extra-virgin olive oil



Directions

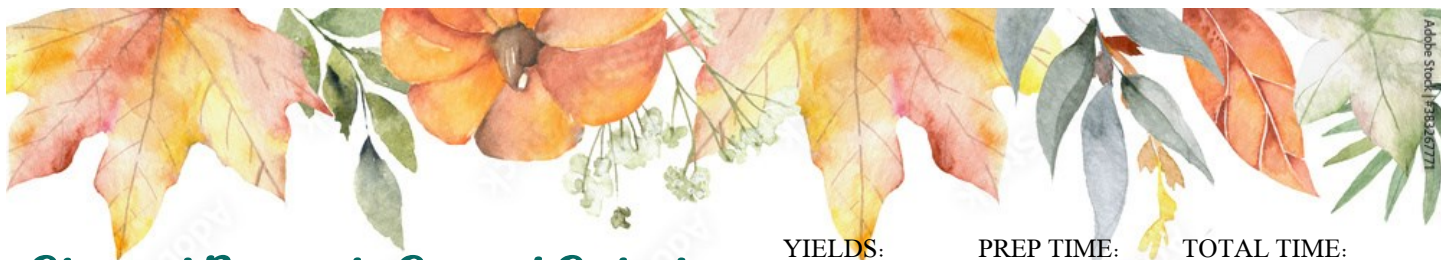
Put the shredded kale in a very large salad bowl. Add lemon juice and extra-virgin olive oil. Use your hands to massage the lemon juice and olive oil into the greens, about a minute or so. The greens should wilt slightly and take on a deep green color.

Add the other shredded vegetables to the bowl as well as the chopped apple.

Make the dressing by combining all of the dressing ingredients in a mason jar. Shake vigorously for 30 seconds and then pour it over the salad. Mix well.

Add the pecans, crumbled goat cheese, butternut squash, and pomegranate arils on top. Serve.





Shaved Brussels Sprout Salad

YIELDS: 10 - 12 serving(s) PREP TIME: 20 mins TOTAL TIME: 35 mins

- 2 lb. Brussels sprouts
- 1/2 c. olive oil
- 1/4 c. lemon juice
- 2 tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp. honey
- 2 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 1 tsp. ground black pepper, divided
- 1 c. dried, sweetened cranberries
- 1 c. grated sharp white cheddar cheese
- 1/2 c. toasted, sliced almonds
- 1/4 c. chopped parsley leaves



Trim the stem end of each Brussels sprout. (Save the bright green leaves that fall off and transfer them to a large mixing bowl.)

Place the Brussels sprouts cut side down on a cutting board and slice very thin (about 1/8-inch thick.) Transfer to the mixing bowl with the leaves.

Combine the olive oil, lemon juice, Dijon mustard, honey, 1 teaspoon of salt, and 1/2 teaspoon black pepper in a mason jar with a tight-fitting lid. Seal and shake well to combine. Pour over the Brussels sprouts. Season with the remaining 1 teaspoon of salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper and mix well to combine. Let rest for 15 minutes.

Add the cranberries, cheddar cheese, almonds, and parsley. Toss and serve immediately, or store, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 4 hours.

Apple-Cranberry Stuffing

YIELDS: 8 - 10 serving(s) PREP TIME: 35 mins TOTAL TIME: 1 hr 35 mins

Spread out the bread cubes on 2 baking sheets, loosely cover, and let dry out for 24 to 48 hours.

When you're ready to cook, preheat the oven to 375°F.

In a large Dutch oven, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onion and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Add the apples and cook, stirring occasionally, until they begin to soften, about 5 minutes more. Add the sage, thyme, and salt, and stir to combine.

Add 3 1/2 cups of broth to the Dutch oven. Bring it to a simmer and cook until the apples are just tender, 6 to 7 minutes. Remove from the heat. Add the dried cranberries, then stir in the bread cubes and toss until the bread is evenly soaked, adding the remaining 1/2 cup of broth, if needed. Stir in the parsley.

Transfer to a 13-by-9-inch baking dish. Bake, uncovered, until golden brown and crisp on top, 35 to 40 minutes. Let rest for 20 minutes before serving.

Ingredients

- 1 (16-oz.) loaf dense country white bread, cubed (about 14 cups)
- 3/4 c. unsalted butter
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 4 stalks celery, chopped
- 3 small Gala apples, chopped
- 1 tsp. dried sage
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 4 c. low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 c. dried cranberries
- 1 c. fresh parsley, chopped





Butternut Squash Casserole

YIELDS:	PREP TIME:	TOTAL TIME:
8 - 10 serving(s)	25 mins	1 hr 20 mins

Preheat the oven to 400°F. In a 13-by-9-inch baking dish, toss together the butternut squash, parsnips, olive oil, sage, 2 teaspoons salt, 1 teaspoon pepper, and thyme. Bake until the squash and parsnips are tender, 1 hour to 1 hour 20 minutes, stirring every 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the bacon in a large skillet over medium heat, turning occasionally, until crisp, 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer the bacon to a paper towel-lined plate. Let stand until cool enough to handle, then crumble into large pieces.

Add the onion to the bacon drippings and cook over medium, stirring, until softened and golden, 25 to 35 minutes. Add the kale, butter, vinegar, remaining ½ teaspoon salt, and remaining 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Cover the skillet and cook until the kale is wilted, 1 to 2 minutes, stirring once. Remove from heat.

Add the kale mixture and bacon to the butternut squash mixture in the baking dish. Gently mix together and spread into an even layer. Sprinkle with the cheese.

Bake until the cheese is melted, about 5 minutes. Sprinkle with almonds and garnish with sage and thyme leaves.

- 2 1/2 lb. peeled and chopped butternut squash
- 3 medium parsnips, peeled and chopped
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh sage leaves, plus leaves for garnish
- 2 1/2 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 1 1/2 tsp. black pepper, divided
- 1 1/2 tsp. chopped fresh thyme, plus leaves for garnish
- 6 slices bacon
- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 1 medium bunch kale, stemmed and chopped
- 2 tbsp. salted butter
- 1 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1 c. shredded gruyère (or swiss) cheese
- 1/4 c. smoked (or plain roasted) almonds, chopped

Roasted Cauliflower

YIELDS:	PREP TIME:	TOTAL TIME:
4 - 6 serving(s)	5 mins	30 mins

- 1 large head cauliflower (about 2 1/2 lbs.)
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 1/2 tsp. seasoned salt
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp. shaved parmesan cheese, optional
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley, optional

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil.

Cut the cauliflower into 2-inch pieces, about 1/2-inch thick.

Place the cauliflower pieces on the sheet tray. Drizzle with the olive oil and butter, and sprinkle with the seasoned salt and pepper. Mix well to thoroughly coat the cauliflower. Spread into a single layer.

Roast until the cauliflower starts to brown and the stems are tender when pierced with the tip of a paring knife, 30 to 35 minutes. Remove from the oven and toss with the parmesan cheese and parsley, if using.

