

FALL 2013

health | wellness | nutrition

WellCRAFTED™
wellness newsletter

Falling

behind is a good thing for our clocks (November 3rd) as we “gain” an hour in time. But, November is not a good time to fall behind on the awareness and acknowledgment of healthy lifestyle behaviors. We have put together some ideas for filling dark days with gratitude, the scoop on squash & spices, as well as how to revamp your family’s favorite comfort foods!

The Scoop On Squash

Squash was originally one of three primary plants cultivated by Native Americans. Botanically classified as a fruit, squash is embraced in culinary circles as a vegetable. While it is most common for people to consume the flesh of these plants, they are a very resourceful food as the seeds can be roasted and eaten or ground into a butter/paste, made into flour or pressed to create a vegetable oil. Additionally, the shoots and leaves are edible greens.

Nutritionally, squashes are an excellent source of carotenoids including alpha-carotene, beta-carotene, lutein, zeaxanthin, and beta-cryptoxanthin.

Spice Up Your Life

Forgo scented candles & embrace the wonderful aromas that come from holiday cooking!

Cinnamon

Aromatic essential oils are responsible for the flavor of cinnamon. Beyond its flavor appeal, cinnamon has been associated with a natural way to repel bugs, control blood sugar levels and possibly help in the prevention of Alzheimer’s and some cancers.

Nutmeg

Buying nutmeg whole ensures that you are not consuming any “filler” product, and prolongs the potency of the spice. In the US, nutmeg is commonly associated with eggnog. This Holiday season, expand your sense of nutmeg by trying it as a tasty addition to egg dishes like soufflé’s, frittats, quiches and scrambled eggs!

Sage

In American cooking, sage is most familiarly used in stuffing. Consider trading your basil for sage with olive oil and Parmesan over pasta. Sprinkle some sage in a lentil stew. And, for the more adventurous consider making some sage butter to compliment pumpkin ravioli or fresh fish!

Pumpkin Seed Recipe

- Preheat oven to 250 degrees
- Remove top from a medium sized pumpkin and scoop out seeds
- Clean and rinse seeds, discarding cracked seeds
- Gently boil cleaned seeds for approximately 10 minutes, drain and pat dry
- In a medium bowl, toss seeds with olive oil and sweet (cinnamon, all-spice...) or savory (garlic, rosemary...) seasonings to your preference
- Spread in a single layer onto a baking sheet, bake for 1 hour turning every 10 minutes until crisp.
- Cool and enjoy alone, mix into a trail mix or as sprinkle on top of a creamy soup or yogurt!

Squash Tasty Tips

Baking

Squashes can be cut in half with seeds removed first or baked whole (seeds removed after) for approximately 1 hour at 375 degrees.

This approach works best for soups.

Roasting

Remove skin of your favorite squash, cut into uniform 1” inch cubes, drizzle with olive oil and spices then bake for approx. 30 min. at 400°

Try combining with grains such as quinoa or brown rice!

Hubbard (Acorn) squashes have a delicate tasty flesh that is best eaten after fully roasting

Season with butter & sprinkled brown sugar!

Puree

Use a hand immersion blender and blend cooked squash with stock, herbs, seasonings and a touch of cream for a delicious soup

Try using milk or yogurt instead of cream!

Make a spread by Pureeing or mashing cooked squash with garlic & sweet or savory spices

Creates a colorful condiment for sandwiches!

Giving Thanks

Thanksgiving is often considered a favorite holiday by many! Consider these ideas for creating new rituals rooting in gratitude:

- Donate desirable food to a local food pantry
- If you are hosting a meal, ask invitees to bring a desirable food donation and deliver these items to a pantry or family in need
- Extend the invitation list to those who might be alone or lonely during this time
- Research what organizations are preparing Thanksgiving meals and volunteer your time to help
- Make place cards and write a personal note of gratitude inside the place card (**Invite everyone to read during the meal**)
- **Share the leftovers!** Ask attendees to bring leftover containers with them or have them on hand

Taking Comfort

The phrase “emotional eater” generally has a negative connotation and implies that someone is eating for the wrong reasons such as stress, anxiety or overwhelm. All of these feelings are quite common and sometimes feel amplified during the holidays. Not surprisingly, we find ourselves reaching for comfort foods and recipes to help restore those good feelings we once felt eating those same foods growing up. Consider the following approach to minimize the negative impact eating under duress can cause:

- **Make a list of foods or recipes you eat when undesirable emotions arise**
- **Refer to the Healthy Ingredient Substitutions list for ideas on how you can reinvent calorie-laden recipes into healthier renditions**
- **Allow yourself a controlled quantity or portion of the comfort food**
- **Consider non-food strategies as a long-term goal**

Healthy Ingredient Substitutions

Comfort Food Ingredients	Healthier Options
Sautéing Vegetable or protein in butter	Sauté in beef, chicken or vegetable stock
1 cup flour in recipes when baking	1 cup rinsed & drained pured black beans
Sugar	Unsweetened applesauce *Use same amount of applesauce but decrease quantity of other liquids by ¼ cup for every cup of sugar
1 cup butter	1 cup avocado puree or mashed bananas *Works well in chocolate brownie or cake recipes
1 cup cream	1 cup evaporated skim milk
Mashed potatoes	Mashed turnips or cauliflower *Consider a partial or full swap and add herbs and Parmesan
Bread crumbs	Rolled oats
Ground beef	Ground turkey or chicken breast *Look at ingredients on packaged ground poultry to make sure it is meat and not skin
Spaghetti, angel hair or linguine	Spaghetti squash (seasonal!)
Sour cream or mayonnaise	Greek yogurt
Iceberg lettuce	Arugula, kale, spinach
Tortilla wraps	Lettuce or cabbage leaves
Potato chips	Kale chips *Remove kale leaves from woody stem, tear into small pieces, place in bowl with small amount of olive oil and use hands to distribute oil and coat leaves, season, bake 10-15 minutes at 350 degrees
Salt	Herbs or citrus juice
Soda	Seltzer w/ sliced citrus
Frying	Oven baking
Boiling Vegetables	Steaming vegetables
Pouring olive oil	Spritzing olive oil *Fill spray bottle