

Healthy Holiday Cooking Tips

Healthy Holiday Cheer

Good alternatives to cocktails and calorie-laden drinks:

Sparkling juices

Warm apple cider

Spritzer made with fruit juice and seltzer

Flavored, calorie-free water

Low sodium vegetable juice

Light egg nog (or dilute regular with skim milk)

Soy nog (see recipe)

Warm Spiced Cider Punch (see recipe)

Appetizers

- ◆ Choose appetizers that help you get in your “5 a day” fruits and vegetables such as fresh vegetable platter or fruit kabobs
- ◆ Choose appetizers that add fiber by using whole grains and legumes such as roasted red pepper spread on whole wheat rounds or creamy garbanzo dip with whole wheat pita chips
- ◆ Contrast flavors and textures (crunchy, smooth, hot, cold, spicy)
- ◆ Choose variety for more nutrients
- ◆ Substitute low-fat or non-fat sour cream or yogurt for your dips
- ◆ Instead of regular nuts, try soy nuts

Soups

- ◆ Cook vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes, winter squash and potatoes until they are soft enough to puree and season
- ◆ Cook beans and puree at least part of them for a creamy texture
- ◆ Make cream soups using nonfat evaporated milk rather than cream
- ◆ Chill soups, stews and chili and then skim solid fat off top and discard

Salads

- ◆ These are a great way to incorporate fruits and vegetables into your menu. Use some of the seasonal items such as cranberries, pomegranate
- ◆ Use salsas and chutneys for dressing
- ◆ Choose low-fat salad dressings and mayonnaise
- ◆ Add pear, orange segments or dried fruit to a tossed green salad for pizzazz

Meat/Poultry/Fish

- ◆ Choose plain over self-basting. Baste with low sodium broth, wine or fruit juice, or place foil tent over as it cooks to avoid drying out
- ◆ Roast on rack to allow fat to drip into pan
- ◆ Remove any skin before cooking or before eating
- ◆ Marinate in fruit juice, wine or low fat sauces. Try rubbing dried herb and spice mixtures (oregano, basil, rosemary) onto surface for added flavor

Gravy/Condiments

- ◆ Use fat separator or zip-lock bag to obtain pan juices but eliminate fat layer (clip small whole in bottom of bag and allow only juices to flow out-discard fat layer and bag)
- ◆ Freeze pan drippings so you can remove hardened fat (save 56 grams of fat per cup)
- ◆ Skip drippings and use broth thickened with cornstarch or pureed potatoes-add broth for flavor and to thin down and prune, apricot or apple juice for a kick!
- ◆ Try pineapple salsa, mango chutney or fruit compote on top of or on the side of meat, poultry or fish for a easy and zippy flavor enhancer

Side Dishes

- ◆ Sweet potatoes are a rich source of beta-carotene! Offer baked or mash with vegetable broth or skim milk and add vanilla extract, lemon zest, orange juice, ginger and or nutmeg. If you insist on sweetness, skip butter and add thin layer of marshmallows or sweeten with apple or orange juice and ground cinnamon
- ◆ For mashed potatoes, use skim milk, garlic powder a little parmesan cheese, and just a small amount of low-calorie margarine. Another seasoning would be minced garlic or horseradish and puree with non-fat half –and-half product.
- ◆ For stuffing, use whole grain bread or wild or brown rice-add cranberries or other dried fruit and nuts

Fruit

- ◆ Stew mixed dried fruit with enough water to cover, season with ginger, cinnamon and apple juice concentrate until fruit is soft. Use as a condiment or side dish or serve over low-fat frozen yogurt or ice cream
- ◆ Add dried cranberries to whole grain stuffing or rice pilaf or green beans

Dessert

- ◆ Other dessert ideas :baked apples, fruit tarts or fruit pizza, bread pudding
- ◆ Try pumpkin-tofu pie for a custardy silken texture with no sat fat and soy isoflavones
- ◆ To intensify rich flavor of chocolate, add ½ to 1 tsp. instant coffee granules
- ◆ Try decreasing sugar in recipes by ¼ to 1/3-increase sweet spices or double vanilla or almond extract or add citrus zest for more flavor
- ◆ In baking substitute half of fat in recipe with applesauce or prune puree
- ◆ Try fat-free sorbet-lemon, or strawberry
- ◆ Consider poached pears-poach in dessert wine or cinnamon and clove-spiked apple cider
- ◆ When making holiday cookies, use small cookie cutters or cut bars into smaller pieces
- ◆ Top cakes with powdered sugar, cinnamon or cocoa instead of thick frosting
- ◆ Using a streusel topping rather than second pie crust saves fat and calories
- ◆ For pumpkin pie, use nonfat evaporated milk for filling and eliminate crust and serve soufflé style
- ◆ For fruitcake, add nontraditional fruits such as dried apricots, cherries, prunes and cranberries-substitute ground flaxseed for ¼ to 1/3 of butter

Snacks

- ◆ Add raisins, dried cranberries and pretzel sticks to a bowl of nuts to decrease calories and fat
- ◆ For a low-fat cheese dip, add diced tomatoes and chilies and serve with baked chips or fresh veggies