



ON THE TRACK TO BETTER HEALTH

A nutrition-based Newsletter from the Better Living for Texans Program

Holiday Newsletter

Even Better News about Thanksgiving and Christmas

At Thanksgiving and Christmas, many of us will enjoy sampling from a variety of holiday dishes ranging from old family recipes to the traditional favorites such as turkey, homemade stuffing, and pumpkin pie. Unfortunately, some of us worry that the holiday menus contribute to the development of poor eating habits and weight gain. While overindulgence can contribute to these health concerns, there is no real reason to be concerned if we eat wisely during the holidays. The reality is that the traditional Thanksgiving and Christmas meals have taken a bad rap over the years, because many traditional Thanksgiving and Christmas foods are some of the healthiest around.

The Harvard Medical School lists Turkey as among the leanest cuts of meat available. In fact, a “3-ounce serving of skinless white meat contains 25 grams of fat, and less than 1 gram of saturated fat.” Holiday foods like cranberries, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin are low in fat and calories and packed with potassium and other important vitamins. Also, pecans are a great source of heart-healthy fats.

Still, it is important to keep several things in mind to have a truly healthy holiday meal:

1. Avoid overeating. Portion control rather than stuffing yourself is always a good practice.
2. White meat of turkey is much leaner than the dark (removing the skin decreases the fat).
3. Pumpkin and sweet potato lose many health benefits when mixed with sugar, butter, eggs, and cream.
4. Avoid leaving foods out at room temperature for more than two hours.
5. Have small portions of dessert.
6. Slow down and savor your meal. Eating fast often results in eating more.
7. Wait about fifteen minutes to decide if you really have room for seconds.

[*www.health.harvard.edu/press_releases/traditional_thanksgiving_turkey_dinner](http://www.health.harvard.edu/press_releases/traditional_thanksgiving_turkey_dinner)

If you are interested in nutrition classes offered by Better Living for Texans, contact the Family and Consumer Sciences Agent at your local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service:

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November Fruit of the Month: Pumpkin

The bright orange color of pumpkins hints to the fact that they are packed with beta-carotenes, phytochemicals providing protection against cancer and other diseases. Vitamin A in pumpkins also benefits our eyes, skin, and cells.

November Recipe of the Month: *PUMPKIN BREAD* (Makes 2 loaves – 16 slices each)



Ingredients:

- 1 cup sugar
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 1 15 oz. can pumpkin puree
- 1 cup low-fat yogurt
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup raisins (optional)

Directions:

In a large bowl, beat together sugar, oil, pumpkin and /yogurt. In a medium bowl, sift together the dry ingredients: flours, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. Fold dry ingredients into the pumpkin mixture stirring just to moisten the dry ingredients. Stir in the raisins. Pour into two greased 9x5x3-inch loaf pans. Bake for 1 hour at 350 degrees or until pick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let cool for 10 minutes before removing from pan. Cool completely. Each slice has only 100 calories and 2 grams fat, and contains fiber from the whole grain.