

NEW JERSEY'S 100-MILE THANKSGIVING MENU

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Garden Plate

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Skinny sides

BY DIANE M. HENDERIKS

Thanksgiving is the time to reunite with friends and family, celebrate the gifts of nature and give thanks for our blessings. We gather with loved ones to a stunningly adorned table overflowing with holiday fare.

For many, the mere thought of Thanksgiving dinner brings to mind endless hours in the gym repenting for overindulgence. It's no wonder, since the average Thanksgiving dinner has more than 2,000 calories and a few days' worth of fat.

The turkey may be the centerpiece of the table but the true stars of the Thanksgiving feast are the side dishes — and that is where much of the fat and many of the calories are lurking.

This year, why not start a new tradition and modify some of your Thanksgiving favorites to make them a bit healthier? With a little help and minimal effort, you can cut down on fat, salt, sugar and calories without sacrificing flavor or feeling guilty about your choices — and your body will thank you.

And follow some sensible holiday tips to fully enjoy Thanksgiving dinner, and the entire holiday season, without feeling guilty or gaining weight.

- Don't go to a holiday dinner hungry. Have a wholesome breakfast and lunch and eat a light snack before you go. You are more likely to overeat and make unhealthy choices if you are famished.

- Stick to your exercise program. Physical activity can help regulate your appetite and burn off some of those extra holiday calories.

- Choose your drinks wisely. Alcohol is high in calories; one drink can contain from 150 to more than 400 calories.

- Deprivation leads to overindulgence. Taste everything you desire but watch the portions of high fat and high sugar items.



Photos by Luisa Pinzón

GREEN BEANS W/SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS, LEEK & TOASTED ALMONDS

Makes 8 6-ounce servings

- 2 pounds thin green beans, trimmed
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 8 ounces fresh shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and caps sliced thinly
- ½ cup low sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- ½ cup thinly sliced leeks, pale green and white parts only
- ½ cup slivered or sliced almonds, toasted
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

1. Cook beans in large pot of boiling water until just tender but still bright green, about 5 minutes. Drain. Rinse beans in very cold water, drain again and set aside.

2. In large skillet melt butter with oil over medium-high heat, add mushrooms and sauté until lightly brown and tender, about

5 minutes, drizzling with broth as needed to prevent sticking.

3. Add leeks and continue cooking, stirring often, until leeks soften, about 3-4 minutes. Drizzle with broth as needed to prevent sticking.

4. Remove from heat, add green beans and almonds to skillet, gently toss mixture together.

5. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

NOTE: As leeks grow, they collect dirt between the layers. Be sure to clean very well: slice thick root end and darker green leaf end off, leaving just pale green and white parts. Cut leek in half lengthwise and wash under running water, making sure to rinse between the layers. Lay on cutting board cut side down and slice into thin half-moons.

NUTRITION INFORMATION: 120 calories; 70 calories from fat; 4g protein; 12g carbs; 2g sugar; 8g total fat; 1.5g saturated fat; 5mg cholesterol; 4g dietary fiber; 380mg sodium; 6% Daily Values calcium; 10% Daily Values iron

DINNER PLATE DIAGRAM

Finally, fill your dinner plate this way:

- Fill half your plate with sauce-free, steamed, roasted or baked veggies. Not the starchy ones like potatoes, turnips, corn or peas — those count as starches.

- Select a total of 1 cup of cooked starches — rice, pasta, noodles, breads, stuffings and starchy veggies. One cup is about the size of a tennis ball.

- Choose 3 to 6 ounces of lean protein. A 3-ounce portion is about the size of a deck of cards.

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OVEN ROASTED BRUSSELS SPROUTS WITH TOASTED PECANS AND DRIED APRICOTS

Makes four 5-ounce servings

- 1 pound fresh Brussels sprouts, cleaned, trimmed & halved
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon rice wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons dried rosemary
- 1 teaspoon Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup pecans; lightly toasted and coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup dried apricots; coarsely chopped

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Place Brussels sprouts in a large bowl.
3. In a small bowl combine oil, garlic, vinegar, rosemary, salt and pepper. Whisk thoroughly.
4. Add mixture to Brussels sprouts and toss gently.
5. Place in an even layer on baking sheet(s).
6. Bake about 15 minutes until crisp/tender; shaking pan halfway through.
7. Remove from oven and stir in pecans and cranberries.

NUTRITION INFORMATION: 160 calories; 90 calories from fat; 4g protein; 19g carbs; 9g sugar; 9g total fat; 1g saturated fat; 0mg cholesterol; 5g dietary fiber; 780mg sodium; 6% Daily Values calcium; 15% Daily Values iron

CRANBERRY, ORANGE & GINGER RELISH

Makes 10 2-ounce servings

- 2 cups fresh cranberries
- ½ cup freshly squeezed orange juice
- 2 tablespoons honey
- ¼ cup finely chopped crystallized ginger
- ¼ cup fresh orange zest
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped orange segments
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped pears

1. Mix cranberries, juice, honey and ginger in a medium saucepan.
2. Cook over low heat for about 4 minutes until berries just begin to pop.
3. Remove from heat and stir in remaining ingredients.
4. Cool completely, cover and chill.

NUTRITION INFORMATION: 50 calories; 0 calories from fat; 0g protein; 14g carbs; 9g sugar; 0g total fat; 0g saturated fat; 0mg cholesterol; 1g dietary fiber; 0mg sodium; 2% Daily Values calcium; 2% Daily Values iron



MASHED SWEET POTATOES

Makes 8 6.5-ounce servings

- 4 large sweet potatoes
- 2 teaspoons light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice
- ¼ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 3 cups lowfat buttermilk
- ⅛ teaspoon cinnamon

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Place sweet potatoes on baking sheet and roast until tender — about 40 minutes.
3. For easy removal of skin, peel potatoes while they are still warm.
4. In a large bowl, whisk together sugar, syrup, orange juice, vanilla, cinnamon and 1½ cups of milk.
5. Add sweet potatoes and mash with potato masher, adding additional milk until desired consistency.

NUTRITION INFORMATION: 150 calories; 10 calories from fat; 5g protein; 30g carbs; 16g sugar; 1g total fat; 0.5g saturated fat; 5mg cholesterol; 3g dietary fiber; 110mg sodium; 10% Daily Values calcium; 2% Daily Values iron

TURKEY SAUSAGE, APPLE AND WALNUT DRESSING

Makes 16 6.5-ounce servings

- 12 cups day-old sliced whole wheat and multigrain bread
- 1 pound sweet turkey sausage, casings removed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 cups chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 pound apples (use a variety of sweet and tart), peeled, cored, chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary or 1 teaspoon dried
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme or 2 teaspoons dried
- Freshly ground black pepper; to taste
- 2 cups chopped walnuts
- 1 whole egg plus 2 egg whites; beaten to blend
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth

1. Preheat oven to 250°.
2. Place bread slices on baking sheets and bake until dry but not browned, about 20 minutes. Cool & transfer to very large bowl. (I use a huge stock pot.) Crumble bread into bite sized pieces.
3. Sauté sausage in large, heavy skillet over medium heat for about 10 minutes until cooked, breaking up with the back of a spoon. With a slotted spoon, transfer sausage to a bowl and set aside.
4. Add oil to same skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion, garlic, celery & apples and rosemary; sauté until leeks and celery soften — about 10 minutes.
5. Return sausage to skillet and toss to combine completely.
6. Pour mixture over bread. Add thyme, pepper and walnuts. Combine all ingredients together with your hands until evenly incorporated. (Can be made one day ahead of time. Cover and refrigerate).
7. When ready to bake: Preheat oven to 350°, mix eggs and 1 cup broth into stuffing.
8. Transfer to 13x9x2" lightly greased baking dish. Cover with foil and bake until heated through — about 40 minutes. Uncover and bake until brown on top — about 10 minutes.

NUTRITION INFORMATION: 300 calories; 150 calories from fat; 14g protein; 27g carbs; 7g sugar; 17g total fat; 2g saturated fat; 35mg cholesterol; 4g dietary fiber; 430mg sodium; 6% Daily Values calcium; 15% Daily Values iron