



HEALTHFUL HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

The holidays are filled with so many delicious meals, and there are so many opportunities to put a healthy spin on some of the classics. Enjoy a cranberry pear compote over blackened salmon to get those heart healthy omega-3 fatty acids, or have roasted acorn squash stuffed with wild rice and pecans to get in some delicious plant-based protein. Don't forget the sides! Try out butternut squash macaroni and cheese or creamy mashed cauliflower to get in some extra fiber and vitamins. This is a great time of year to experiment with some tasty mocktails too. You can sip on the flavors of the holidays, while making sure you are hydrated!



NATIONAL PEANUT BUTTER MONTH

The National Peanut Council reported that the average peanut farm is 200 acres, and one acre has enough peanuts to make 35,000 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches! That's a lot of peanuts! This plant-based, protein-packed, nutritious, and delicious spread is a staple in many homes around the world. It pairs well with everything from the classic lunchbox peanut butter and jelly staple, to chocolate, fruit, and even celery. When buying peanut butter, choose the natural kind to avoid additives and look for varieties without added sugars. Whether you are a creamy or chunky fan, give your oatmeal or yogurt a little extra flavor and protein with a tablespoon of peanut butter. Peanut butter is actually very easy to make. All you need is roasted peanuts and a food processor; no oil or liquid needed, just a little patience and you will have fresh peanut butter blended to your favorite chunkiness level!

CHEF'S TIPS

When cooking this holiday season (and all year round), keep these food safety tips in mind:

DEFROSTING:

Food should always be defrosted in the refrigerator or in the sink under cold running water. When defrosting a turkey, place in a pan on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator and allow 24 hours for every 5 pounds of turkey. Never defrost food at room temperature!

CLEANING:

Always clean your knives, cutting boards and prep areas with soap and warm water between tasks to avoid cross contamination.

TEMPERATURES:

Cook poultry to an internal temperature of 165°F. Always check the temperature at the thickest part of your roast. For turkey, this is the area where the thigh meets the breast.

TECHNIQUES:

To reduce to chance of foodborne illness, do not stuff your turkey. Bake stuffing in a separate pan to an internal temperature of 165°F.

LEFTOVERS:

Leftovers should not remain at room temperature for longer than 2 hours and should always be reheated to a minimum temperature of 165°F before consuming.

When storing leftovers, divide into shallow pans to allow for rapid cooling. Cover loosely until chilled to 40°F or below, then cover tightly, label, and consume within 3 days.

