

# Thanksgiving Light

*By Libby Mills*

## Talk Points

As much as we look forward to Thanksgiving dinner and all the ‘trimmings,’ we don’t look forward to all the extra calories, especially from carbohydrates and fat.

On most tables, however, there typically aren’t a lot of vegetables.

Here are several tips to lighten the table.

Eat with your eyes first.

- Creativity garnish sweet potatoes with cinnamon sticks, eye-catching stars of anis and fresh ground nutmeg. You’ll forget that last year the potatoes were topped with high calorie marshmallows and brown sugar.
- Medleys of vegetables are just one way to creatively mix colors, textures, and shapes. Try mixing vegetables with whole grains. Garnish with dried fruit or a sprinkle of nuts and a simple side can become a main attraction.
- Use smaller serving dishes for the higher carbohydrate mashed potatoes, stuffing and macaroni.
- Create abundance with several side dishes of vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, green beans, spinaches and cabbage.
- Make sure all the dishes on the table are passed to everyone.

Making vegetables special for a celebration

- Simply add different herbs and spices to the vegetables to make them special and enticing.
- Limit the number of new recipes to just a couple, and keep them simple.
- Add flavor by cooking in low-sodium, chicken, or vegetable broth.
- Keep their colors bright by not overcooking.
- Combine different vegetables, or add a few nuts or seeds. Zest from lemon, lime and oranges colorfully season green beans or broccoli.
- Garnish with sprigs of fresh rosemary, basil or thyme.

Avoid getting miserably over-stuffed.

- Make a plan. Decide how much of each food you have before you start serving it.
- Try to fill half of your plate with vegetables.
- Make commitment to eat some of each vegetable.
- Know there will be leftovers. You can always have seconds later.
- Drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- Savor the flavor by taking your time. Make Thanksgiving dinner last. More than 10 minutes.
- Keep in mid a serving size of vegetable is ½ cu cooked or 1 cup raw. Try to have a couple servings with Thanksgiving dinner.

Health benefits of a lighter Thanksgiving table:

- Feeling full, not stuffed like the turkey.
- Less likely to experience indigestion.
- Eating less fat, which means fewer calories.
- More fiber

## **Recipes**

### **Spiced Orange Baked Sweet Potatoes**

Bake sweet potatoes in orange juice with ground cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves. Serve halved drizzled with the remaining spiced orange juice or mashed with the orange juice. Garnish with cinnamon sticks, whole cloves, whole stars of anis and zest of orange.

### **Savory Rosemary Green Beans**

Stove or microwave cook green beans with low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth, one clove of peeled garlic, one bay leaf, fresh ground pepper and rosemary. Garnish with a sprig of rosemary. Try with broccoli and cauliflower, too.

### **Tomato Kraut**

Beautiful orange color and a great way to contrast the richness of the meal  
Rinse sour kraut. Cook with peeled or caned tomatoes. Add caraway or celery seeds for interest and flavor.