

Let's Talk Turkey for the Holidays

The culinary centerpiece of the American Thanksgiving meal, a golden-brown roast turkey, is only an annual tradition for many. With regards to nutrition and good health, however, turkey along with several traditional side dishes can be healthy meal options that should be enjoyed throughout the rest of the year, too.

Holiday Superfoods

Many traditional holiday foods are brimming with good nutrition, if prepared in a healthful way (not loaded with extra fat or sugar) and eaten in sensible portions. Here are 5 holiday superfoods that can also be enjoyed the other eleven months of the year.

Turkey

Skinless turkey breast is one of the leanest meat protein sources available. Turkey is low in saturated and total fat and has only 115 calories per 3 ounce serving. 'Stuffed' with the nutrients zinc, selenium and heart-healthy vitamins B-6, niacin, and B-12, turkey can help boost the immune system, protect cells against cancer and reduce heart disease risk.



Cranberries

These bold berries provide a natural defense against urinary tract infections, bacteria and viruses^{1,2}. An excellent source of Vitamin C, potassium and other phytonutrients, they may also protect against heart disease and certain cancers³. Opt for a fresh berry sauce made with juice, orange zest and a pinch of sugar. Freeze in small portions and add to yogurt, grains and lean proteins for a tasty, nutritious burst of flavor.

Pumpkin

This fiber-rich winter squash is full of healthy carotenoids, as evident by its deep orange color. These nutrients have been linked to lowering the risk of certain cancers, heart disease and age-related eye problems⁴. Canned pumpkin is an easy way to boost the nutritional value of soups, breads, puddings and baked goods year-round.



Sweet Potatoes

Similar in nutrients to pumpkin, eating potassium-rich potatoes can help lower blood pressure by counteracting the effects of sodium⁵. For a healthy lunch or side dish, serve them baked or mashed and sprinkle with cinnamon or a light drizzle of honey.

Cinnamon

This earthy spice is more than just a holiday garnish. One teaspoon of cinnamon has as many antioxidants as 1 cup of pomegranate juice or 1/2 cup blueberries. Emerging research suggests that some compounds in cinnamon may help regulate blood sugar levels⁶. Not just for sweets, cinnamon is also a great addition to savory dishes such as stews, pork and roasted vegetables.



References:

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