

# TIMES RECORD

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## Healthy Holiday

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By Pam Cloud

Remember how Grandma's turkey was bathed in butter, sweet potatoes were swimming in marshmallow goo and the green bean casserole was filled with rich, creamy mushroom soup and fried onions? Don't forget the pecan pie topped with a dollop of whipped cream.

Thanksgiving is the one occasion each year when we allow ourselves to indulge in the comfort foods of home and happiness.

But the calorie-laden foods don't necessarily remind us of health.

According to information from Wellspring Academies, a boarding school for overweight teens, the average person consumes 3,000 to 5,000 calories on Thanksgiving Day — more than double the recommended average of 1,500 to 2,000 calories per day.

Erin Gaughan, Wellspring chef, said Thanksgiving diners don't have to sacrifice taste for health during the holidays.

"Thanksgiving is the one holiday where we try to indulge more than we need to," said Gaughan, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, where she learned classical cooking with butter and cream.

While at Wellspring assisting youths with their diets, Gaughan has learned that many of cooking's tasty staples — butter, cream, sugar and fat — can be substituted with healthy alternatives.

Gaughan said with a turkey, the skin is where most of the fat is; if the skin is removed, the fat content is lowered.

"When you think about stuffing ... people add butter for a rich flavor," Gaughan said. "You don't need it. Add fat-free chicken stock. There's so many herbs in the mix, you're not losing any flavor."

With green bean casserole, Gaughan suggests using fat-free cream of mushroom soup and using only half the french-fried onions, crunching them and sprinkling them on top as a garnish, instead of putting them in the casserole as well.

The Harvard Medical School suggests that cranberries, sweet potatoes, pumpkin and pecans are some of the healthiest holiday foods, as long as they are consumed in moderation and without fat and sugar added.

"Cranberries are packed with dozens of antioxidants," a Harvard news release states. "If you make your own cranberry sauce from whole berries, you'll get a tastier and less sugary sauce than you can get out of a can."

Pumpkin is low in fat, low in calories and loaded with all kinds of good-for-you vitamins and minerals. And pecans are a good source of heart-healthy fat.

Gaughan said the oil and butter in basic pie dough recipes can be substituted with unsweetened applesauce, or phyllo dough, which has less fat, can be substituted for pie dough.

“Or another thing, you can make a pie without the crust at all,” Gaughan said. “It’ll mold itself to the pie plate.”

The most important thing to remember on Thanksgiving Day is to remember portion control.

“Make sure you don’t starve yourself all day,” Gaughan suggested. “And make sure you don’t graze.”

Gaughan and Wellspring Academy share the following healthy Thanksgiving recipes:

### **Roasted Whole Turkey Breast**

12-16 pound fresh turkey breast, bone-in

1 cup fresh herbs (thyme, rosemary and basil)

Spices to taste (Lawry’s seasoning, garlic salt and paprika)

No-calorie, nonfat cooking spray

Preheat oven according to directions on turkey. Chop fresh herbs and place in bowl. Add cooking spray.

Stuff 3/4 of the bowl of herbs under skin of turkey. Spray outside of turkey with spray and add remaining herbs and spices.

Roast according to directions.

### **Green Bean Casserole**

1 package (9 ounces) frozen French-style green beans

1 small can french-fried onions, crumbled

1 medium onion, chopped

1 can fat-free cream of mushroom soup

1/2 cup fat-free Cheddar cheese, shredded

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Saute onions until tender; add to green beans.

Add mushroom soup to green beans. Stir into mix. Mix in Cheddar cheese into green beans.

Cook for 20 minutes. Garnish with french-fried onions and cook an additional 5 minutes.

Makes 8 servings (1/4 cup each).

Nutritional information per serving: 65 calories, 0 g fat.

### **Very Low-Fat Mashed Potatoes**

2 potatoes, peeled and quartered

1/2 cup fat-free sour cream

1/2 cup fat-free chicken broth

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon white pepper

1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg (optional)

Peel and quarter potatoes. Boil until tender.

Drain potatoes and transfer to a large mixing bowl. On low speed, whip potatoes while slowly adding sour cream and chicken broth. Add salt, pepper and nutmeg.

Increase speed of mixer and whip potatoes until desired consistency.

Makes 8 servings (1/2 cup each).

Nutritional information per serving: 113 calories 0.17 g fat, 4.97 g protein.

Note: You also can add roasted garlic to this recipe for a special taste.

### **Cranberry Sauce**

1 package (12 ounce) fresh cranberries

1/2 cup water

1/2 cup Splenda sugar substitute (Note: Check label directions for ratio of artificial sweetener to

sugar)

Combine cranberries and water in a saucepan. Heat mixture until boiling; boil for 15 minutes. Allow mixture to stand for 10 minutes. Add sugar substitute to taste.

Makes 9 servings (1/4 cup each).

Nutritional information per serving: 21 calories, 0 g fat.

#### Low-Fat Pumpkin Cheesecake Pie

Graham Grape-Nuts Crumb Crust (for 9-inch pie or 9 to 12 muffin tins):

12 (2 1/2-inch) graham cracker squares

1/3 cup Grape-Nuts cereal

2 tablespoons granulated sugar

1 tablespoon hazelnut, walnut or canola oil

1 teaspoon unsalted butter, melted

1/2 large egg white

1 to 2 teaspoons fruit juice or water

Crumble the graham crackers into the bowl of a food processor and process until crumbs form.

Add the Grape-Nuts cereal, sugar, oil, melted butter, egg white and 1 teaspoon of juice or water.

Pulse until the crumbs are evenly moistened.

#### Filling:

1 1/2 cups (12 ounces) nonfat cottage cheese

1/3 cup (2 3/4 ounces) low-fat cream cheese, at room temperature

3 tablespoons nonfat vanilla yogurt

1/3 cup granulated sugar

1 1/2 tablespoons unsifted all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

2 large egg whites

1 1/2 cups canned pumpkin puree

1/3 cup dark brown sugar, packed

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

1/8 scant teaspoon ground cloves

1 generous pinch of salt

Position a rack in the top third of the oven and preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Press the Graham-Grape-Nuts Crumb Crust crumb mixture into a 9-inch pie plate or 9 to 12 muffin tins. Set aside.

Strain cottage cheese over a bowl, forcing out as much liquid as possible, making relatively dry curds. Transfer the cottage cheese to a food processor and process for 2 minutes or until absolutely smooth.

Add the cream cheese, yogurt, sugar, flour and vanilla. Process until smooth. Remove 1/3 cup of mixture and set aside. Add egg whites, pumpkin, brown sugar, spices and salt to the processor. Pulse until thoroughly blended. Pour the pumpkin mixture into the prepared crust or crusts, taking care not to dislodge the crumbs.

To make the marbled design, spoon 5 separate pools of the reserved cream cheese batter on the top of pumpkin mixture. Draw the tip of a knife through the contrasting batters in a swirling pattern.

Bake for 30 minutes or until the top of the pie is set and no longer sticky to the touch.

Cool the pie on a wire rack. Serve at room temperature. Refrigerate any leftovers.

Nutritional information per serving: 214 calories, 5 g fat, 1.6 g saturated fat, 8 g protein, 37 g carbohydrate, 8 mg cholesterol, 303 mg sodium.

Note: Gaughan pulled this recipe from a low-fat cooking Web site. She would substitute the granulated sugar with a sugar blend and would substitute the oil and butter with 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon unsweetened applesauce. In the filling, the dark brown sugar can be substituted with

a Splenda brown sugar, and fat-free cream cheese can be used instead of the low-fat cream cheese.