



With the holiday season drawing near, food is likely to be a focus for the next few months. From discovering new tastes and textures to sharing conversation and memories with your dining partners, enjoying food is a wonderful way to connect with yourself and others. This holiday season, make what you eat as healthful as possible. A well-rounded, healthy diet that focuses on whole foods will provide you with the nutrients, vitamins and minerals that can help to promote a healthy immune system and offer up much-needed

energy during the hectic holiday season. This issue of *Balanced Living* takes this into account, with information on healthy eating practices and cooking methods, nutrient-rich seasonal foods to add to your holiday meals and more. Enjoy!

Yours in health,

Andrew Weil, M.D.

4 Healthy Eating Practices To Try

Around this time of the year, we are reminded to be more thoughtful in our lives; this practice should extend to our eating, as well. From selecting the right foods to eating more mindfully, use the following suggestions to practice healthier eating.

- 1 Go Organic.** Organically grown fruits and vegetables appear to have higher [antioxidant](#) levels than conventionally grown foods. Data has also shown that levels of specific vitamins, flavonoids, and other health-protective compounds in organic foods are two or three times those found in matched samples of conventional foods. The reason for this lies in the nutrient density of the organic soil and the biodiversity of the soil microbiome. Moreover, eating [organic produce](#) minimizes the level of pesticide and herbicide residue in your body.
- 2 Eat Local.** By eating locally, you can minimize the amount of time that fresh fruit and vegetables travel from

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Healthy Cooking Methods

With the temperatures lowering and the holidays approaching, we tend to spend more time cooking at home. In addition to selecting fresh, local ingredients, the cooking method is also important to help preserve nutrients in food. Try the following, all recommended by Dr. Weil:

- 1 Stir Frying Or Steam Frying.** Stir-frying allows you to cook foods quickly, combining vegetables and protein. Just use small amounts of good oils (extra-virgin olive or organic expeller-pressed canola) and keep them below the smoking point. Another method is "steam frying" which involves sautéing food briefly in a little oil, then adding

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Quick Tip



Supplements For Gaps In Your Diet

Try as we may, eating healthy is not always an option. Luckily, supplements and vitamins can be helpful to cover gaps in the diet, especially for those who can't or don't eat well-balanced meals rich in antioxidants. Visit the [Weil Vitamin Advisor](#) to see what is recommended for you, based on your diet and lifestyle.

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the farm to your kitchen, minimizing the loss of vitamins and minerals due to lengthy transport.

3 Aim For Humanely Raised Foods.

Whenever possible, avoid meat that is sourced from [factory farms](#). Fresh, wild-caught cold-water fish; chickens and pigs raised in an organic, free-range environment; and cattle that is free of hormones (and grass-fed) are healthy choices. Buying from a local farmer can provide transparency that groceries may not. If you live in a "food desert," consider ordering organic and humanely reared foods online.

4 Focus On Your Food.

Eating mindfully means slowing down, expressing gratitude for the food we are eating, and paying attention to why we eat. By focusing all of your attention on the taste, texture, and aroma, you are more likely to enjoy the meal more.

The Slow Food Movement encompasses much of the above – it encourages people to slow the pace of life in order to truly savor fresh, local foods, and to focus on the pleasure of eating with friends and family sitting around the table.

Healthy Cooking Methods

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water, stock or wine and covering the pan. Allow the food to cook until it's almost done, then uncover and boil off any excess liquid.

2 Slow Cooking.

[Slow cooking](#) is not only convenient, but also a healthy and delicious way to prepare food in advance. The lower temperatures may help preserve nutrients that can be lost when food is cooked rapidly at high heat. What's more, food cooked slowly often tastes better.



3 Steaming.

For more delicate vegetables, steaming uses little energy, creates a minimum of mess, and does the least damage to the nutrients. As a bonus, it lends itself to a quick cleanup. Steaming is best for tender vegetables such as greens, snap peas, and artichokes (you can boil less delicate ones such as potatoes, beets, and corn on the cob). A rule of thumb is that when you smell it, it's done.



4 Avoid Deep Frying.

When it comes to healthy cooking, avoid methods that require excessive fat, especially deep-frying. This method not only adds lots of calories, but also exposes you to the health risks of oxidized fats. Broiling, baking and roasting can also be healthy methods of preparation, provided you don't add unnecessary fat.

3 Healthy Holiday Foods

Eating healthy during the holidays can be tough, but a varied diet, rich in fruits and vegetables, is the foundation of optimum health. This holiday season, add these three to your meals: each are a delicious and versatile way to get much needed nutrients into your diet during this hectic time of the year!



Cranberries. A traditional holiday side dish in North America, cranberries are more than just a tart and tasty meal accompaniment. A rich source of vitamin C and dietary fiber, they are packed with healthy antioxidants and are often used to help prevent urinary tract infections. Recent studies have also linked consumption of cranberries and cranberry juice with healthy [cholesterol levels](#), improved gastrointestinal health, and the prevention of kidney stones - all good reasons to increase your intake no matter what the season. Opt for fresh cranberries to receive the most antioxidants and be sure to choose versions with little to no added sugar or other sweeteners.

Sweet Potatoes. A traditional Thanksgiving favorite, sweet potatoes are available year-round and should be a staple in any healthy kitchen. A universally appealing root vegetable, sweet potatoes are an excellent low glycemic source of vitamins A and C - natural antioxidants that help neutralize [free radicals](#). Try the recipe on page 4, which includes sweet potatoes.

Winter Squash. A delicious and versatile meal option for the colder months, winter squash comes in many varieties, all with a hard shell and mild tasting flesh. In addition to being an excellent source of vitamins A and C, winter squash provides good amounts of potassium, dietary fiber and folate, as well as antioxidant and [anti-inflammatory benefits](#).



Dr. Weil's Anti-Inflammatory Food Pyramid is a practical eating guide that consumers of all ages can use. This simple tool promotes optimum health and healthy aging by providing dietary advice that addresses inflammation. Learn more - join Dr. Weil on Healthy Aging: Your Online Guide to the Anti-Inflammatory Diet.

Weil Vitamin Advisor Tip



Take Your Supplements With Food

Stomach discomfort is the most common side effect of taking supplements. That is why most supplements are best taken with food, especially food containing fat, unless stated otherwise. Sometimes it is simply the amount of food consumed that makes the difference.

Roasted Root Vegetables

Root vegetables (with the exception of potatoes and carrots) are some of the most overlooked and under appreciated food-stuffs around. But these nutritional storehouses are hidden treasures worthy of your notice. Not only are they available in winter when other vegetables are hard to find, but they are also very inexpensive. Experiment with turnips, rutabagas, beets and parsnips, and learn what they have to offer in taste and versatility. Rutabaga (also known as swede) is an accidental vegetable – the result of a chance hybridization of turnips and cabbage. Like carrots, they're low in sodium and high in vitamin C. The flavor of all root vegetables will be enhanced by selecting fresh, firm produce (preferably organically grown) and storing it carefully. Turnips and potatoes should be stored in a cool, dark place out of the refrigerator. The rest of these roots will keep well in the refrigerator for at least a week.

Watch Dr. Weil prepare [Roasted Root Vegetables](#) in his home kitchen.



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Heat oven to 400 degrees. Place the root vegetables and onion in a roasting pan.
- 2 Toss the vegetables with the olive oil and salt to taste. Do not crowd the vegetables.
- 3 Roast the mixture for a total of 45-50 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes. After 30 minutes, scatter the garlic cloves in with the vegetables. Continue stirring every 15 minutes until the vegetables are tender and evenly browned.
- 4 Before serving, add a sprinkling of fresh chopped herbs or balsamic vinegar, if you like, for additional flavor.

Serves 6.

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds root vegetables (use potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips, rutabagas, beets), peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
 1 medium onion, peeled and cut into 1/3-inch wedges
 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
 Salt to taste
 1 head [garlic](#), separated into cloves and peeled
 Chopped fresh herbs like rosemary, or balsamic vinegar (optional)

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories: 108.5
 Protein: 2.7 grams
 Fat: 2.5 grams
 Saturated Fat: 0.4 grams
 Monounsaturated Fat: 1.7 grams
 Polyunsaturated Fat: 0.3 grams
 Carbohydrate: 20.1 grams
 Fiber: 4.1 grams
 Cholesterol: 0.0 mg
 Vitamin A: 10,866. IU
 Vitamin E: 0.7 mg/IU
 Vitamin C: 24.6 mg
 Calcium: 47.4 mg
 Magnesium: 33.7 mg