



HEALTHY THANKSGIVING RECIPES

20+ Easy, Delicious & Healthy Holiday Side
Dishes

BY JENNA APPEL, MS, RD, LDN, CDCES



HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

As many people begin to plan for fall and winter holiday celebrations, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have announced safety guidelines for Thanksgiving this year.

Thanksgiving is a time when many families travel long distances to celebrate together. However, the CDC states that travel increases the chance of getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

Per the CDC, lower risk activities include having a small dinner with only people who live in your household; preparing traditional family recipes for family and neighbors, especially those at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19; and delivering them in a way that does not involve contact with others.

While many will resort to having a virtual dinner this year, it will certainly not take away the enjoyment of sharing recipes and delicious food with your loved ones.

Here you will find over 20 easy, delicious and healthy Thanksgiving side dish recipes that you can make and share with your friends and family. As a bonus, there are a couple of recipes to help you use up all those leftovers! I wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy and safe Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,
Jenna Appel, MS, RD, LDN, CDCES



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CARROT GINGER SOUP

Total Time: 50 minutes

Yield: 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 large white onion, chopped
- 3 cups reduced-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 lb peeled baby carrots
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 1/4 cup reduced fat sour cream
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large pot, melt butter over medium heat; add onions and cook, stirring often, until onions are soft, about 5-6 minutes.
2. Add broth, carrots, and ginger. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until carrots are soft, about 30 minutes.
3. Add sour cream, using an immersion blender, blend until smooth. Bring soup back to a boil, adjust salt and pepper to your taste.



FRESH FIG & ARUGULA SALAD WITH GOAT CHEESE

Total Time: 15 minutes

Yield: 8 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 8 cups baby arugula
- 8 figs, washed and quartered
- 1/4 cup red onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup pecans
- 10 basil leaves, torn
- 1/2 cup semi-soft goat cheese, crumbled
- 1/2 cup balsamic glaze
- 4 tsp extra virgin oil

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Toss arugula, figs, onion, pecans and basil in a large salad bowl.
2. Top with goat cheese and serve with balsamic glaze and olive oil on the side.



CINNAMON ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH

Total Time: 40 minutes

Yield: 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large butternut squash peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 tbsp organic maple syrup
- 3/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh rosemary

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Coat a large baking sheet with nonstick spray. Place the squash cubes in a large bowl and toss with olive oil, maple syrup, salt, pepper and cinnamon.
3. Spread the cubes in a single layer on the baking sheet. Bake for 25 minutes, turning the cubes halfway through baking. Remove from the oven and sprinkle the rosemary over the top.



BUTTERNUT SQUASH MAC AND CHEESE

Total Time: 50 minutes

Yield: 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups uncooked whole wheat desired pasta
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 small yellow onion
- 4-5 cups cubed butternut squash
- 5 cups low sodium vegetable broth
- 3/4 cup skim milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2/3 cup shredded Gruyère cheese



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook the macaroni according to package directions. Drain and set aside. Heat the butter in a large skillet over medium low heat. Cut the onion into thin rings and add to the butter in the pan, sauteing over low heat until golden, about 20 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, bring the broth to a boil and add the squash. Cook for 5-7 minutes or until fork tender. Drain, reserving 1/2 cup broth, and transfer squash to the blender. Add the onions, milk, salt, and reserved broth and puree until completely smooth and creamy.
3. Pour the pureed sauce over the cooked noodles and add the shredded cheese. Stir to melt the cheese; add water or milk to adjust consistency as needed.

ROASTED RAINBOW CARROTS WITH GINGER

Total Time: 35 minutes

Yield: 6 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds rainbow carrots, peeled and cut crosswise into 3-inch pieces
- 3 teaspoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon finely minced ginger

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. In a large bowl, combine carrots, 2 teaspoons olive oil, salt, pepper and ginger. Toss to evenly coat. Place carrots on a parchment lined sheet pan and roast for 30-35 minutes, stirring once halfway through.
3. Drizzle with the remaining teaspoon of oil, toss to evenly coat.



HEALTHIER GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE

Total Time: 1 hour, 15 minutes

Yield: 8 Servings

INGREDIENTS

Casserole ingredients:

- 2 pounds organic green beans, trimmed and cut into bite-sized pieces

Crispy onion topping ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil, divided
- 1 medium organic onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Mushroom sauce ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 ounces organic white button mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup vegetable stock
- 1 cup skim milk
- 1/2 cup fresh parmesan cheese, grated
- Salt and pepper to taste



HEALTHIER GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE

Total Time: 50 minutes

Yield: 8 Servings

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375°F and bring a large stockpot of water to a boil.
2. Heat half of the oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the onions and sauté, for about 5 minutes. Transfer the onions to a separate mixing bowl.
3. Add the remaining half tablespoon of oil to the pan. Add in the Panko breadcrumbs and stir until combined, for about 3-5 minutes. Remove from heat and transfer the Panko to the bowl with the onions. Stir in the Parmesan and salt, and toss the mixture until combined. Set aside.
4. In the same sauté pan that you used to cook the onion and Panko, heat oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and sauté for 3-5 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for an additional 1-2 minutes. Sprinkle with flour, and stir to combine. Sauté for an additional minute to cook the flour.
5. Slowly add vegetable broth. Whisk in milk, and bring the mixture to a simmer. Let cook for an additional minute until thickened, then stir in Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper until the cheese is melted. Reduce heat to low until the sauce is ready to be tossed with the green beans.
6. Add the green beans to the large stockpot of boiling water and boil for 3-5 minutes. Drain the green beans.
7. Transfer the green beans into the pan with the mushroom sauce and toss until combined. Pour the green bean mixture into a baking dish that has been greased with cooking spray. Then sprinkle the onion topping evenly on top. Bake for 25 minutes.

PERFECT ROASTED GREEN BEANS

Total Time: 20 minutes

Yield: 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. fresh green beans
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Add the green beans to a large rimmed baking sheet and toss with the olive oil, kosher salt, black pepper, and garlic powder.
3. Spread the coated green beans in a single layer on the baking sheet. Roast until tender and browned in spots, about 15 minutes. Serve immediately.



ORGANIC SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE

Total Time: 50 minutes

Yield: 8 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups organic sweet potatoes, cooked and mashed
- 1/2 cup organic whole cane sugar
- 2 large free-range eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1/2 cup coconut milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla

Topping:

- 1/2 cup whole cane sugar
- 1 tablespoon organic maple syrup
- 1/3 cup whole wheat pastry flour
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1 cup pecans chopped



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix together sweet potatoes, cane sugar, eggs, butter, milk and vanilla in a large bowl. Pour into a 8x8 buttered dish.
2. Mix together the topping ingredients in a medium bowl and sprinkle over the casserole. Bake for 35 minutes or until casserole is bubbly and topping is golden brown.

MARSHMALLOW STUFFED SWEET POTATOES

Total Time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Yield: 12 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 12 large sweet potatoes
- 3/4 cup (11/2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 3/4 cup light brown sugar
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup toasted pecan pieces
- 1 cup miniature marshmallows



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Wash the sweet potatoes. With a fork, prick the sweet potatoes in a couple of spots and place them on a sheet pan. Bake for 45 minutes.
3. In a large bowl, mix the butter, brown sugar, and flour together until it's crumbly-looking. Add the cinnamon, salt, pecans, and marshmallows; fold together to combine.
4. Slice the sweet potatoes lengthwise down the center and push the ends towards the middle so it opens up. Stuff the sweet potatoes with the topping and return to the oven. Bake for another 20 minutes, or until the topping is bubbly and brown.

LIGHTENED UP CORN CASSEROLE

Total Time: 1 hour

Yield: 15 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 8.5 oz corn muffin mix
- 15.25 oz can sweet yellow corn, drained
- 14.75 oz can sweet corn cream style
- 16 oz fat free Greek yogurt
- 1/4 cup melted light butter
- 1/2 cup egg whites
- Cooking spray



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Spray an 9 x 13 baking dish with cooking spray.
3. In a large bowl combine all the ingredients and mix with a spoon.
4. Pour into baking dish and bake for 60 minutes.
5. Let it cool before cutting.

VEGAN MASHED POTATOES

Total Time: 40 minutes

Yield: 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 6 - 8 medium organic potatoes
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Himalayan sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
- 5 - 6 cloves roasted garlic
- 3 - 4 tablespoons vegan butter, melted/softened
- 1/4 cup fresh chives for topping

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place potatoes in a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a light boil over medium-high heat, add 1 tsp of sea salt, cover and cook for 25-30 minutes or until tender.
2. Drain your potatoes and place them back in the hot pot off the heat for 1 minute to evaporate any additional water. Then transfer to a large mixing bowl.
3. Mash your potatoes until fluffy. Add in butter, garlic, salt, and black pepper and stir to combine.
4. Top with chives, stir and serve.



SCALLOPED POTATO GRATIN

Total Time: 1 hour, 15 minutes

Yield: 7 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 6 medium peeled Yukon gold potatoes, sliced 1/8-inch-thick
- 2 tbsp light butter, melted
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 3/4 cup shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese
- 1 cup skim milk
- 1 bay leaf
- Pinch freshly grated nutmeg
- 2 teaspoon thyme

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Spray an 11 x 7-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
3. In a large bowl, combine potatoes, butter, salt, garlic powder and fresh cracked pepper.
4. Arrange half of the potato slices in the baking dish; top with 1/4 cup cheese. Add the remaining potatoes.
5. In a small saucepan, bring milk, thyme, bay leaf and nutmeg to a boil; pour over potatoes.
6. Top with remaining cheese and bake uncovered, for 45 - 50 minutes.



STUFFING MUFFINS

Total Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Yield: 12 Servings

INGREDIENTS

Olive oil spray

12 ounces 100% whole wheat French bread, cut into small cubes

3 ounces diced pancetta

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

3 shallots, minced

3 large stalks celery, minced

2/3 cup chopped parsley

10 fresh sage leaves, minced

3/4 teaspoon Bell's Seasoning

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 large egg, beaten

1 3/4 cups chicken broth



STUFFING MUFFINS

Total Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Yield: 12 Servings

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Let bread sit overnight to harden. If your bread is fresh, preheat the oven and bake the bread cubes on 2 baking sheets at 250°F for about 30 minutes, stirring half way until the bread is completely firm.
2. Increase the oven to 375°F. Spray a non-stick muffin tin with oil.
3. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat, cook the Pancetta until browned, about 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Add butter; when melted add shallots, celery, parsley, sage, Bell's seasoning and salt and cook on medium low until soft, about 8 to 10 minutes.
5. Remove from heat and let cool a few minutes.
6. In a medium bowl, combine chicken broth and egg.
7. In a large bowl add bread and combine with sautéed vegetables.
8. Add chicken broth and egg mixture and combine well. If stuffing is too dry, add a little more broth or water until you have the right consistency. Let sit 10 minutes.
9. Transfer the stuffing to the muffin pan.
10. Bake uncovered 25 minutes, or until golden.

CREAMED SPINACH - LIGHTENED UP

Total Time: 20 minutes

Yield: 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon grapeseed oil
- 1 small onion, grated
- 16 ounces baby spinach, washed
- 1/3 cup plain Greek-style yogurt
- 1/4 cup reduced-fat milk
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Sauté onion until soft, about 5 minutes; add spinach in 3 to 4 batches, cooking each until wilted before adding the next, 1 to 2 minutes per batch. Remove spinach to a plate.
2. Reduce heat to medium-low.
3. Whisk yogurt, milk, Parmesan cheese, garlic powder, salt, and nutmeg together in skillet; cook about 30 seconds. Stir in the spinach and mix to coat.



AIR FRYER BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Total Time: 15 minutes

Yield: 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound Brussels sprouts (stems removed), quartered
- 2 tablespoons Olive Oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large bowl, toss the Brussels sprouts with the oil, salt and pepper.
2. Pour into the Air Fryer basket and lay in a single layer. Cook in the Air Fryer at 350°F for 10 minutes.



ROASTED SPAGHETTI SQUASH

Total Time: 1 hour, 10 minutes

Yield: 6 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large ripe spaghetti squash
- Salt and pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Cut the squash in half lengthwise, scoop out the seeds with a spoon.
3. Place on a baking sheet, cut side up and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
4. Bake at 350° about 1 hour or until the skin gives easily under pressure and the inside is tender. Remove from oven and let it cool 10 minutes.
5. Using a fork, scrape out the squash flesh a little at a time. It will separate into spaghetti-like strands.



OVEN-ROASTED ASPARAGUS

Total Time: 15 minutes

Yield: 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bunch fresh asparagus
- Olive oil spray
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Fresh black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Wash and trim hard ends off asparagus. Place in a single layer in roasting pan.
3. Spray all over with olive oil and season with salt and pepper.
4. Roast in oven approximately 10 minutes.



FRESH VEGAN BISCUITS

Total Time: 25 minutes

Yield: 7 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup unsweetened plain almond milk
- 1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 3/4 tsp sea salt
- 4 Tbsp non-dairy, unsalted butter



FRESH VEGAN BISCUITS

Total Time: 25 minutes

Yield: 7 Servings

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 450°F.
2. Add lemon juice to almond milk to make “vegan buttermilk.” Set aside.
3. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together dry ingredients.
4. Add cold butter and use fingers to combine the two until only small pieces remain and it looks like sand.
5. Make a well in the dry ingredients and, using a wooden spoon, stir gently while pouring in the almond milk mixture (vegan buttermilk) 1/4 cup at a time. You may not need all of it. Stop when it resembles a slightly tacky but moldable dough, stirring until just combined.
6. Turn onto a lightly floured surface, dust the top with a bit of flour and then very gently turn the dough over on itself 5-6 times – hardly kneading. Add more flour as needed to prevent sticking.
7. Form into a 1-inch thick disc, handling as little as possible.
8. Use a 1-inch thick dough cutter and push straight down through the dough, then slightly twist. Repeat and place biscuits on a baking sheet in two rows, making sure they just touch – this will help them rise uniformly. Gently reform the dough and cut out one or two more biscuits – you should have 7-8 in total.
9. Next brush the tops with a bit more of melted non-dairy butter and gently press a small divot in the center using two fingers. This will help them rise evenly, so the middle won't form a dome.
10. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until fluffy and slightly golden brown.

HEART HEALTHY BANANA WALNUT BREAD

Total Time: 1 hour, 15 minutes

Yield: 10 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups whole grain flour
- 1/2 cup walnuts, chopped
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup + 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 free-range eggs, beaten
- 2 1/3 cups overripe organic bananas, mashed



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large bowl, combine flour, walnuts, baking soda and salt. In a separate bowl, mix together oil and brown sugar. Stir in eggs and mashed bananas until well blended. Stir banana mixture into flour mixture; stir just to moisten.
2. Pour batter into greased loaf pan. Bake in preheated oven for 60 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into center of the loaf comes out clean. Let bread cool in pan for 10 minutes.

PUMPKIN BUTTER

Total Time: 45 minutes

Yield: 30 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (29 ounce) can pumpkin puree
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 3/4 cup apple cider or juice
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 2-3 cinnamon sticks
- 1-2 tsp pumpkin pie spice, to taste

Additional Notes: This pumpkin butter tastes delicious smeared on toast, fresh biscuits, oatmeal and Greek yogurt!

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine pureed pumpkin, sugar, apple cider or juice, vanilla and cinnamon sticks in a large saucepan; stir well.
2. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer for 30 - 40 minutes or until thickened. Stir frequently.
3. Adjust spices to your taste.



ALL NATURAL CRANBERRY SAUCE

Total Time: 15 minutes

Yield: 6 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 12 ounces of fresh organic cranberries
- 1/2 cup organic honey
- 1/2 cup water
- Zest of 1 medium organic orange
- Optional add-ins: 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon and/or 1/4 cup organic orange juice

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Rinse the cranberries well and drain off excess water.
2. In a medium saucepan, combine the cranberries, honey and water. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce heat to medium-low and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture has thickened, about 5 to 10 minutes.
3. Remove the pot from heat and stir in the orange zest. If you'd like to add cinnamon or orange juice, add it now. Taste and, if the mixture is too tart, add more orange juice, honey or maple syrup to taste.

Additional Notes

Prepare in advance: You could make this sauce the day before. It keeps well, refrigerated, for up to a few weeks! Use leftovers: Swirl leftover sauce into yogurt or oatmeal! You can use this sauce just as you would use jam.





Bonus:
Thanksgiving
Leftover
Recipe Ideas

LEFTOVER TURKEY & CRANBERRY MELT

Total Time: 10 minutes

Yield: 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces leftover turkey breast
- 3 tablespoons Light mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon red onion, chopped
- 8 slices 100% whole grain bread
- 4 ounces light Havarti cheese, sliced
- 4 tablespoons leftover cranberry sauce
- Olive oil spray



INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a medium bowl combine the turkey, mayonnaise and red onion, and stir until combined.
2. Heat a large skillet over medium heat.
3. Spray outsides of sandwiches with olive oil.
4. Spread 4 slices of bread with the turkey salad mixture, then top each with 1 ounce of cheese and 1 tbsp cranberry sauce; top with remaining bread.
5. Place sandwiches in the skillet, pressing down lightly with the back of a spatula. Cover and cook until golden brown, about 2-3 minutes per side.
6. Serve immediately.

LEFTOVER TURKEY NOODLE SOUP

Total Time: 20 minutes

Yield: 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 6 cups low sodium turkey broth
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup diced carrot
- 3/4 cup chopped onion
- 3/4 cup diced celery
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup chopped parsley
- 3 oz whole wheat egg noodles
- 8 ounces leftover turkey, shredded

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill a large saucepan with broth.
2. Add bay leaf, carrots, onion, celery, garlic, salt and pepper to taste and simmer 10-15 minutes, until the vegetables are soft.
3. Add parsley, noodles and shredded turkey; cook according to noodle directions.
4. Discard bay leaf and serve.



About the Author



Jenna Appel, MS, RD, LDN, CDCES

Jenna Appel is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and nationally recognized expert in the field of health, happiness and longevity and is frequently sought after by the media as a trusted source of nutrition and fitness information. Her expertise consists of an individualized approach that utilizes evidence-based practices to provide her clients with the tools and support they need to reach their optimal health.

Jenna earned her Bachelor's degree in business administration with a focus on management and marketing at the University of Hartford. She then pursued a Master's of Science degree in nutrition from Hunter College, and completed her dietetic internship at the University of Virginia Health System in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Jenna is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) through the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) which is an associate of The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and is also a Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionist (LDN) in the State of Florida. In addition, she is a Certified Personal Trainer (CPT) with more than 10 certifications in the field. Jenna owns and operates Appel Nutrition Inc. in South Florida offering individualized and group nutrition counseling in the private, corporate and country club settings.

