

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Happy Thanksgiving!

It's today, the big turkey day, the big family meal bash! I hope you have a great one, with great food and great family all around you. Be thankful for your family and friends, and for the freedom to be with them, to call them, to write to them. Not everyone has people to call, and not everyone with family is allowed to contact them. Be thankful for the food you have. Yes, it's more expensive than we're used to, but we still have a lot more than many people do. And be thankful that we enjoy one of the safest food supplies and systems in the world.

More people get sick because they don't eat enough fruits, vegetables and whole grains than because of any contaminants in the foods. So be sure to fill up the holiday table with plenty of fruits and veggies. Variety is the key and an easy way to remember what you need is "Put a Rainbow on Your Plate." The more colors of fruits and vegetables you eat in a day or in a week the more likely you are to stay healthy. So take a look at your menu and stick a few more colors on the table.

Red - that should be an easy one, cranberry sauce. Cranberries are very healthy, high in antioxidants and other protective compounds. Unfortunately they are also so sour we can't eat them without added sugar. Make your own sauce with a low-cal sweetener and orange juice to save calories. Red beets, red cabbage slaw, red pepper slices, or red grapes in a dessert fruit salad are other great choices.

Orange - another easy color to find on a Thanksgiving table, it's sweet potatoes

and pumpkin pie. But again, we tend to load these good-for-us foods up with not so good sugar. Skip the brown sugar and syrup, use low cal maple-flavored pancake syrup instead. Put out plenty of fresh carrot sticks and low cal dip before the meal. Use tangerine slices on the spinach salad, or spiced orange sections for dessert.

Yellow - well, corn is a first thought, yes. But how about a yellow squash casserole instead. Star fruit slices are a pretty as well as healthy decoration on salad or dessert.

Green - Go Salad! The darker green the better, so at least sneak some chopped spinach or romaine lettuce in with the iceberg. If green bean casserole is on your menu, use a low fat sauce or soup and skip the fried onions for a light bread crumb topping.

Blue - blueberries, blue grapes, in salads, muffins or dessert, blue is a healthy color for antioxidants and phytonutrients. Start the morning with a blueberry and banana smoothie, no cooking required to get you going.

Purple - start with grapes, but end with some glorious purple eggplant. Sliced under spaghetti sauce, sauteed with peppers into a ratatouille or stuffed and baked, eggplant is an underused veggie for most of us.

White - this is the one we often get too much of. Some white is fine, but aim for more cauliflower than potatoes. Shred a jicama into your salad for a surprising, juicy crunch. For extra nutrition and health, add parsnips - sweet white carrots. Try rutabagas, baked with garlic and squash they're delicious and nutritious. At bare minimum, put whole grain bread or rolls on the table instead of plain white bread. You can hide it in the bread stuffing too!

If you fill half your plate, every time, with vegetables then split the other half between the starches and the turkey, you'll have a healthy, delicious holiday dinner. Enjoy it, and give thanks for food, friends and family!

Here's a super easy way to cook and serve eggplant. You can eat this hot as a side dish, or cold as a dip with pieces of pita bread (whole wheat, please!). It will keep for several days if there are leftovers too.

Ratatouille (Ra-tuh-TOO-ee)

1 medium (1 pound) eggplant	3 medium (1 pound) zucchini
2 large onions, sliced	2 medium green or red peppers, diced
2 pounds tomatoes (3 medium)	1 Tbsp minced garlic
½ C olive oil	Salt, pepper to taste

Peel and chop the eggplant, chop the zucchini. Sprinkle with salt, mix and let drain for half an hour. Peel tomatoes, remove seeds and dice. Pat eggplant and zucchini dry. Heat part of oil in large skillet, brown half eggplant, repeat with rest of eggplant, zucchini and peppers, add oil as necessary. With last of oil saute onions until tender. Add tomato and garlic, cook covered 3 minutes, remove lid and cook until almost dry. Add in rest of vegetables, salt and pepper to taste, cover and simmer 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally. If it's too juicy remove lid at end and cook until thick. Serve hot or cold. Serves 8.

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