



November

Food is the centerpiece of our holiday gatherings. Fruits and veggies can be a delicious part of your celebrations with family and friends. Moderation is the key – combining new and healthy dishes with favorite foods and recipes can help you maintain your traditions and add to them.

Entertaining this season? People are going to eat whatever you set out! People do not generally pay close attention to what they eat and how much they eat at holiday gatherings. So why not offer a good mix of healthy selections so that guests will not leave your party feeling stuffed? Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina offers these tips for offering at least some low-fat and low-calorie choices:

- Arrange colorful raw vegetables and fruit on a platter with yogurt or cottage cheese dip. Use the 50% rule: cover 50% of the food table with fruit and vegetable dishes.
- Make fruit kabobs with chunks of pineapples, melon, and strawberries.
- Create a homemade snack mix using nuts, raisins, and pretzels.
- Make colorful, edible centerpieces made out of oranges, apples, grapes, tangerines, and other seasonal fruits.
- Keep dips and spreads as light as possible by substituting nonfat sour cream, light cream cheese, light or low-fat mayonnaise, and low-fat yogurt for the more caloric versions.
- As alcoholic drinks, especially alcoholic punches, tend to be high in calories, offer no- and lower-calorie drinks like diet sodas, mineral water with a lime twist, coffee, or holiday punch made with fruit juices and soda or sparkling water.

What's in season now?

Pears

Pears grown in the US are in at their peak availability starting in late fall and into winter months. How to pick a pear? "Check the neck!" Find out at this guide for selecting and storing pears and other fruits:

<http://www.usapears.com/en/Recipes%20And%20Lifestyle/Now%20Serving/Pears%20and%20Varieties.aspx>

How about a great new way to serve pears for a holiday dinner or a family dinner? Try *Spiced Cranberry Pears* made with dried cranberries and canned pears,

http://www.aicr.org/site/News2?abbr=dc_rc_&page=NewsArticle&id=7380&news_iv_ctrl=1130

or *Roasted Pear Salad*

http://heart-healthy-cooking.suite101.com/article.cfm/roasted_pear_salad

Sweet Potatoes – the “vegetable indispensable”! Tasty and packed with vitamins A and C and other plant nutrients, sweet potatoes can bring a warm color to your plate and are a part of many holiday meals. But don't settle for opening a can and pouring the marshmallows over the top – try fresh ones! How about *Smashed Spiced Sweet Potatoes*?

http://eatingwell.com/recipes/spiced_sweet_potato.html

Or made simply in the microwave, *Sweet Potatoes with Maple Syrup*

http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/?page_id=35&iRID=11

A great staple for the winter, sweet potatoes can keep for months if stored cool and dry. More information on their nutrition value, selection and storage:

http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/sweet_potato.html