



FUEL for SCHOOLS

November/December 2022 • Nutrition News & Activities from your Gonzales ISD Food Service Dept.

Five Food Swaps for Healthier Holidays

1. Simplify Holiday Favorites

Often, less is more (and healthier too) when it comes to holiday dishes. Instead of green bean casserole, serve steamed frozen or fresh green beans topped with toasted almonds. Make your own cranberry sauce with citrus zest and less added sugar. Roast fresh sweet potatoes with a spray of oil and cinnamon. Add whole grains to your meal with a whole grain roll or wild rice pilaf.

2. Build a Healthy Mini-House

Kids love to create gingerbread houses. Add a healthy twist by asking your children to construct mini-houses made of graham crackers, peanut or sunbutter (instead of frosting) and colorful dried fruit pieces, seeds and nuts.

3. Make-Your-Own Tortilla Chips

Start with corn tortillas and use cookie cutters to cut out fun holiday shapes. Spray both sides lightly with vegetable oil spray and bake 5-7 minutes in a 400° oven. Serve with bean dip, guacamole or hummus.

4. Serve a Healthy Dip for Your Chips

For a quick and easy guacamole, add 1 tsp. fresh lime juice, 2 T. prepared salsa and 2 T. black beans to one peeled and seeded avocado. Ask your child to help measure the ingredients and mash with a fork.

5. Better Baking

The holiday season evokes the smells and taste of delicious cookies and other baked goods. Baking from scratch allows you to substitute more nutrient-rich ingredients such as whole wheat pastry flour, ground flax, oatmeal, pumpkin, dried fruit, and nuts or seeds. (See winter squash recipe on the next page)

Take Five for Fitness

Cold Weather Fitness Fun

It's that time of year when outside conditions become unpredictable. Winter brings shorter daytime hours, cooler temperatures and unpredictable storms.



On nice weather days, build fun, active play into every day. Shoot some hoops, toss a football or go for a short hike through the neighborhood.

If you are stuck inside on blustery days, take time for calisthenics, dancing, stretching or yoga. A great site with links to fun exercise videos for kids and the entire family can be found at

<https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/blog/best-kids-exercise-videos/>

Nutrition Know-How

Fiber Focus

One place you can always find healthy high fiber foods is at school breakfast and lunch!

After the first 6 months of life, children benefit from eating fiber-rich foods. Good for gut health and digestion, dietary fiber is also linked with lower blood cholesterol, healthy blood sugar levels and a reduced lifetime risk of heart disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes and many types of cancer.

Examples of soluble fiber:

oatmeal, oat cereal, lentils, split peas, beans, apples, oranges, pears, strawberries, blueberries, nuts, flaxseeds, carrots, winter squash, psyllium

Examples of insoluble fiber:

whole wheat, whole grains, seeds, nuts, barley, brown rice, bulgur, broccoli, cabbage, onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, green beans, dark leafy vegetables, raisins, grapes

There are two types of dietary fiber – soluble and insoluble. Insoluble fiber helps to prevent and treat constipation. Soluble fiber also assists in digestion but has the added benefit of regulating both blood sugar and blood cholesterol. A healthy diet consists of a mix of both soluble and insoluble fibers and can be achieved by eating a variety of fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, nuts and seeds.





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Fruit & Veggie Spotlight: Pineapple & Winter Squash

Pineapple

One cup of pineapple supplies 90% of the daily need for vitamin C. It is rich in many other nutrients and also contributes bromelain, which is an enzyme that fights inflammation in our body and can also tenderize meat!



While pineapple is often associated with Hawaii, most of the fruit we eat comes from Costa Rica, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Brazil. Pineapple prefers to grow in warm (but not too warm) conditions. To learn how pineapple grows, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpJHgXaPzFA>.

Winter Squash



Rich in fiber, beta-carotene, potassium and a number of antioxidants, winter squash is a nutritious vegetable that enhances dishes ranging from soups, stews and pasta to smoothies, muffins and desserts. Examples of winter squash include pumpkin, butternut squash, acorn, delicata and spaghetti squash.

Roasted winter squash seeds are rich in protein and contain heart healthy fat. Simply clean and rinse the seeds, spray with oil, and bake at 350°F for 15 to 25 minutes until golden.

Fruit Riddles!

1. Long and yellow, I'm "a-peeling" to both kids and monkeys.
2. I'm the liquid form of fruit. To find the real me, look for 100%!
3. When you hear my name, you might think there are two of me.
4. I rhyme with YUM (and that's also how I taste!).
5. We can be red or green and we like to hang around in bunches.
6. My name and my color are the same.
7. We're the "dried up" version of Riddle #5.
8. If you split my name in half, you will find two kinds of trees (HINT: One is a fruit tree).

Recipe Roundup

Winter Squash Apple Muffins

- 2 cups whole wheat pastry flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 Tablespoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups cooked, pureed butternut squash (can substitute one 15 ounce can pumpkin)
- 1/3 cup canola oil
- 1 apple, peeled and chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts
- Nonstick Spray

Produce Power at School!

Did you know that fruits and/or vegetables are a feature of the school breakfast and lunch choices every day? Encourage your child to pick a fruit or vegetable at every meal and snack.

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly spray 2 baking tins (18 muffin cups total) with nonstick spray. Mix flour, sugar, spice, baking soda, baking powder and salt in large mixing bowl. In another bowl, slightly beat eggs and mix in squash/pumpkin and oil. Stir into dry ingredients and mix lightly. Gently fold in the chopped apple and chopped walnuts. Fill muffin cups 3/4 full. Bake 25-30 minutes until done. Loosen muffins and serve warm.

Servings: 18 medium muffins

Pumpkin Dip

This dip is delicious served with fruit. Pair with pineapple chunks, fresh cut apples, banana chunks, or pear slices.

- 6 oz. vanilla Greek yogurt
- 2 tbsp. whipped cream cheese
- 1/2 cup canned pumpkin
- 1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1 Tablespoon honey (optional)

Directions:

Mix ingredients well and serve with fresh fruit. For a sweeter dip, mix in 1 tablespoon of honey.