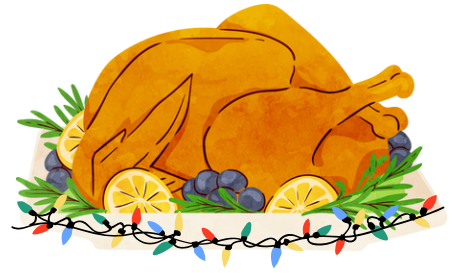


LIGHTEN YOUR HOLIDAY COOKING

Lightening your cooking can help you create all of your favorite meals healthier without sacrificing flavor. With a bit of creativity and attention to ingredient choices, you can create flavorful and nutritious dishes that are better for your health. Here are some tips to help you cook lighter and make a healthy plate:



- **Use MyPlate:** Using MyPlate, you will balance your plate with half fruits and veggies, one-quarter lean protein, and one-quarter whole grains. This is an excellent way to practice portion control while getting a balanced diet.
- **Choose Lean Proteins:** Opt for lean protein sources such as skinless poultry, fish, tofu, legumes, and beans. These options are lower in saturated fats.
- **Trim Visible Fats:** When using meat, trim any visible fats before cooking. This reduces the overall calorie and fat content of your dishes.
- **Incorporate More Veggies:** Load up your meals with vegetables. They're low in calories and nutrients, adding bulk and flavor to your dishes.
- **Choose Whole Grains:** Opt for whole grains like brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat pasta, and whole grain bread. They offer more fiber and nutrients than refined grains.
- **Use Herbs and Spices:** Flavor your dishes with herbs, spices, citrus, and vinegar instead of relying solely on salt, butter, or heavy sauces.
- **Use Reduced-Fat Dairy:** If your recipe calls for dairy, consider using reduced-fat or fat-free options. These can significantly reduce the fat content of your dishes.
- **Limit Added Sugars:** Minimize the use of added sugars in your cooking. You can often reduce the amount of sugar in recipes without compromising taste.
- **Be Mindful of Condiments:** Be cautious with high-calorie condiments like mayonnaise, ketchup, and salad dressings. Use them sparingly.
- **Make Your Own Sauces and Dressings:** When possible, make your own sauces and dressings. You can control the ingredients and use healthier options.
- **Experiment with Plant-Based Meals:** Incorporate more plant-based meals into your diet. This can help reduce saturated fats and increase your intake of fiber and antioxidants.



USE HEALTHY COOKING METHODS

- **Grilling:** Grilling adds flavor without adding excessive fats. Just be cautious with marinades and sauces that can increase calorie content.
- **Baking and roasting:** Baking allows you to achieve a crispy texture without frying. Use a light coating of olive oil or cooking spray.
- **Steaming:** Steaming retains the natural flavors and nutrients of your ingredients without the need for added fats.
- **Sautéing:** Use a minimal amount of oil or cooking spray when sautéing. Consider using broth or water as a cooking liquid instead of oil.
- **Poaching:** Poaching in water or broth is a gentle method that keeps foods moist without adding extra fats.
- **Air frying:** This allows you to cook most potatoes, yams, veggies, and protein items to a crisp without employing a lot of fat.

