

Food for Thought

March 2025

March is National Nutrition Month® Food Connects Us

Each year during the month of March the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics celebrates National Nutrition Month®. This month we invite everyone to learn about making informed food choices and developing healthful eating and physical activity habits.



This year's theme is "**Food Connects Us.**" Food is a connecting factor for many of us. Food connects us to our cultures, our families and our friends. Sharing a meal is an opportunity to learn about its preparation, who made it and where the ingredients were sourced. Health, memories, traditions, seasons and access can all impact our relationship with food. While these factors influence the food we eat, the food we eat also affect our health.

How can you celebrate National Nutrition Month®?

- ✓ Commit to trying a new fruit or vegetable each week.
- ✓ Learn cooking, food preparation, and meal planning skills.
- ✓ Let family members pick out different recipes to try.
- ✓ Let everyone help with food preparation. If you have kids, there are age-appropriate tasks they may enjoy learning how to do.
- ✓ Try more meatless meals — beans and lentils are versatile plant-based protein sources that work in a variety of dishes.
- ✓ Experiment with recipes using different ingredients or cooking techniques.
- ✓ Bring out the flavors of food by trying new herbs, spices or citrus fruit such as lemon or lime.
- ✓ Include your favorite cultural foods and traditions or try new global flavors.
- ✓ Include healthful foods from all food groups.
- ✓ Enjoy your meals with family or friends, when possible.
- ✓ Explore where your food comes from.
- ✓ Learn about community resources such as SNAP, WIC and local food banks.
- ✓ If you watch TV, take breaks during commercials to be physically active.
- ✓ Practice mindful eating by limiting screen time at mealtimes – including phones, computers, TV and other devices.



There are many healthy and delicious naturally green foods you can add to your St. Patrick's Day festivities.



- ❀ **Go Green Smoothies:** Try adding leafy greens such as spinach or kale, naturally green fruits (kiwi, green grapes, or green apples), or avocados to your favorite smoothie recipe.
- ❀ **Add greens to your favorite dishes:** There are plenty of ways to incorporate more greens into some of your favorite dishes.
 - Add green peppers or spinach when ordering or making pizza at home.
 - Stuff your favorite sandwiches with spinach, romaine lettuce, or slices of avocado.
 - Add greens such as kale or Swiss chard to soups.
 - Scramble green peppers or green onions into an omelet for a nutritious breakfast.
 - Add a variety of leafy greens to your salad (spinach, kale, arugula, to name a few).
 - Add green fruit such as kiwi, green grapes, or honeydew melon to a yogurt parfait or fruit salad.
- ❀ **Snack time:** Include oven baked tortilla chips and guacamole, celery sticks and green peppers with dip, edamame, or pistachios.
- ❀ **Substitute:** Instead of pasta noodles, try making zucchini noodles also known as zoodles and add them to your whole wheat pasta. You can use a low-cost veggie spiralizer or a grater to make these. Instead of bread for sandwiches, try using lettuce as wraps.
- ❀ **Add greens to water:** Try adding sliced cucumbers, mint leaves, or lime to your water for a refreshing burst of flavor.
- ❀ **Plan ahead:** Buy frozen green vegetables to save money and time in the kitchen. Since frozen vegetables have a longer shelf-life, there is less food waste, and frozen vegetables contain just as many nutrients as fresh vegetables do since they are frozen at their peak ripeness.

Sources: <https://www.eatright.org/about-national-nutrition-month>; <https://extension.umaine.edu/food-health/2022/03/17/6-tips-for-eating-green-on-st-patricks-day/> retrieved 02/26/25

Eat Smart Idaho can help you learn how to eat well for less. For Information on Eat Smart Idaho classes, contact the Nutrition Instructor in your county:

Panhandle: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai & Shoshone Counties
208-292-2525

North Central Idaho: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, & Nez Perce Counties
208-883-2267



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