

News Column – Donna Krug, District Director and Family & Consumer Science Agent, Cottonwood District

### Make Celebrations Fun and Healthy

Holiday celebrations are just around the corner. This year will be different, considering the uptick in COVID19 numbers. While large family gatherings may be replaced by smaller family affairs there are many ways to make the celebration special. We're planning to do a family Zoom on Thanksgiving Day with those who would normally be seated around our dining room table. I'm certain that our 4 grandkids, ages 6-12 will help make us make some fun memories.

Most celebrations include special foods and beverages. This would be a good year to try some new recipes, that are chock full of the nutrients needed to stay healthy. The more colorful the plate is, the better. When I'm teaching kids about healthy eating I encourage them to eat the rainbow. That is great advice for everyone.

Consider making this recipe for "Baked Winter Squash with Apples" for your upcoming holiday:

1½ pounds uncooked winter squash, peeled and cut into cubes  
1/2 pound fresh cranberries (optional)  
2-3 apples, chopped  
¼ cup raisins  
Juice and grated peel of 1small orange  
1¼ tablespoons maple syrup (or honey)  
Dash each of salt and cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Combine squash, cranberries, apples, and raisins in a small buttered casserole dish. Mix juice, orange peel, maple syrup and salt together. Pour over squash mixture. Lightly dust with cinnamon, cover and bake until squash is tender, approximately 30-45 minutes. Serves 4.

Nutritional information per serving: Calories 199. Protein: 2 g. Total fat: <1 gram, Carbohydrates: 47 grams. Cholesterol: 0 mg. sodium: 76 mg. Vitamin A: 120% daily value. Vitamin C: 78% daily value. Source: Rolling Prairie Cookbook by Nancy O'Connor.

You may want to rethink the type of beverages you serve at celebrations. They can be colorful and festive, without lots of sugar and calories. Use a punch bowl for serving fruit-infused flavored water. Make fun ice cubes with 100 percent juice or add frozen berries or citrus zest.

I'll focus on other ways to prepare for the holidays in the weeks to come. In the meantime stay safe and stay healthy!

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