

National Nutrition Month Week 4—Spice Up Old Recipes!

By Jen Muzzi, RDN/LDN, RYT-200, Chef

Take a few minutes to dig out the old family recipe cookbook or recipe box. Read through them and see if you notice any “dated” ingredients. Is it chock full of shortening, margarine or gelatin? Do you have countless meatloaf recipes??? My grandmother’s recipe box does!! I had no idea that you could have so many different recipes for meatloaf 😊 Nor that there were so many gelatin desserts. But, when I pause and think back to the childhood dinners at family homes and church “covered dish suppers”—it’s all coming back to me. Yes—there was *a lot* of gelatin and beef recipes!

Presently, below I've added some ideas to update and make healthy swaps for those recipes. Following along the theme of National Nutrition Month, “Personalize your Plate”, here’s a way to help make these meals more appropriate for the times and your own health.

- Cook with dried spices and herbs instead of salt to add flavor to your dishes
- Try different grains such as wild rice, whole-grain farro and whole-grain barley to reap the benefits of whole grains
- Go meatless: Serve up beans or lentils for a heart healthful plant-based protein
- Cook with vegetable oils instead of solid fats such as butter when cooking to limit saturated fat
- Eat 100-percent whole-wheat bread instead of white bread for more dietary fiber
- To decrease extra calories from fat, bake, grill, roast or steam your food instead of frying
- Sprinkle chia or ground flax seeds on cereal, salad or toast to increase consumption of omega-3 fatty acids
- For flavor, add lime, grapefruit or pineapple slices to glasses of water
- Cook grains in a low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock for flavor
- To add variety, enjoy vegetables in different forms — raw, steamed, roasted, grilled or sautéed. ⁽¹⁾
- Sub ground turkey or chicken for ground beef.

Just think: in 50-75 years, when your grandchildren are looking back on all these recipes from the 2010's-2020's. They'll probably wonder what our obsession was with avocados, smoothies, high protein meals and Air fryers! That or the bottomless pasta dishes, using donuts as “burger buns”, Unicorn drinks and gluten-free foods (when you aren't allergic

or sensitive to gluten). Go on and try out a nostalgic recipe this week with these healthier, present day tips!

Remember Where You Came From, Eat Well, Soak in the Vitamin D and Bon Appetit!

~Chef Jen



(1)- <https://www.eatrightpro.org/media/press-releases/national-nutrition-month/nnm-2021-traditional-dishes> accessed 3/16/2021