

# *‘Veg Up’ Your Holiday Meals*

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AT GEORGINA NURSE PRACTITIONER LED CLINIC

**Holiday meals can leave so many of us feeling overly full and uncomfortable by the end of the evening. This year, try these tips to incorporate more veggies with holiday classics to lighten up your meals. Feel good this season while enjoying all your favourite holiday foods!**

## **Start with the Soups**

Since there is likely a meat for the main course, why not start the meal with a flavourful, veggie-based soup? You can't go wrong with holiday classics like butternut squash, roasted carrot, French onion, and cream of tomato or mushroom soups. But if you want to be adventurous, try a roasted cauliflower or cream of asparagus soup! Lighten up the cream soups by using milk, light cream, or light coconut milk.

## **Get Creative with Appetizers**

Aside from the usual green salad, there are lots of ways to incorporate more vegetables before the main meal. The bread basket or a veggie tray can be served with eggplant dip (baba ghanoush) or roasted red pepper hummus. Cheese and cracker lovers can try cheese-stuffed mushrooms or jalapeños (jalapeño popper) instead. Air-fried brussels sprouts or zucchini fritters can be a creative twist on using these common vegetables. And for a real challenge, you can even try to make your own vegetable spring rolls!

## **Sneaky Veg'd Up Main and Sides**

The common staples of any turkey meal include a great

stuffing, gravy and potatoes, all of which can hide vegetables quite well. Turkey stuffing will often include onions and celery, but squash, apples, parsnip, and mushrooms can make a flavourful addition. A delicious and healthy gravy can be made by blending up cooked onions, cauliflower and herbs with turkey drippings and additional stock as needed. Mashed potatoes can be mixed with mashed sweet potatoes or cauliflower. Of course, be sure to still include a side of vegetables!

## **We Can't Forget Dessert**

If dessert is your favourite course of the holiday meal, do not fear. Try these fruit-loaded options to keep your sweet tooth satisfied. Chocolate-dipped strawberries or clementines, or a homemade berry sorbet will sure be a hit amongst adults and children. For something a bit fancier to match the occasion, poached pears served with ice-cream or yogurt is a great way to end the meal.





## *Oven-Roasted Cauliflower Soup*

6 SERVINGS

### Ingredients:

- 1 Medium head of cauliflower  
(about 8 cups)
- 1 Carrot, coarsely chopped
- 1 tbsp Butter, melted
- 1 Onion, chopped
- 2 Garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp Dried thyme leaves
- 1 Bay leaf
- 1 carton No salt added chicken or  
vegetable broth (900mL to 1L)
- 1 tbsp Grainy dijon mustard
- 1 cup Milk
- Salt and pepper
- 1/4 cup Fresh dill, coarsely chopped  
Grated lemon zest (optional)

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Break cauliflower into medium-size florets. Place on a large baking sheet with carrots. Drizzle melted butter over vegetables and toss to coat. Roast 20-30 min, turning halfway through, until vegetables are tender. Remove about 1/2 cup florets. Cut into smaller pieces to garnish soup.
2. Meanwhile, place onion, garlic, thyme and bay leaf in a large saucepan. Cover with about 1 cup broth. Simmer gently for 5 min until onion is tender. Add roasted cauliflower, carrot, remaining broth and Dijon. Simmer gently for 7-10 min until vegetables are very tender. Stir in milk. Discard bay leaf.
3. Cool soup slightly. Purée in batches until smooth. Return to saucepan. Season with salt and pepper if needed. Garnish with small cauliflower florets, dill or lemon zest.

### Sources:

1. Holiday dinner image by Tima Miroshnichenko, retrieved from Pexels.
2. Poached pears image by Pervane Mustafa, retrieved from Pexels.
3. Recipe and image retrieved from <https://dairyfarmersofcanada.ca/en/canadian-goodness/recipes/oven-roasted-cauliflower-soup>