

Overcoming Holiday Stress

The holidays can be a joyful time, a chance to reconnect with friends and family, share delicious foods, and relax with some well-deserved time off. The holidays can also be a stressful time, with a dizzying number of demands - shopping, traveling, cleaning, cooking, and entertaining, just to name a few. You may not be able to completely avoid stressful situations during the holidays, but you can respond to them in a healthy way.



Accept imperfection. We often set the bar pretty high for ourselves as we prepare for the holidays, and then feel upset when things don't live up to our expectations. Acknowledging things may not go exactly as planned can ease some of the pressure. Can good be good enough?

Plan ahead. Set aside specific days for holiday activities, like shopping, baking, and decorating. Plan out menus and make a shopping list to prevent last-minute trips to the store. Get help with meal prep *and* clean up.

Get moving. Sometimes one of the best ways to overcome a stressful moment is to move your body. Take a brisk walk around the block, dance to a couple of your favorite songs, or do some simple bodyweight exercises like jumping jacks. Anything that gets your heart pumping will work!

Learn to say no. Saying yes when you really want to say no can leave you feeling overwhelmed. Your friends and coworkers will understand if you can't participate in every activity.

Breathe. This comes naturally, of course, but sometimes we forget to take deep breaths. If you can take ten minutes by yourself, try a [breathing meditation](#). Even pausing what you're doing to take a few deep breaths here and there can reduce your stress level.

Seek professional help if you need it. You may find yourself feeling sad, overwhelmed, and anxious even if you have tried to reduce your stress. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or mental health professional.

Food Safety Tips

Dough and batter made with flour or eggs can contain harmful germs like *E.coli* and *Salmonella*. Don't taste raw dough or batter that is meant to be cooked. This includes cookies, cakes, pies, and custards.



MassGrown

The growing season is mostly behind us, but there are still farmer's markets, CSAs, and other local food resources that are offered all winter long.

Check out the [MassGrown Map](#) for farms and vendors near you. Many offer SNAP and HIP benefits!



Whole Grain Cornbread

Makes 12 servings, 1 muffin or slice each

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup [whole wheat flour](#)
- 3/4 cup [yellow cornmeal](#)
- 3 tablespoons [Parmesan cheese](#)
- 2 teaspoons [chili powder](#)
- 1 teaspoon [salt](#)
- 3/4 cup + 2 tablespoons [milk, low fat](#)
- 2 tablespoons [oil](#)
- 2 tablespoons [honey](#)
- 1 large [egg](#)
- 1 cup [canned corn, drained](#)

Nutrition Facts

Whole Grain Cornbread

Amount Per Serving (1 muffin or slice each)

Calories 120	Calories from Fat 36
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 4g	6%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 1g	
Monounsaturated Fat 2g	
Cholesterol 18mg	6%
Sodium 265mg	11%
Potassium 132mg	4%
Total Carbohydrates 18g	6%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 4g	8%
Vitamin A	5%
Vitamin C	0%
Vitamin D	0%
Calcium	4%
Iron	4%

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. In a medium bowl, combine flour, cornmeal, cheese, chili powder, and salt.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk milk, oil, honey, and egg until combined.
4. Add to dry ingredients and mix well until blended. Add corn and mix again.
5. Spoon batter into a greased or paper lined muffin tin or add it to a greased loaf pan.
6. For muffins, bake for 18-20 minutes. For a loaf, bake for 20-25 minutes. They are done when an inserted toothpick or knife comes out clean and the tops are golden brown.
7. Allow to cool for 5 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack or plate to cool completely.

Notes: For a little more spice, add one 4 oz. can of diced green chilis, drained, to step 3.

For a little more sweetness, add one ripe, mashed banana to step 3.

LOOKING FOR RECIPE INSPIRATION?

Check out Click 'N Cook®, our online recipe database at clickncook.org



What can you do with: Butternut Squash

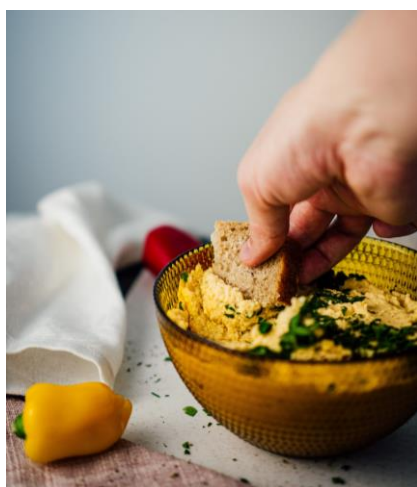


Butternut squash is in the winter squash family. It has orange flesh and a sweet flavor.

- **Choosing:** Squash should be free of blemishes and have hard, dull skin. It should feel heavy.
- **Storing:** Store whole butternut (and other winter squash) in a cool, dark place. Under the right conditions, it can store for more than 2 months!
- **Preparing:** Rinse with running water.
 - **Dicing:** Cut the top off and peel skin with a vegetable peeler or sharp knife. Cut in half lengthwise, scoop out seeds, and dice.
 - **Roasting Halves:** Best for making mash or dip, see recipe below.
- **Uses:** Roast with herbs, add to stews, mash with milk and cinnamon, puree cooked squash and add to baked pastas or muffins, thinly slice and add it as a layer in lasagna
- **Nutrition:** A good source (more than 10% daily value) of fiber and potassium, an excellent source (more than 20% daily value) vitamins C and A.
- **Fun Fact:** The word 'squash' is adapted from the Narragansett Native American word 'askutasquash', meaning "eaten raw or uncooked". (Yes, you can eat it raw! Try shredding some over a green salad!)

A CLICK N' COOK RECIPE
MORE AT: CLICKNCOOK.ORG

Roasted Butternut Hummus



Ingredients

- 1 medium butternut squash
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- ¼ cup tahini (or sunflower butter or peanut butter)
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 cloves garlic
- ½ teaspoon salt

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. With a sharp knife, cut the ends off the squash. Cut in half lengthwise and scoop out seeds. ([Try roasting them!](#))
3. Line a baking sheet with foil and put the squash on it face up. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon oil, cover with foil, and roast for 45 minutes. It's done when you can easily insert a knife.
4. When cooled, remove the skin and cut squash into pieces.
5. In a food processor or blender, add the squash and all other ingredients. Pulse until smooth, scraping down sides as needed. (You can do this in batches if needed.)



Cooking with Young Children

Cooking with kids is one way you can teach them nutrition principles and encourage their healthy eating habits. Studies show children are more likely to try new foods (like veggies!) when they participate in preparing them.

Making holiday meals with children can be a fun and delicious way to spend time together. Just because somebody is little it doesn't mean they can't help!

2-year-old	3-year-old	4-year-old	5-year-old
Wash produce	Add ingredients	Peel eggs and some fruits like oranges and bananas	Measure ingredients
Break cauliflower and broccoli into smaller pieces	Mash potatoes	Help set the table	Cut soft fruit with dull or plastic knife
Gather ingredients	Squeeze citrus fruits	Crack eggs	Use manual egg-beater
Throw things in the trash	Stir ingredients	Tearing herbs and lettuces	Roll and cut dough



DECEMBER 2021

Pear Month

World AIDS Day

December 1

National Cookie Day

December 4

National Influenza Vaccination Week

December 5-11

National Maple Syrup Day

December 17

National Bacon Day

December 30