



## Let Thanksgiving Inspire More Family Meals

During Thanksgiving, many families gather friends and relatives to enjoy time together, usually with a roasted turkey as the centerpiece. As we talk and pass bowls of family-favorite salads and side dishes, we make many memories.

However, during routine days, family mealtimes may get pushed aside because of busy work schedules and after-school activities for children. Let Thanksgiving be the inspiration to eat together more often, whether with family or friends.



### Enjoy big benefits of family meals

Sharing meals helps a family create healthy, happy kids. According to researchers, eating together more often has many benefits among children:

- Lowers sweetened beverage consumption
- Improves grades in school
- Improves food choices, such as more fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy
- Helps with weight management
- Allows children to practice communication skills
- Decreases the risk of mental health issues, such as depression
- Decreases risky behaviors, such as smoking and alcohol use when the children become teenagers

### Aim for at least three to four shared meals per week

Remember that family meals do not have to be a fancy Thanksgiving dinner. In fact, a family meal with at least some members of the family eating together can take place almost anywhere, from a restaurant to a table at a sporting event.

- Be sure to turn off the TV, cellphones and other electronic devices.
- Make family mealtimes a priority. List them on your calendar with other important dates.
- Make mealtimes positive, fun experiences. Share stories, tell about the funniest thing that happened to you that day, try new foods and laugh out loud.

### Singles, couples also benefit from shared meals

Maybe you live alone or your children are grown. Eating together is a source of enjoyment, regardless of your household size.

Sharing a meal can promote a healthful diet and a chance to connect and build relationships. Try a new recipe and invite friends over for dinner, or have a weekly potluck meal.



For more tips to make eating together a possibility, visit [www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise) and search for “family meals.”

This recipe is from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Mixing Bowl website ([www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov](http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov)), which has many recipes to explore.

## Gobble It Up Roasted Turkey Rice Soup

- 1 c. roasted turkey, chopped
- 4 celery stalks, chopped
- 4 carrots, peeled and sliced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 chicken bouillon cube
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- 4 c. water
- 1 Tbsp. butter, margarine or cooking oil
- 1 c. uncooked white rice or brown rice
- 1 (15-ounce) can green beans, drained and rinsed



### Cook's notes and substitutions

- Draining canned vegetables and rinsing them with water reduces the sodium content.
- If desired, substitute 4 cups of low-sodium chicken broth for 4 of cups water and 1 chicken bouillon cube.
- If desired, substitute 2 cups frozen green beans for canned.

1. In a large pot over high heat, add the roasted turkey, celery, carrots, onion, bouillon cube, black pepper and 4 cups of water. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat and cook over low heat for 30 minutes.
2. Cook rice according to the package directions in a separate pot.
3. Add cooked rice and green beans to the soup and stir. Cook for about five minutes until heated through.

Makes eight servings. Each serving has 150 calories, 3 grams (g) fat, 7 g protein, 26 carbohydrate, 3 g fiber and 271 milligrams sodium.

### Menu idea:

Roasted Turkey Rice Soup,  
spinach salad with mandarin oranges,  
whole-wheat rolls, pumpkin-yogurt parfaits,  
low-fat or fat-free milk

My family enjoys pumpkin-flavored foods, but I keep making pumpkin pie and pumpkin bars. I know those recipes are high in calories. Do you have any new ways to enjoy pumpkin?

Pumpkin is very nutritious. It is high in fiber and vitamin A (for healthy skin and eyes).

### Here are several ways to add pumpkin to your diet:

- Try canned pumpkin in place of part of the fat (butter or oil) in recipes such as banana bread.
- Replace part of the fat in brownie or muffin recipes with canned pumpkin.
- Try making a savory pumpkin soup.
- Mix pureed pumpkin into your next batch of chili for a fun fall flavor.
- Create a pumpkin parfait by using canned pumpkin, vanilla yogurt, a drizzle of honey and a sprinkle of walnuts or chocolate chips.
- Mix up your Saturday morning breakfast routine by making pumpkin pancakes or waffles.

## FoodWi\$e Tip of the Month

Enjoy leftover Thanksgiving turkey in many ways on your menu. Turkey is an excellent source of protein, vitamins and minerals. How about some Turkey Tostadas, Turkey Pot Pie, Turkey Salad With Orange Vinaigrette, Turkey Chili, White Chili With Turkey, Corn and Beans or Apple Turkey Pita Pockets?

These easy-to-make recipes are available on the NDSU Extension Service website ([www.ag.ndsu.edu/food](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food)). In the search box, type the name of the recipe or simply type "turkey" for lots of healthful options.

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Contact the local office of the  
NDSU Extension Service  
for more information  
on food and nutrition or  
managing your food dollar.

