

# Healthy Swaps: Thanksgiving

## 1. Mashed Potatoes vs Mashed Cauliflower



### Swap Out: *Mashed Potatoes*

It's not that the main ingredient, the potato, is the problem with this dish. Mashed potatoes become problematic when you start adding in all the additional calories like butter, cheese and heavy cream. These ingredients aren't extremely problematic by themselves, but when you mix them all together, combined with a lack of portion control, and a tendency to place a double serving size on your plate, the calories add up fairly quickly.

### Swap In: *Mashed Cauliflower*

Believe it or not, this cruciferous vegetable doubles as a subtler solution to the classic mashed potato dish. It has the same consistency as mashed potatoes, but with fewer calories and starch and a lower glycemic load. Cauliflowers are a great source of vitamins and minerals including C, K, folate and B6, as well as fiber, phosphorus and magnesium. Simply steam your cauliflower for 12-15 minutes, drain any excess water and then mix in toppings of choice such as garlic, olive oil, sea salt or grass-fed butter. Mash your ingredients together until they look like mashed potatoes or puree until you get a smooth texture. You can still add a creamy consistency by using coconut milk, which will give you a non-dairy alternative to this seasonal favorite.

## 2. Candied Yams with Marshmallows vs Roasted Sweet Potatoes



### Swap Out: *Candied Yams with Marshmallows*

Don't let the yams fool you, this recipe is filled with hidden sugar, syrup, additives and calories. This dish is far from what the traditional Pilgrims were eating when they gathered for this harvest celebration. This holiday favorite is loaded with several forms of sugar, which can put you front row on the blood sugar rollercoaster, leading to sugar cravings and energy crashes. Let's not forget that marshmallows lack vital vitamins and minerals, and are full of additives and empty calories.

### Swap In: *Roasted Sweet Potatoes*

Vegetables don't have to be covered in syrup and sugar to taste good; try roasting them instead for a tasty treat for your health and waist! Sweet potatoes are naturally delicious as well as being a great source of beta-carotene, vitamins C and B, potassium, phosphorus, antioxidants and fiber. This not so guilty pleasure is a great dish to bring to any holiday feast that is packed with flavor and nutrition. Slice up some sweet potatoes, drizzle coconut oil and sea salt on top and roast on high heat for 30-45 minutes. Finish with some sprinkles of cinnamon and serve up this classic recipe with a sweet spin!

## 3. Store Bought Stuffing vs Wild Rice and Veggie Stuffing



### Swap Out: *Store Bought Stuffing*

This should come as no surprise, but many store bought stuffing contain a laundry list of ingredients. This includes added sugars, sodium, high fructose corn syrup, MSG and artificial flavoring, all of which have gone through extensive processing, often making this side dish less nutritious. This holiday favorite is often left with less fiber, minerals and nutrients and more starch and fillers than originally intended. Don't be afraid to go against the grain this year and opt for a healthier substitute.

### Swap In: *Wild Rice and Veggie Stuffing*

This versatile stuffing can be a great side kick to any main course you serve this Thanksgiving. Get creative with spices and herbs such as turmeric, rosemary and cilantro to eat up some extra health benefits. This nutrient dense substitute is packed with fiber, B vitamins, and many minerals including zinc, potassium and magnesium. Make your rice as you normally would and remove from heat when done. While your oven is preheating and your rice is cooking, sauté some of your favorite fall produce such as squash, beets, pears and parsnips. Combine your rice and vegetable medley and bake in the oven at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Show off your advanced culinary gusto with some exotic varieties of rice such as black rice, which contains antioxidants, vitamins and minerals such as iron, potassium and magnesium.

## 4. Green Bean Casserole vs Green Bean Salad



VS



### Swap Out: *Green Bean Casserole*

It's cheesy, it's gooey, and somewhere deep down there are some green beans hidden trying to add nutritional value to the dish, but their efforts are negated by the extra carbohydrate and fat content. The cheese, butter and cream add up quickly when it comes to tacking on extra calories. Despite the crunchy and comforting texture, many green bean casserole recipes also call for using canned soups and fried onions.

### Swap In: *Green Bean Salad*

A much healthier holiday option, sautéed green beans can fill you up and please your palate at the same time. You can steam them, roast them or sauté them with a good quality olive oil and fresh garlic, pepper and sea salt. If you are looking to please the comfort food crowd, then try making a healthier casserole substitute by using Greek yogurt or low-sodium organic cream of mushroom soup, mixed with your sautéed green beans. Skip out on the fried onions and top with some sliced slivered almonds.

## 5. Canned Cranberry Jelly vs Real Cranberry Sauce



VS



### Swap Out: *Canned Cranberry Jelly*

Buying canned cranberry sauce is hardly making our ancestors proud when it comes to keeping holiday traditions alive. Canned cranberry jelly loses many of its nutrients during processing and contains added sugars and preservatives to help extend the shelf life.

### Swap In: *Real Cranberry Sauce*

Naturally packed with fiber, antioxidants and nutrients like vitamins A and C, cranberries can really add value to any main course or side dish. Making your own sauce at home allows you to control what ingredients you choose to prepare it with,

without having to worry about added sugar concentrates. Taking some extra time in the kitchen to make this healthy swap is easier than you think!

Combine 1 bag of frozen or fresh berries with cinnamon, nutmeg and 3/4 cup pineapple juice into a saucepan and bring to a boil. Once the ingredients start to thicken, reduce to a simmer and pour the juice of one freshly squeezed orange over the cranberry mixture. Allow the mixture to simmer for an additional 15 minutes, remove and allow to chill in the fridge for about 4 hours. If you want a sweeter version, add some raw honey or stevia to taste for a healthier spin on this festive classic!

## 6. Mixed Alcoholic Drinks vs Wine



### Swap Out: *Mixed Alcoholic Drinks*

One of the easiest ways to cut out excessive and unnecessary calories is to cut back on alcohol and make smarter beverage choices. Not only does alcohol acts as an appetite stimulant, it also causes our blood sugar levels to drop, often leading to mindless snacking and poor food choices during your holiday outing. Save on calories and sugar by choosing red wines and champagnes, while trying to pass on mixed drinks and heavy beers.

### Swap In: *Wine*

Moderate consumption of red wine can have some health benefits, so don't feel like you have to completely forego your social butterfly status during the holiday season. Red wine contains resveratrol, a plant compound that has antioxidant properties attributed to wine's cardiovascular benefits. The antioxidant and low sugar content of red wine also is thought to protect your body's cells and tissues against free radical damage.

Source: [vitaminshoppe.com/lp/healthy-scoop](http://vitaminshoppe.com/lp/healthy-scoop)