

Fun and Nutritious Fall Recipes for Seniors

September 19, 2016 by Joan Cisneros LPN



As the wind picks up a chill and the weather becomes colder, we're ready to turn to our favorite comfort foods to fill us up and keep us warm.

We've put our swimsuits away and dug out our oversized sweaters but that doesn't mean we should stop watching what we eat. Nutrition is important in every season and at every stage of our lives, especially as we age.

As we age, and our loved ones begin to age, nutrition can play an even bigger role in our lives. Aging tends to weaken our bodies, and so we should strengthen them up with nutritious meals.

We've rounded up some of the healthier versions of our favorite fall comfort foods, perfect for everyone of all ages in your family.

For breakfast, try these healthy **pumpkin cranberry muffins**. Their ingredient list seems daunting but they are easy to make, and certainly worth the shopping trip! Spend some time making these muffins. You can make a family gathering of it, having everyone contribute in their own way. After the muffins are done baking, you will have the perfect breakfast or snack available until everyone has had their share.

To make these muffins you will need:

- ½ cup milk
- 1 ½ cup whole wheat flour

- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup quick cooking oats
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¾ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup white sugar
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 egg
- ½ cup coarsely chopped fresh cranberries
- ¼ cup dried cranberries

Once you have gathered your ingredients, the first step will be to preheat the oven to 375F degrees. You will want to line 12 muffin tins with paper.

Mix the milk and vinegar together, and set aside. Mix together the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, oats, baking soda, ginger, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk the pumpkin, brown sugar, white sugar, vegetable oil, and egg together. Slowly stir in a bit of the flour mixture at a time, until evenly combined. Fold both the dried and fresh cranberries into the batter.

Spoon the batter into the muffin tins and bake for 25 minutes, letting them cool completely before eating.

For lunch why not keep it simple with a **grilled peanut butter and banana sandwich**? This simple meal delivers a perfect boost of protein and potassium, both of which are vital for maintaining a healthy diet.

For this recipe you will need:

- 2 slices of whole wheat bread
- 2 tablespoons of peanut butter
- 1 banana, sliced
- Cooking spray

Start by heating a skillet on medium heat, and coating it with cooking spray. While the pan is heating, spread 1 tablespoon of peanut butter on each slice of the bread, placing the banana slices evenly onto one slice of bread. Close your sandwich up and fry it until it has become golden brown, a process that takes about 2 minutes on each side. Honey may be added to the sandwich for a sweeter taste.

Lasagna is a classic family meal, but is often too time-consuming to make. Get all the taste, and comfort, from lasagna with this **baked ziti** recipe. With pasta, ground beef, tomato sauce and cheese, this little taste of Italy covers all of the food groups.

For this recipe you will need:

- 1 pound dry ziti pasta
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 2 26 ounce jars of spaghetti sauce
- 6 ounces or provolone cheese, sliced
- 1 ½ cups sour cream
- 6 ounces mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat your oven to 350F degrees. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil, add ziti and cook for about 8 minutes, or until your pasta is al dente. Brown the onions and ground beef together on medium heat in a large skillet. Add the spaghetti sauce and let the recipe simmer for 15 minutes. Line a 9" X 13" baking dish with aluminum foil or cover in butter. Pour in half the ziti, provolone cheese and sour cream followed by half of the sauce mixture. Add the rest of the ziti followed by mozzarella cheese, then the remaining sauce mixture and top the whole thing off with Parmesan cheese. Bake until the cheese is melted, or about 30 minutes.

One of the best parts of fall is all the vegetables that come into season, and roasting those vegetables are the perfect side dish to any dinner. Cut back on oil and turn up the flavor with this **roasted potato** recipe. To personalize this recipe, just substitute your favorite fall vegetable for potatoes.

For this recipe you will need:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- ½ tablespoon red pepper flakes
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 4 large potatoes peeled and cubed

Preheat the oven to 425F degrees, and toss all the ingredients, minus the potatoes together in a bowl. Once they have been evenly mixed, toss in the potatoes until they are evenly coated. Place the potatoes on a baking tray and bake for about 20 to 30 minutes, occasionally turning.

Every hearty meal deserves a desert, and Fall is the perfect time to bake this healthier **apple crisp** recipe. Apples are just coming into season, and taste the best during this time of the year—there is no reason to not bake with them! The walnuts can be left out based on personal preference or allergies.

For this recipe you will need:

- 10 cups, unpeeled, cored and sliced apples
- ½ cup white sugar

- 1 tablespoon white whole wheat flour
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- ½ cup water
- 1 cup quick cooking oats
- 1 cup white whole wheat flour
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup chopped walnuts – optional
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ cup butter, melted

Begin by preheating the oven to 350 degrees F. In a 9X13 inch pan, place the sliced apples in the bottom. In a bowl, mix the white sugar, 1 tablespoon flour and ground cinnamon together, and sprinkle over apples. Pour water evenly over the mixture.

In a spate bowl, combine the oats, 1 cup of flour, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda, walnuts and melted butter. Crumble and sprinkle evenly over the apple mixture. Bake for about 45 minutes.

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It's easy to eat healthy and with satisfaction during the fall season. Get the family together and make memories while you create these fantastic recipes. You'll fill your tummy, and warm your heart!

Fall is the perfect time to incorporate comfort foods into your diet, but just because it isn't summer anymore, doesn't mean you should go overboard! Try out some of our healthy comfort foods for seniors and let us know what you think!

All images and recipes are courtesy of All Recipes.