

Food for Thought

March 2024

March is National Nutrition Month® Beyond the Table

Each year during the month of March the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics celebrates National Nutrition Month®. The focus of the month is always on the importance of making informed food choices and developing healthful eating and physical activity habits.



This year the theme is, **Beyond the Table**, which addresses the farm-to-fork aspect of nutrition, from food production and distribution to navigating grocery stores and farmers markets — and even home food safety and storage practices. It also describes the various ways we eat — not only around a dinner table, but also on the go, in schools and restaurants, at games and events. This theme also includes sustainability, for instance, decreasing food waste from school and work to home and beyond. Here are some ways you can go Beyond the Table to improve both your health and the planet's:

Stay nourished on any budget.

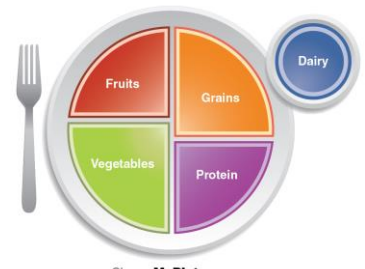
- Learn cooking, food preparation and meal planning skills.
- Use a grocery list and shop sales when purchasing food.
- Learn about community resources such as SNAP, WIC and local food banks.
- Practice home food safety.

Eat a variety of foods from all food groups.

- Include your favorite cultural foods and traditions and try new foods or global cuisines.
- Eat foods in various forms including fresh, frozen, canned, and dried.
- Experiment with recipes using different ingredients.

Eat with the environment in mind.

- Get creative with leftovers and ways to reduce food waste.
- Enjoy more plant-based meals and snacks.
- Buy food in season and from local farmers when possible.
- Grow food at home or in a community garden.



The site www.eatright.org is a good place to explore ways Beyond the Table to reach your health goals. You can read science-based information about healthful food choices, try out new recipes, watch videos and more! It is the website for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, which is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals!

There are many healthy and delicious naturally green foods you can add to your St. Patrick's Day festivities.

- ☘ **Go Green Smoothies:** Try adding leafy greens such as spinach or kale, naturally green fruits (kiwi, green grapes, or green apples), or avocados to your favorite smoothie recipe.
- ☘ **Add greens to your favorite dishes:** There are plenty of ways to incorporate more greens into some of your favorite dishes.
 - Add green peppers or spinach when ordering or making pizza at home.
 - Stuff your favorite sandwiches with spinach, romaine lettuce, or slices of avocado.
 - Add greens such as kale or Swiss chard to soups.
 - Scramble green peppers or green onions into an omelet for a nutritious breakfast.
 - Add a variety of leafy greens to your salad (spinach, kale, arugula, to name a few).
 - Add green fruit such as kiwi, green grapes, or honeydew melon to a yogurt parfait or fruit salad.
- ☘ **Snack time:** Include oven baked tortilla chips and guacamole, celery sticks and green peppers with dip, edamame, or pistachios.
- ☘ **Substitute:** Instead of pasta noodles, try making zucchini noodles also known as zoodles and add them to your whole wheat pasta. You can use a low-cost veggie spiralizer or a grater to make these. Instead of bread for sandwiches, try using lettuce as wraps.
- ☘ **Add greens to water:** Try adding sliced cucumbers, mint leaves, or lime to your water for a refreshing burst of flavor.
- ☘ **Plan ahead:** Buy frozen green vegetables to save money and time in the kitchen. Since frozen vegetables have a longer shelf-life, there is less food waste, and frozen vegetables contain just as many nutrients as fresh vegetables do since they are frozen at their peak ripeness.



Sources: National Nutrition Month® Resources (eatright.org);file:///C:/Users/kalig/Downloads/Beyond%20the%20Table.pdf; <https://extension.umaine.edu/food-health/2022/03/17/6-tips-for-eating-green-on-st-patricks-day/> retrieved 02/29/24

Eat Smart Idaho can help you learn how to eat well for less. For Information on Eat Smart Idaho classes, contact the Nutrition Instructor in your county:

Panhandle: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai & Shoshone Counties
208-292-2525

North Central Idaho: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, & Nez Perce Counties
208-883-2267



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