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FOR NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH® 2021, ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS ENCOURAGES REIMAGINING TRADITIONAL DISHES

CHICAGO – For National Nutrition Month®, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics encourages everyone to embrace their individuality: Create healthful eating patterns with the foods they love.

In March, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics focuses attention on healthful eating through [National Nutrition Month®](#). This year’s theme, *Personalize Your Plate*, promotes creating nutritious meals to meet people’s cultural and personal food preferences.

“We are all unique with different bodies, goals, backgrounds and tastes, so it only makes sense that our food choices will reflect that individuality,” said registered dietitian nutritionist Roxana Ehsani, a national spokesperson for the Academy in Las Vegas, Nev. “It’s possible for anyone to [incorporate the foods you love into a healthy lifestyle](#).”

Registered dietitian nutritionists help clients fine-tune traditional recipes, provide alternative cooking methods and other healthful advice for incorporating family-favorite foods into everyday meals. During National Nutrition Month®, the Academy encourages everyone to make informed food choices and develop sound eating and physical activity habits they can follow all year long.

Seek the advice of registered dietitian nutritionists — the food and nutrition experts who can help develop individualized eating and activity plans to meet people’s health goals. To find a registered dietitian nutritionist near you, use the Academy’s online [Find an Expert](#) service.

Ehsani recommends tips to reimagine traditional dishes:

- Cook with dried spices and herbs instead of salt to add flavor to your dishes
- Try different grains such as wild rice, whole-grain farro and whole-grain barley to reap the benefits of whole grains
- Go meatless: Serve up beans or lentils for a heart healthful plant-based protein
- Cook with vegetable oils instead of solid fats such as butter when cooking to limit saturated fat
- Eat 100-percent whole-wheat bread instead of white bread for more dietary fiber
- To decrease extra calories from fat, bake, grill, roast or steam your food instead of frying
- Sprinkle chia or ground flax seeds on cereal, salad or toast to increase consumption of omega-3 fatty acids
- For flavor, add lime, grapefruit or pineapple slices to glasses of water
- Cook grains in a low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock for flavor
- To add variety, enjoy vegetables in different forms — raw, steamed, roasted, grilled or sauteed.

“Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables and the remaining quarters of your plate with whole grains and protein foods, such as lean meat, skinless poultry, seafood or beans,” Ehsani says. “With each meal, eat calcium-rich foods and drinks such as fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese or a calcium-fortified soy beverage.”

National Nutrition Month®

National Nutrition Month® was initiated in 1973 as National Nutrition Week, and it became a month-long observance in 1980 in response to growing interest in nutrition. The second Wednesday of March is Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day, an annual celebration of the dedication of RDNs as the leading advocates for advancing the nutritional status of Americans and people around the world. This year’s observance will be March 10.

As part of National Nutrition Month®, the [Academy’s website will host resources](#) to spread the message of good nutrition and the importance of an overall healthy lifestyle for all. Follow National Nutrition Month® on the Academy’s social media channels including [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) using #NationalNutritionMonth.

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Representing more than 100,000 credentialed nutrition and dietetics practitioners, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world’s largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving the nation’s health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy. Visit the Academy at www.eatright.org.