

Does healthy eating have to be tasteless?

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This Winter, don't deprive yourself of your favorite comfort foods. Do some healthy cooking... comfort-food style! There are many recipes that provide hearty, satisfying, and nutritious comfort food meals.

It's never been easier to incorporate healthy, fresh, seasonal ingredients into comfort foods.

Lighten Up your Favorite Comfort Foods

Many people would say that macaroni and cheese is one of their favourite comfort foods. For most, it brings back lots of childhood memories. For a healthier macaroni and cheese, use whole wheat pasta, low-fat or fat-free versions of cheese, cream and milk; and if you like it creamier, use cottage cheese or Greek yogurt.

Mashed potatoes can be made more nutritious by substituting some of the potatoes for cauliflower, and



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substituting vegetable broth for cream and butter to add flavour. Blending the potatoes and cauliflower with fresh herbs, garlic and caramelized onions, topped with a sprinkle of parmesan cheese is delicious!

Soup - it's good for your soul, wholesome, easy to make, and comforting. The best thing about soup is that you can be creative by adding your own personalized spin. If creamy soup is your comfort food, thicken a brothy soup by pureeing white beans, caramelized onions and 2% milk. Throw away those cans of soup, and take out your pots and make your own soup - it will taste better and it's better for you! And if you are really ambitious - making your own stock is great! See this link for how to make your own soup stock:

<http://www.chatelaine.com/recipes/chatelainekitchen/how-to-make-the-best-soup-stock/>.

If chicken potpie is your comfort food, making it with a fat-free cream soup as the base, adding extra veggies and topping with whole wheat biscuits

instead of pie crust are all healthier options.

Meatballs and meatloaf can get a healthier twist by using lean ground beef or ground turkey. Shredding veggies such as zucchini and carrot and mixing some lentils in for the ground meat are all healthier alternatives.

Casseroles - the classic comfort food. From lasagna to Shepherds Pie, casseroles are a warm and satisfying one-dish meal. Using leaner cuts of beef, pork and lamb, lower fat cheese like feta, cottage and light cheddar cheese, oil instead of butter, tomato sauce instead of creamy sauces, and topping with whole grain breadcrumbs are all tasty ingredient substitutions. Casseroles are great as they can easily pack all four food groups. Choose casserole recipes that call for lots of vegetables, legumes, whole grain pasta or brown rice, chicken, turkey or fish. When you make your own casseroles, you can limit fat, sugar and sodium!

For chili and stew, make sure you add lots of great ingredients like pulses (peas, beans, or lentils) and veggies!

When you are attempting to re-style your meals and substituting ingredients, be sure to make one modification at a time so that you satisfy your comfort food craving!

Don't Sacrifice Flavour

Flavour is King! Flavour your vegetables and protein with fresh herbs and spices. For fish, herbs and spices such as basil, curry powder, dill, mustard, garlic, marjoram, paprika, parsley, tarragon and thyme work well. To spice up your veggies: for squash; add ginger, basil, onion, garlic, lemongrass or cinnamon, for cauliflower; add nutmeg, onion and garlic, for tomatoes; add basil, onion, garlic, oregano, parsley, and rosemary, for sweet potatoes; add cinnamon and nutmeg.

I hope you enjoy cooking and putting a healthier spin on some of your favorite comfort food dishes this Winter!



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... We Can Help.