

Guilt-free recipes for a holiday feast

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

The holidays are a time for family, friends, gift-giving, sharing and of course, lots of food. It is almost impossible to lose weight around the holidays (and who wants to when there is pumpkin pie and sweet potatoes abound?), but you can still maintain your weight and fight the holiday bulge with the right mindset and flavorful yet healthy recipes. Ellen Haas, author of *Fit Food* offers a solution via healthy recipes that help you to eat well and stay fit whether you are dieting or not this holiday season.

The daily decisions we make about food affect our mood and bodies, and the holidays are no exception. Eating an abundance of unhealthy foods can lead to unhealthy weight gain, lack of energy and mood swings. Vegetables, fruit, grains, poultry, fish, meat and dairy should all constitute part of our daily diet. Ellen Haas shows readers how to manage their weight through portion control and provides readers with nourishing recipes that are both satisfying and delicious. Created by top chefs, you might just want to skip Aunt Norma's pumpkin pie this year.

Try this 'Lemony Risotto with Asparagus and Shrimp' as a great alternative to mashed potatoes or creamed spinach.

Lemony Risotto with Asparagus and Shrimp

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 40 minutes

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 cup asparagus, trimmed and cut into 2 lengths

4 cups low-sodium chicken broth

Salt to taste

Freshly ground black pepper

2 teaspoons olive oil

1/3 cup diced onions

1 pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined

1 clove garlic, minced

1/2 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

1 cup Arborio rice

1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Cooking Instructions

1. Cook the asparagus in a pot of well-salted boiling water until it is crisp-tender, about 3 minutes. Drain. Transfer the asparagus to a bowl of ice water. When the asparagus is cool, drain and refrigerate. (This can be done ahead and stored in the refrigerator for 1 day).

2. Heat the chicken broth in a saucepan, season well with salt and pepper, and keep hot over low heat.

3. Heat the olive oil over medium heat in a separate medium-size pot. Add the onion, season lightly with salt and pepper, and cook until it turns translucent, about 5 minutes.

4. Turn the heat to high, add the shrimp, garlic, and lemon zest, and season with salt and pepper. Cook the shrimp until they are just opaque, about 2 minutes. Transfer the shrimp to a plate and set aside.

5. Add the rice to the onions in the pot, stir, and turn the heat to low. Add about 1 cup of the hot broth to the

rice mixture and stir slowly until the broth is absorbed. Continue to add the broth 1 cup at a time, stirring slowly, letting the rice absorb the broth before adding more.

6.The risotto is cooked when it is creamy on the outside and slightly firm (al dente) in the center, about 20 to 25 minutes total. Stir in the shrimp, half of the Parmesan cheese, and half of the asparagus. Season with salt and pepper to taste. If the risotto is too thick, add a little more broth until it becomes creamy.

7.Divide the risotto into warm serving dishes and sprinkle with the remaining cheese and asparagus.

About Ellen Haas: She is a leading expert on healthy eating and founder and CEO of FoodFit.com, a popular source for healthy eating on the web. As Under Secretary of Agriculture for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, she was the nation's top nutrition official from 1993-1997 and is widely known for making school lunches healthier. She is the author of Great Adventures in Food, A Fresh Market Cookbook.

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