

Healthy LIVING while aging!



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Celebrate a World of Flavors

By Aurora Calvillo Buffington, Ph.D.

What is it about international cuisine that intrigues you? My husband enthusiastically told me “the flavors!” This man is a delight to cook for as he thoroughly enjoys eating and trying new foods making it easy for me to venture out of the usual comfort foods to explore different ingredients and dishes.

Having an adventurous palate is a plus when it comes to tasting cultural foods because they can be so different than the foods to which we are familiar. But sometimes we find dishes from other cultures share similarities with our own, making them great starting points to try.

The beautiful thing about our sense of taste is the surprise and enjoyment that new flavors or flavor combinations can produce. Not only do foods from around the world tickle our taste buds, but they can also help us eat healthier, and this is truly something we can celebrate.

Following are three spices you may wish to explore that are used in international cuisine and add wonderful flavor with the bonus of health benefits.

Cinnamon – This fragrant spice is associated with sweet deserts and beverages but may also be used in main courses.

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Cinnamon can help you use less sugar as it brings out the natural sweetness in foods. Some research shows cinnamon helps reduce blood sugar levels and lipids like cholesterol and triglycerides. Cinnamon is used in Indian, Mexican, Middle Eastern, Lebanese, Moroccan and Chinese cuisines. Try stirring it into your coffee, sprinkling it over yogurt, fruit, hot cereal, or adding it to sweet potatoes, butternut squash and smoothies.

Turmeric – This strong spice is used to add flavor and a bright yellow color to dishes and beverages. Turmeric may help reduce inflammation and is an ingredient commonly used in Caribbean, Indian, North African, Middle Eastern and Indonesian dishes. Add turmeric to lentils, rice, vinaigrettes, soups or stews and see how much color and flavor it adds.

Ginger – This spice can be sweet, slightly spicy and sharp tasting all at once, and is used in Chinese, Thai, Indian, Japanese, Asian and Western cooking. Ginger has been used for centuries to aid digestion and help reduce nausea. For something different, try adding a little ginger to sweet potatoes, applesauce, salmon, salad dressing, ground beef, smoothies and tea – the possibilities are endless!

To find tasty and healthful recipes that include international dishes, check out the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Recipes section at www.eatright.org/food/planning-and-prep and *celebrate a world of flavors!*

For more information about Healthy Aging education or resources, please visit our website: extension.unr.edu and search “Healthy Aging” or contact healthyaging@unr.edu

Shake the habit! 🥄 Tips to reducing salt and sodium in your diet.

World Salt Awareness Week is March 14 through March 20, 2022.

Use the spices featured in our article to ditch the salt!

- **Eat your veggies!** – choose fresh, frozen, or low- or no- sodium canned vegetables and season yourself.
- **Fresh is best** - choose meats that are fresh instead of marinated, canned, smoked, brined or cured meats.
- **Go low or no** – check nutrition labels and compare sodium levels in foods.
- **Pay attention to preparation** – limit cured foods, foods packed in brine and condiments.
- **Subtract, don't add** – rinse canned tuna, vegetables and beans and cook rice and pasta without salt.
- **Limit salty processed food** – limit frozen meals, packaged mixes and canned soups.
- **Spice it up** – boost flavor with herbs, spices, lemon, lime and vinegar instead of salt and salty seasonings.

Visit: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/sites/default/files/publications/TipsToReduceSodium.pdf>

Change your salty ways in 3 simple steps:



1



Choose less salty foods -
look for the Heart Mark!

Cook at home with fresh
ingredients.

2



Cook with less salt.

Use dry herbs, spices, garlic, lemon
and chilli for flavour. If you use salty
ingredients, don't add salt too.

3



Do not add salt to
prepared food.

Taste food before adding more salt
and better yet, remove salt shaker
from the table.

Vegetable Stew

Thursday, March 17, 2022, is St. Patrick's Day - enjoy this delicious vegetable stew.

Green chili pepper adds spice and flavor to this potato, corn and summer squash stew!

Ingredients:

- 3 cups water
- 1 vegetable bouillon (low sodium, cube)
- 2 cups white potatoes (cut into 2-inch strips)
- 2 cups carrot (sliced)
- 4 cups summer squash (cut into 1-inch chunks)
- 1 cup summer squash (cut into 4 chunks)
- 1 can sweet corn, 15 ounces, rinsed and drained (or 2 ears of fresh corn, cut off the cob)
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 2 garlic (cloves, minced)
- 1 green onion (stalk, chopped)
- 1/2 green chili pepper (small, chopped)
- 1 cup onion (coarsely chopped)
- 1 cup tomatoes (diced)
- Add a handful of chopped spinach in honor of National Spinach Day on Saturday, March 26

Directions: 1) Put water and bouillon in large pot and bring to a boil. 2) Add potatoes and carrots and simmer for five minutes. 3) Add remaining ingredients, except for tomatoes, and continue cooking for 15 minutes over medium heat. 4) Remove four chunks of squash and puree in blender. 5) Return pureed mixture to pot and let cook for 10 minutes more. 6) Add tomatoes and the optional chopped spinach and cook for another five minutes. 7) Remove from heat and let sit for 10 minutes to allow stew to thicken.

Consider adding a tablespoon of turmeric for a new flavor combination! For the recipe visit:

<https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/vegetable-stew>

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