

Give Your Plate a Taste Lift Without Forfeiting Nutrition during National Nutrition Month and Beyond

When it comes to choosing what to eat, nutrition is important but flavor is likely the true motivator and also the key to eating right, according to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. This March, during National Nutrition Month®, experiment with new flavors and flavor combinations in healthy meals and “Enjoy the Taste of Eating Right.”

To maximize food’s flavor and nutrition, choose high-quality ingredients at their peak quality, and be sure to store and handle foods properly. Try some of these simple techniques to enhance flavor while experimenting with flavor combinations.

- Intensify the flavors of meat, poultry and fish with high-heat cooking techniques such as pan-searing, grilling or broiling.
- Pep it up with peppers. Use red, green and yellow peppers of all varieties—sweet, hot and dried. Or add a dash of hot pepper sauce.
- Try grilling or roasting veggies in a very hot (450° F) oven or grill for a sweet, smoky flavor. Brush or spray them lightly with oil so they don’t dry out. Sprinkle with herbs.
- Caramelize sliced onions to bring out their natural sugar flavor by cooking them slowly over low heat in a small amount of oil. Use them to make a rich, dark sauce for meat or poultry.
- Simmer juices to make reduction sauces. Concentrate the flavors of meat, poultry and fish stocks. Reduce the juices by heating them—don’t boil. Then use them as a flavorful glaze or gravy.
- For fuller flavors, incorporate more whole grains such as brown rice or quinoa, or experiment with amaranth and wild rice.
- Add small amounts of ingredients with bold flavors like pomegranate seeds, chipotle pepper or cilantro.
- Add a tangy taste with citrus juice or grated citrus peel: lemon, lime or orange. Acidic ingredients help lift and balance flavor.
- Enhance sauces, soups and salads with a splash of flavored balsamic or rice vinegar.
- Give a flavor burst with good-quality condiments such as horseradish, flavored mustard, chutney, wasabi, bean purees, tapenade and salsas of all kinds.

These simple cooking steps can really transform your favorite meals and foods. People sense the same foods differently, so don’t be afraid to try new foods, flavors and taste combinations. There’s truly a world of flavors to explore.”