



Island Harvest
A FOOD BANK FOR LONG ISLAND

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The GrapeVine

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Fall Comfort Foods Reimagined

Fall has arrived! The start of each season signals change, including changes in food choices. Once the temperature drops, mac and cheese, fried foods, creamy soups, meat loaf, and mashed potatoes, just feel right. Unfortunately, these cheesy, creamy, fried comfort foods are not very comforting to our waistlines or health in general. But no need to take them off the menu, a few simple substitutions and/or additions can make a big difference!



Swap out the Cream. For cream-based soup or pasta sauce, use evaporated fat-free milk instead of cream. The taste and mouthfeel will be the same and the swap brings down the saturated fat and calories. Evaporated fat-free milk also works well as a substitute for whole milk in quiche, mashed potatoes, or casseroles.

Rethink Your Dairy Choices. Substitute lower fat milk, cheeses, and yogurts in recipes, or opt for cheeses that are more flavorful than others, so you can use less without sacrificing flavor. Examples of cheeses with a bolder flavor include sharp cheddars, Monterey Jack and tangy cheeses such as feta and goat cheese.

Upgrade Your Grains. Craving pasta or making a pasta or rice-based casserole? Try whole wheat pasta or brown rice. Start slowly by substituting half. The extra fiber will help you feel full and satisfied. Fiber also helps to keep your digestive tract healthy—and the digestive tract is a critical component of a healthy immune system.



Sneak in Some Extra Veggies. Adding vegetables to comfort foods is a quick and easy way to reduce calories and saturated fat while at the same time improving the nutritional quality. Cut the ground meat in your lasagna in half or replace it with a mix of spinach, peppers, eggplant, summer squash, and /or mushrooms. Use the same veggie mix for meatloaf, meatballs, or burgers. Replace half the cheese in your cheese sauce with cauliflower — you may not even be able to taste any difference!

Learn to “Fake-Fry”. Instead of deep-frying chicken, dip it in egg, coat with panko breadcrumbs (use whole wheat to up the fiber and nutrition) and lightly spray or drizzle with olive oil or other vegetable oil and then bake.

Kids’ Activity Corner Tangerine “Pumpkins”

Help your child follow these simple steps to create this fun and healthy tangerine pumpkin!

1. Carefully peel tangerine, remove as much of white membrane (pith) as possible.



2. Wash celery, cut into 1-inch pieces, save the celery leaves.

3. Assemble your “pumpkin” by placing the celery stalk and leaves in the top of the tangerine and enjoy!



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**USDA MyPlate
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This site provides seasonal recipes, recipe videos, resources, and the option to create your own cookbook with recipes selected from the site.

[MyPlate Seasonal Recipes](#)



**Mayo Clinic: Healthy Recipe
Substitutions**

This Mayo Clinic site provides a recipe ingredient list guide with suggestions for nutritious alternatives for some common ingredients.

[Recipe Substitutions](#)



Lighter, Healthier Mac & Cheese



Ingredients

- 4 cups cauliflower cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2 cups whole wheat elbow macaroni, uncooked
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 tbsp. butter
- ¼ cup minced onion
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 3 tbsp. flour
- 2 cups evaporated skim milk
- 1 cup freshly grated extra sharp low-fat cheddar
- ¼ cup grated fresh parmesan cheese

Directions

1. Cook cauliflower and macaroni in water 5-7 minutes or until macaroni is tender. Drain very well.
2. Melt butter/heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir in flour and black pepper and cook 1 minute.
3. Whisk in milk, a little bit at a time, whisking until smooth. Bring mixture to a boil over medium heat while stirring. Thicken and remove from heat.
4. Stir in cheddar and parmesan cheese until melted.
5. Gently stir cauliflower and macaroni into sauce; mix well, remove from heat, and serve.

Recipe Nutritional Upgrades		
Ingredient	Substitutions/Additions	Improvements?
Pasta	Whole Wheat Pasta	Adds fiber, essential to good GI health and a healthy immune system
Butter	Olive Oil (replaces ½ butter)	Reduces saturated fats/increases heart-healthy fats
Whole Milk/Cream	Evaporated Skim Milk	Reduces saturated fat and calories
Cheddar Cheese	Low-fat Cheddar Cheese	Reduces saturated fat and calories
	Cauliflower	Adds vegetables to a recipe that had none