

HEALTHY EATING

In November 2010, Congress approved a resolution to designate October as National Farm to School Month to demonstrate the growing importance and role of Farm to School programs in improving child nutrition, supporting local economies, and educating children about the origins of food.



October: Eat Better, Eat Together

October is National Eat Better, Eat Together Month and when families eat together, meals are likely to be more nutritious and kids who eat regularly with their families are less likely to snack on unhealthy foods and are more likely to eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Beyond health and nutrition, family meals provide a valuable opportunity for children and parents to reconnect. When adults, children and teenagers eat together children do better in school, have fewer behavioral problems, and communication improves. When is the last time you sat down and ate a meal with your family? If you cannot remember, October is a great time to start having a meal with your family as often as you can. Check out the following tips to make family meals happen at your house.

Tips on How to have more Family Meals

Schedule Family Meals.

- To plan more family meals, look over the calendar and choose a time when everyone can be there. Figure out which obstacles are getting in the way of family meals and see if there are ways to work around them.
- Even if it is only once a week, making it a habit to have family meals once a week is a great start and you can work your way up to 2 to 3 times a week.

- Don't forget that breakfast and lunch are meals as well; there are no rules that say family meals should only happen in the evening.

Prepare Meals Ahead of Time.

- It is important to make a shopping list and make time to go to the grocery store so you have food on hand to create meals.
- Try doing some prep work for meals on the weekend to get ready for the week ahead. On a night when you have extra time, cook double and put one meal in the freezer so there is a backup plan for busy nights.
- Remember that a meal at home does not have to be complicated or take a long time.



Involve Kids at Family Meals.

- Family meals can be fun and it is important to involve kids in them.
- Younger kids can put plates on the table, pour beverages, or fold napkins.
- Older kids can get ingredients, wash produce, mix, and stir. You could even have your teens be the cook for a night and you could be their helper in the kitchen.

During mealtime, make your time at the table pleasant and enjoy being together as a family. Remember to keep your interactions positive at the table. Ask your kids about their day and tell them about yours. Give everyone a chance to talk. If you cannot remember the last time you sat down for a family meal, take the time this October to start a family tradition of eating together and eating better.

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October is also Pasta Month – A New Recipe to Try!

Butternut Squash Fettuccine Alfredo

Looking for a creamy new recipe that is nutritious and tasty? Well this Butternut Squash Fettuccine Alfredo from our blogger friend and Dietitian Deanna Segrave-Daly from [Teaspoon of Spice](#) may just be what you need. The butternut squash adds a layer of creaminess and color to this already healthy Fettuccine Alfredo recipe. You can add in some unsalted butter, all-purpose flour and Parmesan cheese and other basic household ingredients to finish it up.

Ingredients

For the squash puree:

- 1 (3 pound) butternut squash, cut in half and seeds removed (save [seeds for roasting!](#))
- 2 teaspoons olive oil

For the pasta:

- 1 pound fettuccine or linguine (I use half whole wheat and half regular pasta)
- 2-3 tablespoons pasta water, as needed

For the sauce:

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 cup low-fat milk, warmed in microwave for 1 minute
- 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt



Directions

1. For the squash: preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Place squash, cut sides up on a baking pan with a lip (to catch any juice drippings) and drizzle each half with 1 teaspoon olive oil. Bake for about 45-60 minutes or until flesh is soft. Remove from oven and cool for about 10 minutes.
2. Scoop flesh out of skin and add to blender or food processor. Puree until smooth (sometimes I add a few tablespoons of water or milk to help the process.) This makes about 1 1/2 cups. Set aside.
3. Cook fettuccine in a large pot according to package instructions. Save some pasta water when draining and add pasta to a large serving bowl.
4. While pasta is cooking, make the sauce. In a large saucepan over medium heat, melt butter. Whisk in flour and then slowly, pour warm milk into pot, whisking as you go. Whisk frequently until roux starts to simmer rapidly and thicken a bit. Reduce to low heat and mix in butternut squash puree until well incorporated. Mix in 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese and add a few tablespoons of pasta water if the sauce is too thick. Remove from heat.
5. Pour butternut squash sauce over hot pasta, add pepper and salt and toss well. Sprinkle with remaining 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese and serve.