

Health Benefits of Thanksgiving Foods

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Here's a little something to make you feel better about all the eating that comes along with the Thanksgiving meal! A whole bunch of those holiday staples have serious health benefits.



Turkey

Packed with hunger-fighting and muscle-building protein -- even the dark meat is good for you!. [Turkey](#) a great centerpiece for a healthy Thanksgiving table, as long as you pass on the fatty skin.

Sweet Potatoes

Low in calories, yet bursting with natural sweetness and powerful antioxidants like [lycopene](#). And there are so many ways to eat sweet potatoes: baked, stuffed, mashed, roasted or whipped into sweet potato pie.

Cranberries

Fresh or dried, [cranberries](#) are packed with fiber, cell-protecting [anthocyanins](#) and [vitamin C](#). Add some to stuffing, grain salads, desserts or good old cranberry sauce.

Green Beans

These [tasty beans](#) give you vitamins C, A and K, plus iron and fiber – all for about 35 calories per cup.

Corn

This holiday classic can make its way to your meal in a variety of fashions – straight up kernels, casserole and (my fave) cornbread just to name a few. These [honey-sweeten muffins](#) are a fabulous choice.

Apples

Keep the doctor away with vitamins A and C and the inflammation-fighting phytochemical called quercetin. Keep the peels on when you make pies, tarts and [applesauce](#) – there are lots of nutrients in there.

Pumpkin

Add both the flesh and [seeds](#) to your holiday dishes to get vitamins, minerals, omega-3s and antioxidants like [lutein](#) and beta carotene. Cooked pumpkin adds lots of silky creamy texture without fat and cholesterol.

Sage

It wouldn't be Thanksgiving without this robust herb. A little goes a long way, giving big flavor for a smidge of calories

Cinnamon

[Cinnamon](#) is a powerful spice – it gives savory dishes warmth and depth and brings out the flavor of fall favorites like apples, pears and pumpkin. You'll also get a dose of fiber, calcium and iron. Regular consumption of this toasty spice may also help keep blood sugar and cholesterol in check.