

# 5 Healthy Thanksgiving Hacks



## **Bonus Recipe** Brussels Sprouts Gratin



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Thanksgiving is the perfect time to celebrate a delicious meal with family and friends, but there's nothing worse than feeling like an over-stuffed bird after dinner. These 5 healthy Turkey Day hacks showcase easy ways to bring out the best in the season's freshest, most vibrant produce, a trick for slimming down your favorite luscious gravy, and guidance on keeping portions satisfying yet sensible.

> **Move Over Marshmallows:** Sweet potatoes are rich in immune-boosting vitamin A, and they're a good source of vitamin C, potassium, and fiber. By topping your sweet potato casserole with crunchy pecans instead of mini marshmallows, you can keep all that good nutrition going strong. Create a better-for-you topping with a combination of chopped pecans, ground cinnamon, ground ginger, coconut oil, and just a tablespoon of brown sugar.

[Click Here](#) for Pecan Topped, Slightly-Sweet Sweet Potato Casserole

> **Slimmed-Down Gravy:** If you don't own a gravy separator, now is the time to add it to your holiday wish list. For about \$15.00, you'll save hundreds (if not thousands) of calories this Thanksgiving and many more down the road. A gravy separator separates the turkey fat from the flavorful pan juices. Once the fat separates, it's easy to pour off and discard. Pan juices can be reheated in a saucepan and thickened with a mixture of cold water and a few tablespoons of flour.

> **Roasted Vegetables to the Rescue:** From baby carrots and cauliflower florets to diced butternut squash, roasting vegetables brings out their natural sweetness and makes for an easy holiday side dish. Simply toss your favorite autumn vegetables with a few tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil, kosher salt, pepper, and chopped fresh herbs like rosemary and thyme and bake at 425°F until tender. Be sure to toss the veggies once or twice as they bake to ensure even browning.

[Click Here](#) for Honey Roasted Rainbow Carrots

> **Better-For-You Mashed Potatoes:** Typically made with heavy cream and a stick or two of butter, mashed potatoes are rich and delicious, but with a few tweaks they can still satisfy your side dish cravings without excessive fat and calories. Lighten up your favorite recipe by replacing half the potatoes with roasted cauliflower florets. Mash together with reduced-fat milk instead of cream and a few tablespoons of butter (versus a stick or two) and season with kosher salt and pepper to taste. Roasted cauliflower is flavorful, nutrient-rich, and it blends in beautifully with mild mashed potatoes.

> **Picking Perfect Portions:** If you love going up for seconds at Thanksgiving (and who doesn't?), then instead of piling your plate sky-high on your first round, start with just two or three bites of everything. Once you clean your plate, ask yourself if you're full or if you have room for seconds. Once you tune in to your tummy, help yourself to a few more bites of what you're craving most or call it quits and wait for dessert. Starting small without depriving yourself of your favorite foods is the secret to keeping portion sizes in check.



# Brussels Sprouts Gratin



The trick to this better-for-you Thanksgiving side dish is the roux made with extra virgin olive oil, flour, and 2% reduced-fat milk. You won't find cream or butter in this recipe, but you will still find great flavor. The Brussels sprouts come out soft and tender, and every luscious bite literally melts in your mouth. {Can be frozen and reheated.}

Makes 8 Servings

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds Brussels sprouts
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 4 ounces prosciutto, roughly chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2½ cups 2% reduced-fat milk
- 2 tablespoons sherry
- 1/2 cup + 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, divided

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Peel off any damaged outer layers of Brussels sprouts. Trim the stems to make them flush. Cut small sprouts in half and large ones into quarters lengthwise. Keep a bit of the core attached. Set aside.
2. Heat the oil in a large Dutch oven or saucepan over medium heat. Add the prosciutto and sauté, stirring frequently, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring frequently until fragrant and golden, about 1 minute. Stir in the Brussels sprouts, pepper, salt, and nutmeg, and stir continuously for 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Add the flour and continue stirring for 2 minutes. This will cook the flour. Stir in the milk and sherry, raise the heat, and bring to low boil, but keep stirring. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring frequently, until the liquid thickens and reduces by about a third and the Brussels sprouts begin to soften, 8 minutes. Stir in 1/2 cup of the Parmesan cheese, season with more salt to taste, and transfer to an oven-proof casserole dish. Cover with the remaining 2 tablespoons Parmesan.
4. Cover loosely with aluminum foil and bake until the Brussels sprouts are tender, about 25 minutes. Remove foil and cook 5 more minutes so top browns slightly.

Per Serving (about 3/4 cup): 220 calories, 11g total fat (3.5g saturated), 540mg sodium, 18g carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 14g protein, 20% vitamin A, 160% vitamin C, 25% calcium