

the  
rhodeahead

Lighten Up  
your  
Holidays

A RHODE AHEAD COOKBOOK



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# Lighten Up your Holidays

This is the season of good tidings,  
good cheer, and, of course, good food.

In this Rhode Ahead cookbook, you'll find holiday recipes that will make your loved ones happy (and healthy). Many of the recipes feature local food from Rhode Island farms.

In our state, we have a surprising bounty of local produce in the fall and winter, including carrots, pumpkins, apples, beets, turnips, squash, lettuce, kale, Swiss chard, radishes, and much more. Rhode Islanders want more local food, so many farmers are growing produce in greenhouses all year.

To find out where to buy local food, visit [farmfreshri.org](http://farmfreshri.org).

Happy holidays and happy eating!

# Southwestern Chicken Soup with Pumpkin

Switch up your traditional holiday soup with this flavorful dish combining both chicken and pumpkin.

SERVINGS: **5**

PREP TIME: **10 MIN**

COOK TIME: **30 MIN**

1 Tbsp. olive oil  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1 medium red bell pepper, chopped  
2 cups corn kernels  
2 cups pureed pumpkin (or 15-oz. can)  
2 tsp. chili powder  
1 tsp. ground cumin  
½ tsp. salt (or to taste)  
Black pepper to taste  
4 cups low-sodium chicken broth  
2 cups chopped cooked chicken  
¼ cup minced fresh cilantro  
½ cup reduced-fat sour cream



Heat oil in a large soup pot or Dutch oven over medium heat.

Add onion, garlic, and bell pepper.

Cook until vegetables soften, about 5 minutes.

Add corn, pumpkin, and spices (through black pepper); cook another 5 minutes, stirring frequently to prevent the mixture from sticking.

Stir in the broth, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer for about 20 minutes, or until the vegetables are fully cooked.

Add the chicken and cilantro, and simmer another 5 minutes.

Serve with a dollop of sour cream.

[Find it online](#)

Nutrition information: 273 calories, 9 g total fat (2.6 g saturated fat), 59 mg cholesterol, 388 mg sodium, 25 g total carbohydrate, 24 g protein

## MAIN DISHES

# Turkey Meatloaf

On a cold night, this hearty meal will warm you up.  
Pair it with roasted veggies or a side salad.

SERVINGS: **8**

PREP TIME: **10 MIN**

COOK TIME: **50-60 MIN**

2 lbs. lean ground turkey  
2 eggs  
½ cup onion, chopped  
1 stalk celery, chopped  
¾ cup rolled oats  
2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, minced  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
½ tsp. salt  
¼ tsp. pepper  
¼ tsp. dry mustard  
1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce  
¼ cup ketchup



Heat oven to 350°F.

In a large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients and mix well.  
Form into a loaf and place in the middle of a 9x13 baking dish.

Top with ketchup (optional) and bake for 50-60 minutes until a meat thermometer inserted into the center reaches 165°F.

Let sit for a few minutes, slice, and serve hot.

[Find it online](#)

Nutrition information: 221 calories, 9.8 g total fat (3 g saturated fat), 122 mg cholesterol, 356 mg sodium, 8.7 g total carbohydrate, 25 g protein

# Holiday Root Vegetable Mash

You don't need to dig deep for a delicious way to use root veggies. This Farm Fresh Rhode Island recipe brings together a medley of local vegetables.

SERVINGS: **6**

PREP TIME: **30 MIN**

COOK TIME: **60 MIN**

2 turnips  
2 sweet potatoes  
4 carrots  
½ tsp. cinnamon  
2 Tbsp. maple syrup  
Olive oil (about 2 Tbsp.)  
1 butternut squash  
2 leeks  
1 cup fresh cranberries  
1 sprig parsley  
3 tsp. vegetable oil  
½ cup sugar  
Salt (to taste)

[Find it online](#)



Heat oven to 400°F.

Wash and cut turnips in half. Rub with olive oil and wrap in aluminum foil. Peel sweet potatoes and rub with olive oil and cover with aluminum foil. Put both into the oven until easily pierced with a fork (about 45 minutes).

Wash and peel carrots. Dice and lightly toss with cinnamon and olive oil. Peel and dice butternut squash (discard pulp and seeds) and lightly toss with olive oil and 1 Tbsp. maple syrup. Put carrots and butternut squash into a baking pan uncovered and cook in the oven until both are easily pierced with a fork (about 30 minutes).

Wash leeks thoroughly and cut off the green stems of the leeks. Finely chop light green to white part of the leek. Sauté with 1 tsp. vegetable oil for about 8 minutes.

In a small saucepan, add cranberries, 2 tsp. vegetable oil, and ½ cup of sugar. Let it simmer until the cranberries break down and appear as chunky cranberry sauce.

Finely chop parsley and set aside.

In a food processor, add all root vegetables and sautéed leeks and blend until smooth (add 1 Tbsp. of maple syrup and olive oil to begin blending process).

Just before serving, mix in parsley and cranberries.

Serve warm as a side on top of lettuce for a holiday treat!

Nutrition information: 295 calories, 7 g total fat (0.9 g saturated fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 109 mg sodium, 59 g total carbohydrate, 3 g protein



# Bean and Pasta Soup

This hearty soup is a quick and easy weekday meal. Simply leave out the ground meat for a satisfying vegetarian alternative.

SERVINGS: 5

PREP TIME: 10 MIN

COOK TIME: 30 MIN

1 Tbsp. olive oil  
½ lb. ground turkey  
1 medium onion, chopped  
1 carrot, shredded  
1 stalk celery, diced  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
½ tsp. dried oregano  
1 tsp. dried basil  
4 cups low-sodium vegetable stock  
28 oz. can crushed tomatoes  
15.5 oz. can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed  
1 small zucchini, diced  
2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped  
1 cup uncooked small pasta, such as shells or tubes  
Salt and pepper to taste  
¼ cup Parmesan cheese (optional)



In a large pot, heat oil and brown meat. Add onion, carrot, and celery and sauté 4-5 minutes.

Add garlic, oregano, and basil and sauté 2 more minutes.

Add stock, tomatoes, and cannellini beans. Bring to a boil, cover, and simmer 10-15 minutes.

Add zucchini, parsley, and pasta and return to a boil.

Cook until pasta is tender, 6-8 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Ladle into serving bowls and top with Parmesan cheese if desired. Serve with crusty Italian whole-grain bread.

[Find it online](#)

Nutrition information: 338 calories, 9 g total fat (2 g saturated fat), 50 mg cholesterol, 337 mg sodium, 40 g total carbohydrate, 25.5 g protein

# Potato and Vegetable Cakes

This recipe from Farm Fresh Rhode Island makes great use of vegetables you may already have around the house.

SERVINGS: **4**

PREP TIME: **15 MIN**

COOK TIME: **10 MIN**

2 potatoes, grated

1 zucchini, grated

1 carrot, grated

1 egg

1 Tbsp. flour

Olive oil for cooking

Salt and pepper (to taste)



Wash vegetables and grate. Combine in a small mixing bowl with egg and flour.

After all ingredients are mixed, shape the mixture in small patties.

Place on a hot pan with oil and cook each one until each side is golden brown.

Serve warm and enjoy.

[Find it online](#)

Nutrition information: 169 calories, 8.4 g total fat (1.4 g saturated fat), 41 mg cholesterol, 37 mg sodium, 21 g total carbohydrate, 4.1 g protein

# Pumpkin Ravioli

You can use fresh or canned pumpkin puree in this recipe. Either will do the trick (and be a treat).

SERVINGS: **6**

PREP TIME: **30 MIN**

COOK TIME: **10 MIN**

1 cup pureed pumpkin  
¾ cup part-skim ricotta cheese  
⅓ cup grated Parmesan cheese  
2 tsp. brown sugar  
¼ tsp. salt  
Pinch of nutmeg  
1 package wonton wrappers  
½ cup low-sodium chicken broth  
¼ cup reduced-fat sour cream  
Chopped parsley

[Find it online](#)



In a medium bowl, stir together the pumpkin, cheese, sugar, salt, and nutmeg. Have a platter or baking sheet and a small bowl of water ready.

Lay one wonton wrapper out on a surface. Dip your finger or a pastry brush in the water and moisten the edge of one half of the wonton wrapper.

Place about one rounded teaspoon of pumpkin mixture in the middle of the wrapper, slightly closer to the moistened side. Fold the dry side over so that the edges meet and the wonton wrapper is folded in half. Pinch the edges to seal.

Repeat with the remaining wrappers and filling, laying the ravioli in a single layer on the platter or baking sheet.

Heat a large pot of water to boiling. Carefully drop the ravioli into the water and cook for 3 minutes. Drain ravioli.

In the empty pot, stir together the broth and sour cream. Return the ravioli to the pot and gently stir to coat with the sauce. Sprinkle with the parsley and serve immediately.

Nutrition information: 259 calories, 5.6 g total fat (3 g saturated fat), 24 mg cholesterol, 533 mg sodium, 38 g total carbohydrate, 12 g protein



# Peanutty African Stew

Your whole family will enjoy this spicy, savory one-pot dish.  
Add cayenne pepper for an extra kick.

SERVINGS: 8

PREP TIME: 10 MIN

COOK TIME: 25 MIN

1 cup instant brown rice

2 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth

1/3 Tbsp. dehydrated onion, minced

1/2 tsp. garlic powder

1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper (optional)

2 cups of sweet potato, peeled and diced

14.5 oz. can of diced tomatoes, with liquid

1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)

1/2 cup creamy, reduced-fat peanut butter

1 1/4 cups non-fat milk

3 cups baby spinach, coarsely chopped

1/4 cup roasted peanuts, chopped

Green onions, thinly sliced (optional)



Combine the first 9 ingredients in a soup pot (rice to salt). Bring to boil, then turn down to medium low. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes.

Stir in peanut butter and milk. Return to gentle simmer and cook uncovered for 5 minutes.

Stir in spinach and cook until wilted, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat.

Ladle stew into bowls and top with peanuts and green onion, if desired.

[Find it online](#)

Nutrition information: 260 calories, 12 g total fat (2 g saturated fat), 1 mg cholesterol, 526 mg sodium, 31 g total carbohydrate, 10 g protein

# Sweet & Sour Winter Slaw

The veggies in this Farm Fresh Rhode Island slaw can be swapped for julienned radish, green beans, and even raw beets. Leeks can be replaced with scallion or red onion. Add texture and variety by sprinkling sliced almonds or sunflower seeds and dried cranberries on top.

SERVINGS: 8

PREP TIME: 20 MIN

COOK TIME: 0 MIN

1 bunch kale, stems and leaves separated  
1 bunch bok choy, stems and leaves separated  
2 Hakurei (salad) turnips, shredded  
1 large carrot, shredded  
1 large or 2 small leeks, trimmed of dark green tops and sliced in thin rounds  
1 lemon, zested and juiced  
1/3 cup red wine vinegar  
1/4 cup maple syrup  
2 Tbsp. olive oil  
1 tsp. kosher salt  
Ground pepper to taste



Stack the leaves of kale and roll them the long way into a cigar-like tube. Using a chef's knife, slice across the tube of leaves to create long, thin ribbons. Do the same with the bok choy leaves. Slice the stems into matchsticks.

Toss kale and bok choy in a large bowl with shredded turnip, shredded carrot, and leek.

Combine lemon zest, lemon juice, red wine vinegar, maple syrup, olive oil, salt, and pepper in a small bowl. Whisk to combine and add to vegetables.

Toss to thoroughly mix.

[Find it online](#)

Nutrition information: 131 calories, 3.8 g total fat (0.5 g saturated fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 412 mg sodium, 23 g total carbohydrate, 3.8 g protein

# Roasted Butternut Squash with Cranberries

Add color to your holiday table with this jewel-toned side dish.  
Pair it with a turkey, ham, chicken, or a vegetarian main dish.

SERVINGS: **6**

PREP TIME: **15 MIN**

COOK TIME: **40-45 MIN**

1 medium butternut squash,  
peeled and cubed

1 apple, chopped

½ cup cranberries, fresh  
or frozen

2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

1 Tbsp. brown sugar

Pinch of salt and pepper



Heat oven to 375°F.

In a large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients until squash and fruit are covered.

Place in a 13x9 baking dish and cover with foil. Bake for 30 minutes.

Remove foil and roast for another 10-15 minutes or until done.

[Find it online](#)

Nutrition information: 150 calories, 5.8 g total fat (0.8 g saturated fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 38 mg sodium, 26 g total carbohydrate, 1.6 g protein



# Quinoa Cranberry Pilaf

Switch your traditional cranberry side dish with this quinoa salad. It'll be a big hit at your table.

SERVINGS: **4**

PREP TIME: **20 MIN**

COOK TIME: **25 MIN**

½ medium onion, chopped  
1 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil  
1 cup dry quinoa, rinsed  
1 cup water  
1 cup low-sodium chicken broth  
½ cup dried cranberries  
2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped  
½ cup slivered almonds or sunflower seeds, toasted



In a medium pot over medium heat, sauté onion in the oil until translucent, 3-5 minutes.

Stir in the quinoa and cook for 1-2 minutes more. Add water and broth and bring to a boil. Cover pot and simmer for 15-20 minutes.

Turn off heat. Add cranberries, parsley, and almonds (do not stir in yet) and replace cover.

Let sit for 5 minutes, then gently combine all ingredients.

[Find it online](#)

Nutrition information: 249 calories, 9.7 g total fat (0.9 g saturated fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 23 mg sodium, 32 g total carbohydrate, 9 g protein

# Pear and Goat Cheese Salad

This seasonal salad is easy, nutritious, and delicious—perfect for a holiday lunch or dinner.

SERVINGS: **4**

PREP TIME: **10 MIN**

COOK TIME: **0 MIN**

## Salad

10-ounce container of spinach or arugula

5 pears, washed and sliced

2 oz. soft goat cheese, crumbled

2 Tbsp. walnuts



## Dressing

2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar

3 Tbsp. olive oil

Toss all the salad ingredients together in a bowl.

Mix the balsamic dressing and olive oil together and add the dressing to taste. You can keep the leftover dressing in the refrigerator for up to a week.

[Find it online](#)

Nutrition information: 272 calories, 14.7 g total fat (3.7 g saturated fat), 7 mg cholesterol, 111 mg sodium, 34.5 g total carbohydrate, 5.6 g protein

# Whole-Grain Cranberry Pancakes

Start your holiday sweetly with this berry-filled brunch recipe.

SERVINGS: 4

PREP TIME: 10 MIN

COOK TIME: 10 MIN

1 cup white whole-wheat flour  
2 Tbsp. flax meal  
2 tsp. baking powder  
1 Tbsp. sugar  
¼ tsp. salt  
1 egg, beaten  
2 Tbsp. safflower oil (or other light cooking oil)  
1¼ cup low-fat milk  
1 cup cranberries, fresh or frozen, coarsely chopped  
Maple syrup for serving



In a large bowl, combine flour, flax meal, baking powder, sugar, and salt. Set aside.

In medium bowl, whisk the egg with oil and milk. Add to dry mixture along with cranberries and stir until just combined.

Heat large skillet or griddle to medium and lightly grease.

Place about ¼ cup of batter for each pancake and cook until golden brown, 2-3 minutes, then flip to cook other side.

Keep warm until ready to serve.

[Find it online](#)

Nutrition information: 195 calories, 10 g total fat (1.3 g saturated fat), 45 mg cholesterol, 199 mg sodium, 22 g total carbohydrate, 5.7 g protein



# Apple Coffee Cake

Pick fresh apples, then bake them into this tasty dessert.  
You'll have plenty to share around the holiday table.

SERVINGS: **20**

PREP TIME: **40 MIN**

COOK TIME: **35-40 MIN**

5 cups tart apples (such as  
Granny Smith), cored, peeled,  
and chopped

1 cup sugar

1 cup raisins

½ cup pecans, chopped

¼ cup vegetable oil

2 tsp. vanilla

1 egg, beaten

2½ cups all-purpose flour,  
sifted

1½ tsp. baking soda

2 tsp. ground cinnamon



Heat oven to 350°F.

Lightly oil a 13x9 inch pan.

In a large mixing bowl, combine apples with sugar, raisins, and pecans; mix well. Let stand 30 minutes.

Stir in vegetable oil, vanilla, and egg.

Sift together flour, baking soda, and cinnamon; stir into apple mixture about ⅓ at a time, just enough to moisten dry ingredients.

Turn batter into pan.

Bake 35-40 minutes. Cool cake slightly before serving.

[Find it online](#)

Nutrition information: 188 calories, 5 g total fat (1 g saturated fat), 11 mg cholesterol, 68 mg sodium, 32 g carbohydrates, 3 g protein

# Pumpkin Pie

How can you set your holiday table without pumpkin pie? The traditional version gets a healthier makeover with this recipe.

SERVINGS: 9

PREP TIME: 25 MIN

COOK TIME: 60 MIN

## Pie crust

1 cup quick-cooking oats  
¼ cup whole-wheat flour  
¼ cup ground almonds  
2 Tbsp. brown sugar  
¼ tsp. salt  
3 Tbsp. vegetable oil  
1 Tbsp. water

## Pie filling

¼ cup packed brown sugar  
½ tsp. ground cinnamon  
¼ tsp. ground nutmeg  
¼ tsp. salt  
1 egg, beaten  
4 tsp. vanilla  
1 cup canned pumpkin  
⅔ cup low-fat evaporated milk

[Find it online](#)



Heat oven to 425°F.

Make the pie crust: Mix oats, flour, almonds, sugar, and salt together in small mixing bowl. In a separate bowl/measuring cup, blend the oil and water together with a fork or small wire whisk, until fully blended.

Add the oil mixture to the dry ingredients, and mix well. If needed, add a small amount of water to hold the dough together. Work the dough into a disk shape, and roll on a lightly floured surface into a 12-inch circle. Press into a 9-inch pie pan and bake for 8-10 minutes, or until light brown.

Turn down oven to 350°F. Make the filling: Mix sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt together in a bowl. Add egg and vanilla, and mix to blend ingredients. Add pumpkin and milk, and stir to combine. Pour into prepared pie shell.

Bake for 45 minutes or until a knife inserted near center comes out clean.

Nutrition information: 160 calories, 7.8 g total fat (1.3 g saturated fat), 19 mg cholesterol, 153 mg sodium, 18 g total carbohydrate, 4 g protein

## SWEETS

# Winter Crisp

Only 1 tablespoon of butter is used to make the crumb topping of this tart and tangy dessert.

SERVINGS: 6

PREP TIME: 10 MIN

COOK TIME: 40-50 MIN

### Filling

½ cup sugar  
3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour  
1 tsp. lemon peel, grated  
¾ tsp. lemon juice  
5 cups apples, unpeeled,  
sliced, cored  
1 cup cranberries



### Topping

⅔ cup rolled oats  
⅓ cup brown sugar, packed  
¼ cup whole-wheat flour  
2 tsp. ground cinnamon  
1 Tbsp. butter, melted

Heat oven to 375°F.

Prepare filling by combining sugar, flour, and lemon peel in medium bowl. Mix well.

Add lemon juice, apples, and cranberries. Stir to mix.

Spoon into 6-cup baking dish.

Prepare topping by combining oats, brown sugar, flour, and cinnamon in small bowl. Add melted butter. Stir to mix.

Sprinkle topping over filling. Bake in 375°F oven for approximately 40-50 minutes or until filling is bubbly and top is brown.

Serve warm or at room temperature.

[Find it online](#)

Nutrition information: 272 calories, 3 g total fat (1.3 g saturated fat), 5 mg cholesterol, 18 mg sodium, 62.6 g total carbohydrate, 2.4 g protein



# Healthy Baking Swaps

Want to lighten up your desserts? These baking swaps make it easy.  
For the best results, replace only one ingredient in a recipe.



Instead of oil,

try applesauce,  
nonfat or low-fat yogurt,  
buttermilk, or puréed fruit.



Instead of  
heavy cream,

try chilled evaporated  
skim milk.



Instead of  
whole egg,

try 2 egg whites.



Instead of milk and  
cream cheese,

try low-fat milk or  
low-fat cream cheese.



Instead of  
frosting,

try powdered sugar,  
cinnamon, or cocoa.

# 3 No-Cost Ways

## Your Plan Helps You Stay Healthy

Take advantage of these perks of your plan!



### 1. Track your food, steps, sleep, and more with your wellness app.

Earn points and get motivated with your BCBSRI wellness program, powered by Virgin Pulse. You can use customized nutrition tools, create healthy challenges, and personalize content based on your interests. To get started, go to [join.VirginPulse.com](https://join.VirginPulse.com) or [download the app](#)<sup>1</sup>. Choose Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island as your sponsor.



### 2. Save on health and fitness with the Blue365 discount program.

Blue365<sup>®2</sup> offers members-only savings on health and fitness gear, gyms, meal services, and much more. There's no charge to register, and you can sign up for email alerts tailored to your preferences, so you'll never miss out on a great deal. Check out the savings at [blue365deals.com/bcbsri](https://blue365deals.com/bcbsri).



### 3. Talk with a nurse or dietitian at no cost.

BCBSRI nurses and dietitians can help you control health conditions such as diabetes, asthma, and heart disease. They work with you and your doctor to help you reach your health goals and make the most of your benefits. To learn more, please call 1-844-563-0892 or email [care@bcbsri.org](mailto:care@bcbsri.org).

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