



  
 University of  
**CINCINNATI**  
 OSHER CENTER FOR  
 INTEGRATIVE HEALTH

# *building a healthy* **HOLIDAY BOARD**



*Stephanie White, EdD*  
 Chef & Professor

## *Stephanie's Note:*

The holidays are a great opportunity to spend time with our loved ones, build beautiful memories, and share delicious foods with one another. Still, some find eating well during the holidays more challenging, but many options exist to integrate healthy foods into your traditional meal mix! If you are looking for options to infuse more nutrient-dense dishes into your appetizers or desserts, these are some options.

## **Mix and Match to Create Your Perfect Holiday Board:**

### *Savory*

- Crackers, chips, pretzels - try whole wheat crackers, pita chips, or vegetable chips, to name a few
- Spiced or roasted nuts/seeds
- Olives and/or pickles
- Crudite - try either raw or blanched/shocked vegetables. Common raw types include carrots, radishes, cucumbers, and celery. However, blanched green beans, cauliflower florets, sweet potatoes, and rutabaga are also great options.
- Savory spreads like hummus, onion dip, spinach and artichoke dip, or green goddess dressing



### *Sweet*

- Fruit! - Freshly sliced, dried (either on their own or stuffed with nut butters), chutneys/jams/fruit butters, baked apple/pear chips. There are so many options!
- Dark chocolate bark or high-quality chocolate pieces
- Small cookies, brownies, truffles







## Sweet potato HUMMUS

### Ingredients

**YIELD: 1 PINT**

Chickpeas, cooked and drained – 1 ½ cups  
Sweet potatoes, roasted, pureed – ½ cup  
Lemon juice - 2 Tbsp, or more as needed  
Extra virgin olive oil – ¼ cup  
Garlic clove, chopped - 1 ea  
Curry powder - ¼ tsp, or as desired  
Kosher Salt - as needed  
Water - as needed

### Directions

1. Combine all ingredients except any water. Purée in a food processor until smooth, adding some drops of water to thin if needed. Adjust seasoning with salt and lemon juice.
2. Serve immediately or refrigerate until ready to serve.

## BLANCHED vegetables

### Ingredients

**YIELD: AS PREPARED**

Choice of vegetables cut consistently (for example, battonnet or florets) – as desired  
Salt - as needed

### Directions

1. Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Prepare an ice bath and a parchment-lined sheet tray while the water is coming to a boil.
2. Once the water is boiling, submerge a batch of vegetables. Cook one variety at a time and try not to overcrowd the pot. The cooking time will vary on the item, but it can generally take between 30 seconds to two minutes. You are looking to cook the vegetable until it is just tender.
3. Remove from the pot of boiling water and immediately submerge into the ice bath. Once fully cooled, remove from the ice bath and place onto the parchment-lined sheet tray.
4. Repeat the process until all the produce has been blanched and shocked.
5. Cover with plastic wrap and keep chilled until ready to serve.







## SPICED nuts & seeds

### Ingredients

YIELD: 1 CUP

Cinnamon – ½ tsp  
Nutmeg – ¼ tsp  
Ginger, ground – ¼ tsp  
Orange Juice – 2 tsp  
Salt – pinch  
Coconut Oil, melted – 1 tsp  
Maple Syrup or Agave – 2 tsp  
Raw Nut or Seeds of Choice, unsalted – ¾ cup  
Orange Zest – as needed

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Combine spices with citrus juice, coconut oil, and maple/agave. Toss with nuts/seeds and spread out onto a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake for 20 minutes, tossing halfway through, or until golden brown.
3. Remove nuts/seeds from the oven. Toss in the orange zest and allow to cool fully before storing in an airtight container.



## CHOCOLATE bark

### Ingredients

Chocolate, dark or semi-sweet, chopped – 14 oz  
Vanilla or Almond Extract – 1 1/2 tsp  
Chopped Nuts or Dried Fruit – ¼ cup

### Directions

1. Line a 9-by-13-inch baking dish or sheet tray with parchment paper. Create a water bath and bring it to a simmer.
2. Put all but 3/4 cup of the semisweet chocolate in a heatproof bowl. Set the bowl over the pot of steaming water (do not let the bowl touch the water) and stir until one-third of the chocolate is melted. Remove the bowl from the pot; keep the steaming water over low heat.
3. Gradually stir the reserved 3/4 cup semisweet chocolate into the bowl, a few pieces at a time, until all the chocolate is melted. Return the bowl to the pot, 5 to 10 seconds at a time, to help melt the chocolate, if needed. Wipe off any moisture from the bottom of the bowl.
4. Stir extract into the chocolate, then quickly pour into the prepared baking dish and spread in an even layer. You can spread it thinly or keep it a little thicker - having thicker bark will mean it may take longer to set. Firmly tap the dish against the counter to remove any air bubbles. Set aside at room temperature until almost set, about 10 minutes.
5. Sprinkle chocolate immediately with toppings, gently pressing them into the top of the chocolate.
6. Set aside at room temperature until firm, about 1 hour.
7. Lift the bark out of the pan using the parchment and break it into pieces.
8. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.



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# CULINARY *Medicine,*

*Culinary medicine is an educational and nutritional approach to improving eating behaviors and overall health by focusing on food shopping, storage, and meal preparation skills.*



*Pamela Sharpe, NP*  
Nurse Practitioner  
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Physician &  
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*More than 60% of caloric intake in the U.S. comes from ultra-processed food according to a study published in Frontiers in Nutrition. The CDC's data from 2019 found only 7.3% of Ohio adults reported achieving the USDA's daily fruit and vegetable consumption guidelines.*

## CULINARY MEDICINE TIPS



**Try to eat whole foods whenever possible. If buying packaged foods, try to choose foods with the fewest ingredients and less refined grains, sugar, and sodium.**



**Eat the rainbow to get a variety of phytonutrient properties from whole, plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans/legumes, and nuts.**



**Spices such as cinnamon and cumin have antioxidant properties that reduce inflammation and can help reduce salt intake. Only buy the amount you need for 6-12 months to retain potency.**

*At the Osher Center for Integrative Health, our interdisciplinary team utilizes food as medicine to teach the importance of food and its impact on your health. [Click here to learn more.](#)*

