



New twists for traditional holiday meals

Holiday celebrations often include special people and foods. Who is usually around your table? Where do you meet? What's on your menu? The holidays this year will likely be or feel different. We may not host meals or visit the way we used to, but we can create holiday experiences that provide joy and pleasure.

Plan a special meal. Select a day and time for your holiday meal. You get to decide what special looks like this year. It could be a recreation of all the family favorites, take out from a local restaurant, or a typical weekday meal that includes music or decorations.

Recreate family recipes at your house. If you will not be with the family chefs, ask if they will share the recipe. Spending time in the kitchen with those you live with can be a fun and educational experience.

Find new family recipes. Produce that is in season in late fall is a wonderful way to add flavor to your holiday meals. Try a recipe featuring apples, greens, lettuce, peas, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, turnips, or carrots. Plate It Up! Kentucky Proud has many recipes featuring these foods. Eating local foods can connect you with your community. It could also become a favorite for future holiday meals.

Bring the family to the table. When you cannot be together, consider a virtual experience. A video chat or speakerphone can help you connect. Also, family members could send letters to read during the meal.

Finally, expressing gratitude yields physical and mental health benefits. Instead of limiting this practice to Thanksgiving, find small ways throughout the season to acknowledge who and what you are grateful for. These daily celebrations of gratitude may leave you feeling happier about the holiday season.

References

University of Kentucky Family and Consumer Sciences Extension. (2020) *Plate it Up! Recipes by Season*. <https://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/plate-it-recipes-season>

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