

Make cooking a family affair with these kid-friendly recipes

By Kathleen Alaks
of the Daily Courier

Chances are you're spending a lot of extra time in the kitchen during the holidays, doing holiday baking and preparing for festive meals.

This year, consider getting your children and grandchildren involved in the holiday cooking. Time together in the kitchen can lead to emotional bonding between adults and children, and can help build a child's self-confidence. Perhaps, too, it may create a new holiday tradition.

From toddlers to teens, young people like to be given responsibilities and take pride in a job well done, says Chandra Disraeli, a nutrition educator with Oregon State University Extension in Josephine County who teaches nutrition programs at local elementary schools.

"I've been a nutrition educator since September 2017 and I have a 10-year-old son, so I know first-hand the daily struggle to get kids to eat healthy," she says.

"When you give kids a chance to do something themselves, it gives them confidence," Disraeli says. "They feel so proud of themselves."

Disraeli has these suggestions for encouraging children in the kitchen and for making cooking fun:

- Pass on traditions. Tell children about the "good old days," such as about the foods grandma made that you loved to eat. Talk about the history of the dishes that you're making, the country they originated from, how they became a family holiday tradition.
- Let kids make choices.

From menu planning and shopping to food preparation and table setting, give children a



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Hunter Disraeli, 10, had to sample some of his slices of red pepper after cutting it with a Curious Chef children's safety knife.

chance to make choices about the meal. Should we have carrots or green beans, mashed potatoes or oven-roasted? Do we use the green tablecloth or the red?

- Give kids a sense of ownership. Supply children with their own kitchen tools: measuring cup, spoons, apron. Let them create a name for a dish.

- Let everyone help. Kids learn by doing. The little ones might get the napkins or wash the fruit and veggies. Older kids can help fixing foods and clean-up. Children can measure flour and other dry ingredients, mix the batter, crack the eggs, or scoop dough into the pan or

onto the baking sheet.

- Make it a learning opportunity. Teach math when measuring, counting calories or figuring cooking times.

Hone literacy skills by reading the recipe, reading package labels, writing out a shopping list.

Share healthy eating tips talking about food groups, nutrition and proper serving size.

- Teach life skills. Give them tips about food safety when it comes to washing

hands and cleaning cutting boards. Teach kitchen safety when it comes to hot appliances and handling knives. Disraeli suggests getting a Curious Chef knife for children.

She also recommends Food Hero recipes for healthy and budget-friendly recipes that are easy to make and taste good. See foodhero.org.

Reach reporter Kathleen Alaks at 541-474-3815 or kalaks@thedailycourier.com.

Pear and Cranberry Crisp



1/2 cup old fashioned rolled oats	4 cups pears, cubed (about 3 pears)
1 tablespoon brown sugar	1 cup cranberries, fresh or frozen
2 tablespoons flour	1 tablespoon cornstarch
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon	
2 tablespoons applesauce	

In a medium bowl, combine oats, brown sugar, flour, cinnamon and applesauce.

Combine pears, cranberries and cornstarch in an 8-by-8-inch baking dish. Sprinkle with oat mixture.

Bake uncovered at 400 F until juices are bubbling and topping is browned, about 20 minutes.

Pumpkin Cookies



1 3/4 cups cooked, pureed pumpkin (15 ounce can)	2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 1/2 cups brown sugar	1 teaspoon nutmeg
2 eggs	1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup oil	1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1 1/2 cups flour	1 cup raisins
1 1/4 cups whole wheat flour	1 cup walnuts or hazelnuts, chopped
1 tablespoon baking powder	

Heat oven to 400 F.

Mix pumpkin, brown sugar, eggs, and oil thoroughly. Blend dry ingredients and add to pumpkin mixture. Add raisins and nuts.

Drop by teaspoonfuls on greased baking sheet, 1 inch apart.

Gently flatten each cookie (use a spoon, bottom of glass, or palm of your hand).

Cranberry Applesauce



3 1/2 pounds apples, peeled, cored and roughly chopped (about 8 1/2 medium apples)	1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries	1/2 teaspoon salt
	1/3 cup brown sugar
	2 tablespoons lemon juice (optional)

In a large (5-quart) saucepan, combine all ingredients with 1 cup water. Bring to a boil then lower heat to simmer. Cover and cook 20-30 minutes.

Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Use a potato masher or fork to mash mixture to the consistency you want. Serve warm or cold.

Makes 6 cups.

Recipe from Food Hero.

Baked Apples and Squash



2 cups winter squash cubes	1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 cups apple cubes	1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon oil	1/2 teaspoon salt

Peel the squash, remove the seeds and cut into bite size pieces.

Peel the apples, remove the core and cut into bite size pieces.

Combine the squash and apple pieces, oil, cinnamon, sugar and salt together in a bowl. Toss to coat evenly.

Spread the mixture on a metal baking pan.

Bake in a 425 F oven for 20-30 minutes, or until squash is soft.

Makes 3 cups.

Recipe from Food Hero.

Parmesan Roasted Potatoes



3 cups potatoes, cut in 1-inch pieces	1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper
2 teaspoons oil	1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, shredded or grated

Heat oven to 400 F.

In a large bowl, toss potatoes with oil, salt and pepper.

Place potatoes in a single layer on a large baking sheet.

Roast 25 minutes; sprinkle with cheese; roast 5 to 10 minutes more.

Serve warm.

Makes 3 cups.

Recipe from Food Hero.

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