

# BREAKROOM BUZZ

December 2025

## Boost Your Holiday Nutrition with Simple Swaps

The holidays are filled with delicious traditions, but a few small changes in the kitchen can make a favorite recipe a little lighter without compromising flavor.

Try these easy swaps:

- Sweeten smartly: Reduce sugar by one-third in most recipes. If it tastes like it's missing something, add extra cinnamon, nutmeg, or a splash of vanilla.
- Sodium savings: Cut the salt in half for baked goods without yeast, which is an effortless way to lower sodium.

- Slim down with fruit: Replace 1 cup of oil with 1 cup of applesauce to save about 910 calories. Not an applesauce fan? Pumpkin purée works well, especially in chocolate desserts where the chocolate masks the pumpkin flavor.
- Go whole grain: Replace half of the all-purpose flour with whole wheat flour to add more fiber and nutrients.

Small swaps can benefit health and help in preparation for the new year!



## HOLIDAY SALAD

### Ingredients for the salad:

- 4 cups romaine lettuce
- 4 cups spinach
- 1 pear, cored and sliced
- 1 apple, cored and sliced
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup pecans
- ½ cup sliced almonds
- 1 cup feta cheese

### Ingredients for the balsamic vinaigrette:

- 1/3 cup extra virgin oil
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 garlic clove, minced

Servings: 8

### Directions:

1. In a large bowl, combine all the salad ingredients and toss gently to mix.
2. Add all the vinaigrette ingredients to a jar. Shake vigorously until the mixture is completely smooth and free of lumps.
3. Either dress the salad with the balsamic vinaigrette and toss or dress each salad serving individually.

Nutrition information per serving: 340 calories; 26 g fat (6 g saturated fat); 310 mg sodium; 25 g carbohydrate; 5 g fiber; 6 g protein.

For quick tips to avoid overspending, visit:

[go.illinois.edu/quickholidaymoneytips](http://go.illinois.edu/quickholidaymoneytips)  
or scan the QR code:



## The Gift of Sharing Stories During Holiday Meals

In today's fast-paced, tech-driven world, people have lost touch with their own family history. This holiday season, take time to reconnect through storytelling.

Encourage guests to bring the following:

- A few family photos or old letters
- A favorite recipe card to share
- A cherished childhood holiday memory or tradition to discuss

These small acts can spark meaningful conversations, strengthen family bonds, and preserve memories for future generations. Sharing stories is a priceless gift that brings warmth, laughter, and connection to the holiday table.

For more, visit: [extension.illinois.edu/family/life-story-writing](http://extension.illinois.edu/family/life-story-writing)

