



## December Holidays

National Pear Month

- Dec 4** National Cookie Day
- Dec 6** National Gazpacho Day
- Dec 8** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent
- Dec 8** National Brownie Day
- Dec 8** Feast of the Immaculate Conception
- Dec 9** National Pastry Day
- Dec 13** National Cocoa Day
- Dec 15** 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent
- Dec 15** National Cupcake Day
- Dec 22** 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent
- Dec 24** Christmas Eve
- Dec 25** Christmas
- Dec 28** The Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph
- Dec 31** New Year's Eve

## The Spice with Hidden Potential: Nutmeg

It's winter and nutmeg is our warm, go-to spice, used in a lot more recipes than we realize. Nutmeg is actually a seed and its fruit is grown on dark evergreen trees! We use nutmeg in baked desserts such as pies and cookies as well as savory dishes like curries, soups, and vegetables like roasted brussels sprouts with apples and cranberries. Its antibacterial properties help our immune system to potentially stop winter colds and its anti-inflammatory compounds help reduce muscle and joint pain. With all of its uses, this spice is available in its nut form, powder, oil, and in grounds. Happy baking and cooking this holiday season!

## Spread the Word, Not the Germs! Wash your hands Awareness Week

The first full week in December is Wash Your Hands Awareness Week. Remember to spread the word and not the germs! There is plenty of celebrating this month during this cold and flu season so please remember to always wash your hands! The correct length of time to wash your hands is 30 seconds and if you think that's hard to remember, an easy tip is singing the happy birthday song 2 times which is the same length of time. Let's have a healthy holiday season and always remember that washing our hands can help prevent the spreading of sicknesses and bacteria.



### Did You Know?

- 80% of communicable diseases can be transferred by touch (person-to-person contact).
- The two most important times to wash your hands are before and after preparing food, and after using the bathroom.
- Most bacteria on our hands is under our fingernails, so when you're washing, be sure to scrub underneath them.
- Damp hands are 1,000 times more likely to spread bacteria than dry hands, yet only 20% of people dry their hands after they wash them.
- Reusable cloth towels have millions of bacteria in their fibers. Using disposable paper towels is the cleanest way to dry your hands.

## Dietitian's Pick

This pasta salad is made with a colorful mix of vegetables: peppers, tomatoes, celery, and olives. This combination of vegetables provides an array of nutrients such as fiber, vitamins and minerals. For example, peppers are high in vitamin C while celery has a good amount of vitamin A. Vitamin A is important for cell growth and development, for fighting off diseases and for good vision. Also, the dressing for this salad includes Greek yogurt which contributes to the amount of protein in this salad. This dish has almost all of the meal components since it contains a protein source, carbohydrates, vegetables and healthy fats which makes it a balanced nutritious dish that will help fuel your body with essential nutrients!



## Vegetable and Pasta Salad

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1** large Florida bell pepper, diced small
- 1** pint Florida tomatoes, halved
- 2** stalks Florida celery, diced small
- 1** pound whole wheat pasta (your favorite)
- 1/2** cup black olives, halved
- 1/2** small red onion, diced small
- 6 oz** sharp cheddar cheese, cube
- 1/2** cup pepperoncini, sliced thin
- 3** tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped

### DRESSING:

- 1** cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1/4** cup mayonnaise
- 2** tablespoons apple cider vinegar

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Cook pasta according to package instructions. Remove from heat, drain and set aside. In a small bowl combine yogurt, mayonnaise, vinegar, lemon juice, and all-purpose seasoning. Stir to combine, taste and adjust seasoning as needed. In a large bowl combine pasta and all other ingredients. Add dressing a third at a time (you may not need all of it). Serve immediately or chilled.

**FRESH TIP:** Leftover dressing can be used on salads or as a sauce for other vegetables or protein.

- 1/2** lemon, juiced
- 2** tablespoons all-purpose seasoning
- Sea salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste

