National Nutrition Month® - Enjoy the Taste of Eating Right  
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March is National Nutrition Month® and this year’s theme is “Enjoy the Taste of Eating Right.” Research has found that the taste of food is the top motivator for eating well. This is no news flash, but how does one use that information to make healthier choices?

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics sponsors this event each year. Once again they have posted some great ideas, this time for making the healthier choices taste fabulous with some simple changes. Registered dietician and Academy spokesperson Joy Dubost says, “Try some of these simple techniques to enhance flavor while experimenting with flavor combinations.

- Intensify the flavors of meat, poultry and fish with high-heat cooking techniques such as pan-searing, grilling or broiling.
- Pep it up with peppers. Use red, green and yellow peppers of all varieties—sweet, hot and dried. Or add a dash of hot pepper sauce.
- Try grilling or roasting veggies in a very hot (450°F) oven or grill for a sweet, smoky flavor. Brush or spray them lightly with oil so they don’t dry out. Sprinkle with herbs.
- Caramelize sliced onions to bring out their natural sugar flavor by cooking them slowly over low heat in a small amount of oil. Use them to make a rich, dark sauce for meat or poultry.
- Simmer juices to make reduction sauces. Concentrate the flavors of meat, poultry and fish stocks. Reduce the juices by heating them—don’t boil. Then use them as a flavorful glaze or gravy.
- For fuller flavors, incorporate more whole grains such as brown rice or quinoa, or experiment with amaranth and wild rice.
- Add small amounts of ingredients with bold flavors like pomegranate seeds, chipotle pepper or cilantro.
- Add a tangy taste with citrus juice or grated citrus peel: lemon, lime or orange. Acidic ingredients help lift and balance flavor.
- Enhance sauces, soups and salads with a splash of flavored balsamic or rice vinegar.
- Give a flavor burst with good-quality condiments such as horseradish, flavored mustard, chutney, wasabi, bean purees, tapenade and salsas of all kinds.

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"These simple cooking steps can really transform your favorite meals and foods," Dubost says. "But,” she continues, “keep in mind the average adult has 10,000 taste buds, and people sense the same foods differently. So don’t be afraid to try new foods, flavors and taste combinations. There’s truly a world of flavors to explore."

For more ideas to help you "Enjoy the Taste of Eating Right," visit the Academy’s website to view their library of recipes. Go to eatright.org and search for recipes. You can also contact me at 660-425-6434 or HackertJ@missouri.edu or your local University of Missouri Extension office.

For more information on making time to be physically active, or any other topic, contact me at 660-425-6434 or HackertJ@missouri.edu or your local University of Missouri Extension office.

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