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Easter Eats That Won't Bulge the Belly


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 By **Elisa Zied, MS RD CDN** (</profile/8/41/elisa-zied-ms-rd-cdn>), Registered Dietitian on Friday, March 30, 2012

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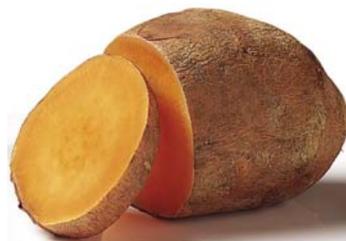
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For many, Easter brings back childhood memories of hunting for colored eggs, and feasting on delicious foods at gatherings with family and friends. Even though I'm Jewish, I, too, have fond memories of close family friends bringing my brother and I giant, solid milk chocolate Easter bunnies each and every year. (Just maybe, I have Easter to blame for my mad love of chocolate?!)



Whether you're preparing a multi-course menu to serve family or friends, making a dish to bring to a gathering, or simply want to make more healthful food choices when celebrating Easter, the good news is you won't have to go on a massive hunt to find nutritious, delicious foods to serve or eat. To help you in your efforts, I rounded up some experts' favorite Easter foods to please your palate, maximize your nutrient intake, and help you manage your weight.



Dave Grotto, RD, LDN, a Chicago-based registered dietitian loves baked sweet potatoes. Loaded with vitamin A and beta carotene, sweet potatoes also provide a good dose of vitamin C, manganese, vitamin B6, potassium, iron, and fiber. According to Grotto's *101 Foods That Can Save Your Life*, red varieties of sweet potatoes are rich in lycopene, a phytochemical that may protect against heart disease and some cancers. Sweet potatoes that have purple flesh are notable for the

anthocyanins they contain.

"These act as powerful antioxidants to protect the body against degenerative diseases such as osteoarthritis, circulatory and vision disorders" says Grotto.

CHECK OUT this recipe for [Roasted Sweet Potato Salad with Fresh Herbs & Sherry Dressing](#)
<http://galtime.com/roasted-sweet-potato-salad-fresh-herbs-sherry-dressing#axzz1qE3aPDDz>

When asked what for her favorite Easter food was, Jackie Newgent, RD, culinary nutritionist and author of *Big Green Cookbook* could only think in color.

"Fresh seasonal fruit is always my favorite part of holiday meals since it adds so much sweetness and color, not to mention nutrients." She adds "I especially love blackberries - not only are they gorgeous, but they're loaded with dietary fiber, potassium, and antioxidants, including vitamin

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C, anthocyanins, and ellagic acid, which make them ideal for promoting health and potentially fighting cancer."



Newgent also loves blackberries' versatility.

"They can be added to salads, simmered into a sauce or glaze for organic chicken or ham, or included as a main ingredient in a dessert of choice."

DELICIOUS [Basil Mint Fruit Salad Recipe](http://galtime.com/basil-mint-fruit-salad#axzz1qE3aPDDz) (<http://galtime.com/basil-mint-fruit-salad#axzz1qE3aPDDz>)



Though eggs are certainly a year-round food, that's the food of choice to celebrate Easter for registered dietitian Laura Coti Garrett, MS, RD, CDE.

"My parents grew up during the depression, so of course hardboiled eggs were on our menu for a week after Easter. My mom would marinate sliced hard boiled eggs and tomatoes in a dressing (similar to the kind you'd use to make bruschetta), and we'd eat them stuffed in a hard roll

- what a great sandwich!"

Eggs are a great source of high quality protein, and tomatoes' notable nutrients include vitamin C, vitamin A, vitamin K, and potassium. To make this more healthful, stick to one hardboiled egg, use only one teaspoon of olive oil to make the marinade, and use as a fill or topping for a fiber-rich whole grain roll or some whole grain crackers.

Happy Easter!

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