

## Put a Healthy Spin on Comfort Foods

(NAPSA)—A great way to warm hearts—and stomachs—during winter weather is with delicious comfort foods. What many find even more comforting is that you can make them heart-healthy with simple ingredient swaps and healthier cooking techniques. To help, there's the "Comfort Your Heart" Recipe Collection from CanolaInfo.

"I love these recipes because they are both hearty and heart-healthy," says Dawn Jackson Blatner, R.D., C.S.S.D., L.D.N., author of "The Flexitarian Diet" and developer of the recipe collection.

To make comfort foods heart-healthy, Blatner uses a blender to thicken soup instead of heavy cream and "bake-frying" to make food crispy without deep-frying. She upgrades grains, using whole grain versions of breads and gnocchi. She also pumps up produce, making fries out of carrots and parsnips, "chips" from zucchini and "pasta" from spaghetti squash to keep calories and saturated fat in check while optimizing nutritional value.

"The emphasis lately has been more on what to add to your diet as opposed to what to subtract," says Blatner. "It's about eating whole grains, plant proteins, produce and heart-smart fats like canola oil."

Each heart-warming entrée contains less than 500 calories per serving and is low in saturated fat. All recipes are made with canola oil, which has the least saturated fat and most omega-3 fat of all common culinary oils and is free of trans fat.

Recipes include:

- Rustic Tomato Soup with Grilled Cheese Crostini
- Chicken Parmigiana with Spaghetti Squash
- Turkey Burger Casserole with



Comfort your heart with healthy entrées such as this Skillet Gnocchi with Butternut Squash and Kale Pesto.

Parsnip and Carrot Frites

- Cornmeal-Crusted Fish and Zucchini Chips

- Beef Ragout with Grilled Bread

- Skillet Gnocchi with Butternut Squash and Kale Pesto

In this last nutrient-rich dish, whole grain gnocchi and the "superfood" kale lay the foundation. Healthful convenience foods such as pre-packaged, whole grain gnocchi and frozen, cubed butternut squash save time in preparing the dish.

"When putting together these recipes, I thought about foods I would like to eat on a winter night," says Blatner.

### Skillet Gnocchi with Butternut Squash and Kale Pesto

**Kale Pesto:**

- 2 cups chopped kale leaves
- 2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp grated Parmesan cheese

- 1½ Tbsp chopped walnuts
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp canola oil

**Gnocchi:**

- 1½ cups frozen pre-cut (1-inch

- cubes) butternut squash, thawed

- 1 small red onion, finely chopped

- 1 package (16 oz) prepared whole grain gnocchi

- 1 cup kale leaves, cut into fine strips

**To prepare pesto:** In food processor, purée kale, lemon juice, Parmesan cheese, walnuts and garlic for 2 minutes until paste forms. While processing on low, drizzle in canola oil. Warm large non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add pesto, butternut squash, red onion (reserve 2 Tbsp for garnish) and sauté for 5 minutes. Add gnocchi and sauté another 5 minutes until thoroughly heated. Top with kale strips and chopped red onion. Serve.

*Yield: 6 servings*

*Serving size: 1 cup gnocchi*

*Nutritional Analysis per Serving: Calories 260, Total Fat 8 g, Saturated Fat 1.5 g, Cholesterol 5 mg, Sodium 390 mg, Potassium 337 mg, Carbohydrates 42 g, Fiber 4 g, Sugars 6 g, Protein 8 g*

For the recipes and information, visit [www.canolainfo.org](http://www.canolainfo.org).