

The Healthier Side Of Winter Meals

(NAPSA)—During the winter months, light, fresh dishes are replaced by warm, hearty meals. While comfort foods are family favorites, their rich ingredients aren't always the healthiest choice. If you're looking for a side dish that is full of flavor without all the fat, try a sauté of winter vegetables, using heart-healthy olive oil along with sesame seeds, almonds and thyme.

For Sesame-Almond Vegetable Sauté, simmer a mix of squash, carrots, cauliflower and broccoli with chicken broth, then combine with a sauté of extra virgin olive oil, onion, garlic and thyme. Olive oil used for sautéing not only adds extra flavor, it's a heart-healthy choice, because olive oil is high in monounsaturated fat—the good fat. To add a little kick and texture to this dish, sprinkle with red pepper flakes, toasted almonds and sesame seeds. The result is a warm, tasty side dish that is sure to complement any favorite winter meal.

Keeping your pantry stocked throughout the winter with a variety of spices, herbs, olive oil, and vegetables such as carrots and squash that have a longer shelf life makes recipes like these a snap.

Sesame-Almond Vegetable Sauté

Prep. Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 12 minutes

Total Time: 27 minutes

- ½ cup chicken broth or water**
- ½ small (about 2 lb.) butternut or buttercup squash, peeled, seeded and cut into ¾-inch pieces (about 2 cups)**
- 1 cup baby carrots, halved crosswise**
- 2 cups broccoli florets (about 1½ inches)**
- 1½ cups cauliflower florets (about 1½ inches)**
- ½ cup slivered almonds**



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- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil**
 - 1 medium onion, cut into thin wedges**
 - 1 clove garlic, minced**
 - 2–3 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves**
 - ½ teaspoon salt**
 - ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes**
 - 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds**

1. In Dutch oven or large skillet, combine chicken broth, squash and carrots. Cook over medium-high heat until broth is steaming. Cover and cook 3 minutes. Add broccoli and cauliflower; cover and cook 2 to 3 minutes longer or just until squash is tender and broccoli is brightened. Drain and set aside.

2. In small skillet over medium-high heat, cook almonds 5 to 7 minutes or until light golden, stirring frequently. Remove from heat.

3. In very large skillet or Dutch oven, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion and garlic; cook and stir 2 to 3 minutes or until onion is softened. Increase heat to medium-high. Add well-drained vegetable mixture, thyme, salt and red pepper flakes. Cook and stir until hot and tender. Stir in almonds; turn into serving dish. Sprinkle with sesame seeds.

Makes 12 servings.

Tip: Toasted sesame seeds are available in the spice section of some grocery stores. To toast your own, follow directions for toasting almonds, stirring frequently and watching carefully to prevent over-browning.