



Happy, healthy holidays!

By Tanya Barham

Do you fast for weeks and weeks during the first half of November and December just to avoid putting on that inevitable two pounds that never seems to come off in the new year? Well don't. This month's guilt-free gourmet taps Northwest Portland's bountiful supermarkets to show you that tasty holiday meals need not jeopardize your chances of getting back into a size 6 come January.

If you aren't exactly a stickler for traditional ham, then why not wow your guests with your off-beat and sophisticated love of seasonal game? While traditional cuts of beef and pork can have up to 35 grams of fat per serving, wild game such as bison, deer, caribou, boar or rabbit tend to have fewer than 4 grams per serving.

Osso buco is the name of a cut of meat taken from the shank of the hind leg of the animal. Venison osso buco is a rich, stewy meat dish full of hearty winter flavors. Seasonal roast vegetables such as carrots, onions, turnips accompany the dish.

Red wine and seasoning such as celery, bay leaves, cloves, rosemary and juniper berries give even the fussiest palate some layers to unravel.

A Google search for "venison osso buco" produces pages of variations on the theme. Zupan's meat department stocks

rabbit and lean duck, and can order venison and bison meat that will be ready for you within a day.

If your relatives threaten to revolt without the traditional mashed potato fare, try these simple substitutions to soften the blow on your waistline. After placing your potatoes (the peel is rich in nutrients and safe if you buy organic) in cold, salted water. Boil until easily pierced with a fork. Instead of using heavy cream and butter before mashing your potatoes, substitute chicken or vegetable broth and some Tillamook fat-free sour cream. While the potatoes are cooking, roast some finely chopped onions or shallots in a bit of olive oil at 375 degrees until brown and crispy. Sprinkle on the potatoes as garnish for a little extra flavor.

For dessert, cut and seed a pan full of apples. Cover in the juice of one orange and a bit of orange zest and bake at 350 degrees until saucy and golden brown. Serve in bowls with a dollop of plain yogurt, a spoonful of maple syrup and a handful of walnuts. The tartness of the apples and yogurt, mellow sweetness of the maple syrup and crunchy bites of walnuts are so satisfying that few, if any, will complain that you've cheated them out of their seasonal indulgence.

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