

Everything But The Bird

By Michelle Stern of [What's Cooking](#)



Every year, as the days grow cooler and the night comes earlier, I feel an itch to get into the kitchen to cook up some new culinary creations for the holidays. The produce at the farmer's market is beginning to change with the season, and fall delights such as pumpkins, squash, and sweet potatoes are becoming more readily available.

During the month of November, I teach a popular cooking class for children called Everything But The Bird. During this class, we prepare several dishes that can be served with a Thanksgiving dinner. We strive to build confidence and enthusiasm in our students so that they are eager to participate in the preparation of their family's holiday feast.

We aim to select recipes that put a fresh twist on some traditional favorites. Try calling your kids into the kitchen to prepare a few of our recipes this season. And don't forget to bring them in to help you prepare healthy family meals during the rest of the year, too!

Cranberry Sauce with Dried Cherries

Children and adults alike love the flavor contrast of the tart cranberries and the sweet dried cherries. Ginger and orange highlight the flavors of this dish, and make it a special side dish for any meal.

3.5 cups cranberries (1 12-ounce bag)
1/4 cup dried cherries
1/2 cup shallots, finely chopped
2 Tbls red wine vinegar
Zest and juice of one orange
2 Tsp grated ginger, peeled
1/4 cup light brown sugar, packed

1. Combine cranberries, cherries, shallots, vinegar, orange zest and juice, ginger and brown sugar in a medium saucepan and cook over medium heat until cranberries pop.
2. Reduce heat to low. Cook, stirring occasionally until cranberries release their juices, about 15 minutes.
3. If the sauce becomes too thick, add water until the desired consistency is reached.
4. Transfer to a bowl to cool.

Yield: 3 cups

Tip: You can substitute dried cranberries or raisins for the dried cherries in this recipe.

CALL THE KIDS:

- Measure cranberries and cherries
- Juice the orange
- Scoop the brown sugar and pack it into the measuring cup tightly.
- Add the ingredients to the sauce pan

Nutrition (per serving): 471.0 calories; 3% calories from fat; 2.1g total fat; 0.0mg cholesterol; 7.1mg sodium; 102.5mg potassium; 113.2g carbohydrates; 8.6g fiber; 3.8g sugar; 104.6g net carbs; 0.2g protein.

Mashed Sweet Potatoes with Caramelized Apples

In this sweet potato recipe, caramelized apples replace the traditional marshmallows, adding a delicious twist on an old favorite. One of our 5 year old students declared that this dish was the best thing she had ever eaten...after warning us that she didn't like sweet potatoes!

4 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch chunks
 1 cup whole milk or half-and-half
 6 Tbs butter
 4 Tbs light-brown sugar
 3 Macintosh or Gala apples
 3 Tbs brown sugar
 3 Tbs butter
 Coarse salt and ground pepper

1. Set a steamer basket in a large saucepan. Fill with enough water to come just below basket; bring to a boil, then reduce to a gentle simmer. Place sweet potatoes in steamer basket and cover; steam until tender, 15 to 25 minutes. Drain, and return to saucepan.
2. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, bring half-and-half, butter, and brown sugar to a simmer, stirring to combine; remove from heat. Add to drained sweet potatoes, and mash just until smooth; season with salt and pepper.
3. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add apple wedges and brown sugar; cook about 10 minutes, turning apples occasionally, until lightly browned on both sides.
4. Place on top of sweet potatoes and bake 30 minutes, until heated through. (Note: If refrigerating before baking, cook an additional 15 minutes, or until heated through.)

Servings: 8

CALL THE KIDS:

- Measure milk or ½ and ½
- Measure brown sugar
- If you have an apple peeler/corer/slicer, let your child turn the handle to slice the apples
- Mash sweet potatoes with a potato masher
- Add butter and milk
- Help to pour potato mixture into a baking dish

Nutrition (per serving): 379.3 calories; 44% calories from fat; 19.1g total fat; 67.2mg cholesterol; 249.4mg sodium; 130.3mg potassium; 43.9g carbohydrates; 4.3g fiber; 28.9g sugar; 39.5g net carbs; 10.0g protein.

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What's Cooking is a Certified Green business that offers healthy and seasonal cooking classes and birthday parties to children of all ages in the San Francisco Bay Area. In our online shop you'll find unique sustainable gifts and party favors as well as What's Cooking Weekly, our menu service offering recipes, grocery lists and tips on making cooking with your kids fun and simple.

For more information, please visit:

What's Cooking, Cooking Classes and Gifts for Children – www.whatscooking.info

What's Cooking Weekly, Healthy Family Menus – www.whatscookingweekly.com