

Stay healthy with this holiday advice

Thank you for following the advice of everyone who cares: wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart, wash your hands, eat healthy and be physically active. This Saturday consider joining the monthly Walk with a Doc organized by the Brody School of Medicine students. Put on your mask and walking shoes and meet at Lake Laopus located on 500 Medical Drive. You might meet new people, exercise, and become better informed about your medical health by trained, medical professionals.



KATHY KOLASA

full of tips and encouragement for anyone this holiday season who wants to enjoy themselves while remaining healthy. Signing up gives you access to free recipes, a Facebook community support group, weekly challenges that hold you accountable, tips on how to navigate holiday parties, and manage stress. Visit <https://esmmweighless.com/holidaychallenge/> to register. You can live anywhere and sign up.

And make sure you stay active. Alice Keene, Pitt County recreation director, suggests this is a good time to try a new trail or greenway. Check out the trails and parks at www.greenvillenc.gov. The family might like to try a new activity like pickleball. This combination of tennis, table tennis and badminton was developed back in 1965 by three dads seeking something for their children who were bored with their “typical” summer-time activities. Wintergreen Primary School has three courts.

I made it through Thanksgiving without overeating. Now how do I eat healthy until New Year's? People have already started dropping off treats. LB, Greenville

Katie Birchall, a senior ECU dietetic student has some suggestions for you. Here is what she says:

Ah, the burning question this season. This is easily the hardest thing to do at least in a normal year when it seems like there is an endless supply of drinks, desserts and homemade dishes that are irresistible.

We don't really know what this season will bring but it sounds like you are lucky to have friends and family who want to share some joy with you. If any of the treats are suitable for sharing with those less fortunate than you, then do share.

To start, just take time to breathe. If you don't manage your stress during the holiday season you may overeat or eat the less healthy way. So, plan. You are more likely to fill up your plate with lean protein and more vegetables and whole grains and move every day for at least 30 minutes if you write down and remind yourself of your goals.

For both health and safety reasons, when not eating at home you may be wise to bring your own food. The CDC recommends avoiding potlucks or buffets as these things can put you at a higher risk of contracting the virus. If you do attend a large gathering, be aware of how the serving utensils are being cleaned and handled. Don't hover over food, wash your hands, and wear a face covering when not eating or drinking in both public and private.

If you think you might need some extra help with staying on track, it's not too late to access the perfection holiday gift Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina created for us. It's free and I have been enjoying the daily tips and recipes.

Maintain, Don't Gain is a free seven-week program

Please stay safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic by following the guidance of the health experts. At the end of the day, the holidays are meant to be enjoyed — not be a stressor. Do what you can this year to stay safe and healthy while looking forward to a less stressful 2021 holiday season.

For more information on navigating the holiday's during the pandemic, check out the CDC's website for more information: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html.

Professor emerita Kathy Kolasa, a registered dietitian nutritionist and Ph.D., is an affiliate professor in the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. Contact her at kolasaka@ecu.edu.



Cranberries not just for sauce

Enjoy some year long solutions for the seasonal fruit

Thanksgiving has passed, but that's no reason to stop eating cranberries.

These pert and tart berries are a welcome addition and decorative garnish throughout the year, and especially brighten up a winter table during the frosty holiday season.

Their bright ruby color practically screams celebration, livening up salads and sauces, desserts and cocktails, and their pucker-y tartness easily complements sweet and savory dishes.



LYNDA BALSLEV

Need inspiration? While a good ol' cranberry sauce is the go-to accompaniment to turkey, you can also add cranberries to chutneys, salsas and relishes.

Blitz or cook them down with savory ingredients, such as peppers, onions, ginger and dried fruit to accompany red meat, game and pork.

Blitz cranberries into marinades. Their astringent tartness will work wonders as a flavorful meat tenderizer.

Add tart cranberries to fruity desserts, such as pies, crisps and cobbles. They pair well with apples, pears, quince and dried fruit. Their tartness will make the dessert pop, and nicely balance the sugar and sweetness of the fruit.

Did anyone say chocolate? Cranberries love chocolate (who or what doesn't?). Fold them into dark chocolate cakes,



LYNDA BALSLEV/TASTEFOOD

Cranberry-Bourbon Citrus Smash

bark and bars, or simply dip and coat them in chocolate for a dangerously easy nibble to eat.

Add them to cocktails and mock-tails.

Use them to flavor simple syrup, infuse vodka, muddle into mixed drinks, or simply float a few berries as a colorful garnish.

And while we're on the subject of drinks, this is a bright and festive cocktail that will carry you through the holiday season. The berry's cheek-sucking tartness provides contrast to the warmth and spice of honeyed bourbon, acting as a natural bitter, if you will.

The berries are incorporated in three ways: in a cinnamon-infused syrup, muddled with citrus and mint, then added in frozen form for colorful bling.

Cranberry-Bourbon Citrus Smash

Makes one cocktail

Ingredients:

Cranberry-Orange Simple Syrup:

2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries

1 cup water

1 cup sugar

1 (2-inch) cinnamon stick

2 strips orange peel

Cocktail:

3 to 4 fresh or frozen cranberries

3 to 4 mint leaves

1 lime quarter

1 orange slice

1 1/2 ounces bourbon

1/2 ounce Cointreau

1 ounce Cranberry-Orange Simple Syrup:

1 ounce fresh lime juice

Ice cubes

Fresh ideas

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Blitz cranberries into marinades. Their astringent tartness will work wonders as a flavorful meat tenderizer.

Add tart cranberries to fruity desserts, such as pies, crisps and cobbles. They pair well with apples, pears, quince and dried fruit. Their tartness will make the dessert pop, and nicely balance the sugar and sweetness of the fruit.

Fold them into dark chocolate cakes, bark and bars, or simply dip and coat them in chocolate for a dangerously easy nibble to eat.

Add them to cocktails and mock-tails. Use them to flavor simple syrup, infuse vodka or muddle them into mixed drinks.

Steps:

Make the simple syrup:

Combine the syrup ingredients in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer until the cranberries break down, about 15 minutes. Strain the syrup through a fine-mesh sieve, pushing down on the cranberry pulp. Discard the solids. Cool the syrup to room temperature. (The simple syrup may be stored in a glass container in the refrigerator for up to one month.)

Make the cocktail:

Combine the cranberries, mint, lime and orange slice in a cocktail shaker and muddle. Add the bourbon and Cointreau, and then add the remaining ingredients. Shake vigorously and pour into a tall glass or strain into a rocks glass. Serve with whole fresh or frozen cranberries, lime wedges and mint sprigs.

Lynda Balslev is an award-winning cookbook author, recipe developer, tester and editor. Taste Food is distributed by Andrews McMeel Syndication.

Merriam-Webster's top word of 2020 not a shocker: pandemic

BY LEANNE ITALIE
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — If you were to choose a word that rose above most in 2020, which word would it be?

Ding, ding, ding: Merriam-Webster on Monday announced “pandemic” as its 2020 word of the year.

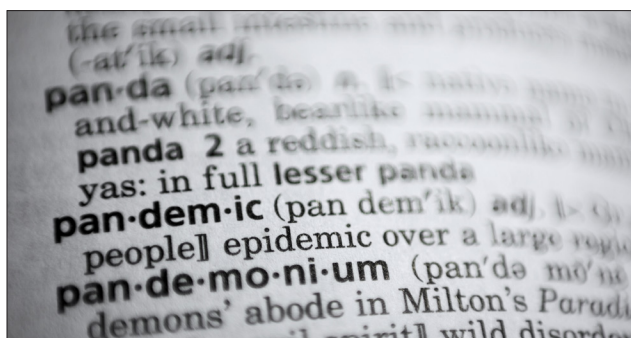
“That probably isn't a big shock,” Peter Sokolowski, editor at large for Merriam-Webster, told The Associated Press.

“Often the big news story has a technical word that's associated with it and in this case, the word pandemic is not just technical but has become general. It's probably the word by which we'll refer to this period in the future,” he said.

The word took on urgent specificity in March, when the coronavirus crisis was designated a pandemic, but it started to trend up on Merriam-Webster.com as early January and again in February when the first U.S. deaths and outbreaks on cruise ships occurred.

On March 11, when the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic, lookups on the site for pandemic spiked hugely. Site interest for the word has remained significantly high through the year, Sokolowski said.

By huge, Sokolowski means searches for pandemic on March 11 were 115,806% higher than



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The word “pandemic” is displayed in a dictionary in Washington. Merriam-Webster on Monday announced “pandemic” as its 2020 word of the year.

lookups experienced on the same date last year.

Pandemic, with roots in Latin and Greek, is a combination of “pan,” for all, and “demos,” for people or population. The latter is the same root of “democra-

cy,” Sokolowski noted. The word pandemic dates to the mid-1600s, used broadly for “universal” and more specifically to disease in a medical text in the 1660s, he said.

That was after the plagues of the Middle Ages,

Sokolowski said.

Merriam-Webster acted quickly in March to add and update entries on its site for words related to the pandemic. While “coronavirus” had been in the dictionary for decades, “COVID-19” was coined in February. Thirty-four days later, Merriam-Webster had it up online, along with a couple dozen other entries that were revised to reflect the health emergency.

Coronavirus was among runners up for word of the year as it jumped into the mainstream. Quarantine, asymptomatic, mamba, kraken, defund, antebellum, irregardless, icon, schadenfreude and malarkey were also runners up based on lookup spikes

around specific events.

Particularly interesting to word nerds like Sokolowski, a lexicographer, is quarantine. With Italian roots, it was used during the Black Death of the 1300s for the period of time a new ship coming into port would have to wait outside a city to prevent disease. The “quar” in quarantine derives from 40, for the 40 days required.

Spikes for mamba occurred after the January death of Kobe Bryant, whose nickname was the Black Mamba. A mass of lookups occurred for kraken in July after Seattle's new National Hockey League franchise chose the mythical sea monster as its name, urged along by fans.