

# March Into Nutrition Month With Dairy

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ST. LOUIS - National Nutrition Month® is an annual campaign created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. This year's theme, "Celebrate a World of Flavors," encourages trying new foods from various cultures to bring different flavor combinations to healthy eating. Food patterns are influenced by family history and culture, but also by geography, budgets and taste preferences. Many cuisines offer dishes that contain foods from each food group, including dairy; making it possible to plan nutritious, well-balanced meals that are bursting with flavor. "The wide variety of milk and dairy foods provides endless options to meet personal needs, tastes, and preferences within a variety of cultures," states Maggie Cimarolli, Registered Dietitian with St. Louis District Dairy Council.

Eating healthy does not have to be complicated or boring, thanks to versatile dairy foods that easily pair with meals and snacks from across the globe. Familiar ingredients can be presented in new ways and new foods may remind us of things we already know and love. "Dairy has always been a part of enjoying food with those who matter most," states Cimarolli. Finding new recipes to share is easier than ever with social media, but here are a few cultural dishes that incorporate dairy to get started:

Breakfast: smoothie with yogurt or buttermilk and tropical fruits, such as papaya or mango; Scottish oatmeal or bulgur with milk and toppings like fruit, nuts or nut butter; Spanish omelet with potatoes and veggies, topped with cheese; aalu paratha with Dahi (spicy potato stuffed flat bread with yogurt)

Lunch and Dinner: bean and cheese empanada (stuffed pastry) with mango and jicama salad; grilled chicken, koresh bademjan (eggplant and tomato stew), brown rice, pomegranate and yogurt; laal maas (lamb in garlic sauce) with brown rice, vegetable raita (yogurt dip) and cauliflower; gyros on pita bread with tzatziki (yogurt based dressing made with cucumbers, garlic and dill) and feta cheese

Snacks: Lassi (buttermilk or yogurt blended with fruit, herbs or spices); fruit smoothie made with milk; yogurt or labneh (a thickened yogurt) with fresh fruit; raw veggies with tzatziki; fruit chutney with cheese

Local grocery stores offer a variety of ethnic and regionally inspired foods that can bring new tastes to the dinner table. These multi-cultural options cater to diverse populations and highlight new flavor trends that are constantly emerging. Visiting ethnic restaurants or festivals to try new flavors and foods is another way to enjoy cultural cuisine. Finally, exploring local fare when traveling or taking a hands-on culinary class or tour can help expand personal palates.

For more information on the "Celebrate a World of Flavors" campaign and personalizing your plate to include foods from other cultures, visit [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).

For additional information on dairy foods, visit [www.stldairycouncil.org](http://www.stldairycouncil.org), call St. Louis District Dairy Council at (314) 835-9668, or e-mail [MCimarolli@stldairycouncil.org](mailto:MCimarolli@stldairycouncil.org). For easy and tasty recipes, check us out on Facebook and Instagram at [STLDairyCouncil](#).