

*a lifestyle resource from Food Equality Initiative*

# Free-From™ MAGAZINE

## POP OR SODA?

The story of  
healing bubbles

## TRADITIONAL DIET?

It's a Myth

## CROSS- CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

A blended  
holiday season

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Recipes for  
the Holidays



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Everyone celebrates the holidays differently. Even within my own family, from year to year we celebrate differently. Sometimes we go the traditional route with all the trimmings, but occasionally, like this year for example, we take a different approach.

Since I am hosting my family's gathering for Thanksgiving, I have the responsibility of setting the menu and the honor of dictating and delegating side-dishes for my family members to bring. I have decided that instead of roasting a turkey in the oven (which takes a long amount of time, consumes a lot of electricity, and provides too many leftovers for my

liking), I am planning a meal that can be cooked fully on the stove: bratwurst, sauerkraut, potato pancakes, and applesauce.

Whatever your family or friends are serving this holiday season, I hope that it brings you joy in simply being together and taking time to recognize that luxury. It sounds cliché, but it is true! Counting what we are thankful for may seem elementary, but is an excellent exercise. I know we will be doing that at my house. (Since I am hosting, no one can opt out!)

In our special December edition of Free-From Magazine, we aim to

highlight different traditions that celebrate the past, present, and future of holidays recognized in the United States. We also spend a chunk of time counting Food Equality Initiative's blessings from 2022. So, take a walk with us down memory lane - who knows, you might even learn something new.

See you next year!

Happy reading,

**SOFIA**

Sofia Gillespie  
Editor in Chief,  
Free-From Magazine

### COVER DESIGN & LAYOUT

Amelia Richard  
Art Director,  
Free-From Magazine

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# Free-From MAGAZINE

a lifestyle resource from Food Equality Initiative

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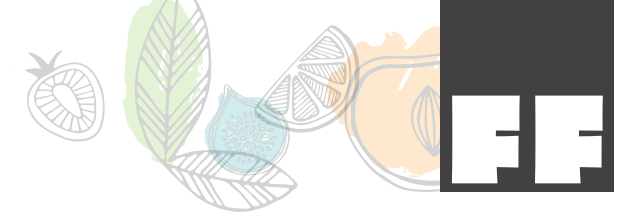
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\*Disclaimer: The recipes included in the Free-From Magazine are suggestions. Please read carefully and make any substitutions that are necessary for your diet. Consult your doctor if you have questions or concerns. NOTE: Cooking is a science experiment and some ingredient substitutions may not produce the same results.





# THE STORY OF SODA

Emily Olson

To put it simply, Americans love soda.

In fact, the average American consumes **38 gallons** of soda per year! I mean, who can resist deliciously marketed soft drinks that come in every possible flavor combination you could imagine in the cutest packaging you could dream of? Right; it's hard! How did this American obsession start?

You may have heard the story of how for the first 17 years of Coca-Cola's existence, it had cocaine in it. However, you may not have heard the story about **Coca-Cola's** original mission to be an alcoholic beverage combining caffeine and wine that was eventually nixed due to Prohibition. Wild and weird, but that still does not answer the question of where it all started.

Would you believe me if I told you soda was originally made to cover up the taste of medicine? As Mary Poppins once said, a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down!

## The Very Beginning

Dating back to the **Roman Times**, people used water to heal. Specifically, they used mineral water coming from springs. Because it was naturally a bit bubbly, doctors used it to treat tumors, skin diseases, and joint pain. They also

turned it into their own form of prescription medicine by instructing patients to take certain amounts of the water for their treatment. Because there became such a high demand for this water and not enough sources, businesspeople tried to capitalize on this market by adding artificial minerals to water; however, no one could really replicate the "healing" bubbles until a certain chemist came along.

## Joseph Priestly's Invention

In 1767, **Joseph Priestly** was the first one to discover how to make carbonation by infusing water with carbon dioxide. He, along with many other chemists and doctors at the time, thought mineral water had **healing power**, and could cure a variety of illnesses such as indigestion, headaches, and even physiological disorders. However, the main reason he invented carbonated water was to help treat patients with scurvy, a condition that occurs when not enough vitamin C is consumed.

## Soda as Medicine

Store owners started selling carbonated water in **pharmacies**. If it meant people were actually wanting to take their medicines, pharmacists around the U.S. wanted to get their hands on these magical drinks. To take it up a notch, pharmacists also decided to add flavorings in order to make the carbonated medicine taste better. They were mixed into the drinks to help cover up the taste of various medicines. Soon enough, soda fountains were popping up in pharmacies all over where people could gather and socialize over their favorite flavored carbonated waters, such as pistachio and java.

And just like that, the soda industry took off. However, it is fascinating how somewhere along the line, the **perception of health** got lost in the transformation of soda. Soon after Priestly invented carbonated water, sugar started taking the place of medicine and it was no longer viewed as a cure,

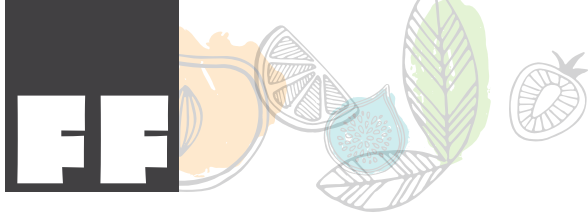
but more as a threat to people's health in some cases. Now, companies are trying to fix some of the damage soda has done by cleaning up the ingredients and reframing the industry by pushing healthy drinks as alternatives to soda. This, in essence, is returning soda back to its roots of being advertised as a beneficial bubbly drink.

## How is the Market Changing?

Living in a world where soft drink consumption still tends to dominate popular culture, it is only fair to believe that many companies try to compete against each other for the next best thing. Well, some companies are actually now creating **"healthy sodas"** that aim to give the same sensation and satisfaction of drinking soda, while also providing health benefits (such as prebiotics and vitamin boosts) at the same time.





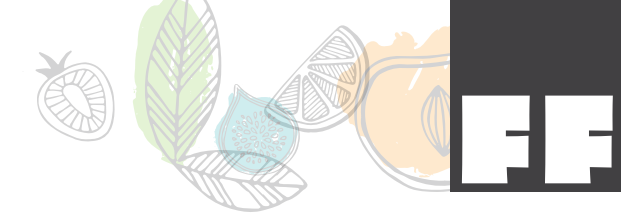


## How Healthy are the "Health Drinks"?

If you take one step into any supermarket, gas station, or grocery store, you will see the shelves and refrigerator section flooded with new drinks that have been deemed by companies as "health drinks."

Some of them promote gut health through prebiotics, others are fast sources of energy, and some are just simply there for a good tasting thirst quencher. But, are these drinks solely a product of good marketing and cute packaging, or do they actually contain health benefits that provide an alternative to sodas or other beverages?

I decided to put three of these health drinks to the test through personal trial and research to see if they really live up to their marketed promises.



## 1. Celsius

Celsius energy drinks hit the market back in 2009, but recently gained huge popularity through social media in 2021 and have continued to stay trending. **Celsius** claims their drinks accelerate metabolism, burn body fat fast, and provide essential energy through a variety of delicious flavors. On the label, the drink is advertised as containing 0g of sugar and only 10 calories per can. It stands out from other energy drinks because it is made with healthier ingredients such as green tea and ginger, according to its [website](#).



**People** have been most commonly drinking Celsius before workouts in order to burn more calories by boosting metabolism and energy. While this drink can be good in moderation, some consumers have reported having serious health issues linked to drinking Celsius energy drinks everyday. **Doctors** say this is most likely attributed to the amount of caffeine in Celsius that can cause spiked heart rates and high blood pressure.

With that being said, it is extremely important to monitor how much caffeine you are ingesting daily. Some **concentrated caffines**, like in Celsius, can lead to a jittery

feeling in the body and an energy "crash" later on. **The Mayo Clinic** suggests adults have up to 400mg of caffeine a day, which is why it is vital to keep this in mind if you will be drinking Celsius (which contains **200 mg** itself) along with other sources of caffeine like coffee or soda.

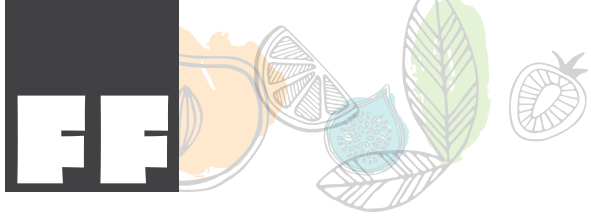
*I tried Celsius in the past due to its popularity and health benefits. When trying it again for this research, I wanted to pay more attention to how it made me feel after drinking it. I drank a Strawberry Guava flavored Celsius around 12 P.M. after eating a full meal. I then went on a walk and this is what I noticed: my energy levels had risen and my heart was beating slightly faster. Overall, I would make sure to drink these on a full stomach and only every once in a while.*

## 2. Poppi

You might recognize these cans for their bright colors and neon packaging. **Poppi** popped into the health drink market in 2020 but really took off in the last year. The company prides themselves on containing one tablespoon of **apple cider vinegar** in each can, which has been used for centuries as a gut and digestion remedy. **Their founders Allison and Stephen Ellsworth** say they "plan to democratize healthy soda" and want to "produce a low sugar alternative to traditional soda pop."







Poppi is a great source of prebiotics, which are ingredients that promote growth of helpful microorganisms in the intestines. They come in delicious flavors like Cherry Limeade, Root Beer, Classic Cola, and Ginger Lime (AKA— your favorite soda flavors without all the sugar and caffeine!). Talking about gut health can be taboo in our society, so Poppi does a great job of opening up the discussion. Learn more about prebiotics [here](#) and other ways to keep your gut healthy!

In a recent advertisement, Poppi compared name-brand Coca-Cola to their Classic Cola flavor. Listed under Coca-Cola it says “39g of Sugar, Chemicals, No Function.” Under the Poppi version it says, “5g of Sugar, Real Ingredients, Prebiotics.” This is targeted at soda drinkers who are looking to break habits and find a better alternative.



**Dr. Whitney Linsenmeyer** from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics says that there might be a few things to watch out for with health drinks like Poppi and its competitor Ollipop. Sometimes these brands and others will sweeten sodas with juice, which may not be included on the “added sugar” amount on the nutrition facts label. While they contain less sugar than traditional sodas, they are still mostly just sugar and empty calories, so it is best

to take it slow. Overall, she agreed these drinks were a good alternative to soda, but it is best to consume them in moderation, as the pros and cons are still being researched.

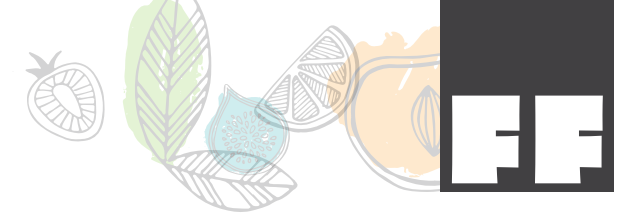
On **Poppi's** website, they have a “Benefits 101” section listing all of the reasons to try Poppi. Some of the ones that stand out most are: *may aid digestion, may lower cholesterol, may help promote weight loss, and may help refine complexion.* Notice that before each of these statements is the word “may.” This is reinforcing the fact that everyone’s bodies react differently to products. Poppi could affect you differently than a friend, as could be said for any product on the market.

*I tried the Root Beer flavor of Poppi at 12 P.M. after a full meal. It sat well in my stomach and did not make me jittery. I am certainly curious to see if/how they would positively affect me if I consumed them long-term.*

It is important to consult your doctor before attempting to change your body or diet dramatically to come up with a plan that is going to give you the results you are looking for.

### 3: Liquid IV

Liquid IV’s overall mission is to keep people hydrated and enhance the absorption of water and other key ingredients into the bloodstream using their **“Cellular Transport Technology.”** Their claim to fame is that one stick of their Liquid IV powder poured into 16oz of water hydrates faster than water alone. According to their [website](#), Liquid IV hydration multiplier packet helps combat dehydration, contains 5 essential vitamins (B3, B5, B6, B12 and Vitamin C), and improves daily performance. Since developing the hydration multiplier, they have also come out with different powders to specifically boost energy, sleep, and immune support.



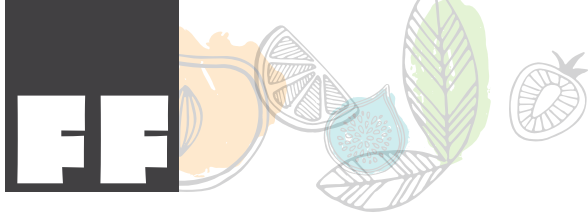
While this seems like a magic powder, it is important to observe just how much of it you are consuming. Liquid IV is technically a **high sodium supplement** that contains **380 mg** of sodium in one packet. That is a whopping 17% of the daily recommended intake (**2,300 mg**) per day. Too much sodium in the body can cause negative side effects. Some people have **reported** high blood pressure, fast heartbeat, restlessness, vomiting, and seizures after heavy usage of Liquid IV.

It is important to monitor your sugar intake as well. One stick of Liquid IV contains 11g of sugar; the CDC recommends 40g per day. That amounts to more than 1/4th of the recommended daily intake. As always, please consult with a doctor if you are thinking of adding Liquid IV or any dietary supplement into your routine! Some other options that contain less sugar are LMNT or Pure Hydration.

*I poured my Liquid IV into 16oz of water at 12 P.M. after a full meal. My immediate reaction was I did not like that particular flavor very much (lemon-lime), but it did make me feel very full and hydrated. **Because of the extreme hydration it provides, you are more prone to feeling full after drinking it.** It is not a replacement for food, but it is a nice additive to a small meal for that extra full sensation and boost of hydration.*



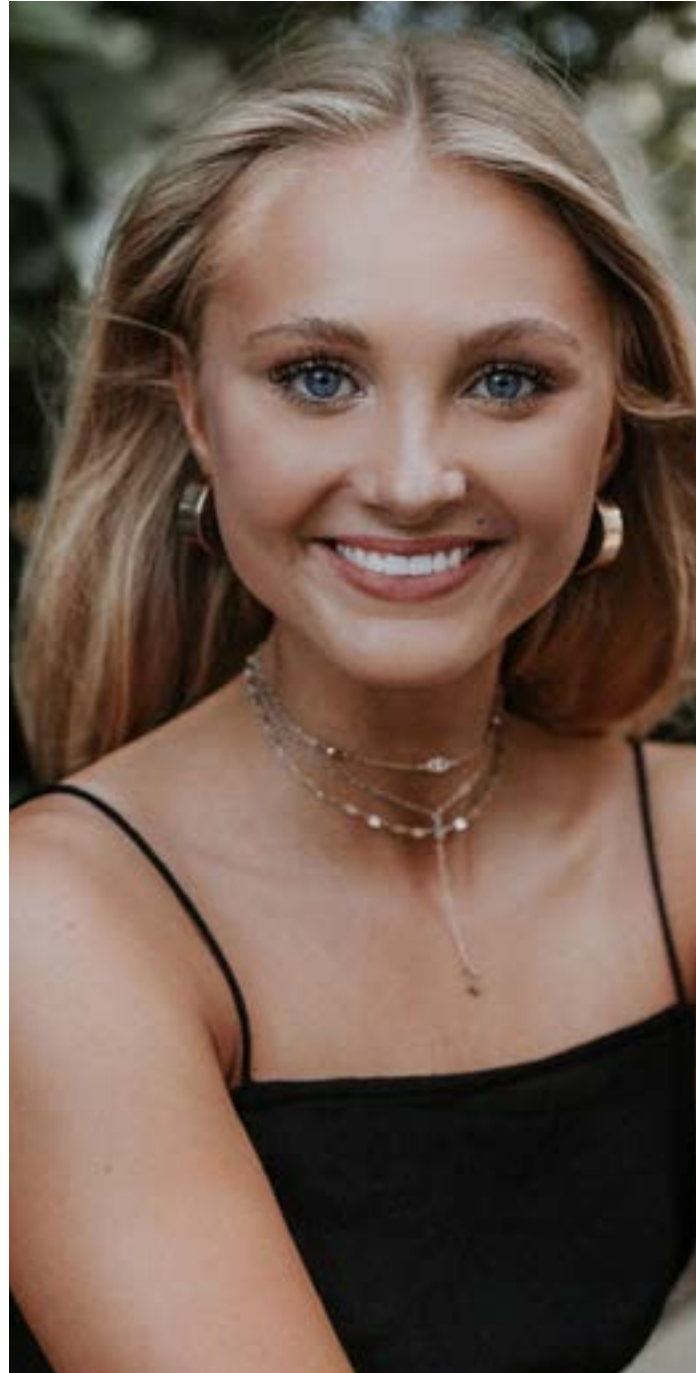




## At the end of the day...

If you are trying to change your diet, shake a soda fixation, or just stay hydrated, any of these three beverages could work for you! However, it is important to always drink in moderation and watch out for some of the caffeine, sodium, and sugar intakes that come with any liquid that is not basic water. Although they might not fix all your health problems, doing more research and trying out these health beverages could be a step in the right direction.

It certainly is a bit ironic that we are now wanting to essentially put medicine back in soda, as when it was first invented in 1767 by pharmacists. Everything really does come full circle! While you will still see the popular Coca-Cola, Dr. Pepper, and Root Beers, these new up-and-coming healthy sodas might be giving them a run for their money. Good taste and better-for-you ingredients? Sounds like a win-win. 🍓



### ABOUT EMILY

Emily Olson is a student at the University of Kansas. She enjoys spending time with family and friends and exercising. She is excited to write for Food Equality Initiative to share her passion of health and wellness!



## WIPE OUT A CLIENT STORY

Sarah Guthrie

### Food Equality Initiative client Brian Wurm is already up to his ears in Thanksgiving Day preparations.

It's his favorite holiday. He's cooked the dinner for years. But now he has two extra challenges – his daughter has celiac disease and his wife is sensitive to dairy products.

“The kind of food we can bring into the house is getting slimmer and slimmer,” he says. “Not incorporating gluten or dairy takes out a lot of meals.”

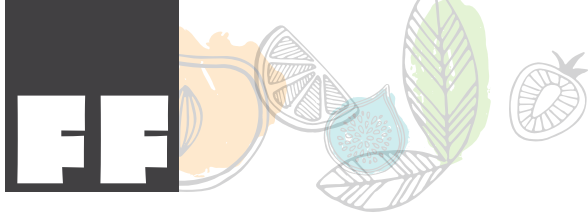
As Thanksgiving is his favorite holiday, he wants to get it right.

Brian's journey to provide a great-tasting Thanksgiving meal despite food sensitivities and celiac disease began seven years ago. His now 21-year-old daughter Madasyn, who also has a rare neurological disorder, Retts Syndrome, was diagnosed with celiac disease in 2016. Then, in 2021 Brian's wife, Maggie, was diagnosed with dairy sensitivity.

That meant some major life changes in more ways than one, requiring a lot more planning and fore-thought to make sure everyone is fed the food they need. Living in the small town of Wilbraham, Massachusetts, grocery items are limited which means Brian or Maggie have to drive from store to store to snag the limited gluten and dairy-free items on the shelves.

“There have been a lot of times I've gone to the gluten-free section and it's completely wiped out,” said Brian.





Cooking takes more time and planning, too. Brian finds that timing and prepping are key to a successful dinner.

Finding groceries that fit their dietary requirements and adequate meal prep time is not the only challenge. After COVID-19 hit, the Personal Care Assistants that the family hired to help care for Madasyn – who cannot talk or use her hands – no longer felt safe and quit. At the end of 2020, Brian left his job as a Frito Lay Sales Rep to assume full-time care for his daughter. Maggie, who had been working part-time, returned to work full-time, helping individuals with disabilities live independently by using assistive devices and services.

In addition to the stress of finding gluten-free food, their job transitions reduced the family income. Thankfully, their referral to FEI from Boston Children’s Hospital was a game changer.

**“FEI really helps out financially and relieves a lot of stress,” says Brian.**

But holidays like Thanksgiving really “hit the wallet.” To keep the budget under control, Brian prepares all year.

Take stuffing, for example. His wife created a recipe using chorizo and chicken or beef stock that he calls “phenomenal.” But it contains bread - aka gluten. Brian figured that if he saves a slice or two from a loaf of Udi’s gluten-free bread – which costs about \$5.00 for a small loaf – throughout the year he will have enough for Maggie’s special stuffing by Thanksgiving. That way he knows Madasyn and Maggie can enjoy a Thanksgiving staple and it won’t break the bank to prepare.

He’s also figured out how to make a gluten-free version of a family favorite, savory Zucchini Bread, that Madasyn enjoys. He’s still working on a dairy-free version for Maggie – the last batch didn’t suit him.

Unfortunately, there are some family favorites that have been on the menu for years – like green bean casserole – that Brian cannot figure out how to duplicate to fit both a gluten-free and dairy-free diet. So, sadly, it is off the table.

Despite the challenges of cooking a traditional Thanksgiving dinner, it’s still his favorite holiday. Each year he learns a little more about how to make that perfect feast that everyone in his family can enjoy. 🍏



**ABOUT SARAH**

**Sarah Guthrie is an award-winning writer and seasoned development professional. She began volunteering for FEI in 2019, where she helps with fundraising and communications. Sarah is also a dedicated food allergy mom.**



**CROSSROADS OF CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON**

**Sonia Hunt**

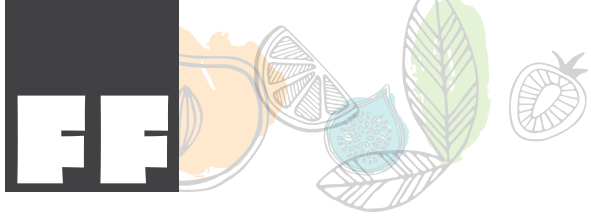
**India + United States of America = ???**

**A**s a young child growing up in the United States with Indian parents, we happily celebrated holidays in the traditional Hindu religion with our family and Indian friends. These holidays included Ganesh Chaturthi, a festival in honor of the deity Ganesha, the God of prosperity and wisdom; and Diwali, known as the “festival of lights,” which celebrates the triumph of light over darkness. We felt the strength of our Eastern community during these celebrations, but in our American schools, my siblings and I didn’t see any representation of these holidays. In fact, we learned of other holidays that we had never experienced at home with our parents.

Puzzled by this, one day my older sister came home from school and asked my parents why we didn’t celebrate any of the American holidays that our classmates did. My parents knew that their first-generation Indian American children were growing up in a culture that they hadn’t grown up in, and it was important that we fit in with our friends. At the same time, they are proud of their Indian heritage, so we needed to find a compromise. As a family, we sat down and discussed how we could celebrate holidays in ways that blended both of our Eastern and Western cultures.

During breakfast and dinners we would discuss ideas that everyone had. As a fun exercise we created a “Vision Board” by cutting images from magazines to represent the environment and energy we wanted to create in our home, colors to use, decorations that would light up the house, and foods we wanted to cook that were both American and Indian. This process allowed all of us to be expressive,





share ideas, and create a holiday experience that everyone got to cherish and feel a part of. Looking back, I respect how much love and effort my parents put into this process without ever having done something like this before.

### Here's how it went down

As immigrants from India, my parents grew up with celebrations that had the potential to last for days. The holidays they know are focused on family gatherings, fireworks, charitable giving, and incredible feasts! Pumpkin pie and eggnog weren't on the menu for Indian holidays; rather their meals were comprised of Indian delicacies such as Samosas, Bhel Puri, Lamb Kebabs, and Curries galore, with Gulab Jamun, Jalebi, and Ras Malai for desserts.

Since I was a child with severe food allergies, I took a particular interest in the "feasts" portion of our hybrid-holiday season and helped my mother prepare foods according to my dietary restrictions. We decided that for each holiday, our menus would include traditional American foods, traditional Indian foods, and some fusion dishes that incorporated the two – all allergy friendly and home-cooked! Being in the kitchen with my mom was a

special experience because I got to learn cooking skills, taste test, and hear stories of the history of each dish.

### In the fall

My family would celebrate Halloween by dressing up in trendy American costumes and handing out candy to the kids in the neighborhood. My parents would also host a Halloween dinner party for friends with fusion dishes such as Pumpkin Curry with Chicken, and "Spooky" Vegetarian Biryani that included an assortment of vegetables (okra, beetroot cubes, pomegranate seeds, and Kala Chana/black chickpeas) that made the dish "spooky."

### That November thereafter

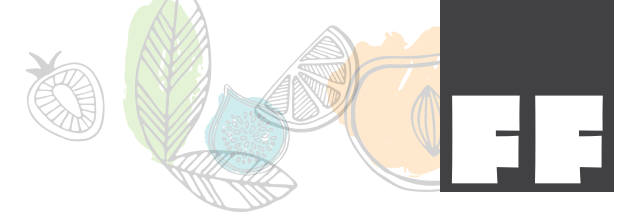
My mother made her very first traditional Thanksgiving dinner with all the American trimmings. This was so exciting for my siblings and I because it celebrated the Western side of our culture. In future years, mom began experimenting with adding Indian spices, like cumin and turmeric, into dishes such as herbed stuffing to blend our cultures.



### Come December

We shopped for Christmas trees, Menorahs, and Indian lighting to continue the celebration for Diwali, which falls in November. Together, we cooked everything from homemade Hamantaschen, to Herbed Rack of Lamb with Indian Spiced Chutney, and Eggnog spiced with cumin.

This was a time in my life when I felt the most normal, loved, and able to participate in the same holiday events that my friends were celebrating in their own homes – just with our unique twist. What we learned through this process was that there were so many beautiful parts to both our Eastern and Western cultures that could be integrated into unique experiences for our family. The cultural and social practices relating to the food we eat, and the traditions we built allowed me, personally, to feel deeply connected to each side of my life and learn about the generations who came before us. 🍎



### ABOUT SONIA

Sonia Hunt is a Certified Integrative Nutrition + Health Coach, Best-Selling Author of NUT JOB, TEDx Speaker and Food Activist living in San Francisco, CA. To connect with Sonia, [visit her website here.](#)







## INDIAN ROASTED PUMPKIN SOUP

Sonia Hunt

I love everything about the holiday season. The changes in weather, a beautiful handmade scarf draped around your neck, driving through the neighborhood to view gorgeous displays of holiday decorations on homes, and a vibrant energy in the air as people gather to share laughter, libations, and the mouthwatering tastes of yummy holiday foods. Here's one of my favorite fusion recipes from my childhood, consider it your holiday gift!

### ROASTED PUMPKIN INGREDIENTS

3 ½ cups Fresh pumpkin, cut into big chunks  
 1 ½ Tbsp Olive oil  
 1 tsp Ground cumin  
 1 tsp Paprika  
 Salt, to taste

### DIRECTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 375°F.
- Place the pumpkin, olive oil, ground cumin, paprika and salt in a large bowl and mix well.
- Arrange the pumpkin pieces on a baking tray in a single layer and bake for 15-20 minutes or until tender. Then set aside in a bowl.

### SOUP INGREDIENTS

1 Tbsp Ghee or butter (or vegan butter)  
 2 tsp Olive oil  
 1 small Onion, finely chopped  
 2 cloves Garlic, finely chopped  
 1 small piece Ginger, finely chopped  
 ½ tsp Ground turmeric  
 2 tsp Ground coriander  
 1 tsp Garam masala  
 ½ tsp Cayenne pepper  
 2 cups Chicken stock (or vegetable stock, if vegetarian)  
 2 Tbsp Coconut cream (or coconut milk)  
 ½ tsp Ground black pepper  
 Salt, to taste  
 Cilantro leaves, to garnish (optional)  
 Naan bread, croutons, or toasted sliced baguette, to serve

### DIRECTIONS

- Heat the ghee and olive oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat.
- Add in the onions and sauté until they are soft. Stir in ginger and garlic and sauté for another minute. Add the ground turmeric, ground coriander, garam masala, and chili powder. Fry all the ingredients for another minute or so.
- Add the stock in and bring the entire mixture to a boil. Place a cover on the saucepan and simmer the mixture for about 10 minutes.
- Stir in the roasted pumpkin from earlier, coconut cream, and ground black pepper. Simmer again, covered, for another 5 minutes. Remove from heat and let the soup cool slightly.
- Place the soup into a blender and puree the pumpkin mixture in batches. Put the puree back in the saucepan and reheat gently. If the soup is too thick, add more water to get a desired consistency.
- Remove from heat and ladle the soup into bowls. To garnish, add coriander leaves, roasted pumpkin seeds, or even a dollop of yogurt. For your dipping pleasure, heat a few slices of Naan bread (available fresh or frozen in your local market), or cut up slices of French baguette and toast them to place in the soup or on the side. Homemade croutons are yummy as well!





## THE "TRADITIONAL DIET" IS A MYTH

Zoë Slaughter | [Invisibly Allergic Blog](#)

Food allergies are often associated with children, yet, the Allergy and Asthma Foundation of America found that **10.8% of adults in the United States live with one or more food allergies.**

Outside of food allergies, there are numerous other conditions that require specialty diets. Watching blood sugar for diabetes, lowering sodium intake for high blood pressure, following an anti-inflammatory diet due to an autoimmune disease, eating plant-based for environmental consideration. There can be any number of reasons, whether they be medically necessitated or chosen for personal or religious preference, why someone implements dietary changes.

The point is, there is no such thing as a “normal” or “traditional” diet, even though society has led us to believe there is. Whatever the reason for stepping outside of this “dietary norm,” it is a valid decision. And, unless the person managing it wants to share, that information is private.

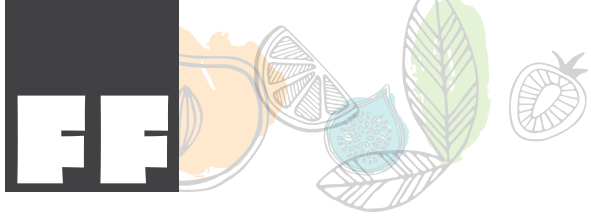
As a whole, we could do better at respecting requests for food accommodations. There are many ways we can all be more supportive of different diets and different lifestyles, whether we have dietary boundaries ourselves or not. Not

questioning someone’s dietary choices or drawing attention to different meal requirements/needs is a great start. Instead, just politely ask: “Is there anything you need me to do?” Then respect the request and move on, not putting a huge focus on it. Personally, I appreciate when others bring a minimal amount of attention to my food allergies - it is enough to make sure they understand it, but not too much to make me uncomfortable or feel like I am an outlier or burden.

Of all the ways to provide support to someone, empathy is probably the most important. Fostering an accepting, understanding mindset around dietary limitations can work magnitudes. No one wants to make things more difficult by restricting their diet. There is always a reason behind it, and it is likely a stress-inducing one. Having an immune response in your body to food isn’t enjoyable and leaves people feeling quite vulnerable. Practicing empathy, listening to concerns, and providing requested support is key to making that person feel comfortable.







### 3 WAYS TO SHOW EMPATHY AROUND DIETARY NEEDS:

1. Don't question the request
2. Ask if and how you can help the person with the request get their needs met
3. Ask what to do for them in the event of exposure to the food they are avoiding

I use the word “restrict” in this article carefully, but after trying out many other words, I do believe it is the right descriptor. It is important to keep in mind that as challenging as it can be to make and enforce accommodations, it isn't easy for the person having to implement these dietary changes to do so in their daily lives, either. It isn't easy asking for accommodations time and time again. There can be a lot of stress involved in asking requests of others and having conversations where you feel like you have to explain yourself yet again.

As much as people say “food brings people together,” it can equally pull us apart. Food and diets are not easy to navigate. Showing empathy to those requesting accommodations is a great way to make someone's day a little brighter and less challenging or stressful.

Hopefully this insight helped broaden your horizons. If this resonated with you personally, I hope you can pass this article along to someone who could better understand this hidden part of managing food allergies and dietary restrictions in adults. 🍏



#### ABOUT ZOË

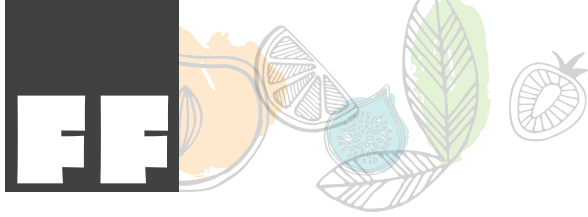
Zoë Slaughter resides in Louisville, KY and has a severe airborne and cross-contact reactive peanut allergy. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her rescue beagle, reading, painting and creating art, and recently started playing tennis. She started a blog called Invisibly Allergic in 2017 that is dedicated to living with severe food allergies. You can check it out here: [invisiblyallergic.com](http://invisiblyallergic.com)



**2022  
IN REVIEW**

Sofia Gillespie





**We made it through another ground-breaking year at Food Equality Initiative. As each month goes by, we learn more and more, opening ourselves up for more opportunities to spread the news about Food is Medicine and serve people this food/medicine that they need to live healthy lives. Here are some highlights from 2022.**

## JANUARY

We put a fresh spin on our mission and vision, really taking the Food is Medicine movement by the reins. We expanded our focus to include all diet-related illnesses and conditions, promoting the lasting health benefits of nutrition security.

The Free-From Magazine, as you may have already noticed, condensed our publication into bi-monthly issues. We tested out a subscription model, but have decided to return it to free and open for all who want to read it. So, please share the good news!



Kansas Governor Laura Kelly proposed “Axe the Food Tax,” to eliminate the state-level sales tax on groceries, saving the average Kansas family \$500 dollars or more a year on their grocery bill. **Food Equality Initiative signed on to a letter of support**, urging Kansas lawmakers to pass a straight-forward bill to end the food sales tax.



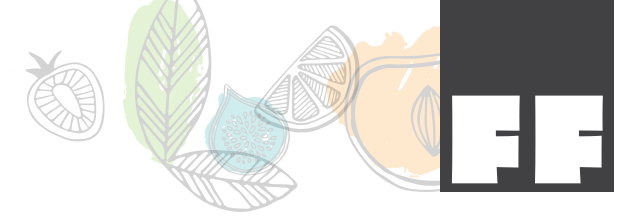
## FEBRUARY

Erin Martinez (CEO) & Sofia Gillespie (Educational Content Coordinator) traveled to Phoenix, AZ for the annual meeting of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology:

AAAAI. We hosted an informational booth and passed out copies of Free-From Magazine to healthcare providers from around the United States. It was a great networking event to promote FEI’s mission and expand our connections.



Erin participated in a roundtable for the American College of Allergy Asthma and Immunology: ACAAI. The discussion centered on Racial Disparities in Atopic Dermatitis and Food Allergy. From this talk, Erin and several others collaborated to develop white papers for all to read, geared toward professionals in allergy and atopic dermatitis- the publication of these papers is still in the works, and is on track for release early 2023.



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We had 2 new people join the FEI team:



**CRYSTA GREEN,**  
*Administrative Assistant*  
Crysta has degrees in Spanish & Education. She was thrust into the world of food allergies when all three of her daughters were diagnosed with FPIES. You can often find her hiking, exploring, and camping in National Parks.



**FELIPE CÁRCAMO,**  
*Spanish Translator*  
Felipe was born and raised in Chile. He graduated with a B.A. in English and Writing and completed graduate studies in Hispanic American literature. Felipe has more than 15 years of experience as a translator, and lives a gluten-free life.

## MARCH

FEI launched our new website, incorporating our newly expanded and refined mission statement: Food Equality Initiative fights for nutrition security and health equity for all. We wanted to make sure that our homepage reflected our new direction in education and advocacy for all peoples, regardless of their diagnosis.



Some other important definitions we included are:

**NUTRITION SECURITY**  
Having consistent access, availability, and affordability of foods and beverages that promote well-being and prevent or treat disease if necessary.

**HEALTH EQUITY**  
Removing obstacles so that every individual has the opportunity to lead the healthiest life they possibly can.

## APRIL

Free-From Podcast launched for the public! It is dedicated to helping individuals with restricted diets realize the fullest potential in their food. Know the phrase: You are what you eat? Well, that isn’t too far off from the truth. A lot of our health starts in the kitchen. Our bodies need ‘the good stuff,’ but healthy has a different definition for every body. Free-From Podcast explores how Food is Medicine for different bodies and how we can all benefit from knowing more about our food. In season one, we dove into the food allergy world, and in season two, we tackled food and the planet. Tune in January 2023 for Season 3.

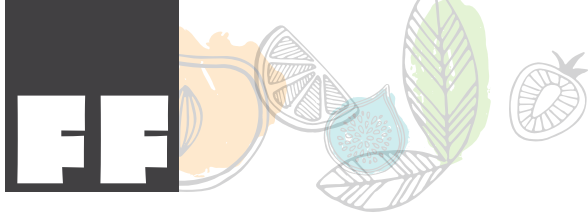
**Free-From Podcast is released every other Sunday at 5pm Central on most podcast streaming services.**



Listen on: **Spotify, Amazon Music, and Apple Podcasts.**

Food Equality Initiative collaborated with University of Kansas Medical Center, Children’s Mercy, and Free-From Market to author a chapter about





the intersection of food allergies and food insecurity in an academic book - to be published in 2023.

After having secured a grant, Boston Children's Hospital started utilizing FEI's direct-delivery service of free-from foods for their patients, primarily those diagnosed with celiac disease. This grant covers service for 40 patients for 12 months.



Sofia was invited to give a talk to the Richmond, MO Rotary Club to share FEI's mission. Rotary members really enjoyed playing The Price (Comparison) is Right, which showcased the price difference between foods and their allergen-friendly substitutes. It was a learning experience all around, as prices and availability of specialty foods is different in the rural setting.



## MAY

Governor Laura Kelly signed the "Axe the Food Tax" bill. This bill will completely eliminate the state's sales tax

on groceries by 2025, putting money back into Kansans' wallets. "When Kansans needed it most, we were able to bring Democrats and Republicans together to eliminate our state's tax on groceries," Governor Laura Kelly said. "Because we saved for our collective future, we can now responsibly axe the food tax - all while boosting funding to Kansas schools, roads, and law enforcement."

## JUNE

We were blessed with several wonderful interns this summer. They helped us with writing blogs, magazine articles, and gathering data. Thank you to: Gabby Martinez, Aoife O'Flaherty, Tory Blosser, Emily Olson, William Dalton, and Vikrant Hajarnavis!

Gillian Barcus started as the new chair for the Teen Advisory Board. If you or a young person you know would be interested in joining TAB, send an email to: [contact@foodequalityinitiative.org](mailto:contact@foodequalityinitiative.org).



Erin received a scholarship to attend the Food Allergy Conference for Education and Science: **FACES** in Chicago, IL. This conference is hosted by FEI's partner, Center for Food Allergy & Asthma Research (CFAAR) and is focused on providing an in-depth and up-to-date review of the research and management of food allergy from experts across the country. FEI decorated a booth and met some future contributors of Free-From Magazine!



FEI submitted a letter of support for **HB 3002**, for Asthma and Allergy Equipment and Training for all of Missouri's public schools. In the letter, Erin said: "According to AAFA-STL, asthma is the number 1 reason children are hospitalized in St. Louis. Having the trained staff and proper equipment and medication available to quickly administer breathing assistance can be the difference between an interruption in the school day and a trip to the hospital."

## JULY

We are proud to be named an inaugural United Way Impact 100 organization. This year, United Way launched the Impact 100 to provide unrestricted funding to the 100 organizations they believe are addressing the most vital health and human service needs in our community. At Food Equality Initiative, we will use this funding to help us continue fighting for nutrition security and health equity for all.



Food Equality Initiative & Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE) co-authored a letter on behalf of the Food Allergy Collaborative to the White Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health bringing awareness to the experiences of the food allergy and celiac disease communities in this space. Here is a short passage from the letter: "All federal food programs must provide appropriate substitutions for those with food allergy and celiac disease. Additionally, policies should be established to broaden foods free of the top nine food allergens and gluten-free options distributed by The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)."

## AUGUST

Erin presented to school nurses in St. Louis, MO for their annual professional development meeting. Upon learning about our mission and services through FEI's Nutrition Access, Education, and Advocacy Program, many of the nurses became interested in joining the cause and are working towards a future of partnership.

FEI participated in an hour-long virtual Lunch & Learn for GEHA, joining The Giving Grove and Kansas City Community Gardens to talk about how we address food insecurity outside of the food pantry/kitchen model. The meeting was recorded and shared with 5,000+ employees, encouraging them to support us in any way they can.

## SEPTEMBER

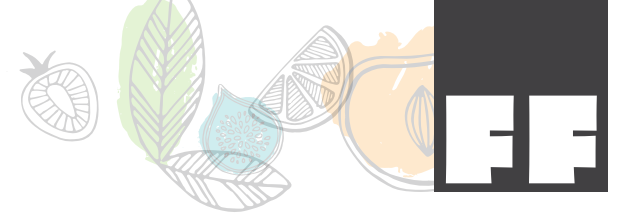
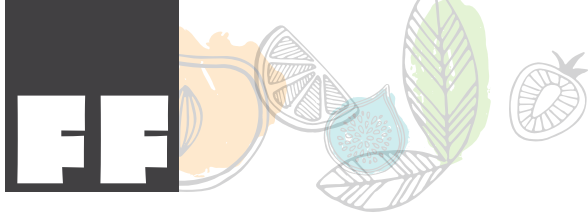
Erin Martinez was named the CEO of Food Equality Initiative. Here is an excerpt from her acceptance letter: "As a mother of children impacted by diet-treated disease, I am eager to carry on the cause of improving access to and education about free-from foods for families like my own. As CEO of Food Equality Initiative, I promise to fight for nutrition security and health equity for all. I will lead our team to produce work that nourishes minds and bodies while creating a more equitable health system. I will continue to be a mother advocating for what my children need to be safe, healthy, and strong."



We hosted the Second National Food is Medicine Day & Cocktail Party on September 14th. Over 40 people attended, raising a total of \$1,700 for our mission!







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**The Voice of the Patient Report**, from the Patient-Focused Drug Development Meeting in September 2021, was released to the public, compiled by the members of the Food Allergy Collaborative (FAC). The insights and perspectives of people living with food allergy, which are collected in this Report, can help guide the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in partnership with biopharmaceutical companies to evaluate and develop critical new therapies and improved policies that are desperately needed by this community. 4 representatives from FEI attended this meeting, including Erin, Emily Brown, and 2 clients.

## OCTOBER

Erin was asked to give a talk at the National Toy & Miniature Museum in Kansas City - The Ingredients of Play: How Food Shapes Our Identity. She talked about how food can bring us together but it can also pull us apart when not everyone has a seat at the table due to lack of access to safe, nutritious, affordable food.



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Erin spoke with students from the University of Missouri, Kansas City involved in a class called: Diversity in Health. She was able to answer evocative questions from future nonprofit leaders and change-makers.

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Erin advocated for the Women Infant & Children (WIC) nutritional package's cereal requirements to remain as-is to the Office of Management and Budget. WIC is considering making revisions to the cereal category of the nutritional program, to require that all authorized cereals be whole grain versus the current requirement that at least half of cereals be whole grain. This policy would effectively eliminate approximately half of the cereals offered through WIC, making it more difficult to access for people in rural areas and people with food allergies.

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Free-From Podcast reached 500 downloads!



## NOVEMBER

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Phase One of our research pilot program with Stanford University finished this month. With the preliminary data now collected, it is time to analyze and write up reports. The aim of the project was to study the impact of food access and nutritional education intervention for people with food allergies experiencing food insecurity in California. The early

findings suggest that, after completing the program, parents/caregivers were more likely to report that they were educated in how to read and interpret labels when food shopping, how to prepare allergy-safe foods, and how to manage their child's food allergy. This shows that our educational program is worthwhile and plays a significant role in improving the health of our community. We are excited to start Phase Two in 2023!



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Continuing on the research side, we started a pilot program with Northwestern University, mimicking Stanford's project except with participants in Illinois aged 5 years old and younger that qualify for HeadStart.



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**The Food is the Medicine** documentary premiered in Austin, TX, made by findhelp films about Food Equality Initiative. Sofia and Erin were invited to attend the viewing.



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Erin participated in a virtual roundtable discussion on Increasing the Diversity of Patient and Caregiver Engagement for the University of Maryland, joining 12 other speakers from advocacy organizations to individual caregivers across the country. 5 FDA representatives attended to listen and understand why we should care about surveying a diverse population when developing drugs.

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Global Ties KC invited Erin to speak with Palestinian leaders about FEI's mission. Together, they discussed ways to get the food is medicine movement started in Palestine with state & private insurance, increased transparency from food manufacturers, and encouraging more locally grown foods over international imports.



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4 out of the Impact 100 organizations were recognized at the United Way of Greater Kansas City's Tocqueville Society dinner presentation - FEI being one of them. Each person invited to the Tocqueville Society dinner has personally donated \$10,000 per year

to the United Way of Greater Kansas City, who allocated those funds to be invested in organizations like Food Equality Initiative. It was a great honor for us to be chosen to present.

## DECEMBER

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And for the end of the year, of course, we are preparing for 2023. A big part of that involves our campaign to raise funds during this end-of-year-giving season. A financial contribution helps build sustainability - helping FEI provide education about living the free-from lifestyle, improving access to safe and nutritious food for those in need, and advocacy for improved policies for greater health equity.

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Thank you for all your support in 2022! We are excited for what the future brings.





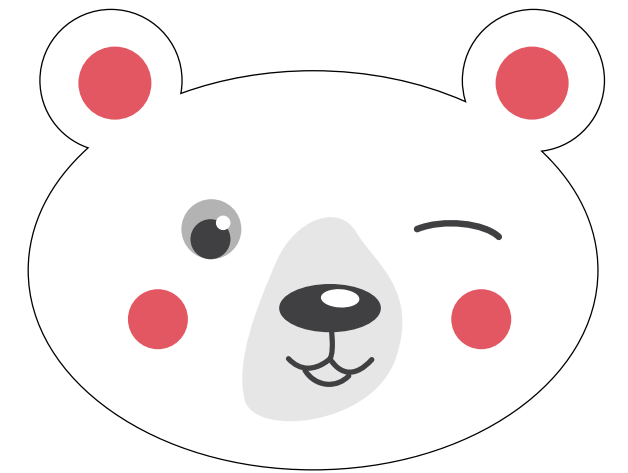
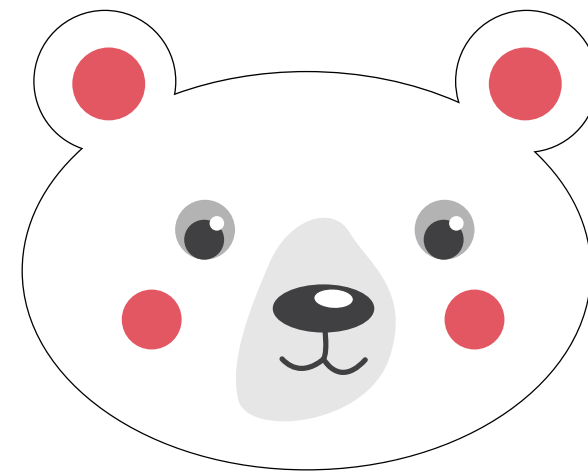
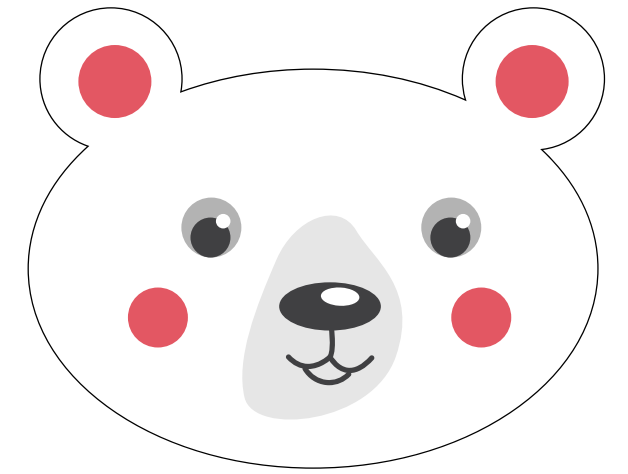
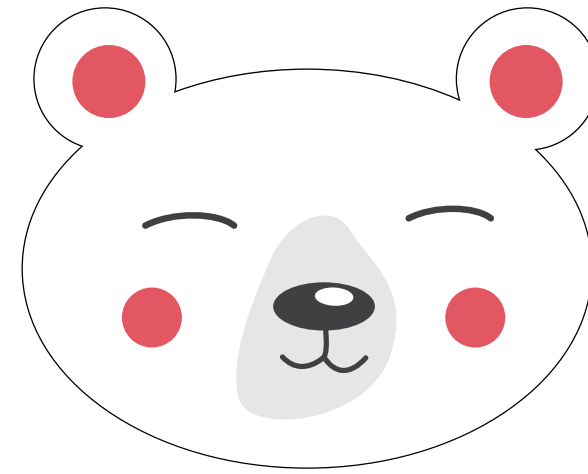
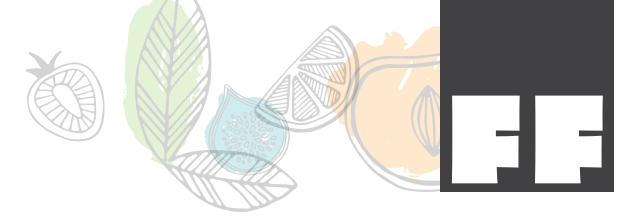


## HANDY POLAR BEAR ACTIVITY

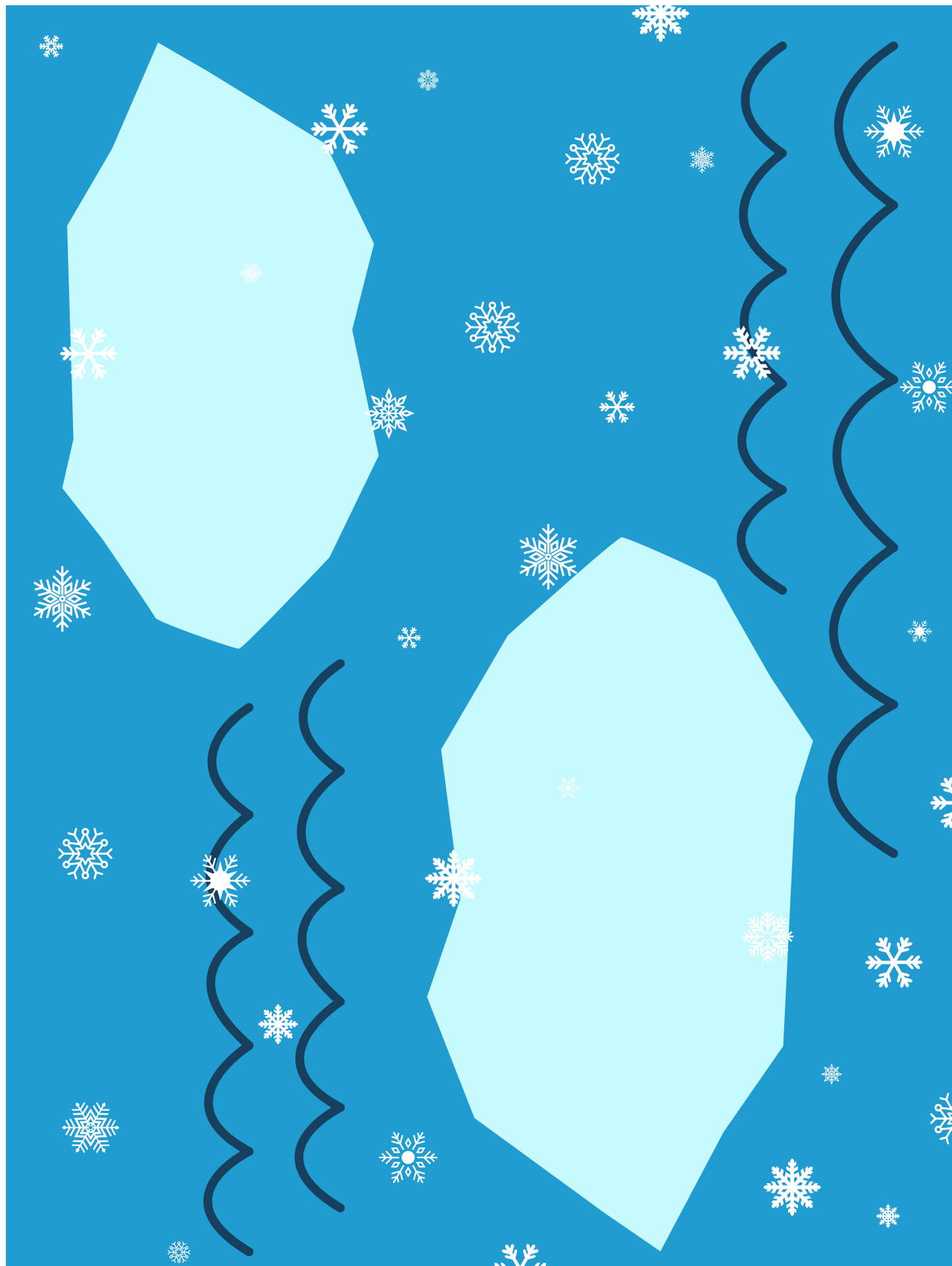
On the next page, we've designed a nice, icy scene-scape for a handy polar bear to live in, but it is missing one thing: a handy polar bear!

### DIRECTIONS:

Print out the icy scene-scape (or design one of your own on a piece of blue paper). Grab a spare sheet of white paper and trace your hand on it with a pencil. Carefully cut out your handprint from the paper and flip upside down, so the fingers are at the bottoms. On the tips of all the fingers, draw toes for your handy polar bear by making three little lines with a black marker. Then, you can either draw on a face for your polar bear, or print and cut out one of the faces on the next page to glue on. And there you go: A Handy Polar Bear! All that's left to do is to give it a name.







# THANKSGIVING MENU

## *Main course*

TURKEY TENDERLOIN - PAGE 32

CRANBERRY CHICKEN - PAGE 34

ROASTED INDIAN PUMPKIN SOUP - PAGE 16

CORNBREAD DRESSING - PAGE 36

## *Dessert*

PUMPKIN "CREAM" PIE - PAGE 40





## TURKEY TENDERLOIN

Crysta Green

This easy meal has quickly become a family favorite in our home. It is free-from gluten, dairy, and egg. However, it does take some planning ahead. We generally start the marinade the night before, leaving the turkey in the fridge overnight before removing it for dinner the following day.

### INGREDIENTS

1 ½ lbs Turkey tenderloin

#### MARINADE

⅓ cup Apple cider vinegar

½ cup Coconut aminos

2 tsp Lime juice

4 cloves Garlic, minced

2 tsp Brown sugar

2 tsp Chipotle powder

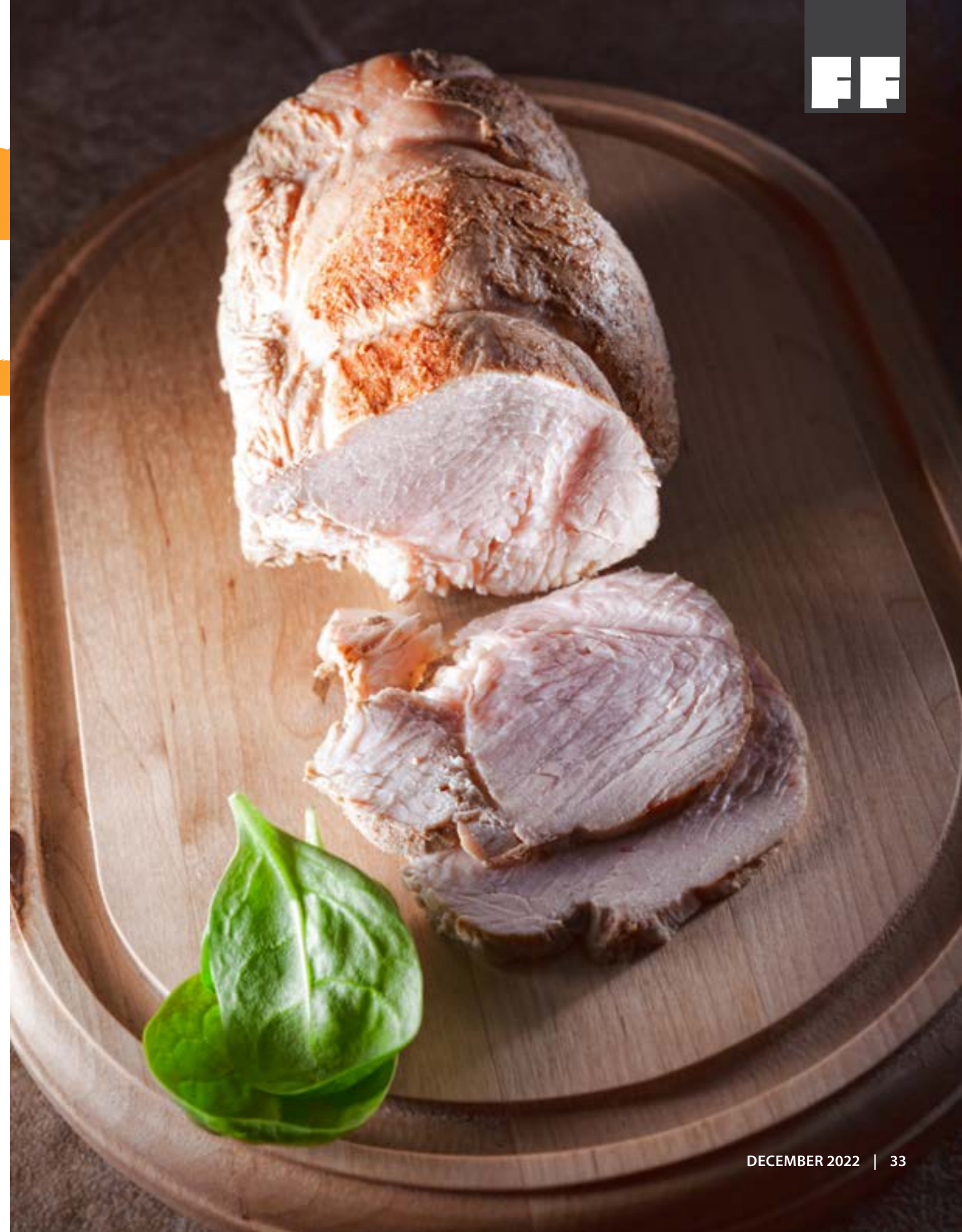
¼ Onion finely chopped

1 tsp Chili powder

2 tsp Stone ground mustard

### DIRECTIONS

- Combine all ingredients in a bowl for the marinade.
- Place turkey tenderloin in a sealable baking dish. Pour the marinade over the tenderloin. Place in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours (the closer to 24 hours, the better).
- When ready to cook, preheat oven to 350°F.
- Remove tenderloin from marinade and place in a greased baking dish. Discard remainder of the marinade.
- Bake, uncovered, for 45 minutes. If you have smaller tenderloins, time will be less. Remove from the oven when tenderloin registers on meat thermometer 165°F.







# CRANBERRY CHICKEN

Sarah Guthrie

## INGREDIENTS

1 package Dry Lipton (or other) onion soup mix -if you need gluten-free, [try this](#)  
 1 can Whole cranberry sauce  
 1 bottle Catalina French dressing (I use the lite version, but either works)  
 2-3 pounds Boneless, skinless chicken pieces – such as tenderloins, breast, or thighs



## DIRECTIONS

- Mix all ingredients together. I usually put water in the Catalina dressing bottle -- about halfway -- and shake it to get all of the dressing and add that. (It also makes more sauce!)
- Pour mixture over the chicken pieces in a 9 x 13 baking dish. Place in the oven at 375°F.
- Cook times vary depending on whether the pieces are frozen or not. If frozen, it will take about an hour and a half to cook. (I usually cover the chicken for the first 30 minutes of cooking, then remove the cover to finish the bake.) If chicken is not frozen, it will take less time. When the chicken is tender and the sauce is bubbly, it is ready.
- Once you take it out of the oven, you can strain the sauce and remove the bits of onion. Or you can keep it in and thicken the sauce with flour to enjoy with the chicken. Serve over a bed of rice and a green side salad.







## SOUTHERN CORNBREAD DRESSING

Amelia Richard

I made this for the first time 3 years ago. Since then, it has been my go-to dressing for Thanksgiving. My husband has never been a fan of dressing and would only eat his mother's. This one he has claimed to be as good, if not a little better than hers, which is a HUGE compliment.

### CORNBREAD

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup **Cornmeal, self-rising**
- ½ cup Flour, self-rising (or gluten-free alternative)
- ¾ cup Buttermilk (or Forager Project's drinkable Cashew milk yogurt acts like a non-dairy buttermilk)
- 2 Eggs – or egg substitute, like Just Eggs
- 2 Tbsp Avocado oil

#### DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400°F.
- In a medium bowl, stir together all ingredients. Pour into a lightly greased 9 in cast iron skillet or a 9-inch baking pan.
- Bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool.
- Before using for the dressing, crumble into small pieces.

### DRESSING

#### INGREDIENTS

- 10 Tbsp Butter, split into 8 Tbsp and 2 Tbsp
- 3 medium White onions, chopped
- 4 stalks Celery, chopped
- 1 Tbsp Garlic, minced
- 1 ½ tsp Dried sage
- 1 tsp Poultry seasoning
- ¾ tsp Salt
- ½ tsp Pepper
- 3 pieces Toast, crumbled (or gluten-free bread)
- ½ cup Milk (or dairy-free alternative)
- 3 Eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 – 2 ½ cups Chicken stock

#### DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350°F.
- Heat 8 tablespoons of butter over medium heat in a large pan. Add garlic, celery, and onion and sauté until soft and translucent.
- Add sage, poultry seasoning, salt, and pepper to the onion mixture.
- In a large bowl combine the crumbled cornbread and toast.
- Whisk together milk and eggs and add to the bowl with cornbread and toast. Stir in 2 cups of chicken stock.
- Stir in onion mixture. Mixture should be very moist. Add more stock if necessary.
- Transfer to a greased 9x13 baking dish.
- Cut the remaining 2 Tbsp of butter in small slivers and scatter on top of the dressing. (You can also skip this step altogether.)
- Bake uncovered for 30 minutes, or until the top is lightly browned.





## I CAN EAT MY PUMPKIN "CREAM" PIE AND LIKE IT TOO!

Martha Morgan | Allergy Dragon

**Holidays are special times for all of our families, based on traditions and love, no matter what you celebrate.**

**F**or my family, the kitchen is truly the heart of the home. It is where I constantly spent my time growing up, making yummy things for the holidays. It was always more about spending time with my aunt, grandma, sister, and mom creating something together than about the dish we actually created.

Since reaching adulthood, food has become so much more to me than just sustenance. Food brings people together; food nourishes not only our bodies but our souls, too. I mean, they call it comfort food for a reason. I am from a Southern family, and pie is an essential holiday dessert, especially pumpkin pie. However, my family and I can no longer eat this pie in its traditional form.

Another thing since reaching adulthood, I've started to realize that in the same way food can comfort us, it can also hurt or improve our health. In other words, food is medicine and we have to make sure we are eating what is right for us and our individual bodies. Like I said, I can't eat my mom's pumpkin pie, but I CAN eat it the way I make it.

Due to multiple diagnoses in my family, I had to become a specialty diet and allergy chef. I took my kids into the kitchen with me and focused on what we can eat and not on what we can't. My oldest child has celiac disease and is

on the autism spectrum - so food texture is a huge issue. We also have 30+ food allergies to account for amongst my family members, so while it is not impossible, it does take some creativity and planning to feed everyone.

I created this pumpkin cream pie recipe to accommodate my oldest child's texture issue with traditional pumpkin pie. He loved the taste but not the texture of the pie. It was too firm - he would completely cover it in whip cream, then he would mash it up and not eat the crust. So, in an attempt to make him reduce the consumption of almost a whole can of whip cream on 1 slice of pie (I wish I was kidding), I recreated this staple of the Southern holiday spread for him. No one said I couldn't recreate or create new food memories for my children.



### ABOUT MARTHA

Martha Morgan is a Specialty Diet & Allergy Chef and the creator of Allergy Dragon. Through Allergy Dragon, she can provide company and individual consulting for everything in the kitchen. Chef Martha also excels at creating new recipes and revamping old ones.





## EASY NO BAKE PUMPKIN CREAM PIE

Martha Morgan, Allergy Dragon

The beauty of this recipe is it is quick, easy, and has no baking. It is very kid-friendly, but adult supervision is required. This pie is more of a cream-type icebox pie, it is gluten-free, allergy-friendly, and vegan.

**Approx total time to prepare is 15 to 25 minutes.**

### FILLING

#### INGREDIENTS

15 oz Pumpkin puree (yams or butternut squash work well in place of pumpkin)

10 oz Whip-like topping (cream or coconut)

½ cup Powdered sugar (I use a vegan, gluten-free, and rice starch-based powder sugar)

¼ tsp Ground cloves

¼ tsp Allspice

½ tsp Ground nutmeg

\*You can substitute 1 teaspoon of pumpkin pie spice instead of the 3 spices listed if you can have them. Pumpkin pie spice contains cinnamon and ginger, which my youngest is allergic to.

¼ tsp Salt

1 tsp Vanilla extract

#### DIRECTIONS

- Place the pureed pumpkin in a small pot or medium microwave-safe bowl. Whisk in the vanilla, salt, spices, and sugar until blended.
- **If on the stovetop**, heat the pot over medium heat and frequently whisk until the pumpkin is warmed through and starting to smell like pumpkin pie. The heat and water in the pumpkin will activate the cornstarch or rice starch in the powdered sugar, depending on the kind of powdered sugar you are using. This takes around 10 minutes on the stovetop.

- **If you are using a microwave dish**, place the bowl in the microwave for 30-second intervals whisking for 10 seconds between each interval. Repeat this process until the pumpkin mixture is heated and smells like pumpkin pie. This method takes about 5 minutes total, depending on the strength of your microwave.
- After your pumpkin mixture is heated through and smells like pumpkin pie, remove it from heat and allow it to cool as you make the crust.



### CRUST

#### INGREDIENTS

1 ½ cup Ground Graham crackers, gluten-free (or other safe hard baked premade cookies such as animal crackers)

6 Tbsp Palm shortening (or coconut oil, or butter)

2 Tbsp of Sugar

#### DIRECTIONS

- Place your graham crackers (or other cookies) in a gallon-sized ziplock bag. Using a rolling pin or heavy can, smash the cookies into crumbs. If you don't have the patience for this (or an over-excited child is available to assist), use a food processor to make crumbles for your crust.
- Place palm shortening in a microwave-safe bowl and microwave for 30-second intervals to melt. (It usually doesn't even take a full minute.) In a separate bowl, place your cookie crumbs and sugar, and stir them together. Next, add the melted shortening to the crumb mixture.
- Once it is well incorporated, put your cookie crumb crust mixture into your pie pan. Using your hand, press into the pie pan until evenly covering the bottom and sides.
- In a medium-sized bowl, stir together 10 oz of the whip-like topping and the pumpkin mixture - which should be warm now but not hot. Place all the filling in the pie crust and refrigerate for at least 6 to 8 hours. For best results, refrigerate overnight.

This pie does well to freeze and thaw. It will keep in the freezer for 3 to 6 months, as long as it is sealed well. This pie keeps for 5 to 7 days refrigerated in a sealed container.

\*Disclaimer: The recipes included in the Free-From Magazine are suggestions. Please read carefully and make any substitutions that are necessary for your diet. Consult your doctor if you have questions or concerns.  
NOTE: Cooking is a science experiment and some ingredient substitutions may not produce the same results.







300 E 39th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111



(816) 800 - 0884



[contact@foodequalityinitiative.org](mailto:contact@foodequalityinitiative.org)

**[WWW.FOODEQUALITYINITIATIVE.ORG](http://WWW.FOODEQUALITYINITIATIVE.ORG)**