

L A K E N O R M A N

# CURRENTS

## THE DOING GOOD ISSUE

There's  
gratitude  
in giving

Thanksgiving  
done healthy

Team Summit  
Foundation

A Habitat  
happy ending

With the help of Jill Dahan and Starr Miller, you can have a healthy and happy holiday celebration. Here's how!

Thanksgiving is all about family and food — lots of it. But this year instead of stuffing yourself with all of the traditional favorites that aren't always the best food choices (think high cholesterol, high sodium, obscene amounts of sugar), serve a healthy meal that is also tasty.

We asked Jill Dahan, a Cornelius resident who wrote *Starting Fresh! Recipes for Life* and *CURRENTS'* recipe correspondent, to whip up a deliciously healthy Thanksgiving dinner for us. One taste of her Sweet Potato Cheesy Mash, and you'll discover that she succeeded and then some.

However with Thanksgiving, food is only part of it. You have to serve this glorious meal in a beautiful setting to truly pull off a successful celebration. That's where Starr Miller, president and principal designer of Cornelius' Starr Miller Interior Design, Inc., comes in. She and her team created a beautiful environment in which to give thanks and simply have a good time with family and friends.

We hope our Thanksgiving dinner primer inspires you to entertain at your best this fall. Enjoy!

# ONE TERRIFIC



From left, Dianna Lomangino, Mary Santini, Margot Tate, Lori K. Tate, Graydon Tate, Starr Miller, Jill Dahan and Karen Hughes celebrate after a tasty Thanksgiving celebration shoot.

# THANKSGIVING



Miller says that using one color in a centerpiece makes more of an impact. For this table setting, Miller asked Blumengarten in Cornelius to create four flower balls made of orange carnations.



## How to Choose a Theme

Instead of looking at setting your Thanksgiving table as a chore, think of it more as an art project, as well as an extension of your personality. Starr Miller starts with one item when she begins designing a table setting.

"It can be a flower, a color or a napkin," says Miller. When she found wishbone napkin holders at Pottery Barn, she had her muse for designing the table for this spread. She also chose to accent the color orange in the table's centerpiece, but instead of going with predictable pumpkins, she asked Blumengarten in Cornelius to create four flower balls of orange carnations.

"Using one color in your centerpiece makes more of an impact," explains Miller, who also incorporated her grandmother's white linen tablecloth, her own

silver and brass apple place card holders and Jill Dahan's bird appetizer plates into the mix.

"When it's a family affair, people tend not to be as elegant. They tend to think of it as potluck," says Miller. "If you have a formal dining room, you should use it. This is a celebration. Bring out the good stuff and make everybody help you clean."

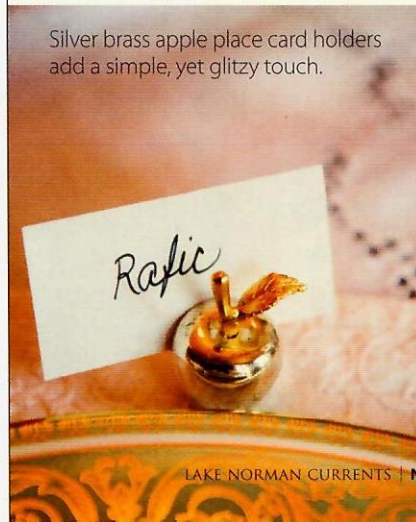
The main thing to ponder when developing a theme for your table is the mood you want to create. From there you can do anything from using burlap as a tablecloth to sheet music for place settings. "Always use something unexpected," says Miller. "Your guests will think you went out of your way for them, which is how it should be."

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## Starr Miller's Centerpiece Dos and Don'ts

1. Don't make your centerpiece too tall. You don't want to deter conversation.
2. Consider what else will be on the table, especially food.
3. Use one color for your centerpiece so it will have more impact.
4. I like to use things from around the house for centerpieces. It can be anything from watches, compasses, books or boxes.
5. Make it personal. Who knows? The centerpiece could end up being the topic of conversation.

Silver brass apple place card holders add a simple, yet glitzy touch.



Wishbone napkin holders from Pottery Barn inspired Starr Miller's table setting. "Guests can each make a wish after dinner," says the interior designer.



## Make It Healthy

Healthy is not the first word that comes to mind when thinking about Thanksgiving dinner, but with Jill Dahan's help, it's not impossible to cook a nutritious meal that will still have your guests asking for seconds.

"The biggest thing is to incorporate as many real foods as you can," says Dahan.

"Use fresh ingredients that you can prepare ahead of time." In other words, kick the jellied cranberry sauce can to the curb.

In addition to fresh ingredients, Dahan is also a fan of minimal ingredients. "With minimal ingredients, there's not a lot of shopping, you don't spend as much money and the prep time is shorter," she says. "You should also use things that are in season. Red cabbage is in season this time of year, as are honey crisp apples and brussel sprouts. The fresher the better."

In the following chart, Dahan offers healthy substitutes for Thanksgiving favorites.

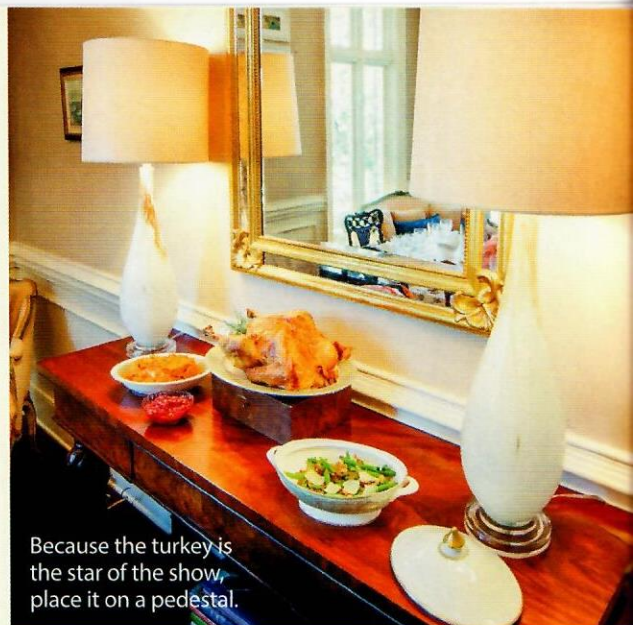
### Healthy Thanksgiving Alternatives

Traditional	Healthy Substitute
Green bean casserole	Warm green beans with walnuts and Manchego cheese (see recipe).
Turkey	Turkey is fine; just make sure you buy reputable bird.
Stuffing	Macademia and Ginger Stuffing (see recipe).
Mashed potatoes or candied yams	Sweet Potato Mash (see recipe).
Broccoli salad/ broccoli casserole	Sprout Slaw
Bread	Go for a bread with five ingredients or less.
Pumpkin pie	Swap out white or brown sugar for coconut sugar.
Sweet tea	Instead of sweetening with sugar, sweeten with liquid coconut sugar or blueberries.

## Cooking Prep 101

We've all been there. We're hosting a dinner and plan to have everything done by the time the guests arrive. However, when the doorbell rings, you're still slicing and dicing. Here are some tips from Jill Dahan to put you ahead of the game.

1. Cook sweet potatoes ahead of time and peel them. This goes for other vegetables that need to be cooked and peeled as well.
2. Use minimal ingredient recipes so there's less prep time.
3. Make cold salads the day before. The Sprout Salad (see recipe) tastes better if it's had a day to sit in the fridge.
4. Use fresh ingredients that can be prepped ahead of time.



Because the turkey is the star of the show, place it on a pedestal.



Sweet Potato Cheesy Mash

## Sweet Potato Cheesy Mash

### Ingredients

- 3 large sweet potatoes
- 4 ounces (about 2/3 cup crumbled) mild goats cheese or soft herb cheese
- 1 tablespoon rosemary leaves
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

### Instructions

Bake sweet potatoes on a baking sheet at 375 F for about 45 minutes until soft. Remove and scoop out flesh, leaving the skins (save the skins to bake later with sprinkled with cheese on them for a yummy potato skin appetizer!) Beat the potatoes with a whisk or electric beaters until smooth. Add in finely chopped rosemary and crumbled cheese, and stir just until combined. Drizzle with olive oil and serve warm. This dish can be prepared up to a day in advance without the olive oil and then warmed. Serves four.

## Warm Green Beans with Walnuts and Manchego Cheese

### Ingredients

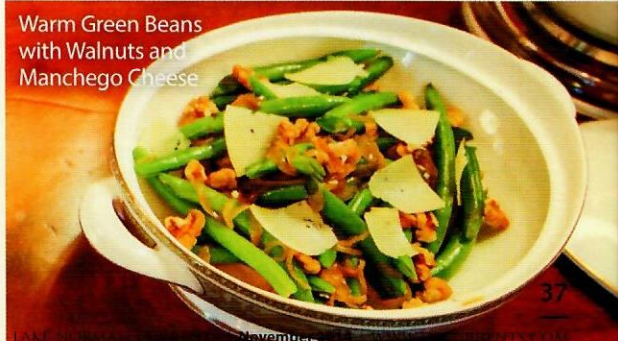
- 1 pound of green beans
- 1/2 of a sweet onion
- 1/2 cup of walnuts
- 2 tablespoons unfiltered apple cider vinegar
- 1 large clove of garlic
- 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons of walnut oil
- 2 ounces of Manchego cheese
- Coconut oil to sauté onions

### Instructions

Up to a day in advance, soak the walnuts in water for about two hours, drain and pat dry (soaking removes the bitter taste and improves nutritional bang.) Slice onion into paper-thin rings. Heat coconut oil until hot, and fry onions until lightly browned. Remove and drain on paper towel to crisp. Also shave

the cheese thinly with a vegetable peeler.

Trim the tops and tails of beans. In a dry sauté pan, heat them covered on medium high heat for about five minutes until lightly done. Remove and add in oils, a crushed garlic clove and vinegar. Stir to coat and top with walnuts, cheese and crispy onions. Can be served warm or room at temperature. Serves four.



Warm Green Beans with Walnuts and Manchego Cheese

## Red Cabbage, Apple and Fig Tarts

### Ingredients

- ½ a head of red cabbage
- ½ of a sweet onion
- 4 tablespoons of balsamic vinegar
- 4 tablespoons of water
- 1 large clove of garlic
- 1 (2-inch knob) of fresh ginger
- 1 small apple
- 3 dried figs
- 2 ounces of soft goats or herb cheese
- Pecans and rosemary leaves to garnish



Red Cabbage, Apple and Fig Tarts

### Instructions

Slice enough cabbage and onion finely on a mandolin or by hand to make four cups of cabbage and one cup of onion. Using a Dutch oven pan, if possible, cook onions covered on medium low heat for about five minutes. Grate apple and fig, and add to the onions along with the cabbage, water, vinegar, crushed garlic and one large tablespoon of finely grated ginger. Stir, cover and place in the oven at 350 F for about 25 minutes. Remove and stir the mixture, and then replace cover and bake for another 15 to 20 minutes until softened.

While cabbage is cooking, separate five sheets of filo pastry and brush with a little olive oil between each sheet and stack. Cut into 3-inch squares, and place each square in an ungreased mini-muffin hole. Bake at 350 F for about five to seven minutes until lightly browned and set aside.

Fill each filo tart with some of the cabbage mixture and dot with goat or herb cheese, and garnish with pecans and rosemary. Serve warm or at room temperature. Makes about 9 to 12 small tarts.



Sprout Slaw

## Sprout Slaw

### Ingredients

- 1 pound of Brussel sprouts
- 1/3 sweet onion
- 2 ½ tablespoons of sherry vinegar
- 4 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large clove of garlic
- ½ teaspoon of cumin seed
- 1/3 cup of pomegranate seeds

### Instructions

Remove the outer leaves and stems of the sprouts. Slice the sprouts and onion finely on a mandolin or by hand. Toast the cumin seed in a dry pan until warmed. Remove and whisk in crushed clove of garlic, vinegar and olive oil. Pour onto sprouts and top with pomegranate seeds to serve. This is great made in advance. Serves four.

## Ginger Macadamia Stuffing

### Ingredients

- 4 all-butter croissants or gluten-free Canyon bread
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin coconut oil
- 1 sweet onion
- 1 red pepper
- ½ pound mild chicken or veggie sausage
- 1 teaspoon of red pepper flakes
- 1 (2-inch) knob of fresh ginger
- ½ cup of parsley leaves
- 1 cup of macadamia nuts
- ½ cup low sodium chicken or vegetable broth if cooking in a baking dish

### Instructions

Toast the croissants at 325 F for about 10 minutes until crunchy and lightly browned. Remove and crunch into small pieces.

Chop the onion and red pepper finely. Crumble the sausage, and cook with the onion and pepper in coconut oil on medium heat covered about five to seven minutes until softened and lightly browned. Finely grate the ginger and crush the nuts into small pieces. Add the ginger, nuts, chili, parsley and croissant pieces into the sausage mixture and stir until combined.

Place in a baking dish, sprinkle with enough stock to moisten lightly, cover, and bake at 375 F for 20 to 25 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 10 to 15 minutes to crisp the top.

This is also delicious stuffed in chicken, turkey or vegetables like eggplant or zucchini prior to cooking. Just add additional cooking time onto birds to adjust for them being stuffed. Serves four.



Jill Dahan

## An Update on Starting Fresh! Recipes for Life

In the October 2013 issue of *CURRENTS*, we wrote a story about Jill Dahan's cookbook launch. A little more than a year later her cookbook titled *Starting Fresh! Recipes for Life* has sold almost 2,500 copies in the Lake Norman area. From the beginning, Dahan wanted to donate all of the proceeds from the book to Boston Children's Hospital. Soon she will be donating approximately \$30,000 to the hospital thanks to swift book sales. Lucky for us she hopes to write a sequel.



### THE SCOOP

You can learn more about Jill Dahan, as well as purchase *Starting Fresh! Recipes for Life* at [www.jilldahan.com](http://www.jilldahan.com).

## Pecan Pumpkin Pie with a Granola Crust

### Ingredients

#### Crust

2 cups of granola (homemade or Purely Elizabeth)  
2 tablespoons of extra virgin coconut oil

#### Pecan Layer

¾ cup pecan pieces  
1 large egg  
1 ½ tablespoon of coconut nectar  
or 2 ½ tablespoons of maple syrup

#### Pumpkin Filling

3 large eggs  
1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin puree  
1/3 cup of coconut sugar  
2 teaspoons each of powdered cinnamon and ginger  
2/3 cup unsweetened almond or dairy whole milk  
2 teaspoons vanilla bean paste

### Instructions

Blend granola in a blender until fine like flour. Add in oil, and blend until it comes together. Press into a removeable 10-inch cake pan. For the pecan layer, mix the egg and sugar together, and then add in the pecans. Spread over the crust. Bake five minutes. While it's baking, blend all the pumpkin filling ingredients until smooth in a blender. Remove pie, gently pour pumpkin over the pecan layer, and bake at 350 F for about 25 to 30 minutes until just set but wobbling a little in the center when touched. Remove, cool and chill until one hour before serving. Whipped cream, whipped coconut cream or ice cream can be served on top or on the side. Serves eight.

*Note: If you love pecan pie you can double the pecan layer ingredients for an extra pecan punch. Just add an additional five minutes baking time to the pecan layer to set before adding the pumpkin.*



Pecan Pumpkin Pie with a Granola Crust

## Giving Thanks

Special thanks to Jill Dahan for letting us use her beautiful home for the shoot and providing yummy food for us to eat afterward. Assistant Sous Chef Karen Hughes helped Dahan prepare this wonderful meal.

Thanks also to Starr Miller and her brilliant creative mind for designing a lovely table for the shoot. Dianna Lomangino and Mary Santini helped bring Miller's vision to life.

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