

# Go Organic!™ for Earth Day Newsletter

December 2009

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Dear Katie,

'Tis the season for giving, which consequentially makes it the season for buying. When it comes to how to celebrate the holidays and deciding what to give your loved ones, health and sustainability may not be at the top of your list of priorities. In this month's newsletter, the Go Organic! for Earth Day team provides tips and tricks for greening up your holiday season, without sacrificing the traditions that define it.

## → Go Organic!™ Holidays: Part Two

The holidays have several traditions that people hold dear, but many of these customs can be harmful to the earth and ourselves. Here are a few quick fixes that can add up to a big impact:

- **Cook and bake with organic ingredients.** This simple switch will expose your loved ones to fewer pesticides.
- **Throw a classier party.** Bring out the real dishes for the next party you throw. The presentation will look better than disposable ware, and you'll avoid creating loads of waste.
- **Wrap, Rip, then Recycle.** After opening presents, throw the paper in the recycle bin. Or, if you are especially skilled in your opening, try to keep the wrapping in tact and reuse next year.



- **Rethink those toys.** The excitement on the face of a child opening a present is a holiday joy that cannot be compromised. Consider, however, how often toys end up in mouths and the chemicals that they could contain. Look for toys that are chemical-free and made with natural ingredients, and let your little one play in peace.

## → More Efficient Holiday Cheer: LED Lights

For many people, holiday lights are an annual tradition. Unfortunately, incandescent bulbs use loads of energy and can be very unreliable, with the whole string flashing off with one misplaced footstep. How can you avoid these frustrations? LED (Light Emitting Diode) lights are encased in a hard plastic, meaning they will not shatter and shut down the entire string of lights. While incandescents last an average of 1,000 hours, LED lights take an average of 50,000 hours to burn out. Even when one bulb does stop working, the rest of the string will remain brightly lit. Since the bulbs burn coolly, you can also lay to rest any concerns about your festive lighting turning to fire. While LED lights used to only be available in their clear form, which gives off a white/blue light, you can now find them in strings of all colors. With energy use five times less than that of incandescents, LED lights are the better choice for your budget and the environment.



### → It's Worth It

If you have ever wanted to find out more about organic products, you are not alone. To address the various questions surrounding this term, our partners at the Organic Trade Association recently launched a site called [Organic. It's Worth It.](#) The site, which is divided into four sections (Make, Get, Grow, and Learn) is loaded with information on organic standards, labeling, recipes, what to look for when buying organic, how to grow your own organic food, and more. Check it out and see why organic is worth it!



### → In-Season Food of the Month: Fennel

Fennel, a perennial vegetable, has a somewhat sweet, licorice-like flavor and a crunch that makes it a perfect addition to a variety of dishes. All parts of fennel are edible, and since it is at its peak in the winter months, now is the time to experiment with its uses. The bulb can be eaten raw, sautéed, braised, or roasted. The stalks give flavor to broths and stocks, while the leaves provide an herb seasoning that can be sprinkled on top of meals. Regarding nutrition, fennel serves up plenty of vitamin C, fiber, and folate, as well as the phytonutrient anethole, which has been shown to reduce inflammation and lower cancer risk. Try sauteeing the sliced fennel bulb in olive oil for a healthy side dish, or simply slicing it raw to add crunch to your next sandwich.





Healthier Egnog

While many people look forward to the season for Eggnog, its healthful qualities tend to be lacking. This made-over recipe, courtesy of Domenica Catelli, gives you a boost of probiotics (via the kefir), along with a healthier sweetener (agave nectar), so you can serve up a drink that's not only festive, but offers some nutritional benefits as well.

### [The Ultimate Eggnog](#)

Recipe by Domenica Catelli

Makes 6-8 servings

#### **Ingredients:**

- 6 organic eggs\*
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1/4 cup agave nectar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons nutmeg
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 1/2 cups low-fat evaporated milk or whole milk
- 3/4 cups plain low-fat kefir
- 1 teaspoon rum extract



#### **Process:**

1. Beat eggs until fluffy.
2. Add remaining ingredients. Mix.
3. Chill and serve.

If you do not feel comfortable using raw eggs follow these instructions:

1. Beat eggs with the sugar and agave, then add the milk.
2. Pour into a heavy-bottom sauce pot and heat slowly.
3. When the mixture is thick enough to coat a spoon, remove from heat and add nutmeg, vanilla, and rum extract, then add kefir.
4. Chill in the refrigerator before serving.

#### **Make it your own! Try this variation to liven up your recipe:**

- Steam eggnog and add a shot of espresso for a fun after dinner drink.

\*Raw eggs are sometimes considered an unsafe food. Most commercial eggnogs are pasteurized. Making eggnog with pasteurized eggs, egg substitute, or without raw eggs are all options.



For more delicious and healthy recipes from Domenica Catelli, visit her [Mom-A-Licious web site](#), and look for her cookbook, *Mom-a-licious*, in stores now!

Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,

The Good Girl™ for Earth Day™

