

Healthy eating through the holidays

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Holiday time is here again! So are the joys and challenges of holiday eating. The big challenge is to have fun at special occasions without jeopardizing some of the healthy practices you have worked on throughout the year.

Here are some tips to help you survive the holiday season.

Do not arrive hungry to the party! Skipping meals before a holiday party in an effort to save calories for the big party will only make you overeat. Eat a light meal or snack before arriving to the party. A snack or meal that is high in fiber and contains lean protein is ideal because it can help control your appetite and help you avoid overeating.

Choose the right plate. You are more likely to eat food that ends up on your plate. Thus, choosing a smaller plate will not only prevent you from filling your plate with more items than you really need, but it will also make the amount of food on your plate seem larger.

Be merry. Spread holiday cheer by spending time enjoying the company of others at the party. The more you talk, the less time you will spend eating.

Balance your plate. Aim to fill half your plate with vegetables, a quarter with lean protein, and a quarter with starch.

Bring something to the party. Offer to bring an appetizer, side, or dessert to the party. Not only will the host or hostess appreciate the help, but you'll also have control over what goes into the dish.

Fill up on vegetables and fruits. Not only do these foods have plenty of vitamins and minerals, but they also contain fiber, which helps keep you full longer and may leave less room for other high-calorie foods.

Watch the liquid calories. For some, a holiday party is not complete without traditional drinks and cocktails. Beware that these drinks often contain a large number of calories. One cup of eggnog can set you back around 360 calories, while hot chocolate can contain around 200 calories. Alcoholic mixed drinks and punches can easily contain over 200 calories. Opt instead for a glass of sparkling water with a splash of your favorite juice or wine.

Be choosy. If you are at a buffet, scan the table before you enter the line. Choose small servings of the foods you want, but try not to return for seconds.

Food gifts. With the holidays come tins full of cookies and sweets. If you know that these will be trouble once you bring them home, open them up at work and pass them around for all to enjoy. If you are in the position of giving a gift to someone that is trying

to eat healthy or lose weight, why not give them a non-food gift like a plant, balloons, or a healthy cookbook.

Be active. A short trip over the holidays doesn't have to mean taking a vacation from your workout. Pack your sneakers or walking shoes and make a plan to fit in some activity each day.

Modifying the celebration

Look at the difference portion size can make.

Food	Original portion	Calories	New portion	Calories
Roasted turkey (white meat, no skin)	7 ounces	380	3.5 ounces	190
Cranberry sauce	1/4 cup	90	2 tablespoons	45
Gravy	1/4 cup	129	2 tablespoons	64
Stuffing	1/2 cup	118	1/4 cup	59
Mashed butternut squash	1/4 cup	35	1/4 cup	35
Whipped potato	1/2 cup	94	1/4 cup	47
Vegetable salad	1 cup	25	1 cup	25
Salad dressing	1 tablespoon	50	1 teaspoon	16
Dinner roll	1	70	Omit	0
Butter	1 teaspoon	45	Omit	0
Wine	2 4-ounce glasses	170	1 4-ounce glass	85
Pumpkin pie	1/8 of 9-inch pie	316	1/16 of 9-inch pie	158
Whipped cream	2 tablespoons	162	Omit	0
Coffee	1 cup	0	1 cup	0
Coffee creamer	2 tablespoons	60	1 tablespoon	30
Sugar	2 teaspoons	40	1 teaspoon	20
Total calories		1,784		774
Calories saved = 1,010				

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/healthy-eating-through-the-holidays-2018112015386>