

Tips for Healthy Holiday Eating

Party-size platters groaning with tempting arrays of mouth-watering holiday foods are stressful if you want to maintain your weight and your waistline. Knowing what and how much to eat during holidays can help you stay slim, healthy and active.

Preparing holiday food in your own kitchen? Try these tips:

- Replace full-fat (generally 4 percent) sour cream, cottage cheese or yogurt with a lower fat (2 percent) or non-fat substitute. To thicken yogurt, place in a wire-mesh sieve over a bowl for several hours to drain. Use in dips, creamy salad dressing, mashed potatoes and tacos.
- For meat- or poultry-based stocks, prepare and chill stock in advance. Skim the congealed fat from the top and proceed with your recipe.
- Snacking? Try lower-salt, salt-free, or baked varieties of crackers, nuts and chips as well as lower-salt salsas. Alternatively, why not make your own non-salty salsa or dip?
- Have an air-fryer? Use it as recommended for lower-calorie menu items.



In restaurants or at holiday parties, shun deep-fried appetizers like fried mozzarella or deep-fried crab cakes. Instead, opt for matchstick-sliced veggies and olives paired with hummus or, chilled seafood cocktail. Ordering salad? Request dressing on the side and choose a vinaigrette instead of a higher-calorie creamy ranch or blue cheese. Better yet, go with oil and balsamic vinegar for a lower-calorie punch.

Other calorie-curbing suggestions

Stay with broiled chicken or fish entrees and avoid anything that says sautéed, French-fried, creamed or sauced. Too severe? Request side-sauces. Eat a three-ounce (deck of card-size) portion.

Carb-curbing? Ditch the rice or pasta, farro or and double the steamed broccoli or other vegetables.

Get a-go container when your food comes to the table. Place half your meal in the to-go box and you won't end up eating more than you should. Never mind if others look askance, you'll remain slim and svelte throughout the New Year.

Apply a think-small strategy at those wonderful Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year's get-togethers.

- Nuts? Choose about two tablespoons of lower-fat almonds over high-fat cashews, macadamias or pecans. About ¼ cup of most nuts is about 150 calories, equivalent to 1 ½ slices of bread.
- When it comes to cheese, cut a small wedge or cube. A 100-calorie ounce of most cheeses is about the size of your outstretched thumb.
- Most holiday sit-down or walk-about celebrations include protein turkey, shrimp, roast beef and/or pork. In general, fish and shellfish yield fewer per-ounce calories than meat or fowl. Again, think small, deck of card-size portions and small, half-cup (think tennis ball size) portions of starches like mashed potatoes, noodles or rice.

Don't stop at the holidays. Use these healthy eating tips year-around.