

HEALTHFUL FOODS FOR THE HOLIDAYS & BEYOND. ©

How does anyone know what *to eat* anymore? With the fuss over *how not to gain weight* and what *not* to eat during the holidays, it seems like a never ending dilemma. Take heart and stay with me; this valley is full of great foods you can eat and ways to prepare them that are delicious, healthful and fun to consume at party time.

Munching around the buffet tables can be limited to the veggie offerings and a SMALL amount of the sweets.... Yes, your sugar intake may increase and add to your weight – but then who is in charge of what you eat?? The next article will cover what we call “New Year’s Re-Solutions” and how to carry them through at least until April....

Meanwhile, since I love to cook and entertain, I have spent years researching and gathering recipes and ideas, *especially* for the holidays, that can be enjoyed by my guests and by the official chef and wine glass washer (myself), without any guilt, useless during the holiday season anyway, or worry about the “waistline challenge”. So, here are some of the best foods to eat and enjoy while celebrating from Thanksgiving through the New Year.

Among the best of the “traditional holiday foods” are **Roast Turkey**; a 3 ounce serving of skinless turkey breast gives you 20 grams of protein, almost no fat and 100 calories, vitamins B6 & niacin: **Sweet Potatoes**; with as much beta-carotene as carrots, also contain vitamin C, potassium and other vitamins & minerals and taste wonderful.

Pumpkin; one of my favorites, provides 3 ½ times the RDA of Vitamin A and lots of fiber in a ½ cup serving. Pumpkin puree, **applesauce** and prune puree can be substituted for fatty ingredients in baked goods. Pumpkin with cinnamon and nutmeg works deliciously together with yams or sweet potatoes whipped with plain yogurt or buttermilk or (real) butter and baked in a casserole.

Nuts and Seeds: are nutritious and good as nibbles before the meal and as compliments to many dishes. Chop and put almonds or cashews - or if you are really ambitious, shell some pistachios to use in stuffing; toss them in with the sautéed green beans and garlic or other veggies for a little protein and omega 3 oils. Take the seeds from your Halloween pumpkin and wash them well, spread on a cookie sheet and sprinkle with a little salt and garlic and roast for about 8 – 10 minutes on 350°. Place a piece of aluminum foil on top to prevent them from “popping” all over the oven, and enjoy as a nutritious snack.

Beans (legumes); colorful and healthful, beans range from pink, purple, black, white, green, and yellow to bright orange, brown, speckled and splotched with amazing colors and flavor. Soak well and use in a wide variety of soups, dips, stews, casseroles, salads and even desserts. Low in fat, 1 cup of beans supplies 14 –18 grams of protein and fiber.

Greens; veggies with leaves, stems and anything green (Grinche excepted). Raw or cooked, solo or added to any meat or fish dish along with salads. All your heart desires. Add **beets, tomatoes, red peppers, etc.**, and you have colorful holiday dishes that look and taste good and fit right in with the season and beyond. Happy New Year!

Recipes are available along with other weight loss suggestions at 970-618-7607.

Ricki McKenna, BS, C.N. is a certified, licensed nutritionist and Health Coach in private practice. She counsels clients about individual food choices including the purchase and preparation of meals. We share the secrets of eating out, and maintaining a healthful lifestyle and wellness while away from home. Ricki specializes in teaching creative eating for those who want to lose weight, live longer and maintain a healthy body and outlook.

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