

Staying Healthy During the Holidays

The holidays are a great time of year to celebrate and spend time with family and friends, but it is also a time when making healthy choices can be difficult. We have some tips and recipes for you to avoid adding on a few holiday pounds while you “eat, drink, and be merry.”



If you are hosting a party:

- Limit the variety of food- Try to limit the amount of dishes and appetizers to a few holiday favorites so your guests (and yourself) are not tempted to fill your plates with every dish and side dish available.
- Prepare lower calorie dishes- You have the power to control what goes into the food! *Add flavor, but not fat.* Try to forgo using added butter and sodium. Broth can add moisture to meats instead of gravy, and using dried or fresh herbs can add more flavor to a dish instead of added salt.
- The focus doesn't have to be on the food- Food and drinks don't have to be the main attraction. Have a variety of games and activities available for your guests to play to shift the focus of the party to socializing with friends and family.

If you are a party guest:

- Be smart about calories- Limit the amount of trimmings you add to your foods- add fewer amount of gravy, butter, cheese, whipped cream, etc.- or omit them all together! Only eat your “must-have” holiday favorites and skip appetizers and dishes that are available all year round.
- Choose reasonable portion sizes- If you must sample many different items choose smaller amounts and still keep to one plate of food.
- Alternate alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks- If you choose to drink, it is smarter and safer to drink in moderation. Alternating between alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks you will save some

Healthy Holiday Recipes (from Million Hearts Heart-Healthy Recipes)

With the Holidays comes a variety of cookies and candies that are hard to avoid. Here is an alternative to gingerbread cookies (a holiday favorite)!

Ginger Crinkle Cookies

Ingredients:

2/3 cup canola oil
1 1/2 c. turbinado sugar, divided
1 large egg
4 tablespoons molasses
2 cups sifted whole-wheat pastry flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 1/4 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 1/4 teaspoons ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon sea salt

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Mix oil and 1 cup sugar in a large bowl until combined. Beat in egg until combined. Stir in molasses until evenly incorporated. Sift flour, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger and salt over the wet ingredients and stir until just combined.
3. Put the remaining 1/2 cup sugar in a small bowl. Roll the dough into 1-inch balls and roll each ball in the sugar before placing 2 inches apart on an ungreased baking sheet. Do not flatten.
4. Bake the cookies until set, but still soft when gently touched, 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

To limit fat and calories in a Thanksgiving meal, choose white meat and skip the skin since dark meat is higher in fat content and poultry skin is high in fat and calories. Instead of the whole bird, try cooking a turkey breast.

Try out this heart-healthy stuffed turkey breast recipe (220 calories and 5g of fat per serving)

Spiral Stuffed Turkey Breast with Cider Gravy:



Turkey & gravy

1 2-pound boneless turkey breast half
1/4 tsp. salt, or to taste
Freshly ground pepper, to taste
4 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
1 c. apple cider
1/2 c. reduced-sodium chicken broth
1 c. onion, coarsely chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed and peeled
8 sprigs fresh thyme, or 1 tsp. dried
4 tsp. cornstarch
2 Tbs. water
1/4 c. reduced-fat sour cream
1 1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard
1 tsp. lemon juice

Stuffing

2 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
1 c. finely chopped onion
1/2 c. finely chopped celery
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 c. fresh whole-wheat
breadcrumbs
3 Tbs. chopped fresh parsley
1 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme, or 1
tsp. dried
1 1/2 tsp. chopped fresh sage, or 1/2
tsp. dried
1/4 tsp. salt, or to taste
Freshly ground pepper, to taste

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 300°F.
2. **To prepare stuffing:** Heat oil in a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add onion and celery; cook, stirring often, until softened, 2 to 4 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds. Remove from heat and stir in breadcrumbs, parsley, thyme, sage, 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper.
3. **To prepare turkey:** Remove skin from turkey breast and trim off fat. Butterfly the turkey breast. Flatten the turkey breast. Spread the stuffing over the breast and roll the breast up into a cylinder. Secure with kitchen string.
4. Sprinkle the turkey with 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper. Heat 2 teaspoons oil in a large cast-iron or nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the turkey and cook, turning from time to time, until browned all over, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to a plate. Add cider to the skillet and bring to a simmer, stirring to scrape up any browned bits. Add broth and bring to a simmer. Remove from heat.
5. Heat the remaining 2 teaspoons oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring often, until softened, 2 to 3 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds. Add the browned turkey. Pour in the cider mixture, then add thyme sprigs (or dried thyme). Cover the pan and transfer it to the oven.
6. Bake the turkey until it is no longer pink inside and an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center registers 170°, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Transfer to a carving board, tent with foil and keep warm.
7. **To prepare gravy:** Strain the liquid from the Dutch oven into a medium saucepan, pressing on the solids. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat; cook for 2 to 3 minutes to intensify the flavor. Mix cornstarch and water in a small bowl; add to the simmering gravy, whisking until lightly thickened. Add sour cream, mustard and lemon juice, whisking until smooth. Season with pepper. Heat through.
8. Remove the string from turkey. Carve into 1/2-inch-thick slices and serve with gravy.