

**November/December
2025**

**GIVE
Thanks!**

Holiday Harmony: Eating Well During the Holidays

From Your Dietitian

The holiday season rolls in with a wave of cheer, twinkling lights, and the promise of shared feasts that bring family and friends to the table. It's a time for tradition, celebration, and creating cherished memories. However, with this festive spirit often comes a pair of common challenges: limited time and the tendency to overeat. Between shopping, decorating, and social gatherings, preparing meals can shift from joyful to stressful, and it's easy to lose touch with hunger and fullness cues.

But the holidays don't have to mean choosing between celebration and balance. With a few time-saving strategies and mindful eating techniques, you can enjoy the season while feeling your best. Let's unwrap some practical ways to savor the holidays—merry and light.

Time-Saving Strategies

When time is short, a few simple strategies can help you stay nourished without spending hours in the kitchen. Embracing a semi-homemade approach is one of the easiest ways to reduce stress. Using high-quality prepped ingredients can still provide that homemade feel without the overwhelm. A rotisserie chicken, for example, can be shredded for tacos, soups, or lettuce wraps. Frozen pizza dough can be customized with your favorite toppings for a quick family meal. Even pre-chopped vegetables are a time-saver—perfect for roasting, stir-fries, or salads. These shortcuts aren't about cutting corners; they're about directing your energy where it matters most.

Another helpful strategy is to cook once, eat twice. Preparing versatile ingredients in bulk makes mealtime easier all week long. Cooking a pot of rice or quinoa at the start of the week can form the base for different meals such as grain bowls or a lentil quinoa dill salad. Hard-boiled eggs can be prepared in batches and used for quick snacks or as a protein addition to salads and sandwiches.

For easy cleanup, focus on one-dish meals. Sheet pan dinners, slow cooker meals, or Instant Pot recipes can save both time and dishes. Try baked Mediterranean salmon packets or turkey pumpkin chili for flavorful, stress-free options.



Mediterranean Salmon Packet Meal

Prep Time 10 mins
Total Time 30 mins
Meal Type Lunch,Dinner
Contributed By
Source Living Plate Teaching Kitchen
Servings 4



Ingredients

lb,c g/ml

- 1 Zucchini, medium, *Sliced into half circles*
- 1 cup Cherry Tomatoes, *Halved*
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 1/2 tsp Black Pepper
- 1 1/2 lb Salmon, skinless (6 oz per fillet)
- 4 Tbs Olive Oil
- 4 Garlic Cloves, *Minced*
- 1 Lemon, *Juiced and Zested*
- 1/2 tsp Red Pepper Flakes
- 1/4 cup Parsley, fresh, *Chopped*

Directions

Prep

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Wash and cut all vegetables.
3. Prepare a 10x12 inch piece of tinfoil and parchment paper for each serving.

Make

1. Spread out each piece of tinfoil on a baking sheet and top each with a piece of parchment paper. Slightly crimp the edges to prevent juices from running.
2. Fill each packet with zucchini and cherry tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper. Top with salmon.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, garlic, lemon juice and zest, and crushed red pepper flakes. Pour mixture over the salmon.
4. Fold the edges of the packet over the salmon and fold to seal. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool for 2 minutes before opening. Caution: steam will escape the packet when opened.
5. Garnish opened packets with fresh parsley and serve.

Source: Nutrient data for this listing was provided by USDA Food Composition Database. Each "*" indicates a missing or incomplete value.

Nutrition information for recipes is calculated by retrieving and compiling individual food data from the USDA database. Factors such as brand selection, size of produce, and preparation can change nutrition information in any recipe. We offer this information as an estimate only.

Nutrition Facts		Amount/Weight	% Daily Value*	Amount/Weight	% Daily Value*
Calories 391 per serving		Total Fat 24.7g	38%	Total Carbohydrates 6g	2%
		Saturated Fat 3.6g	18%	Dietary Fiber 2g	6%
		Trans Fat 0.0g		Total Sugars 3g	
		Cholesterol 94mg	31%	Protein 35g	
		Sodium 377mg	16%		
		Vitamin D 0mcg 0% · Calcium 50mg 5% · Iron 2mg 12% · Potassium 1181mg 25%			

* The percent Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

- Show all nutrients -



Turkey Pumpkin Chili

Prep Time 10 mins
Total Time 30 mins
Meal Type Lunch, Dinner
Contributed By
Source Living Plate Teaching Kitchen
Servings 8



Ingredients

lb, c g, ml

- 1 onion, *diced*
- 4 carrots, *peeled and chopped*
- 1 cup red bell pepper, *chopped* (about 1 red pepper)
- 2 zucchini, *chopped*
- 3 cloves garlic, *minced*
- 1 1/2 cups black beans, *drained and rinsed*
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 1 lb turkey breast, ground
- 1 Tbs chili powder
- 1 tsp cumin, ground
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 1/2 cups tomatoes, canned diced
- 1 1/2 cups pumpkin purée
- 4 cups chicken stock, low-sodium
- salt, *to taste*
- pepper, *to taste*

Directions

Prep

1. Dice the onion, carrots, pepper, zucchini, and mince the garlic cloves.
2. Drain and rinse the black beans.

Make

1. Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic. Cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Add the carrots, peppers, and cook for an additional 5 minutes, until carrots begin to soften.
2. Add the turkey, and cook until browned, breaking up the ground turkey into crumbles.
3. Stir in the chili powder, cumin, cinnamon, and cayenne pepper, and cook for an additional minute.
4. Add in the zucchini, diced tomatoes, pumpkin purée, chicken stock, and black beans; stir to combine.
5. Bring the chili to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes.
6. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Source: Nutrient data for this listing was provided by USDA Food Composition Database. Each "*" indicates a missing or incomplete value.

Nutrition information for recipes is calculated by retrieving and compiling individual food data from the USDA database. Factors such as brand selection, size of produce, and preparation can change nutrition information in any recipe. We offer this information as an estimate only.

Nutrition Facts		Amount/serving	% Daily Value*	Amount/serving	% Daily Value*
		Total Fat 9.4g	14%	Total Carbohydrates 25g	8%
		Saturated Fat 2.0g	10%	Dietary Fiber 7g	29%
		Trans Fat 0.1g		Total Sugars 8g	
		Cholesterol 39mg	13%	Protein 19g	
		Sodium 212mg	9%		
		Vitamin D 0mcg 2% · Calcium 87mg 8% · Iron 4mg 19% · Potassium 904mg 19%			

* The Percent Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

- Show all nutrients -

Strategies to Prevent Overeating

The abundance of delicious foods and treats during the holidays can make mindful eating a challenge. A little preparation goes a long way. One of the best strategies is to avoid arriving at an event overly hungry. Eating a small balanced snack beforehand—like apple slices with almond butter, Greek yogurt with berries, or vegetables with hummus—can help curb hunger and prevent overeating.

Staying hydrated can also make a big difference. Sometimes thirst is mistaken for hunger, so drinking a glass of water before meals and sipping throughout the event can help you stay in tune with your body. You might even enjoy a festive, non-alcoholic option such as sparkling water with cranberries and a sprig of rosemary.



Cranberry Orange Mocktail

Prep Time 5 mins
Total Time 5 mins
Meal Type Snack, Side
Contributed By
Source [Living Plate Teaching Kitchen](#)
Servings 1



Ingredients lb,c gml

- 2 Tbs orange juice, *freshly squeezed*
- 1 tsp ginger root, *grated*
- 1/2 cup sparkling water
- 1/4 cup cranberry juice
- 2 Tbs ginger beer
- 1 tsp crystallized ginger
- 2 tsp sugar

Directions

Prep

- Squeeze orange for juice and grate fresh ginger [if you freeze the ginger ahead of time it will be easier to grate].

Make

- Add crystallized ginger to a small food processor with sugar and process until combined. Add to a small plate.
- Run the quartered orange around the rim of the glass and dip into the ginger/sugar mixture.
- Add ice to the glass then add sparkling water, cranberry juice, orange juice, and ginger.
- Top off with ginger beer. Garnish with fresh rosemary and cranberries.

Source: Nutrient data for this listing was provided by USDA Food Composition Database. Each "-" indicates a missing or incomplete value.

Nutrition information for recipes is calculated by retrieving and compiling individual food data from the USDA database. Factors such as brand selection, size of produce, and preparation can change nutrition information in any recipe. We offer this information as an estimate only.

Nutrition Facts		Amount per serving		% Daily Value*	
Calories 103 per serving	Total Fat 0.2g		0%	Total Carbohydrates 26g	8%
	Saturated Fat 0.0g		0%	Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
	Trans Fat 0.0g		0%	Total Sugars 24g	
	Cholesterol 0mg		0%	Protein 0g	
	Sodium 8mg		0%		
	Vitamin D 0mcg 0% · Calcium 33mg 3% · Iron 0mg 1% · Potassium 122mg 2%				

*The Percent Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

When faced with a buffet, take a moment to look over the options before serving yourself. Start with vegetables and protein, then add smaller portions of the richer foods you really want to taste. Using a smaller plate can help with portion awareness, and studies suggest that higher contrast between the food and the plate color may also encourage smaller servings.

Finally, allow yourself to enjoy holiday treats without guilt. Try the “one-plate rule”—fill one plate with the foods you love most, savor each bite slowly, and stop when comfortably satisfied. Remember, food is part of the celebration, not the focus of it.

Additional Holiday Strategies

The holidays don’t have to derail your healthy habits. When it comes to sweets and seasonal treats, be selective. Choose the ones that truly feel special, and skip the ones that are available year-round. If you’re able, make them at home—homemade desserts often use fewer additives and can be made with more wholesome ingredients. Simple no-bake power bites or oatmeal cookies can offer a sweet balance without going overboard.

Incorporating activity into your celebrations can also help keep your energy up and your stress levels down. Create new traditions that involve movement—like a post-dinner walk, a family football game, or a holiday lights stroll. Active gatherings such as volunteering, decorating together, or even dancing to holiday music can keep the spirit bright.

Managing stress is equally important. The busyness of the season can lead to emotional eating, so take a few moments for deep breathing, stretching, or a short meditation. Setting realistic goals can also relieve pressure—aim to maintain your current weight rather than lose during the holidays. And when you need encouragement, lean on friends or family who share your goals. Sometimes simply talking about challenges can help you stay grounded.

Embracing the Spirit of the Season

As the lights twinkle and laughter fills the air, remember that the holidays are about connection—not perfection. Allow yourself to enjoy your favorite foods while keeping balance and mindfulness in mind. A few days of indulgence are part of life’s joy. When the season winds down, you’ll return to your usual habits with renewed energy and gratitude.

Wishing you a happy, healthy, and balanced holiday season—filled with joy, love, and delicious memories.

Ask the Dietitian

Q: How can I enjoy holiday gatherings without feeling guilty afterward?

A: Great question. First, let go of the idea that certain foods are “good” or “bad.” Guilt around eating can lead to all-or-nothing thinking and overeating later. Instead, focus on balance and mindfulness. Eat regular meals leading up to the event so you don’t arrive overly hungry. Choose the foods you truly enjoy, eat slowly, and pay attention to satisfaction rather than fullness. If you happen to overeat, skip the guilt. One meal won’t derail your progress—what matters most are your habits over time. The goal isn’t perfection—it’s peace with food and yourself this holiday season.

New 2025

Online Nutrition Classes

Please join us for these **complimentary classes** taught by registered dietitian and diabetes educator!

- Diabetes Prevention
- Healthy Habits for Weight Loss
- Meal Planning Strategies & Virtual Grocery Tour
- Heart Health
- Mindful Eating
- Fight Inflammation: The Power of Food

Sample Meal Plans and Recipes Included!

Details



When: Bi-monthly Monday Evenings 6pm–7pm
Where: Comfort of Your Own Home
How to Register: Scan QR Code or Call Scheduling
Instructor: Jessica Jantz, RDN, CDCES



Thank you for reading our Healthy Living newsletter!

Cravings are part of being human. In a month full of candy, your power comes from awareness + a plan that respects satisfaction and supports your health. Choose what you love, enjoy it with intention, and keep a few steady meals and snacks in your corner.

Thank you for reading our Healthy Living Newsletter! If you have a question you would like for us to answer in upcoming newsletters or topics you would like to see covered please email us at jessicajantz@clayplattefamily.com



Melissa White, MS, RD, LD, CDCDES



Jessica Jantz, RDN, CDCES