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Holiday to Holiday Challenge



HOLIDAY SURVIVAL GUIDE



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First the bad news....

Anatomy of a Holiday Pig-Out

(this article first printed in Marie Claire magazine)



The average weight gain between Thanksgiving and New Years is a whopping 7- 10 pounds! That's because a typical Holiday meal contains more than 3,000 calories.

What does it do to your body?

It takes 3,500 excess calories to gain a pound — so you *might* escape from your holiday feast with little to show for it.

The bad news is that at least 40 percent of the excess calories you've eaten probably come from fat. Fat is the most calorically dense (nine calories a gram versus four for protein and carbohydrates), and it converts most easily into fat on your hips.

Your stomach and intestines burn off about 20 percent of the calories in the process of converting excess carbohydrates and proteins into fat. However, your body doesn't burn a single calorie when it is converting nutritional fat into body fat. Your small intestine simply dumps it straight into your bloodstream.

If you eat 100 excess fat calories, most of the 100 are stored as fat. With 100 calories of excess carbs, about 20 go to fat storage.

WHAT'S IN YOUR HOLIDAY FEAST?

Mixed nuts and crackers, 289 calories, 23 g fat
Sour cream and spinach dip, 108 calories, 9 g fat
Small salad with dressing, 173 calories, 16 g fat
Dark and white turkey meat, 239 calories, 10 g fat
Herb stuffing, 292 calories, 10 g fat
Cranberry sauce, 200 calories, 0 g fat
Gravy, 84 calories, 7 g fat
Sweet potato casserole, 309 calories, 9 g fat
Green beans almondine, 124 calories, 8 g fat
Cornbread with butter, 338 calories, 23 g fat
Two glasses white wine, 201 calories, 0 g fat
Pumpkin pie with whipped cream, 321 calories, 24 g fat
Pecan pie with whipped cream, 568 calories, 43 g fat



TOTAL: 3,246 calories, 182 g fat (50 percent of total calories come from fat).

Prepare for the Big Feast

You can minimize the damage with a little forward planning:

Eat something substantial beforehand; don't skip whole meals in advance. "You'll be so famished, you'll eat way too much when it comes to the feast," says Anne Dubner, R.D., of the American Dietetic Association. When you're hungry, your body compensates by lowering your metabolism to guard against starvation. "It acts like a dry sponge — and will just soak up more fat."

Drink less alcohol beforehand. Alcohol douses your resolve, ignites hunger, and adds to your calorie load.

A half hour before the meal, fill up on water and calorie-free beverages, such as (sugar-free) iced tea, sparkling water, or coffee. Eat a small snack high in hunger-satisfying fiber, perhaps an apple, carrot, small salad, or handful of raw almonds. Or have some soup. A study conducted by Baylor College of Medicine in Houston found that people who consumed a bowl of hot soup before meals ate less, lost more weight (about a pound more yearly), and kept it off longer. Soup also fills your stomach, so you eat less, later.

Increase your workout days in advance. Take a walk, a cardio kettlebell class, or go jogging. You may be too tired to gorge, and you may burn off enough calories to compensate for those you'll

be bulking up on later. "Physical activity is the currency with which you pay for food," says Pamela Peeke, M.D., author of *Fight Fat After 40* (Penguin USA, May 2001).

While You Eat

Be aware that friendship is a dieter's enemy. A study by Pennsylvania State University found that when people ate among friends or family, they consumed about 50 percent more than if they were alone or among strangers. Barbara J. Rolls, Ph.D., professor of nutrition at Penn State, theorizes that drinking and watching others indulge lowers our resolve, and that conversation prolongs the meal and distracts us from calorie counting.

Tighten your belt. If you are wearing fitted clothing, you have a constant reminder not to overeat.

Go on a reconnaissance mission. Once you've checked out the buffet, you can pick out what you'll succumb to and what you'll ignore. Then serve yourself (if possible), so you can control portion sizes. Avoid sauces, cheese toppings, and nuts. You also might choose pumpkin pie over pecan pie (the latter has far more calories than the former).

Perfect the "platter pass." To further thwart temptation, make sure a healthy dish lands by you when you pass dishes around the table.

Follow the "three quarter rule": Fill your plate three-fourths full of lower-calorie foods — salad, vegetables, turkey — and one-fourth full of higher-calorie choices, including stuffing, sweet potatoes or other starches. A further visual aid is making your plate appear fuller by creating a river of space, about an inch wide, between different foods.



Downsize your portions — and forget seconds. "The greatest pleasure comes from the first two or three forkfuls," says Peeke. She suggests putting a money value on each dish, with the more caloric ones being the priciest. "Tell yourself you have a budget, and decide where you'll spend it." A good place to splurge: the foods you only eat at holidays.

Prolong your pleasure. Eat slowly and take breathers.

Get up from the table during the meal and leave the room.

You need to get yourself out of an unconscious "food coma," which is when you eat and eat without realizing what's going on.

Make a point of signaling the end of your meal. When you've finished, have a mint or piece of gum to clear the taste of food from your mouth — it'll make post-meal nibbling less appealing.



What happens to food after you've eaten it?

When you put down your silverware, your body has only begun a major production, eight hours in the making. When food enters your mouth, saliva breaks down each morsel. "The rate at which you eat and swallow affects how quickly you fill up," says Barbara J. Rolls, Ph.D., professor of nutrition at Pennsylvania State University.

First to be metabolized is alcohol, which is sent directly to the liver to burn up within minutes. Liquids follow, and over the next few hours the body breaks down solid foods, disposing first of carbohydrates, then protein, leaving fats for last. Why? Because fats are more complex to break down.

"A 3,000-calorie meal takes about two hours to be digested in the stomach, and another four to six hours for nutrients to be absorbed in the intestines," says Kenneth Koch, M.D., gastroenterologist and professor of medicine at the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Penn State. The food stimulates the release of hormones to alert the brain that you're full. "The higher the fat content and larger the meal," Koch says, "the more slowly food passes through the stomach, and the longer those satiety signals take to get their message across."

By morning, everything has been absorbed or disposed of. All that remains are the extra calories your body stores.

Watch what you drink

Alcohol makes the calories add up faster than you think. Though the majority of our calories come from solid foods, "fluid calories also add to your caloric intake, but with little effect on your satiety," says Richard Mattes, Ph.D., a nutrition professor at Purdue University.

Alcohol also slows the breakdown of fat. In one study, people drank 100 grams of alcohol — about six drinks — and their ability to burn fat dropped more than 30 percent. We burn fat in our liver. But when we drink alcohol, the liver is busy burning alcohol instead of fat.

The Morning After

You were as bloated as a balloon when you rolled into bed. So how come you wake up ravenous the next morning?

Your gut is empty and begging for more food to fuel your body's daily functions. A large meal also makes your digestive system work overtime, raising your blood sugar.

Once the meal is digested, usually while you sleep, your blood sugar drops, triggering greater secretion of insulin, which further wets the early morning hungries.

There's also the effect of great expectations.

If you eat a large meal, your mind tells you to do it again. It's a psychological phenomenon.

Post pig-out

Don't berate yourself and start a downward spiral. "If you dwell on it, you may get depressed, which only leads to more eating," Alphin says. Don't deprive yourself the next day to compensate. Your body will go into starvation mode — your metabolism will plummet so your body can hoard nutrients. Think of your dining splurge as a shopping one: Pay it off gradually with exercise and healthy eating.

Workout! Moving will make you feel less sluggish and bloated. Those endorphins will lift your spirits and curb hunger! Take your time to undo the damage — at least a week. You'll be less likely to binge as a reaction.



The Average American's Holiday Season



And now the good news....

YOU DO HAVE CHOICES...

25 Tips for Fighting the Holiday Blubber



1. **Start your day strong with a healthy breakfast.** If you don't, you will tend to overeat the rest of the day. Good rule to follow: eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and supper like a pauper.
2. **Curb your appetite.** Drink a glass of water before every meal. It will help you fill up faster and help you eat less.
3. **Slow down.** Eat slower and taste your food. It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to recognize how much is in your stomach. It is a good idea to take a break after you eat to lessen the temptation to go for another serving!
4. **Stay active.** Exercise with your family and go for a walk or jog outside! Sign up for your regular workouts, enlist your friends- take on a Holiday 5K!

5. **Keep a food diary.** Tracking everything you put into your body will help to point out your weaknesses. You will then be able to focus on limiting your intake of certain foods and spot when you missed a meal. What you measure you can manage!
6. **Work the 80/20% Principle.** Eighty percent of the time, eat protein, vegetables and fruit and healthy fats like nuts and seeds. A handful of almonds or a freshly sliced apple is a great snack to curb your hunger! 20% of the time, have a glass of wine or bite of dessert. Keep it real but keep it lean.
7. **Don't go anywhere hungry.** Try to arrive at any holiday parties having already eaten something healthy. That way you won't be too prone to digging into high-calorie party foods. Also, bring a healthy option to a holiday party!
8. **Maintain portion Control.** Pay attention to how much you put on your plate. Use smaller plates. Moderation is one of the most important elements in weight control –especially at holiday parties!
9. **Choose water over Alcohol.** Drink water in place of alcohol - keeps you hydrated and keep your energy high. It is amazing quickly calories in alcoholic drinks can add up! Spend your calories wisely- Alternate drink nights- have tonic or seltzer with a slice of fruit – add a push to your white wine. It's simple, really! Drink your booze and build your belly.
10. **Decide how many drinks you are going to have before the party.** Choose light and clear alcohol over dark, and alternate between an alcohol beverage (if you are drinking) and water (same goes for soda). This cuts 100's of calories!!!!
11. **Don't eat things if you don't like them.** Sounds simple enough! If you put it on your plate and it doesn't taste as good as you thought, why eat it?
12. **Don't give up!** Falling out of habits you are trying to accomplish for a few days, DOES NOT mean your effort is hopeless. Simply acknowledge that you 'slipped up' or ate poorly and get back on your plan. New day, new start!
13. **Exercise on days you eat a holiday meal.** Try to get a workout in on the days you know you will have a big holiday supper that day. Your metabolism will be running higher and chances are you will choose better foods!
14. **Eat more vegetables.** Try to fill half of your plate with vegetables. Keep an eye on dips.
15. **Wrap up leftovers immediately.** If you wrap them up, you less likely to eat them mindlessly when you are already full.



16. **Give your leftovers away or throw them away!** These foods will tempt you! It is best to keep your kitchen full of healthy foods so when hunger strikes, you don't have high calorie options to choose between.
17. **Use the dirty napkin trick.** When you want to stop eating throw a dirty napkin over your food.
18. **Throw the snack plate away.** When at a party, if the plate is plastic, toss it. If it is a dish put it in the sink. The longer you hold on to your plate, the more you will eat.
19. **Focus on healthy fats and ditch the sugars.** I know it seems backwards but I would rather you eat all the nuts you want rather than refined carbohydrates. Repeat after me- it's the SUGAR stupid!
20. **Split dessert with somebody.** This way you will only have half the calories!
21. **Set goals for yourself over the holidays.** Read them first thing in the morning, throughout the day and before bed. Share these goals with as many people as you can to help you stay accountable!
22. **Brush your teeth.** Brush your teeth after you eat so that you won't continue eating. Or, keep chewing gum with you and do that instead!
23. **Leave the kitchen.** Don't hang out by the food table at home or at parties. Too much mindless eating!
24. **If eating out, put half the meal in a box before you start eating.** This will help you with portion control!
25. **Make a workout calendar for yourself!** Commit to a certain number of days per week that you exercise. Mark them off with a marker to show your progress.

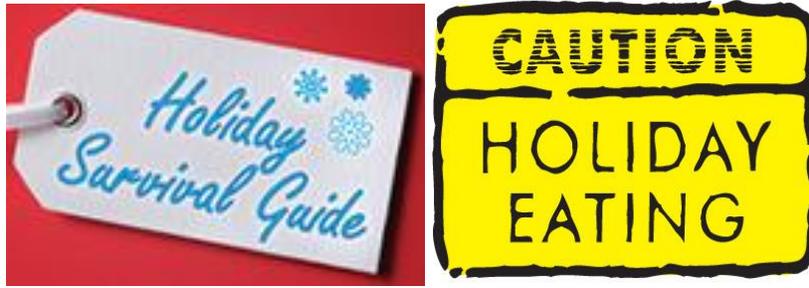


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Easy Ways to Cut At Least 100 Calories



It may not sound like much but by cutting just 100 calories per meal, you could lose your love handles and more before Santa sneaks down your chimney this year.

Don't discount the power of little changes: consistency is the key to success!

Breakfast:

- Try a green smoothie for breakfast in the am!
- Skip the juice- lots of sugar and calories
- If you are eating dairy, choose Greek yogurt or kefir
- Buy Local Pig sausage or bacon and savor the difference!
- Fill your omelet with onions, peppers, spinach, and mushrooms instead of cheese
- Use 2 egg whites and one egg for your omelets or scrambled eggs or use egg substitutes all together.
- Trade regular butter for organic butter or coconut oil



Lunch & Dinner:

- Put lettuce, tomato, onions and pickles on your turkey burger or veggie burger instead of cheese and skip the bread
- Stuff lettuce with fresh vegetables and meat
- Pick tuna in water over tuna in oil
- Try a lean buffalo burger rather than ground beef (great bison at Costco!)
- Eat soups and stews to keep warm, full and satisfied
- Enjoy your salad with no croutons. Add sliced almonds for a good crunch.
- Use infused olive oils and vinegars instead of regular salad dressings and if eating out, ask for it on the side.
- Trim excess fat from beef, pork, and chicken when preparing
- Bake, broil, or grill chicken and fish rather than frying
- Remember to be aware of portions- overeating even good food is not ideal
- Add vegetables to your spaghetti sauce like, zucchini, green peppers, mushrooms, and onions
- Add blueberries, strawberries, green apples almonds, and/or chicken to a mixed green salad or spinach salad

- Season steamed vegetables with fresh lemon and herbs instead of butter
- Use healthy coconut oils in your baked goods when possible.

Dessert:

- Take a sliver, bite, or taste of dessert instead of a full portion
- Have a single scoop ice cream cone instead of several scoops in a bowl
- Choose an inside piece of cake, where there is less icing
- Put berries on top of angel food cake and light cool whip
- Select a cupcake instead of a slice of cake
- Have low-calorie frozen yogurt or sherbet instead of ice cream
- Eat a dish of fresh fruit instead of other higher calorie desserts
- Choose apple, peach or blueberry over pecan or cream pie
- Follow the low-fat directions when preparing brownies, cake, and cookie mixes
- Split your dessert with your friend or share with the table
- Substitute half or all the oil in a recipe with applesauce when baking



Snacks:

- Freeze bananas or blueberries for a Popsicle-like treat
- Sautee and apple with a few pecans or walnuts and cinnamon
- Sautee brussel sprouts with garlic and use as poppers
- Eat more raw veggies with guacamole
- Make home-made applesauce with a few walnuts and cinnamon
- Eat a handful of raw almonds (you can buy them in snack serving sizes)
- For chocolate cravings, always choose dark chocolate (70% cacao at least)

Dining Out:

- Skip the bread- don't even let them bring it to the table
- Ask for a cup of soup instead of a bowl and skip the cream soups.
- Ask for dressings and sauces on the side. A little can go a long way.
- Dip your fork into your dressing, then into your salad
- Order a vinaigrette dressing instead of a cream-based dressing
- Ask for no cheese on your salad
- Ask for the vegetable for the day; skip the potato, rice, or pasta side
- Select an appetizer as your main dish; add soup, salad, or veggie side
- Choose a healthy option item designated on the menu
- Ask for a half-portion or share your entrée with a friend
- Or, ask for a box and take half off your plate for later
- Use fresh lemon to season your fish instead of tartar sauce
- Choose a side salad instead of fries if you are at a fast food restaurant (but don't be)



WHEN YOU DO DRINK...

- Look at your labels! Many drinks are calorie busters
- Watch serving sizes in containers, especially a single bottle
- Choose Water Water Water! La Croix makes so many festive varieties!
- Watch sugar content in juices and drinks also check them against total carbohydrates
- Choose almond milk or coconut milk over dairy- use in recipes

How long do you think it takes you to lose that weight?



Mindful Check In: Use this list to check in with yourself during the holidays.



Because, what is measured can be managed!

- ✓ Do you keep a food and exercise journal?
- ✓ Do you eat breakfast?
- ✓ Do you “Strive for Five” (at least 5 fruit and vegetables servings per day)?
- ✓ Do you eat your 3 meals & 2 snacks a day, even if you’re not hungry?
- ✓ Do you drink half your body weight in ounces of water daily?
- ✓ Do you get 25-30 grams of fiber a day?
- ✓ Do you mix carbohydrates & protein in most meals and snacks?
- ✓ Do you get enough sleep?
- ✓ Do you have a set kitchen curfew time?
- ✓ Do you exercise?
- ✓ Do you have someone as a support person?
- ✓ Do you put yourself in tempting situations to overeat or make bad eating choices?



Remember, you get to choose.

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