

LIGHTEN UP

The holidays



THIS YEAR, USE A FEW MINDFUL FOOD PRACTICES TO MAKE IT A HEALTHY HOLIDAY SEASON—RATHER THAN A HEAVY ONE.

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A slew of social gatherings and special foods can spell trouble for your waistline in the season of indulgence that starts with Halloween and tapers off after New Year's Day. On average, adults gain 1 to 2 pounds from mid-November through early January. That may not sound like much, but for many, that extra weight sticks around long after the holidays, compounding each year and contributing to the creeping weight gain that often happens with age.

Still, you don't have to banish all your favorite holiday foods to ensure you'll fit into your pants come January 1. Simply being a bit more mindful of your food choices and portion sizes during this festive time can thwart unwanted weight gain.

Read on for simple strategies to keep your calorie intake under control.

Navigating the Season of Indulgence

Temptations await at every turn during the holiday season. Passing up some little (and big) splurges along the way can save you a lot of calories.

Pass on the PSL

Eschew that pumpkin spice latte at your favorite coffee shop (or enjoy it just once).

SAVE: 380 calories per 16 oz



Haul away Halloween candy

Give those candy bars to a dentist participating in the Halloween Candy Buyback program. Learn more at halloweencandybuyback.com

SAVE: 480 calories per six fun-size bars



Pick a better pie

Stock up on ingredients to make pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving instead of pecan pie.

SAVE: 187 calories per slice



Cut it in half

Enjoy your favorites—just in smaller portions. For example, eat ½ cup rather than 1 cup of green bean casserole.
SAVE: 82 calories per ½ cup



Trim the turkey

Opt for skinless white-meat turkey instead of the drumstick.
SAVE: 42 calories per 3 oz



Avoid food pushers

Say “maybe later” when someone insists you try the sweet potato casserole.
SAVE: 260 calories per ½ cup



Ditch dull dinner rolls

It’s easy to get in the tradition of eating something just because it has always been there. Case in point: basic store-bought dinner rolls. Pass up ho-hum rolls, and save your calories for special foods.
SAVE: 166 calories per buttered roll



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Remove temptation

Moving bite-size chocolates at least 6 feet away could help you eat five fewer pieces per day, studies say.

SAVE: 570 calories in a week



Skip the eggnog

Unless you've made it yourself with skim milk, pass on the eggnog at gatherings.

SAVE: 300 calories per cup



Make only a few

Is making fudge or other goodies a top tradition? Pick *one* favorite this year. When you cut back on how much you make, you also cut back on how much you eat.

SAVE: 240 calories per 2 oz of fudge



Forget the fruitcake

Don't let the "fruit" fool you—this sugary concoction is high in calories. If you're gifted one, just keep it going by passing it along to someone else.

SAVE: 320 calories per 3-oz slice



Decorate—then donate

Decorated gingerbread or sugar cookies are fun to make with kids, but consider donating some of them to a bake sale.

SAVE: 87 calories per cookie



Prance around prime rib

It may be a classic, but skipping this fatty meat at holiday party buffets (or eating just a few bites) can help you bank major calories.

SAVE: 334 calories per 3 oz



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A nice New Year's Eve

Enjoy one simple drink, such as champagne, rather than a cranberry cocktail or other mixed drink.

SAVE: 94 calories per 4 oz



Count down passed apps

Many holiday parties feature trays of hors d'oeuvres. While your mind may not register that you're eating much, these indulgent bites add up. Often, just five pieces equals 500+ calories. Pick a few you're really excited to try and pass up others that you'd eat just because they're there.

SAVE: 106 calories per bruschetta



End-of-season-savings:

AT LEAST 3,648 CALORIES

Congratulations! This equals more than 1 pound of body weight you didn't gain!

5 Tips to Limit Sugar

Many of the foods we overeat around the holidays are sweet—cookies, candy, pie and sweet drinks. Cutting back on these sugary treats is a smart way to keep your weight in check. Try these tips:

- 1. Limit variety.** Studies show that the greater the variety of tempting foods available—such as desserts—the more we tend to eat. If you're hosting a holiday gathering, offer just one kind of dessert. For a potluck-style meal, give guests guidance on what kind of dish you'd like them to bring, such as a vegetable side dish or fruit salad, so you don't end up with a tableful of desserts.
- 2. Trick your tongue.** *Gymnema sylvestre*, an Ayurvedic medicinal plant, contains compounds that block sweet taste receptors on your tongue, making sugary treats lose their appeal for about an hour. When adults sucked on a lozenge containing an extract of gymnema leaf (sold as Sweet Defeat) before they were offered their favorite candy, they ate 44 percent less of the candy, compared with people given a placebo lozenge. Note that gymnema also may reduce blood sugar, so use it only with a doctor's guidance if taking diabetes medication.
- 3. Fight back with aromatherapy.** The mere sight of chocolate can trigger cravings. So, what do you do when you're surrounded by chocolate peanut clusters, gooey fudge and chocolate-covered cherries this holiday season? Sniff or diffuse some jasmine essential oil. Studies show that smelling jasmine (or other nonfood scents) can curb chocolate cravings. But avoid sniffing sweet scents, such as vanilla-scented candles, which research suggests could increase cravings for sugary treats.
- 4. Serve nature's sweets.** Use red, orange and yellow fruits, such as red or purple grapes, mandarin oranges and pineapple to make Thanksgiving-themed dessert fruit arrangements. In December, make a red and green parfait with kiwi slices and strawberries, layered with stevia-sweetened, homemade whipped cream. Or, simply drizzle strawberries with melted dark chocolate.
- 5. Skip sugary drinks.** Sugary liquid calories do little to satisfy hunger but easily add to your waistline. Try drinking calorie-free cinnamon apple spice herbal tea instead of hot apple cider to save 120 calories and 7 teaspoons of sugar (albeit fruit sugar) per cup. Or, make a cup of low-cal hot chocolate with 2 tablespoons of unsweetened cocoa, 8 ounces of water and a stevia sweetener. 🍷