

Don't Let Holiday Food Dictate How You Eat



Written by Aimee Wilcox

The holidays are for celebrating those meaningful traditions with the person who matters most to you. But, often times those celebrations are synonymous with food. So, how can you keep all the delicious treats and calorie-rich meals from adding up on the scale? Here are a few tips:

1. Be there and be square: Bring the healthy food.

If it's a potluck, holiday party or a family get together, ensure your access to healthy foods by volunteering to bring a healthy dish. It doesn't have to be fruits or vegetables (although those are great options); think outside the box with things like hummus, roasted vegetables or low fat cheese. But don't just bring it; the point is to fill up on the healthy food *first*. Or, eat a small meal (like soup) before you go so that you don't throw all self control out the window on an empty stomach. Keep your indulgences after that to a minimum (picking 2-3 other foods to sample is a good goal). Don't forget that drinks have calories, too. And, by all means, don't linger near the food table!

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2. Make your wish list known: Enlist the support of others.

Tell your well-intentioned friends and family about your goals and kindly request that they steer clear of gifts that include holiday treats this year. It's probably inevitable that you'll get at least a few boxes of candy and cookies, so don't hesitate to re-gift them (unopened, of course) to

others. If people ask, suggest gift cards for smoothies or a health food store. Or, ask them for a gift card so you can go on a shopping spree for a new workout outfit. And, don't forget to use the buddy system. Designate that trusted loved one for moral support through the holidays. An added bonus: share your dishes to cut down on the calorie intake.

3. Run like a turkey on Thanksgiving.

Instead of meeting your date at a restaurant, try going for a bike ride, walk or hike instead. You can even go bowling, rock climbing, dancing or ice skating. Just find a way to be active together. Besides, you'll probably have a lot more fun. Even better, sign up for a Turkey Trot or holiday race. Those are the kinds of things that make for memorable (and healthy) holidays.

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Staying healthy through the holidays may require a little more planning, discipline and activity, but you'll be glad when the number on your scale doesn't resemble the bill from your credit card this holiday season. Cheers!

A full time mom to her four young muses, Aimee is also a part time writer and avid runner, and is always looking to keep a perspective on motherhood, life with kids and the Great Balance.