



Healthy Holidays

Handy, Healthy Hacks

Holiday celebrations may look slightly different this year, but the season of baking and cooking family favorites is a tradition likely to continue. Try these healthy holiday hacks to prevent the addition of more pandemic pounds and for loved ones focused on health.



Go mini. Good things do come in smaller packages – or portions! Small versions of your favorite holiday cookies taste just as delicious plus they're adorably cute. Mini-muffins and tiny fruit cake, individual-sized cheesecakes, and shot glass puddings allow everyone to enjoy treats in moderation.



Dip lightly. Many appetizers and side dishes include a dip. For dairy-based dip, use non-fat Greek yogurt instead of sour cream. Try hummus as a plant-based fiber and protein-packed option.



Try a flour substitute. To add fiber and/or protein to your favorite holiday loaf, swap out 1/4 to 1/3 of the traditional white flour for garbanzo bean flour, flaxseed meal or ground flaxseed, almond flour, or a soy protein powder. Your Keto and Paleo loving friends will appreciate the effort!



Double down on veggies. A side dish of roasted root vegetables (sweet potatoes, carrots, kohlrabi, parsnips) is the perfect complement to any holiday meal. In recipes that call for veggies, double the amount. Family and guests will walk away feeling satisfied but not stuffed.



Cut the crust. Whether your holiday guests are looking to cut carbs or calories, making dessert options without the crust is the perfect way to ensure they see you as the perfect host. Baked apples, for example, have all the flavors of the season and no one will miss the crust.



Master mocktails. Estimates suggest the average person doubles their alcohol intake over the holidays. To keep alcohol consumption in check as well as to meet the needs of your sober-curious friends and family offer festive, lower calorie mocktails this year.



Factor out fat. There are many ways to cut up to half the fat in baking recipes. Use Greek yogurt instead of oil (3/4 cup yogurt to 1 cup oil), evaporated skim milk instead of cream, unsweetened apple sauce or bananas in place of oil or butter. To maintain consistency, texture and flavor, replace half or less of the oil.



Limit fat, sugar, salt. Most holiday recipes have more than enough fat, sugar, and/or salt. You can likely reduce the amount in a recipe by up to 25 percent. These simple tweaks go far to offering more nutritious versions of your holiday favorites and no one will notice the difference.



Try candy alternatives. Bark made with dark chocolate and uncooked quinoa is a healthy alternative to peanut brittle. Cocoa dusted almonds are amazingly decadent. Mandarins, oranges, strawberries, and dried figs, are fantastic when dipped in just a bit of chocolate.



Mix up the mash. Swap half the potatoes for mashed cauliflower the next time you mash spuds. You'll retain the flavor of mashed potatoes while reducing the carbs and fat.