



How to Have a Mindful Holiday Season

The holiday season can be a stressful time for some, especially when it comes to food. The meals available are not our day-to-day choices, and food is often the center of every holiday gathering. Not to mention, seeing distant friends and family can add stress to the holidays, which may influence our appetite. If you are someone who feels added pressure at holiday meals, know that food doesn't have to dictate your holiday season!

Use the following tips to practice mindfulness while at the holiday dinner table:

1) **Practice Flexibility**

Since the foods we have around the holidays are often family traditions, allow yourself to stay flexible and enjoy them! Think about the overall balance of your plate, and how you can include the foods you really want to eat. For example, if you want to try your aunt's famous pot roast, include some veggies like green beans and a starch like potatoes on your plate. If you are eyeing a dessert, add a little on there too! Try to add multiple food groups to your plate for a satisfying and balanced meal, and don't omit the foods you really want.

2) **Don't Change Your Eating Patterns**

Don't skip any meals before a big gathering and try not to show up starving. If you are feeling hungry beforehand, make time to have a well-balanced, light snack before leaving the house. Even better, if you have a far drive ahead of you, pack some light snacks for the road! Some great ideas are yogurt, veggies with hummus, or even apple slices with peanut butter. This will help to take the focus off eating once you arrive, and will keep you from over indulging at the dinner table.

3) **Stay Active, But Don't Overdo It**

Practice mindful movement this holiday season. Allow yourself the freedom to enjoy this time of year by being flexible with your exercise regimen. Stick to your usual activity schedule as much as possible, but do allow time for other fun activities and relaxation. Including family and friends in your mindful exercise may be enjoyable too. Try taking a walk with everyone or tossing around a football outside after a meal!

4) **Re-Direct the Conversation**

When you have not seen family or friends in a while, a conversation can often start with comments about appearance or weight. Keep in mind that not everyone welcomes these comments. When this happens, politely change the topic to something you want to share, such as a new TV show you are watching, a job promotion, or new hobby you picked up. The holidays are a time for catching up with each other, and you can do this by talking about many different topics!

Whatever table you find yourself at this holiday season, keep these tips in your back pocket to manage the stress surrounding exercise, food, and eating patterns.

Cranberry Nut Bread

Perfect for a holiday morning!

Ingredients

- 2 cups flour
- 2/3 cups sugar
- 1.5 tsp baking powder
- 1.5 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp grated orange peel
- ¾ cup orange juice
- 4 tbsp. butter, melted
- 1 egg
- 1 cup chopped cranberries
- 1/3 cup chopped walnuts



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix flour, sugar, baking powder and baking soda in a large bowl.
2. Grate orange peel over the bowl, then squeeze in juice from orange. Add in additional orange juice to make ¾ cup.
3. In a separate bowl, blend orange juice, butter, egg, and grated orange peel; add to flour mixture, stirring until just blended. Mix in cranberries and walnuts.
5. Pour batter into a 9x5 inch loaf pan, greased on bottom only.
6. Bake for 50-60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 slice	
Serves: 15	
Calories	153
Fat	5 g
Saturated Fat	2 g
Total Carbohydrate	24 g
Fiber	2 g
Sugars	10 g
Protein	3 g
Sodium	180 mg
Potassium	66 g

<https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/cranberry-nut-bread>