

How to E at More Healthily During the Holidays

I can write a book on this, LOL, but I shall just give you some pointers in this short article. Notice that I titled my article “How to E at *More Healthily* during the Holiday Season” and not “How to E at Healthily during the Holiday Season”.

With all the traditional goodies during this wonderful season of the year, it will be difficult not to succumb to our sweet tooth. And I don't believe in deprivation. I personally know a few who really “eat to live”. I mean food really doesn't excite them. They eat so they won't feel faint. They eat so they don't lose too much weight. Although I cannot say I “live to eat”, I really, really enjoy eating. And I do enjoy this holiday season of eating as much as the next average person. But I don't care to go overboard, so let me share with you my game-plan.

1. Fill yourself with plain old Adam's ale (that is water, preferably filtered) before the social event. Flavor it with some lemon juice if you like. Two reasons for doing this. First, your thirst will be quenched (many of us are dehydrated without knowing it) and you won't be tempted to fill yourself with soda or juice later on. Second, the clean taste of pure water will prepare you mentally to take charge of your food intake.

2. Use a smaller plate.

I remember when I first visited the States in the late 80s. Oh my, I almost fell off my seat when my hamburger order at a restaurant arrived. It was as big as a plate and surrounding it was a frightening mountain of extra salty fries. Believe me, I was stunned. I still have a picture of it in my scrapbook. Today, such servings seem “normal” to me. Most of us eat with our “eyes” rather than what our “stomach” needs. When we use a big plate, we pile more food and we don't think too much of it. And our stomachs are **VERY** stretchable. Recall all those crazy food competitions when skinny young men and women wolf down 20-30 (or more) hot dogs and hamburgers in a few minutes? Surely they don't eat like that every day, and they don't! Well, our stomachs can just keep on stretching to accommodate what you put in.



But if you have learned to listen to your stomach, you will know when it is “full”. Many of us have overeaten the better part of our lives that we don't know when to stop. So start with a smaller plate.

3. Fill the plate with good stuff first. Veggies and fruit (not the candied kind). Those fruit salads made from whipped cream are not salads but desserts best eaten sparingly.
4. Eat a variety of food. Favor whole grain over processed stuff. Better raw than stewed with sugar. Take smaller portions of sweet and salty stuff so you won't feel deprived. Like you don't need the whole slice of pecan pie. Share that piece with 1 or 2 friends. I love trying all the desserts my friends have prepared and I'd be in trouble if I took a serving of each!
5. Drink water or hot tea instead of sodas (as a former Coke addict I know that's hard!). Living in the South, folks don't usually drink hot teas. But I love my green tea and cannot do without it. Each Sunday in church I make myself a mug (I leave my special mug there just for this purpose) of hot tea after the service. And when we have our church functions, that's what I drink. It's wonderful to sip on hot tea and nibble on all the wonderful desserts folks bring. And hot tea in winter is lovely! Besides, its antioxidants are good for you too. Some claim that green tea speeds up your metabolism as well.
6. If you must try that wonderful wassail (which I love serving and drinking!), just sip half a cup.
7. Don't eat while you are engaged in a conversation. Concentrate on the conversation, and then when you eat, savor that piece of brownie or Christmas cookie. Practice the art of slow and deliberate eating. Chew thoroughly. Two good reasons for this. First, you be less likely be eating mindlessly. Second, you are doing your digestive system a favor. Apparently an alarming number of American women (1 out of 4) have

digestive discomforts every day. Being a very, very busy school administrator before I was married, and then a busy mother, I've grown used to wolfing down my food. So while I eat relatively healthily these days, I still have some digestive problems that are still in the process of being resolved. I'm reaping what I'd sowed.

8. Don't hang around the buffet table too much! It is easier to yield to all the wonderful pies and desserts when they are making eyes at you. Get yourself a hot drink and fellowship, sans another plateful of sweets. Of course if you have a young one like me, it is easier not to hang around the table...

Okay, this is my game-plan. Hope it helps you.

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