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5 Easy Steps to Trim Calories from Your Favorite Holiday Recipes

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It's party season again! But if you go to multiple parties between Thanksgiving and the New Year, brace yourself - a traditional Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner can contain 2000 calories.



Try these simple steps to trimming the calories from your festivities so you can provide healthy and tasty meals to your loved ones without putting a damper on the holiday spirit.

5 Easy Recipe Substitution Tips for Your Holiday Menu

1. Try a low-fat or fat-free version

Almost all packaged ingredients like butter, cream, sour cream, and mayonnaise also come in a lower fat or fat-free version, so why not take advantage of them? For instance, instead of using regular cream of mushroom soup and whole milk in your green bean casserole, try 98% fat-free cream of mushroom soup and 1% milk. This simple change slashes 14 grams of fat (~125 calories). Apply the same strategy for your mashed potatoes. Swapping half & half cream and regular butter with buttermilk and light butter will save 21 grams of fat (~190 calories). It's that simple!

2. Consider substituting sugar

Studies have revealed that the average American eats the equivalent of 20 teaspoons of sugar a day, and the intake skyrockets during the holiday season. Sugar intake is of particular concern for people with diabetes. As a general rule, you may substitute unsweetened applesauce or pureed prunes for half the sugar in recipes. In addition, you may consider no-calorie artificial sweeteners such as Splenda. You could shave 380 calories from a cake recipe that calls for one cup of sugar by replacing half with an artificial sweetener. You will shave 770 calories if you replace it all with a sweetener.

3. Try a different kind of whip

We have a love affair with whipped cream! We add whipped cream to specialty coffee, hot chocolate, desserts like sundaes, pies, etc. But one cup of whipped cream contains 14 grams of fat. Try making your own whipped cream using evaporated milk. This will trim half of the fat away! Alternately, try non-dairy Cool Whip Free. It offers a similar mouth feel without the fat and guilt.

4. De-fattening your eggs

If you're making pies and cakes this holiday season, eggs are in integral ingredient on your baking list. If your guests have heart health concerns, try substituting one egg with 2 egg whites to cut down on fat and cholesterol. However, be careful, because this substitution may not work in all recipes. For bakery recipes requiring eggs as an emulsifier, you can look for commercial fat-free, cholesterol-free egg substitutes like Egg Beaters. As a general rule, substitute one egg with 1/4 cup of egg substitutes.

5. Go skinless

It's not a holiday meal without the turkey! And believe it or not, turkey is considered a healthy food item on the holiday menu. In addition to being an excellent source of protein, turkey offers the least amount of fat per serving among all meats, if you pass on the skin. One serving (3 1/2 oz) of deep-fried turkey with the skin on contains about 12 grams of fat, compared with 10 grams in roasted turkey with skin. But if you remove the skin, you will save 5 to 7 grams of fat.

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