



FOODS THAT

ENTERTAIN



FROM TRADITIONAL
TO MODERN

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I always look forward to entertaining my family and friends during the holiday season. It is an opportunity for us to share the joy and cheer with each other. My friends and family know that my party celebrations are special and unique. The most important thing for me is to prepare food that is amazingly healthy and at the same time festive, flavourful and tasty.

Holiday season is the hardest time to eat sensibly and healthy! But you don't need to worry because the following tips will help you prepare healthy dishes that will delight your guests.

Start by planning ahead and use only the freshest ingredients of the highest quality. Most traditional entertaining foods are high in unhealthy fats, refined oils and sugar. Did you know that you can employ your creative talents and develop a healthy recipe by modifying a traditional recipe to reduce its calories, sodium, sugar and fats? Consider healthy substitutions to achieve balance and harmony in the body.

FESTIVE APPETIZERS

Make appetizers interesting, appealing and beautifully garnished to impress your guests.

- Garnish the plate with fresh carrots, celery, red and yellow peppers, chopped fennel, cucumbers, red radishes, cherry tomatoes, cauliflower and broccoli florets and add home-made dip, hummus, white bean dip or spinach dip in the middle.
- Baked tortilla chips are a healthier version of high fat corn chips and are excellent with fresh home-made salsa. If you eat dairy, then substitute a low-fat version of mayonnaise with yoghurt or sour cream.
- Serve a vegetarian version of sushi nori stuffed with sunflower or almond pâté,

tomatoes and red peppers on a bed of sprouts.

- Compose salads by using whole grains, vegetables or legumes. They are perfect as appetizers.
- Decorate your festive plate with sliced cucumbers; add parsley pâté and place half of a cherry tomato on top. Sprinkle onion sprouts on cucumbers to get more texture and colour.
- Make your own tasty guacamole with avocado, tomatoes, olives and serve with brown rice crackers. Pesto and hummus go very well with dehydrated crackers, celery ribs and a bowl of olives

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- Try fresh raw soups; they are delicious, tasty and light on the digestive system, and are therefore perfect to serve as appetizers.
- Tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers are a great base for any kind of soup. Use parsley to add some flavour and Celtic salt or sea vegetables (algae) such as kelp or Dulse to add some saltiness. Garlic, onion, ginger and cayenne pepper are great and add some spiciness to the soup.
- For a creamier consistency use fatty ingredients such as avocado, nut butter or coconut meat. For preparing a cooked soup I suggest using fat-free and low sodium broth. Use pureed root vegetables, beans or yam potatoes for a creamy consistency.

FESTIVE DINNER

Focus on whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds when designing a holiday dinner menu.

- Base sauces primarily on vegetables and fruits.
- Build the flavours of your dish with spices or seasoning instead of salt to make your recipe healthier.
- Replace unhealthy saturated fats and trans-fats with healthy plant fats or oils found in raw foods such as avocado, nuts, seeds, olives, hempseeds, macadamia nuts and coconuts.
- Avoid refined carbohydrates and increase the presence of whole grains and legumes such as brown rice, quinoa, kamut, millet, amaranth and lentil.
- Serve mashed yam potatoes in replacement of white. Top them with chopped pecans or walnuts.
- Focus on vegetables. I prefer to use them raw but they can be steamed, braised or roasted in the oven.
- Use a lot of spices to bring out the flavour. Use flavoured olive oil, coconut oil or arrowroot powder-thickened sauce instead of butter to complement the vegetables.
- Build a salad with radicchio, romaine, green leafy lettuce, collard greens, red cabbage, napa cabbage, kale, dandelion, endive, watercress,

and parsley. You can add beans, red radishes, olive oil, freshly squeezed lemon, Celtic salt and toss in some ground flaxseeds or Chia seeds, hemp seeds or dulse. Use your imagination and make your own creamy salad dressings by incorporating macadamia nuts, walnuts and spices.

- If you are a meat eater, serve lean cuts of meat such as beef tenderloin. If you are having turkey, remove the skin and choose white meat over dark. My suggestion is to use healthy protein such as fish, nuts and legumes.

FESTIVE DELICIOUS DESSERTS

- Create a healthy version of a holiday pie by using nuts and seeds along with dates, raisins or dried fruits.
- When baking cookies, muffins or cakes, replace butter with applesauce, mashed bananas or other fruit purees, if you want to cut the fat completely.
- Use egg whites as a substitute for whole egg.
- Sweetness can come from nutrient-dense dry fruit such as dates, raisins, molasses, fruit juices, agave nectar and maple syrup to replace highly refined white table sugar and artificial sweeteners which are full of chemicals. Molasses is great in place of sugar for baking.
- Choose whole grain flour to make your baked desserts more nutritious.
- Use nuts and oats to add fiber. If you are baking muffins, top them



with low fat frozen yoghurt. Replace heavy cream or ice cream with coconut icing.

- Cocoa powder has a distinctive bittersweet flavour. It contains no fat and is not processed, roasted or mixed with milk solids.
- To reduce fat use a silicon baking mat or parchment paper to line a pan rather than butter, oil or shortening.

FESTIVE BEVERAGES

- Make a refreshing Piña Colada drink made of fresh coconut meat, coconut water, agave nectar and fresh pineapple chunks.
- Replace condensed milk with coconut cream, and use a lot of ice.
- Rich Eggnog is a must for Christmas holiday. Eggnog is thick, creamy and packed with calories. Make a healthy version of Eggnog by using almond milk, agave nectar, vanilla coconut milk and sprinkle with nutmeg, cinnamon and cardamom
- Serve organic wines that are made from certified organic grapes with no sulphites added. Do not buy organic wines from the wineries that use organic grapes, but add sulphites and other additives. Watch for the label "Made with organically grown grapes." Sulphites are powerful preservatives added to wine as a protection against oxidation and bacterial growth (spoilage). Some people are allergic to sulphites as they cause headaches and other allergic reactions.
- Choose Cabernet Sauvignon with cherry, blackberry and currant flavours to serve with chocolate cake or other chocolate desserts. It also goes well with vegetables.
- Zinfandel with a distinctive raspberry flavour goes very well with tomato dishes and dips,
- Sauvignon Blanc with its tropical fruity flavours is excellent with goat cheese rolled in arugula leaf (for those who eat goat cheese).

Consider healthy substitutions when designing a holiday menu. Share the joy with your loved ones - after all, it is a celebration of life and a time of giving. Food is a blessing; give thanks daily, not just on holidays.