

Healthy Meals Made Easy

Savory Pumpkin Hummus
Smoked Salmon Avocado Cucumber Canapés
Siracha-Buffalo Cauliflower Bites with Blue Cheese Yogurt Dip

Today's menu features three simple, healthy appetizers to please a crowd during the holidays. Instead of bringing a calorie laden dip, opt for hummus instead. The savory pumpkin hummus can be made in 5 minutes and served with pita chips, whole wheat crackers or veggies of your choice. The smoked salmon cucumber canapés are quick to assemble and can be enjoyed as a healthy snack year round. For a vegetarian spin on the traditional chicken wing, the siracha-buffalo cauliflower bites with blue cheese yogurt dip are the next best thing.

Ten Tips for Eating Well During the Holidays

- 1) **Go for the veggies first** – At your next office party or holiday gathering, pile your plate with veggies. The fiber will keep you satiated longer and help keep you regular if you do decide to indulge in the cheese platter. When entertaining guests, try making a few side dishes with veggies such as balsamic roasted Brussels sprouts, green beans with dried cranberries & hazelnuts, roasted winter squash or maple glazed sweet potatoes.
- 2) **Do not skip meals** – It is fairly common to skip breakfast and/or lunch to save your appetite for a big meal later in the day. However, this usually leads to overeating. Research shows that people who regularly eat breakfast tend to consume fewer calories throughout the day.
- 3) **Eat mindfully** – It is important to take the time to choose food that you really want to eat. By actively focusing on the various smells, tastes and textures of each bite, you will naturally slow down and stop eating when you are full.
- 4) **Stay hydrated** – Thirst is often confused with hunger, which can lead to mindless snacking that never satiates. To stay hydrated, make sure you are drinking plenty of water throughout the day. Also, because alcohol is often prevalent at holiday gatherings, it is even more important to drink plenty of water. Try alternating between an alcoholic beverage and a zero-calorie sparkling water or fresh water with added lemon or ginger to avoid unwanted pounds.
- 5) **Drop the guilt** – Give yourself permission to indulge in your favorite treats without the guilt. Just remember to get back to your healthy eating routine the next day.
- 6) **Go to social gatherings to socialize first, eat second** – Our schedules are often full of family gatherings, office parties and other social events during the holidays. Use this time to be present with friends and family instead of focusing on food. Try eating a snack with protein and vegetables beforehand to stabilize your blood sugar and keep your focus on what matters most: your present company.
- 7) **Make holiday treats year-round** – Try making your favorite pie, cookies, savory casserole or side dish during other times of the year. Simply knowing your favorites are available not just during the holidays prevents the urge to overindulge now.

- 8) **Ignore any food pushers** – Sometimes you may feel forced by family members (Grandma’s we’re looking at you!) or well-meaning neighbors to eat certain foods because they keep offering them to you. Smile politely, gently decline and thank them for the thoughtful gesture.
- 9) **Keep healthy snacks on hand** – Holidays are some of the busiest times of the year which means extra errands, shopping and traveling which often leads to skipping meals and surrendering to fast food. Choose high protein single-serving snacks such as nuts, cheese or hummus to pair with easy to pack fruits and veggies like apples, mandarin oranges, baby carrots and snap peas.
- 10) **Keep moving** – This time of year comes with added stress and responsibilities, thus regular exercise often takes a back seat. After a big family gathering, offer to take a walk to catch up with family members, or play a game of catch or football with the kids.

References

1. Andersen, Charlotte. “The One Holiday Diet Rule Nutrition Experts Never Break.” *Greatist.*, 6 Jun. 2018, <https://greatist.com/eat/holiday-healthy-eating-tips>.
2. Gordon, Barbara. “5 Tips for Enjoying the Holiday Without Gaining Weight.” *Eat Right. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.*, 4 Dec. 2018, www.eatright.org/health/lifestyle/holidays/how-to-enjoy-the-holiday-without-the-weight-gain.

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