

*NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with Simple Again's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you.*

## 12 Tips for Holiday Eating

It's easy to get swept up in the holiday season. This combination of religious and national celebrations can help keep the cold winter away. But the feasts and parties that mark it can tax the arteries and strain



the waistline. By eating just 200 extra calories a day — a piece of pecan pie and a tumbler of eggnog here, a couple latkes and some butter cookies there — you could pack on two to three pounds over this five- to six-week period. That doesn't sound like much, except few people shed that extra weight in the following months and years.

You don't need to deprive yourself, eat only boring foods, or take your treats with a side order of guilt. Instead, by practicing a bit of defensive eating and cooking, you can come through the holidays without making "go on a diet" one of your New Year's resolutions.

- **Budget wisely.** Don't eat everything at feasts and parties. Be choosy and spend calories judiciously on the foods you love.
- **Take 10 before taking seconds.** It takes a few minutes for your stomach's "I'm getting full" signal to get to your brain. After finishing your first helping, take a 10-minute break. Make conversation. Drink some water. Then recheck your appetite. You might realize you are full or want only a small portion of seconds
- **Distance helps the heart stay healthy.** At a party, don't stand next to the food table. That makes it harder to mindlessly reach for food as you talk. If you know you are prone to recreational eating, pop a mint or a stick of gum so you won't keep reaching for the chips.
- **Don't go out with an empty tank.** Before setting out for a party, eat something so you don't arrive famished. Excellent pre-party snacks combine complex carbohydrates with protein and unsaturated fat, like apple slices with peanut butter or a slice of turkey and cheese on whole-wheat pita bread.
- **Drink to your health.** A glass of eggnog can set you back 500 calories; wine, beer, and mixed drinks range from 150 to 225 calories. If you drink alcohol, have a glass of water or juice-flavored seltzer in between drinks.

- **Avoid alcohol on an empty stomach.** Alcohol increases your appetite and diminishes your ability to control what you eat.
- **Put on your dancing (or walking) shoes.** Dancing is a great way to work off some holiday calories. If you are at a family gathering, suggest a walk before the feast or even between dinner and dessert.
- **Make room for veggies.** At meals and parties, don't ignore fruits and vegetables. They make great snacks and even better side or main dishes — unless they're slathered with creamy sauces or butter.
- **Be buffett savvy.** At a buffet, wander 'round the food table before putting anything on your plate. By checking out all of your options, you might be less inclined to pile on items one after another.
- **Don't shop hungry.** Eat before you go shopping so the scent of Cinnabons or caramel corn doesn't tempt you to gobble treats you don't need.
- **Cook from (and for) the heart.** To show family and friends that you really care about them, be creative with recipes that use less butter, cream, lard, vegetable shortening, and other ingredients rich in saturated fats. Prepare turkey or fish instead of red meat.
- **Pay attention to what really matters.** Although food is an integral part of the holidays, put the focus on family and friends, laughter and cheer. If balance and moderation are your usual guides, it's okay to indulge or overeat once in a while.

*Learn more at [simpleagain.com](http://simpleagain.com)*