



## HOW TO MAKE *Holiday Treats* PART OF YOUR NUTRITION PLANS

Eating and enjoying the experience is a basic treasure of life: from the fragrance that fills the room (or entire home!), the meld of flavors masterfully paired and prepared and the variety of texture and taste when it's finally time to enjoy the feast together.

The holidays are a unique time of year for our senses. But it can leave many of us concerned, even anxious about how good we'll feel if we grab a second serving or try a dessert we've been avoiding for weeks, when we have our nutrition goals in the back of our minds.

Michelle Segar, a University of Michigan researcher and long-time health coach says we can find something that works for each of us so we can enjoy the flavors of the season while respecting the way we want to eat.

First, we have to understand what happens around treats specifically.

Treats tend to come wrapped in rules, guilt and should-do/should-not-do

parameters. Think: "I can only eat one piece;" "I'm a failure if I eat it;" "I should be able to resist eating it," etc.

When we eat a treat within this framework of thinking, it releases our internal rebellion or what Segar calls the rebellion decision-disruptor.

"Our human psyche has evolved to rebel against and overindulge in what we feel restricted by," reminds Segar. This energy "overwhelms our body's intuitive wisdom and leads us to overdo it and then blame ourselves and our lack of self-control." These are not great feelings and this can sometimes be detrimental to progress made.

Instead, we can try making a neutralized, flexible decision that will allow us to both partake in and enjoy holiday gatherings but also allow us to feel good about respecting our nutrition goals. In doing so, we build self-trust and resilience that further evolves our self-care along our journey.

### **Here's How:**

- Make it a treat you mindfully choose to eat.
- Decide how much you want to eat and allow it to fit within your nutrition goals.
- Enjoy the "full-bodied sensory world of taste, texture and aroma that accompanies [eating]!"
- Withhold any judgement or punishments – allow it to be just what it is: simply a holiday treat that you decided to enjoy.
- Allow yourself to feel grounded and feel good in enjoying the season AND respecting your goals.
- Try this mantra: "I'm choosing the Joy Choice."

We are making great choices to take good care of ourselves; it's a beneficial decision to choose to enjoy the journey, too!

# Maintaining Your Wellbeing Throughout the Holiday Season

The holiday season can bring parties, meals, travel and shopping—all of which can be full of temptation for anyone trying to stay on track with their lifelong wellness goals. The stress associated with planning and preparing for holiday events make it easy to overindulge when it comes to food and drink.

When you're sitting down to a holiday meal, chances are you'll be consuming more calories than normal. This is especially true if you're hosting or attending a party, where food is passed around and you won't have time to sit down and eat slowly.

Holiday foods can be high in calories because they tend to contain higher amounts of fat. Fat actually helps our bodies absorb all the good things, such as vitamins A, C and E (vitamin A helps with eye health; vitamin C promotes healthy skin; vitamin E protects cells from damage). Healthy fat also helps us feel fuller faster when we eat it with other foods such as protein-rich meats like turkey breast or fish fillets. But some fats—like saturated fats—can cause health problems like heart disease by raising levels of bad cholesterol in the blood while lowering levels of good cholesterol.

## Make Time for Movement

The key is to plan ahead! Don't wait until the big day arrives before deciding what you're going to do about fitness and nutrition. Instead, start planning now so that you don't get caught off guard by holiday stressors later.

- Map out a workout schedule for the month. Remember, if you don't get to every single exercise, it's OK! This way, you have a plan in place and you'll be more likely to fit it in when you can. Some exercise is always better than none!
- Create a grocery list based on what foods will help fuel your workouts (for instance: lean protein, like chicken or fish, is great for recovery meals).
- Write out some healthy recipes using ingredients from your grocery list so you'll know exactly what goes into making them later.

## Focus on the Foods That Count

- Aim to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables throughout the day.

- Eat healthy fats (avocado, nuts, seeds, olive oil, salmon).
- Incorporate lean protein.
- Avoid ultra-processed foods as much as possible, especially those that contain added sugar or other sweeteners such as high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) or sucrose. Many beverages contain these sugars, so check the label before you buy!

## Above All, Enjoy the Season Keeping Your Wellbeing in Mind!

When thinking about how to stay healthy during the holidays, it's important to remember that nothing is perfect. The most important thing is that you're making an effort—if you're trying your best, then that's more than enough! We hope you'll take it easy on yourself and just do what feels right for your body this holiday season.



## Roasted Brussels Sprouts With Apples and Maple-Mustard Dressing



Serves: 6 Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 20 minutes Total Time: 30 minutes

- 2 pounds Brussels sprouts, halved lengthwise
- ½ cup walnuts, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 large or 2 small apples, diced
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon whole-grain mustard
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup

1. Preheat the oven to 450° F. Line a baking sheet with foil and spray it with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Place the halved Brussels sprouts and walnuts on the baking sheet and drizzle them with 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Season the Brussels sprouts with salt and pepper and toss together with your hands until coated.

3. Roast the Brussels sprouts for 18 to 20 minutes, flipping them after about 10 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, whisk together the remaining tablespoon of olive oil, the apple cider vinegar, mustard and maple syrup. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

5. Combine the roasted Brussels sprouts and diced apple in a serving bowl and pour the dressing over them, stirring to combine.

Nutrition Facts:  
200 calories, 12 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat,  
165 g sodium, 17 g carbohydrates, 6 g fiber,  
5 g sugar, 8 g protein

Recipe adapted from [reciperunner.com](http://reciperunner.com)