

Healthy Merry Munching During the Festive Season

The festive season is a wonderful time for festivals, celebrations and sharing special moments with our friends and families. Whatever your holiday tradition □ Hanukkah, Eid-UI-Adha, Christmas, or just going to dinners and parties, you□ll most likely be faced with the temptation to indulge during December. To have a heart-healthy holiday, you don□t need to starve yourself on celery sticks and resort to boring tasteless meals. Just make a few simple swaps for healthier options throughout your day and convert those treasured favourite recipes into sensational healthier creations. Here are some ways you can substitute ingredients to help you cut your calorie and fat intake:

Healthier alternatives to use in those special recipes

Instead of 250 ml butter, USE 250 ml polyunsaturated margarine or 220 ml oil
Instead of 250 ml hard margarine, USE 250 ml oil or 250ml oil plus 45 ml polyunsaturated margarine
Instead of 250 ml whole milk, USE 250ml skim or low fat milk
Instead of 250 ml light cream, USE 250 ml low fat evaporated milk or 45 ml oil and 200 ml skim milk
Instead of 250 ml whipping cream, USE 167ml skim milk and 83 ml oil
Instead of 250 ml sour cream, USE 250 ml plain fat-free yoghurt OR 250 ml fat-free smooth cottage cheese OR 187 ml low fat buttermilk and 62 ml oil
Instead of 1 whole egg, USE 1 egg white and 10 ml oil OR 2 egg whites
Instead of 30 g cheddar cheese, USE 30 g mozzarella, ricotta, parmesan or any low fat hard cheese (20-24% fat) or 30 g fat free cottage cheese

Try out these tasty healthy recipes for that special meal:

Starter - Smoked Salmon and Rocket Salad *(serves 4)*

1 Tbs extra virgin olive oil
2 Tbs balsamic vinegar
150 g rocket leaves
1 avocado
250 g smoked salmon
325 g jar marinated goat□s cheese, drained and crumbled
2 Tbs roasted hazelnuts, coarsely chopped

Directions

For the dressing, thoroughly whisk together the oil and vinegar in a bowl. Season, to taste. Trim long stems from the rocket, rinse, pat dry and gently toss in a bowl with the dressing. Cut the avocado in half lengthways then cut each half lengthways into 6 wedges. Discard the skin and place 3 wedges on each serving plate and arrange a pile of rocket over the top. Drape slivers of salmon over the rocket. Scatter the cheese and nuts over the top and season with ground black pepper. Serve immediately.

Main - Spiced turkey with cranberry chutney *(makes 12 servings with leftovers)*

5-7 kg fresh or thawed plain turkey
Spice rub
2 Tbsp (25 ml) ground sage
1 tsp (5 ml) ground nutmeg
1/8 tsp (1 ml) ground cloves
2 Tbsp (25 ml) olive oil

Stuffing

The stuffing in this recipe is just for flavour and moisture. Discard before you carve the turkey.
1 orange, 1 apple, 1 lemon, 1 pear, 1 shallot □ all cut in large chunks.

Directions

Preheat oven to 180: C. Combine all the spice rub ingredients in a small bowl and set aside. Combine the stuffing in a large bowl and toss with 1 tsp (5 ml) of the spice rub.

Stuff into the cavity of the turkey. Place the turkey in a large roasting pan. Pat dry with a paper towel and rub the spice mixture over the skin. Tie the legs together and tuck the wings under the back. Cover tightly with tinfoil and roast, undisturbed, for 2 hours. Remove foil and roast for an additional 45-60 minutes, basting every 15 minutes, until a thermometer placed in the thickest part of the leg registers 77-80: C. Let rest for 15 minutes before carving. Serve with the cranberry chutney and vegetables of your choice.

Cranberry chutney (*makes 12 servings*)

This recipe can be made one week in advance. Bring it to room temperature before serving. Serve with the turkey instead of gravy.

3 cups (750 ml) fresh or frozen (thawed) cranberries
1 cup (250 ml) apple, diced (1 apple)
1 cup (250 ml) pear, diced (1 pear)
1 cup (250 ml) pomegranate seeds (1 pomegranate), optional
1 Tbsp (15 ml) finely grated orange zest, 1 orange
1 Tbsp (15 ml) shallot, finely diced
1/3 cup (75 ml) fresh orange juice, from 1 orange
1/3 cup (75 ml) cooking sherry, optional
1 tsp (5 ml) cinnamon
= tsp (2 ml) black pepper
1/8 tsp (0.5 ml) nutmeg
2 dashes Tabasco sauce

Directions

Combine all ingredients in a large sauce pan. Cook over medium-high, stirring frequently for 20 minutes. Cool to room temperature.

Dessert - Baked plums and blueberries (*serves 4*)

10-12 large juicy, deep purple ripe plums
125 g sugar
125 g blueberries
3 cinnamon sticks
1 vanilla pod
2 cups (500 ml) fresh fruit juice (apple, orange or mango)
30 ml (2Tbs) apricot or cassis liqueur (optional)
30 ml (2 Tbs) fat free yoghurt (optional)

Directions

Wash the plums and wipe dry, then place stem-side down onto a baking tray. Cut a cross on the top of each one using a sharp knife. Place the plums in a shallow baking tray and sprinkle the tops with sugar. Scatter half the blueberries around the plums. Add the cinnamon sticks. Split the vanilla pod and mix the seeds with the fruit juice. Place the pods between the plums, then pour the juice around the base of the plums. Cover the baking tray with foil and bake at 180°C for 25 to 30 minutes until the fruit is cooked. Check the plums by pressing them lightly □ they should have softened and the skins opened like the petals of a flower. Remove one or two plums with a spoonful or two of the blueberries, and sieve to make a purie. Meanwhile, add the remaining blueberries to the baking tray and bake for 5 minutes more. Remove the foil and allow it to cool, then sprinkle the liqueur over the fruit. Just before serving, swirl the dessert with the berry purie and chilled yoghurt.

Have a blessed festive season by putting exciting, healthier varieties of food on your plate. A selection of recipe books is available from the Heart and Stroke Foundation. All of the recipes in these books are heart-healthy i.e. lower in saturated fat, dietary cholesterol and sodium (salt). For more information on general heart health and about our recipe books, contact the Heart Mark Diet Line on 0860 223 222, email heart@heartfoundation.co.za or visit www.heartfoundation.co.za

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