

"Help me avoid holiday weight gain!"

Yes, you *can* enjoy all your favorite seasonal treats without packing on unwanted pounds!

Cut calories!

Enjoy a Cookie Smoothie!

If your to-do list is longer than Santa's naughty-or-nice list, start your day with an energizing, satisfying breakfast that'll cut cravings for hours, says dietitian Marlene Koch. "Fuel up on satiating protein, healthy carbs and filling fiber," she advises. Her recipe for success? "My creamy Oatmeal Cookie Breakfast Smoothie, which has 17 grams of protein, two grams of fiber and just 190 calories!" In a blender, place 1/3 cup low-fat milk, 3 Tbs. quick-cooking oats and 1 Tbs. raisins. Let soak three to 4 minutes. Add 1/2 cup plain nonfat Greek yogurt, 3 packets no-calorie sweetener, 1/2 tsp. each cinnamon and vanilla extract and 1 cup crushed ice. Blend until creamy and enjoy!



Lead with protein!

A simple timing trick to help you stay trim? "Feast on protein-rich foods, such as turkey, chicken and lean meat, as well as non-starchy veggies, such as salad greens, *before* enjoying your favorite carb-rich foods such as stuffing or cornbread," says Koch. "According to a new study, this simple strategy of eating protein first, then carbs about 10 minutes later—instead of

eating them at the same time—reduces post-meal fat-storing insulin as much as 25%, while increasing a gut hormone that makes you feel fuller longer! Plus this way, you'll be able to enjoy dessert satisfied instead of starving, which helps you keep portions in check."

Sip eggnog like Champagne!

Surprising but true: Simply pouring eggnog (just eight ounces contains a whopping 200 calories, per Koch) into a champagne flute helps you effortlessly reduce consumption. "The average champagne glass holds six ounces, and a typical 'pour' is about 2/3 full, or four ounces—about 95 calories. So, you can cut calories in *half* just by using a champagne flute!"

Let seasonal treats slim you!

Cut calories with peppermint!

A festive way to keep calories at bay? "Just lick a sugar-free candy cane slowly so you really savor it," suggests food psychologist Susan Albers. "Peppermint has been shown to help reduce your appetite. Plus, its invigorating scent is just what you need when your energy is taxed during the holiday." Or get the same positive peppermint effect by sipping Koch's 65-calorie Peppermint Mocha:



Place 1 Tbs. cocoa powder, 3 packets no-calorie sweetener, such as stevia, and 1/4 rounded tsp. cornstarch in a microwave-safe mug. Whisk in 2/3 cup warm water, 1/2 tsp. each instant coffee and peppermint extract. Microwave on high one minute. Whisk in 1/4 cup low-fat milk. Heat 30 seconds and top with 2 Tbs. light whipped cream.

"By comparison, a small Peppermint Mocha at Starbucks serves up 350 calories and 10 teaspoons of sugar!"

Curb cravings with cocoa!

Not-so-fun fact: When we're even slightly dehydrated, we tend to feel hungrier and crave fatty foods. "We naturally drink less when the weather gets colder, so it's



Indulge smarter!

Instead of skipping your favorite holiday foods, just have a game plan to curb "calorie creep," suggests Palinski-Wade. "If you're at a holiday party with a buffet, for example, instead of diving right in, take your time and scan it first, rating foods on a scale of one to 10. Then go back to the buffet, filling your plate only with nines and tens, so you're not wasting calories and space on your plate with ho-hum foods you don't really love anyway."

important to remind yourself to enjoy a cuppa," says nutritionist Erin Palinski-Wade. "Warm drinks are especially satisfying and help curb cravings, and hot cocoa in particular has been shown to reduce your appetite for both sweet and salty snacks. Just be sure to go for an antioxidant-rich dark chocolate—and sprinkle in some cinnamon for an extra calorie-burn kick!"

—Kristina Mastrocola

Our expert panel



Marlene Koch, R.D.—author of *Eat What You Love: Quick & Easy: Great Recipes Low in Sugar, Fat, and Calories*—has been featured on *Home & Family*, *Today* and the Food Network.



Susan Albers, Psy.D., is a psychologist at the Cleveland Clinic and *New York Times* bestselling author of *EatQ: 50 Ways to Soothe Yourself Without Food*. Learn more at her site EatingMindfully.com.



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