

Christmas Survival Guide

The British Nutrition Foundations' guide to a healthier festive season for you and your family!

Survive Christmas parties in style

The festive season can help remind us about the joy of sharing food and spending time with friends and family! However, we know between all of the celebrations and indulgent foods and drinks, it can be somewhat of a challenging time to eat well.

The Christmas 'do' is one of the highlights of the work calendar. But, with alcohol and canapés a-plenty, many additional calories may be consumed. So, a little forward planning and making some good food choices can help to make your party season that little bit healthier!



- The more food on offer, the more we tend to eat, so try sticking to a few smart choices rather than trying everything.
- Select the healthier items first, you will add fewer higher calorie alternatives later (e.g. veg sticks, houmous - steer clear of too many choices with pastry and breadcrumbs).
- Have a small snack (like low sugar wholegrain cereal, fruit and a low-fat yogurt) before a party so you don't drink on an empty stomach. If you don't arrive hungry, you're less likely to overindulge on higher calorie foods.
- Opt for smaller wine glasses, switch from pints to half pints, measure rather than pour spirits and choose low calorie mixers!
- Remember, drink plenty of water before you go to bed and keep more by your bedside, as re-hydration may help to reduce the effects of a hangover.

Swap	Calories	For	Calories
Mini sausage roll	53	Sushi (salmon)	30
Breaded chicken	51	Chicken skewer	26
Tortilla crisps (handful)	101	7 olives	22
Rum and cola (single)	119	Rum and diet cola (single)	57
Glass of wine (large)	228	White wine spritzer	159
Pint of beer/lager	182	Bottle of beer/lager	109
Orange cream chocolate	52	Satsuma	21
Salted peanuts (handful)	181	Salted popcorn (handful)	78
Mince pie	253	Mini mince pie	87

12 Christmas Dinner Tips

in case you are looking to make your day that little bit healthier...

1. Before cooking the turkey, prick the skin to allow the fat to run out and cook the bird on a wire rack or an upturned ovenproof plate so it is not sitting in fat all the time.
2. The skin on turkey or goose is where most of the fat is, so remove before eating to reduce saturated fat and calories of your meat. Light meat also has fewer calories than dark meat.
3. Make bread sauce with skimmed milk, adding garlic or cloves for extra flavour!
4. Cut potatoes bigger for roasting - larger ones absorb less fat during roasting. The same applies to roasting parsnips and other veg!
5. Use small amounts of vegetable oil on potatoes (as a healthier alternative to goose fat or lard) – they still go crispy!
6. Swap half of your regular potatoes for sweet potatoes, as an alternative that can contribute towards your 5 A DAY.
7. If you leave the skins on your potatoes, you can up your fibre intake for the day!
8. Use the cooking water from your vegetables to make the gravy as this will contain some of the vitamins from the vegetables! Steaming veg also retains more of these vitamins, compared to boiling!
9. To make gravy with less fat, pour the turkey juices into a jug, wait for the fat to rise to the surface and spoon off the fat, before using the juices to make gravy. Use low salt stock cubes for gravy and try to limit salt added at the table.
10. Serve a variety of vegetables as they all provide different essential nutrients. Vegetables are what we call low-energy density foods – so you can eat lots for relatively few calories (provided they are not covered in fats like butter). Use chopped fresh herbs or lemon zest instead to add flavour. Try caraway with your carrots, or nutmeg with your Brussels sprouts for a deliciously Christmassy taste!
11. Instead of using sausage meat stuffing, why not replace with a chestnut, nut or fruit-based version.
12. Christmas pudding and other festive desserts can be delicious, but also very rich – why not opt for a small portion and add additional fruit for a 5 A DAY contribution.

New year, new you: time to move!

Step it up

Sitting down uses very little energy. Being physically active can include all forms of activity, such as everyday walking, cycling, housework, working out in the gym, dancing, gardening, playing active games, as well as organised and competitive sport.

Is the thought of jogging around the park or joining the January masses in the gym not for you? Why not start a new hobby! Visit your local leisure centre to see if they have swimming clubs, or try a kayak, rowing or football club! Alternatively, find a climbing wall nearby, or start a yoga or dance class! You could even join a community garden or just offer to help your neighbour out with their shopping or dog walking.

30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on at least 5 days a week can help to prevent over 20 health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, several cancers, obesity and mental health problems.



Intensity	Activity	Calories used (based on 30 mins)*	Burns roughly the equivalent of...
Light	Ironing	69	2 vegetable spring rolls
	Vacuuming	105	2 small sausage rolls
	Wallpapering	99	2 pigs in blankets
Moderate	Mowing the lawn	165	1 large G&T
	Brisk walking (4 mph)	150	3 mint chocolate thins
	Golf	129	1/4 pot sour cream dip
Vigorous	Cycling (12-14 mph)	240	6 cheese straws
	Aerobic dancing (e.g. Zumba)	195	2 glasses of champagne
	Swimming (crawl)	240	1 luxury mince pie
	Running (medium – 6 mph)	300	Christmas pud (avg. portion)

*Based on a person of 60kg. For more information about different intensities of physical activity, see:

<http://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/seasons/christmas-and-new-year.html>

For more information on the sources used in this text please contact postbox@nutrition.org.uk

Last reviewed December 2018. Next review due December 2021.