

5 Tips For Eating Healthy On Thanksgiving

ND Medina

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via Unsplash

Thanksgiving is a holiday about friends, family, gratitude, and food... especially food. While it is seen as a very food-focused holiday in the US, it doesn't need to be that way. If you are on a health and wellness journey -- or if you suffer from ailments such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, IBS, or others -- Thanksgiving can be a difficult holiday to dance around. That said, there are ways to stick to your goals and remain comfortable in your own body during the holiday.

Here are five tips to help you stay mindful and eat well during Thanksgiving.

1) Remember: Thanksgiving is a single day



following year. "The holidays" fall on specific dates.

going hog-wild at the family
y day until January 2 of the

Thanksgiving is the last Thursday in November, not a 60-day free-for-all. You don't have to stuff yourself from now until next year. You can save the cheat meals and the splurges for Thanksgiving if you like, but try to contain yourself to that single day. You will thank yourself later.

2) Be selective and moderate in your food choices

Turkey. Cornbread. Okra. Kale. Green beans. Macaroni and cheese. Nachos. Guacamole. Apple pie. Ice cream. What do all of these things have in common? You may find them all at your family gathering on Thanksgiving... but they don't all have to be on your plate. You can choose to limit yourself to a few, healthier options on Thanksgiving rather than bingeing on everything and the kitchen sink.

If you do decide to splurge on Thanksgiving, splurge wisely. Would you rather spend your calories on Grandma's home-baked apple pie or some cheap, store-bought sugar cookies? There's no need to have both when you only have one stomach, after all.

3) Keep portions small

If you can't choose between your favorite foods at Thanksgiving, you can always restrict your portion size. Rather than loading up two or three plates with your favorite foods, try to limit yourself to one plate of food of different colors.

You can help yourself keep portions small by partaking in a protein shake or having a protein bar before arriving at Thanksgiving dinner, in order to curb your appetite. You can also start off your meal with a broth-based soup or a small salad with veggies, vinegar, salt and pepper. Penn State nutrition studies have shown that either of these tiny appetizers will help you eat less for the rest of the meal.



Thanksgiving is a time when friends and families come together in gratitude for the year that has passed and all the blessings they have received. Rather than focusing on food, think of Thanksgiving as a time to be together with your family. Think of it as a time to enjoy the big game, a time to reflect on the year, a time to catch up with friends and family you don't see often, and a time to practice mindfulness and gratitude. It doesn't have to be a food-focused holiday unless you make it one.

5) Avoid alcohol

Alcohol is nothing more than empty calories. What does that mean? Alcoholic drinks are made from natural starch and sugar, which means they contain a lot of calories. In fact, alcohol contains seven calories a gram, which is almost as much as pure fat. These calories have no nutritional value; they have very few vitamins and minerals, and the very tiny amount of these found in alcoholic drinks make no contribution to your diet.

On top of being packed with empty calories, alcohol is also a substance our body can't store. For this reason, our body wants to get rid of alcohol, and it prioritizes doing so. That means that other processes, such as absorbing nutrients and burning fat, are on hold as our system fights to get rid of alcohol.

Avoid it if you can.



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