

Survival tips for Christmas

Not feeling quite right? Know you need to make a diet or lifestyle change but not sure where to start? Confused by mixed messages about what foods to eat?

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**by Fiona Kane
Nutritionist**

Christmas is fast approaching and I notice that people seem to get more and more stressed as the date gets closer. We have so much to do

before Christmas, with the countdown a constant reminder of how many days you have left to do "everything". My question is why do we need to do "everything"? Maybe there are some things that can wait, surely?

Is your idea of Christmas being stressed out, overstressing your budget and yourself? Maybe you have the wrong idea about what Christmas is. Why has Christmas become a competition about who can spend the most and who can eat the most? We put so much pressure on ourselves leading up to the day that we are already well "over it" before the day. We place a bunch of unrealistic expectations on ourselves and others about what we should have achieved by Christmas and how our experience "should" be; stressing everyone involved!

What happens after Christmas Day, Boxing Day and then the next day and then the next? Life goes on.....the world will not stop because you didn't buy perfect gifts, send Christmas cards or fix up the house! It is just another day. A day with special significance that has nothing to do with shopping and stressing!

1. Create a list of what you really actually need to do, talk to family and friends about realistic expectations; you will notice that many of them will be relieved to come up with less stressful/expensive ways of celebrating Christmas. Some families choose to have one gift per person policy they draw everyone's name out of a hat and everyone buys just one gift, something that the person actually wants. Then you only need to buy one gift for the family. Some choose to swap gifts after Christmas to take advantage of the Christmas sales. Get everyone to bring a plate or be responsible for a part of Christmas lunch.
2. Don't drop all of your good habits for the holidays. It takes time to create good habits, you don't want to have to do it all over again next year!
3. Choose the parties/functions where you will allow yourself to indulge, don't go crazy at every function, limit the days you indulge a little to Christmas day and one or two other selected parties.
4. Alcohol is often where people come undone. Beer and pre-mixed drinks are the worst offenders. Instead have a glass or two of wine or a wine spritzer (with soda water). Spirits with soda water are a better option and rotating alcoholic beverages with water.
5. Which is the biggest meal today? Change your eating habits accordingly. If you are going out to a big three course lunch then halve what you would normally have for lunch for dinner.
6. Be selective and choose the healthier option most times. For example, small portions of fresh berries/nuts in place of pudding, kebab sticks over party pies, raw veges over fried food.
7. Fresh is best, at cocktail functions with trays and trays of finger food, avoid all things deep fried in favour of vegies, fruit and fresh seafood like prawns, scallops and sushi.
8. Stay positive. If you over indulge, don't give up or start shaming yourself, just get back into your usual routine immediately.
9. Snack ideas to provide or take to a party are: salsa, mashed avocado and hummus dips with raw vegetable crudites (broccoli, carrot, celery, cauliflower). Raw unsalted nuts and seeds, fresh fruit.
10. When you approach a buffet, always head to the seafood, chicken or meat first and then add salad and vegetables. Go to the vegetable based salads not the creamy and pasta/rice salads. Protein, fat and fibre will help you to feel satisfied and stop you from overdoing it!
11. A roast is wonderful but a great alternative to the roast in Australia's hot climate is seafood, chicken and yummy green salads.
12. If having a BBQ have seafood, chicken, meat. Vegetables are great on the BBQ such as capsicum, broccoli, eggplant, mushrooms or zucchini.
13. Other vegetarian options are vegetable and lentil or chickpea patties and kebabs with mushrooms and vegetables. Always have lovely big salads with your BBQ.
14. Desserts - choose fresh fruit such as berries. Serve with macadamias, cream, natural Greek yoghurt or coconut yoghurt.
15. Take the edge off your hunger by having a small protein snack (egg, nuts, seeds, meat) before the event; don't arrive ravenous.
16. Clear the table once the meal is finished to avoid picking at the leftovers and avoid food poisoning.
17. Most importantly enjoy the time connecting with your family and friends! Distract yourself with engaging conversations and games rather than just obsessing about food.
18. Relax and enjoy Christmas and the holidays!

Merry Christmas from the team at Informed Health!!

The team from Informed Health: pictured here at Enniskillen Orchard - L to R Rebecca Dixon, Rachel Fox and Fiona Kane - wish everyone a wonderful Christmas! Photo: Kristen Flavell Photography



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