



# **Your Ultimate Guide to Surviving the Holidays**



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# Common Holiday Challenges

The holiday season is full of excitement, traditions, and celebrations. It's the time of year when we come together with family and friends to share food, exchange gifts, and create lasting memories. But alongside the joy and sparkle of the holidays come two big challenges: limited time and the temptation to overeat.

## Challenge 1: Too Much To Do, Not Enough Time

Between holiday shopping, decorating the house, attending events, and preparing meals, the days can feel like they are disappearing before your eyes. This is especially true if you're the one hosting or preparing food for a big family gathering. The pressure to get everything done can turn what should be a joyful season into a stressful time.



## Challenge 2: The Temptation to Overindulge

Holiday meals often come with an endless buffet of rich, delicious foods—everything from creamy mashed potatoes to decadent pies. While it's wonderful to indulge in these seasonal treats, it's easy to overeat, especially when you're surrounded by so many tempting options.



# Time Saving Strategies

## Meal Prep

### Start with Pre-Prepped Ingredients

Pre-prepped ingredients can dramatically cut down time in the kitchen, without sacrificing flavor or nutrition. Here's how to make your holiday meal prep easier:

- **Semi-Homemade Hacks:** Use store-bought rotisserie chicken, pre-made pizza dough, or pre-chopped veggies to save on prep time. Customize these items with your favorite sauces and seasonings for a home-cooked feel with minimal effort.
- **Frozen and Canned Staples:** Keep frozen veggies, canned beans, and pre-cooked grains (like frozen quinoa or rice) on hand. These can be quickly turned into side dishes or added to soups and casseroles.

### Batch Cooking for Efficiency

Batch cooking is one of the best time savers. By preparing large amounts of food at once, you'll have ready-made meals or ingredients that can be repurposed throughout the week.

- **Cook Once, Eat Twice:** Make extra rice, roasted veggies, or proteins that can be used in different meals. For example, grilled chicken can be added to salads, wraps, or pasta dishes.
- **Prepare Basics in Bulk:** Boil a dozen eggs, roast several sweet potatoes, or grill extra chicken breasts at the beginning of the week. These can be quickly used to assemble meals during busy holiday days.

### Sheet Pan and One-Pot Meals

Cleaning up after cooking can be time-consuming, so focus on meals that require minimal dishes.

- **Sheet Pan Dinners:** Roast your proteins and vegetables on a single sheet pan. You can make an entire meal this way with little cleanup.
- **One-Pot Meals:** Stews, soups, and casseroles made in one pot (or an Instant Pot) save time both in cooking and cleaning. Throw all your ingredients in one dish, set it, and forget it!



## Avoiding Overindulging

1

### Arrive Prepared

Eat a light snack before heading to a holiday event to avoid overeating.



2

### Stay Hydrated

Staying hydrated can reduce feelings of hunger, and mocktails are a festive, non-alcoholic alternative to holiday drinks. Drink water before and during meals to help manage your appetite.



3

### Portion Control

**Use Smaller Plates:** This helps control portion sizes. Studies show that people eat less when using smaller dishes.

**Prioritize Veggies and Proteins:** Start your plate with salads, vegetables, and lean proteins. Once full, allow yourself smaller portions of your favorite treats.

4

### Balance Healthy Options & Treats

It's okay to indulge in your favorite holiday goodies, but balance is key.

**One-Plate Rule:** Fill one plate with a variety of foods, but avoid second helpings. Savor each bite and focus on the experience, not just the food.



# Holiday Celebrations Done Right

## Charcuterie Board

A holiday charcuterie board is an elegant and easy-to-make centerpiece for any party, and it can be both festive and healthy.

### How to Build a Balanced Charcuterie Board:

- **Protein Options:** Include lean meats like turkey slices, smoked salmon, or plant-based proteins like hummus or nut butter.
- **Fruits and Veggies:** Add color and nutrients with fresh fruits like grapes, figs, or pomegranate seeds, along with raw or roasted veggies.
- **Cheese Choices:** Offer a variety of cheeses, like aged cheddar, goat cheese, or a light ricotta spread.
- **Whole-Grain Crackers or Nuts:** Serve alongside whole-grain crackers, toasted nuts, or even homemade granola bites for crunch.



## Hostess Gift Ideas

Show your appreciation with thoughtful, healthy gifts that stand out from the typical bottle of wine.

- **Homemade Spice Mixes:** Give the gift of flavor with custom spice blends that can be used long after the holidays.
- **Gourmet Olive Oil or Vinegar:** A high-quality bottle of olive oil or balsamic vinegar makes a thoughtful and practical gift.
- **Holiday Power Bites:** Homemade power bites made with oats, nut butter, and dark chocolate are a sweet, nutritious gift.



## Spice Blends

Homemade spice blends are wonderful, unique gifts for friends and family! Here are some easy spice blends to offer as hostess gifts - scale according to your mason jar size and number.

### BBQ Seasoning Blend

- 4 Tbs paprika (smoked if desired)
- 4 Tbs coconut sugar
- 4 tsp garlic powder
- 4 tsp chili powder
- 2 tsp onion powder
- 2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper (optional)



### Italian Herb Blend

- 2 Tbs oregano, dried
- 2 Tbs basil, dried
- 2 Tbs parsley, dried
- 3 tsp rosemary, dried
- 3 tsp thyme, dried
- 2 tsp garlic powder



### Taco Seasoning Blend

- 2 Tbs chili powder
- 4 tsp cumin, ground
- 2 tsp oregano, dried
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 2 tsp paprika, smoked (or regular)
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper (optional)



**Add any of these mixtures into a mason jar, add some festive flair like ribbons, and your holiday gift game just leveled up!**



## Beverages

### Cranberry Orange Mocktail

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Yield: 1 serving

#### Ingredients

- 2 Tbs orange juice, freshly squeezed
- 1 tsp ginger root, grated
- 1/2 cup sparkling water
- 1/4 cup cranberry juice
- 2 Tbs ginger beer
- 1 tsp crystallized ginger
- 2 tsp sugar



#### Instructions

##### Prep

1. Squeeze orange for juice and grate fresh ginger [if you freeze the ginger ahead of time it will be easier to grate].

##### Make

1. Add crystallized ginger to a small food processor with sugar and process until combined. Add to a small plate.
2. Run the quartered orange around the rim of the glass and dip into the ginger/sugar mixture.
3. Add ice to the glass then add sparkling water, cranberry juice, orange juice, and ginger.
4. Top off with ginger beer. Garnish with fresh rosemary and cranberries.

### Pomegranate Ginger Mocktail

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Total Time: 2 hours 5 minutes

Yield: 4 servings

#### Ingredients

- 1 tsp ginger root, grated
- 1 lemon, sliced
- 2 cups pomegranate juice
- 4 cloves, whole
- 4 cups sparkling water
- 4 sprigs mint leaves
- 1/4 cup pomegranate seeds



#### Instructions

##### Prep

1. Grate ginger & slice lemon.

##### Make

1. Place pomegranate juice, two lemon slices, ginger, and cloves in a glass jar and refrigerate for at least 2 hours to infuse.
2. Strain the mixture into a fresh glass jar.
3. Fill 4 glasses with ice and pour equal amounts of strained juice into each serving glass and top with sparkling water. Stir gently.
4. Add lemon slices, pomegranate seeds, and mint sprig just before serving.

## Recipes



### Pumpkin Bean Dip

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Total Time: 20 minutes

Yield: 6 servings

#### Ingredients

- 1/2 Lemon, Juiced and Zested
- 2 Tbs Tahini
- 1 Clove Garlic, crushed
- 1 1/2 cups White beans, Drained and Rinsed
- 2 Tbs Olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups Pumpkin purée
- 1/4 tsp Cayenne pepper
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 1 tsp Sage, fresh, Chopped
- 2 Tbs Pumpkin Seeds

#### Instructions

##### Prep

1. Zest and juice lemon.
2. Drain and rinse beans.

##### Make

1. Place the lemon juice, lemon zest, tahini, garlic, white beans, olive oil, pumpkin puree, cayenne pepper, salt, and sage in a food processor. Pulse until smooth adding some water to thin if necessary.
2. Transfer to a bowl and allow to sit for 15 minutes before garnishing with pumpkin seeds and serving.
3. Serve with raw vegetables.

### Shaved Brussels Sprouts Salad

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 20 minutes

Yield: 6 servings

#### Ingredients

##### Salad

- 2 lb Brussels sprouts, shaved
- 2 pears, chopped
- 1 cup pomegranate arils (1 small pomegranate)
- 1/3 cup pecans, raw, roughly chopped

##### Dressing

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup tahini
- 1 lemon, juiced (for 1/2 Tbs juice)
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp maple syrup
- 2 Tbs cold water
- salt, to taste
- black pepper, to taste

#### Instructions

##### Prep

1. Using a food processor, shave the Brussels sprouts.
2. Seed the pomegranate (if necessary).
3. Roughly chop the pecans.
4. Chop the pears.

##### Make

1. Place Combine the shaved Brussels sprouts, pears, pomegranates, and pecans in a bowl.
2. To make the dressing, combine all ingredients in a mason jar and shake to emulsify. If necessary add more water to thin the dressing. Season to taste with salt.
3. When ready to serve the salad, drizzle the dressing over the salad ingredients and toss to combine.



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[info@momentumtherapy.ca](mailto:info@momentumtherapy.ca)