

Healthy holidays

Quick quiz... ...which has more calories and fat: a traditional holiday turkey dinner; or a Big Mac, large French fries, apple pie and large Coke?

Answer: The traditional holiday turkey dinner with all the trimmings! It has between 2,000 – 3,000 calories and 150 – 230 grams of fat. Compare this to the Big Mac “meal” with 1,700 calories and 73 grams of fat.

By some estimates, Americans consume more calories on Thanksgiving than any other day of the year. In addition to the large meal itself, many of us eat a second large meal of leftovers and we snack while watching parades and games on television.

By planning in advance, you can make a few changes so you can have a delicious holiday turkey meal with traditional ingredients, prepared with less fat and calories. Here are some ideas:

Plan the menu to include favorite foods you and your family and friends look forward to, but **limit the number of choices for each course.** The more variety there is, the more people eat. For example, it is hard to keep from trying some of each of several desserts. Instead of serving four choices, offer two and save the others for another occasion.

Prepare holiday dishes with less fat and sugar.

- Add flavor with herbs and spices.
- Sauté in broth instead of butter.
- Use lower-fat alternatives for dairy products such as fat-free sour cream and half-and-half, or milk instead of cream in baking or sauces.

Put serving dishes on a counter or side table, not on the dining table. This will make it a little harder to take second helpings.

Put leftovers away immediately after the meal for food safety as well as calorie control, and send leftovers home with guests!

Don't be too hard on yourself if you overeat.

See Step Ahead's Healthy Holidays packet for:

- easy and healthier recipes for holiday dishes and leftovers,
- a comparison between healthy and traditional holiday dinner recipes,
- more tips to trim calories from meals, and
- ways to burn calories on the big day.

Our Healthy Holiday information is also available at www.stepaheadprogram.com.

Recipe of the Week – Garlicky Pasta with Tomatoes and Spinach

Serves 6

1 lb. linguine (try whole wheat for more fiber & nutrients)
 2 Tbsp. olive oil
 6 to 8 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced
 2 cups mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
 20 cherry tomatoes
 4 cups baby spinach, washed
 1/3 cup pine nuts, lightly toasted
 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
 Ground pepper and lemon juice

1. Cook pasta according to package directions.
2. Saute' garlic in olive oil a few minutes over medium heat. Add tomatoes and mushrooms. Cook till mushrooms are just tender. Set aside.

3. Place spinach in a colander. When pasta is cooked, pour it with its cooking water over the spinach in the colander. As the pasta drains, it cooks the spinach.
4. Transfer pasta and spinach to a large serving bowl. Add mushroom mixture and toss. Top with pine nuts, lemon juice, cheese and pepper.

Nutrition information:

Calories: 452 Total fat: 13 g
 Saturated Fat: 2.5 g Total carbohydrates: 66 g
 Total protein: 16 servings

Adapted from Whole Foods Market, Everyday Recipes

Tip of the Week

When you walk for exercise, bend your arms 90 degrees and swing them naturally back and forth opposite the leg motion. You can add power and speed by using your arms effectively. If you let your arms hang straight, they act like a long pendulum, slowing you down, and your hands are more likely to swell when you walk.

– <http://walking.about.com>