



# Letter To The Editor: Guilt-Free Holiday Eating

by Abigail Parker

November 8 2023 5:26 PM



## **Letter To The Editor:**

Food guilt...been there, done that. Of all the times to have the voices in your head telling you that you need to eat this, don't eat that, I shouldn't have eaten that – now is not it. The holidays can be stressful enough without adding food to the list of things making your head spin.

As a certified nutritionist, I find it especially important over the holiday season to not have to worry about the foods you choose to eat. It's the most wonderful time of the year, and that includes all the special foods that come with it. I'm talking about even foods like pumpkin pie and your favorite Christmas cookie.

Use these 3 tips to stop the mental chatter at your next holiday meal and find the confidence to enjoy the day.

### **1) Eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner too**

It's time to break free from the mindset that calories dictate how much you can eat in a day. You're not going to skip breakfast in exchange for a larger holiday meal that day. In fact, skipping breakfast can only lead to increased cravings by the time you do reach mealtime.

Take control of your hunger by allowing yourself to eat. Remember food is energy, and you need it all day.

### **2) Treat your holiday meal like any other**

The foods we get to have over the holidays are our favorites because we do only get them this special time of year. It leads to building them up in our minds. We overindulge because we know it will be another year before we get to enjoy them again.

Take away that power and treat it like any other meal. Make your plate with the foods you want to enjoy, eat until you're satisfied, and keep the leftovers. As a bonus, many foods freeze well to enjoy a second round later.

### **3) Balance out your plate and enjoy**

Holiday meals tend to be side focused. It's hard to choose when there are 9 different options at the family table. And even more, most of them are carbohydrates: think rolls, macaroni and cheese, sweet potato casserole, mashed potatoes, stuffing. Eating mostly

carbohydrates leads to that tired, regretful feeling we're all familiar with at the end of the meal. Instead of piling as much on your plate as you can and feeling more stuffed than the turkey later, think about macronutrients as you make your plate. It's not a matter of limiting what you can and can't eat, but instead making your food work for you.

Make sure all macronutrients are on your plate:

Protein, like turkey or ham,

Carbohydrate, like mashed potatoes or stuffing, and

Fat, like butter in your mashed potatoes or cheese on your macaroni and cheese

The best thing you can do to enjoy your holiday meals is exactly that – enjoy them. Sit down with your plate of delicious foods, take your time eating, and savor the moment.

**Abigail Parker**