

Festive season food swaps



Each year, millions of people make New Year's resolutions to eat healthily and lose weight, and it's usually following an overindulgent festive season. This year, why not end off on a high note by starting your healthy eating routine early by cutting back on holiday calories without ever compromising on flavour?

Snacking. If it's tradition in your home to have a box of Quality Streets or chocolate coated nuts on display throughout the festive season, it may be time to give something new a try. Why not put a bowl of lean game biltong out to snack on, or rustle up some homemade tortillas with salsa to satisfy your peckish guests?

Lightly salted air-popped popcorn is a low-calorie alternative to chips and dip, and if you can't go without chips, use Greek yoghurt instead of choosing a cream-laden or shop-bought dip.

Starters. Cheese balls, prawn cocktails, barbeque chicken wings, and mini sausage rolls are all great starters at a festive season feast. The problem is, they're little mouthfuls of calorie-laden fat traps. And you will pack on a few kilos if you enjoy them too often.

Instead, make a wholesome, colourful salad, topped with walnuts and goat's cheese, served with a tangy Greek yoghurt dressing, and no one will miss the junk food.

Mains. Whether you like a hot or cold lunch, typical holiday meals are cooked in lots of fat, loaded with carbs, and have added sweetness and sugar that go straight to the hips.

To keep the meal wholesome and simple, opt for turkey and lean, sliced beef, both of which are low in calories compared to many other options like boerewors, fatty lamb chops, and beef Wellingtons.

Opt for roasted sweet potato wedges and freshly roasted Mediterranean vegetables instead of butter-smothered mashed potato and sugared carrots to keep the meal nutrient dense but tasty.

Dessert. Malva pudding, jelly and custard, ice cream and chocolate sauce, and trifle are holiday season desserts. While you don't need to completely give up your favourite, make sure you take a small helping of one type. It's also best to make your own from scratch so you can substitute things like unsweetened apple sauce for butter in the Malva pudding, vanilla for sugar in the custard, and mixing Greek yoghurt with dark chocolate to make a healthier chocolate sauce.

Don't let this festive season be the reason your pants feel a bit smaller and your belt a little tighter, and that you once again have to make a New Year's resolution to lose weight and start a healthy diet. Try these simple food swaps during the holidays to stay healthy without ever feeling deprived or having to compromise on flavour.