

8 WAYS TO AVOID EXTRA POUNDS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Is that adorable little black dress you were hoping to wear to a holiday party feeling a little snug? Why does it take so much effort to drop a couple of pounds, but one big meal seems to send the scale soaring? During last year's Scramble holiday poll, 65 percent of respondents said they gain weight during the holidays. To help you avoid being part of that swelling statistic we have assembled some tips for enjoying the holidays without having to buy a new wardrobe.

Limit holiday splurges. Write all those holiday parties and gatherings in your calendar and then commit to limiting your splurges to those special events. Your greatest source of extra calories is probably from the daily intake of cookies, cocoa and other goodies that are more likely to be lying around the house this time of year, rather than the occasional festive splurge.

Tame your appetite before the party. One of the worst things you can do is to fast all day before a party. Your hunger will likely send you straight to the buffet line to overindulge. Instead, eat a high protein snack (like a handful of nuts, or a few forkfuls of chicken, tuna or a spoonful of low fat cottage cheese), a piece of fruit and drink a big glass of water before the festivities. At the party, load your plate with vegetables and take a small portion of the indulgences you really want to taste. Eat slowly and mindfully, and enjoy the conversation and company.

Fill in all the non-splurge days with healthy meals. Make a menu ahead of time (The Scramble can help with that!) for the upcoming week or month and fill your kitchen with healthy ingredients before things get so busy you have no choice but to have greasy pizza or fast food for dinner.

Cook in advance. Double a few recipes and freeze half so you have ready-made dinners for those full weeks of visitors and parties. That way you can avoid calorie laden restaurant meals.

Use healthy substitutes for holiday fare. Instead of whole milk products, use low fat or nonfat variations. For example, use plain nonfat Greek yogurt instead of sour cream to make your favorite holiday dips, and consider other low fat, healthy dips like salsa and hummus. Apples (which are delicious this time of year) and honey make a sweet and healthy side dish or dessert.

Limit the liquid calories. Soda, eggnog and cocktails can pack amazing quantities of calories, most of them devoid of nutrition. If you limit the holiday treats to foods, you will easily cut down on the sugar and calories your entire family consumes. Meanwhile, load up on water, tea, and other calorie-free drinks to keep well hydrated and feel fuller.

Get moving. After a meal, go for a walk with your family to see holiday displays in your neighborhood. Take the stairs rather than elevators, dance to holiday music, play outside with your kids after school, and try to find any and every way to stay active to keep your immunities up and the weight off.

Finally, **Give the Gift of Time, Good Taste and Good Health** to yourself or a loved one with a subscription to The Six O'Clock Scramble meal planning service. Don't forget to use your discount code HOLIDAY10 to get \$5 off all 6-month [gift subscriptions](#) and \$10 off 12-month gift subscriptions.

[The Six O'Clock Scramble cookbooks](#) make terrific gifts with easy, delicious and healthy recipes organized by season and accompanying grocery lists online. Customers tell us the book makes a terrific host/hostess gift for holiday festivities, too.

Simple Spice-Rubbed Chicken Thighs

Servings = 6

Prep = 10 min; Cook = 30 min

My 11-year-old daughter Celia made this spice rub (with my guidance on measurements), and she couldn't believe how easy it was to prepare a whole tasty dinner with just a few minutes of actual work. Serve it with sweet potato fries.

- 3 lbs. bone-in chicken thighs
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 2 tsp. chili powder

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Spray a large baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray and lay the chicken on it.

In a small bowl, combine all the remaining ingredients. Sprinkle and rub the spices all over the chicken. (Prepare the sweet potato fries now, if you are serving them.) Put the chicken on the baking sheet, skin side up, and bake them for 30 minutes until the skin is dark and crispy. Serve immediately or refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Scramble Flavor Booster: Use chipotle or hot Mexican chili powder in place of some or all of the chili powder, or add 1/4 - 1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper to the spice blend.

TIP: This is a great spice mixture to double and use in another recipe. It would also be tasty on pork or fish fillets.

SERVE WITH SWEET POTATO FRIES

To make the fries, preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Slice 2 medium sweet potatoes the long way, making thin, long strips (no need to peel them). In a medium bowl, toss them with 2 Tbsp. vegetable or peanut oil, 1/4 tsp. salt, and 1/4 tsp. chili powder or cinnamon (optional) and bake them in a single layer on a baking sheet for about 20 minutes, turning once, until they are lightly browned. For a crisper texture, broil them for a few minutes before serving them. Serve them with ketchup, if desired.

Nutritional Information per serving (% based upon daily values):

Calories: 481; Total Fat: 35g, 53%; Saturated Fat: 10g, 50%; Cholesterol: 190mg, 64%; Sodium: 338mg, 14%; Total Carbohydrate: 1g, 0%; Dietary Fiber: 0g, 1%; Sugar: 0g; Protein: 39g

Nutritional Information per serving with side dish (% based upon daily values) 3/4 cup sweet potato fries:

Calories: 522; Total Fat: 37g, 56%; Saturated Fat: 11g, 52%; Cholesterol: 190mg, 64%; Sodium: 421mg, 17%; Total Carbohydrate: 7g, 2%; Dietary Fiber: 1g, 5%; Sugar: 2g; Protein: 40g



Oven-Fried Lemon Garlic Cod

Servings = 4
Prep+Cook = 30 min

My family devoured this scrumptious fish. Its crunchy topping and light lemony flavor makes it hard to resist. This is also a great way to use up an opened package of crackers in your pantry. Serve it with couscous and steamed green beans with pesto.

- 1 1/2-2 lbs. cod fillets (or use other firm white fish such as flounder, catfish or tilapia)
- 2 Tbsp. reduced-fat mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. minced garlic, (about 2 cloves)
- 1 lemon, (use 1 Tbsp. juice, and cut remaining lemon into wedges for serving)
- 1 1/2-2 cups crackers (buttery or whole grain), crushed to make 1 cup coarse crumbs

Adjust the oven rack to the middle position and preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Spray a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. Place the fish on the baking sheet.

In a small bowl, combine the mayonnaise, garlic and 1 Tbsp. lemon juice. Using a pastry brush or the back of a spoon, brush the top and sides of the fish with the mayonnaise mixture, then press the crumbs evenly on top of the fish.

Bake it for 15-20 minutes, until the crumbs are golden brown and the thickest part of the fish is opaque and flakes easily with a fork. (Meanwhile, prepare the couscous and green beans, if you are serving them.) Serve it with the lemon wedges.

Scramble Flavor Booster: Double the garlic and add 1/2 - 1 tsp. lemon zest to the mayonnaise mixture.

TIP: Do your kids like to cook? This is an excellent recipe for younger kids to help you prepare, or older kids to make by themselves. Kids are so proud to serve and eat something they have made.

SERVE WITH COUSCOUS & STEAMED GREEN BEANS WITH PESTO

Prepare couscous according to package directions, using water or broth for the liquid. For even more flavor, stir fresh herbs, toasted pine nuts or slivered almonds, or dried cranberries or currants into the hot couscous.

Steam 1 lb. green beans until they are tender, 6 - 8 minutes. Drain and toss them with 1-2 Tbsp. pesto sauce. Sprinkle it with 1 tsp. toasted pine nuts, if desired.

Nutritional Information per serving (% based upon daily values):

Calories: 270; Total Fat: 5g, 8%; Saturated Fat: 1g, 5%; Cholesterol: 75mg, 25%; Sodium: 330mg, 14%; Total Carbohydrate: 21g, 7%; Dietary Fiber: 1g, 4%; Sugar: 2g; Protein: 34g

Nutritional Information per serving with side dish (% based upon daily values) 3/4 cup couscous prepared with water; 1 cup green beans:

Calories: 461; Total Fat: 8g, 12%; Saturated Fat: 2g, 7%; Cholesterol: 80mg, 26%; Sodium: 367mg, 15%; Total Carbohydrate: 58g, 19%; Dietary Fiber: 7g, 27%; Sugar: 4g; Protein: 41g



Tortellini With Crisped Bacon And Peas
Servings = 6 (about 1 1/2 cups)
Prep+Cook = 25 min

This meal is surprisingly light and hits all the right flavor notes. Serve it with roasted Brussels sprouts.

- 8 oz. turkey, pork or vegetarian bacon, or use sliced
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- cremini mushrooms
- 1/2 cup shredded or grated Parmesan cheese
- 12-16 oz. cheese tortellini
- 1 1/2 cups frozen peas

(Start the Brussels sprouts first, if you are serving them.) Cook the bacon according to the package directions (or sauté the mushrooms in 1 Tbsp. butter or olive oil over medium heat) until it is crisp, and dice it into 1/2-inch pieces.

Meanwhile, cook the tortellini according to the package directions until it is al dente. One minute before draining it, add the peas to the boiling water with the tortellini, and then drain it all together.

Return the tortellini and peas to the pot over low heat, stir in the olive oil and cheese, and top it with the bacon (or mushrooms) before serving it.

Scramble Flavor Booster: Use freshly grated aged Parmesan cheese and season the dish with freshly ground black pepper.

TIP: This recipe is a real winner with kids. When I make this, I often double it and send leftovers to school with them the next day.

SERVE WITH ROASTED BRUSSELS SPROUTS

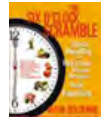
To prepare 1 lb. of Brussels sprouts for roasting, trim the stems a little and peel off any tough outer leaves. If sprouts are large, cut them in half from top to bottom. Toss sprouts with 1-2 Tbsp. olive oil and 1/4 - 1/2 tsp. kosher salt and roast them in the oven for 25 - 30 minutes at 400 degrees, tossing them occasionally, until they are browned and tender.

Nutritional Information per serving (% based upon daily values):

Calories: 320; Total Fat: 15g, 23%; Saturated Fat: 5g, 25%; Cholesterol: 65mg, 22%; Sodium: 900mg, 38%; Total Carbohydrate: 31g, 10%; Dietary Fiber: 3g, 12%; Sugar: 4g; Protein: 17g

Nutritional Information per serving with side dish (% based upon daily values) 1 cup Brussels sprouts:

Calories: 370; Total Fat: 18g, 27%; Saturated Fat: 5g, 25%; Cholesterol: 65mg, 22%; Sodium: 1,080mg, 46%; Total Carbohydrate: 38g, 12%; Dietary Fiber: 6g, 24%; Sugar: 6g; Protein: 20g



Burritos make such a simple and satisfying meal that I can hardly make enough variations for my family. These are reminiscent of our favorite burritos from Burrito Brothers in Washington, DC. Serve them with fruit salad with lime dressing.

- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 30 oz. canned pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/2 cup salsa, plus extra for serving
- 9 oz. baby spinach
- 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese
- 6 large (burrito size) whole wheat or flour tortillas

(Prepare the fruit salad first, if you are serving it.) In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the beans and salsa and cook them for 3 - 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until heated through.

Meanwhile, in a loosely covered bowl, wilt the spinach in the microwave, about 2 minutes. Add the spinach to the beans and salsa and stir it gently.

Remove the bean mixture from the heat and gently stir in the cheese.

Warm the tortillas in the microwave (about 1 minute on high). Put a scoop of the bean-spinach mixture in the lower middle of each tortilla. Add additional salsa, if desired. Fold half the tortilla up over the beans, and roll it up to secure it.

Scramble Flavor Booster: Sauté one diced jalapeño pepper, seeds removed, with the beans, and/or use spicy salsa.

TIP: Do your burritos often fall apart? Tortillas are much easier to fold if they're a little warm, so make sure not to skip this step in your preparations. After folding up your burrito with the fillings, let it sit for about a minute so the tortilla can mold to the filling.

SERVE WITH FRUIT SALAD WITH LIME DRESSING

Toss in-season fruit of your choice, such as 1 - 2 cups blueberries, strawberries, or grapes, 1 - 2 cups chopped melon or pineapple, and 1 - 2 sliced bananas or mango with 1 tsp. fresh lime juice and 1 tsp. superfine (or regular) sugar (optional).

Nutritional Information per serving (% based upon daily values):

Calories: 400; Total Fat: 10g, 16%; Saturated Fat: 3g, 15%; Cholesterol: 5mg, 2%; Sodium: 850mg, 35%; Total Carbohydrate: 62g, 21%; Dietary Fiber: 9g, 34%; Sugar: 3g; Protein: 14g

Nutritional Information per serving with side dish (% based upon daily values) 1 cup fruit salad:

Calories: 517; Total Fat: 11g, 17%; Saturated Fat: 4g, 18%; Cholesterol: 5mg, 2%; Sodium: 871mg, 36%; Total Carbohydrate: 91g, 31%; Dietary Fiber: 13g, 51%; Sugar: 23g; Protein: 16g



My brother Lincoln introduced me to this delectable one pot soup. It is so simple to make, and elegant enough to serve to your book club or other casual gathering. For a meatier version, stir diced cooked sausage into the soup. Serve it with baked breadsticks and a green salad with apples, toasted walnuts and blue cheese.

- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 3 large carrots, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 3/4 cup wild rice
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 28 oz. crushed tomatoes, (or use 6 - 8 fresh tomatoes, chopped)
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- 32 oz. reduced-sodium chicken or vegetable broth

In a large stockpot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onions, carrots and celery. Cook them until they are softened, 6-8 minutes.

Add the remaining ingredients. Bring it to a boil, lower the heat, cover the pot, and simmer the soup for 30-40 minutes, until the rice and vegetables are tender. (Meanwhile, prepare the breadsticks and salad, if you are serving them.) Remove the bay leaves before serving. If the soup is too thick, add more broth or water to thin it. Serve it immediately, or refrigerate it for up to 3 days, or freeze it for up to 3 months.

Scramble Flavor Booster: Serve the soup with hot pepper sauce, such as Tabasco.

TIP: Believe it or not, wild rice is not a member of the rice family, but rather a grain-producing grass. It's got a delicious nutty, earthy flavor and is a good source of protein, B vitamins and folic acid.

SERVE WITH BAKED BREADSTICKS & GREEN SALAD WITH APPLES, TOASTED WALNUTS AND BLUE CHEESE

Prepare 1 pkg. low fat breadsticks in the oven or toaster oven according to the package directions. Serve them warm.

Toss 1 small head of lettuce, torn into bite-size pieces, with 1 diced apple, 1/4 cup lightly toasted walnuts, 2 Tbsp. crumbled blue cheese or Gorgonzola, and 2 - 4 Tbsp. honey-vinaigrette salad dressing. To make the dressing, whisk together 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, 2 Tbsp. red wine or balsamic vinegar, 1 tsp. honey, and a pinch of salt and black pepper. Refrigerate any remaining dressing for future use.

Nutritional Information per serving (% based upon daily values):

Calories: 150; Total Fat: 5g, 7%; Saturated Fat: 1g, 3%; Cholesterol: 0mg, 0%; Sodium: 420mg, 18%; Total Carbohydrate: 26g, 9%; Dietary Fiber: 5g, 20%; Sugar: 9g; Protein: 5g

Nutritional Information per serving with side dish (% based upon daily values) 1 baked breadstick; 1/6 of salad:

Calories: 288; Total Fat: 10g, 16%; Saturated Fat: 3g, 11%; Cholesterol: 2mg, 1%; Sodium: 676mg, 29%; Total Carbohydrate: 46g, 15%; Dietary Fiber: 7g, 27%; Sugar: 16g; Protein: 9g

the six o'clock SCRAMBLE®

INSPIRING IDEAS FOR QUICK
AND HEALTHY DINNERS!



Try www.thescramble.com. Use this promo code:
GLAVI2706 for \$3 off of a 6 or 12 month subscription.

TEAR OFF FOR A FRIEND!

GROCERY LIST

STAPLES

- 2 Tbsp. vegetable or peanut oil (1S)
- 5-6 Tbsp. + 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil (3) (3S) (4) (5) (5S)
- 1 tsp. minced garlic (2)
- 2 Tbsp. reduced-fat mayonnaise (2)
- 1 tsp. superfine sugar (optional for 4S)
- 1 tsp. honey (5S)
- 1 tsp. sugar (5)
- 1/2 cup ketchup (optional for 1S)
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar (5S)

SPICES

- 7/8 tsp. salt (1S) (5) (5S)
- 3/4-1 tsp. kosher salt (1) (3S)
- 3/8 tsp. black pepper (5) (5S)
- 1 tsp. dried oregano (1)
- 1 tsp. garlic powder (1)
- 1 tsp. paprika (1)
- 2 1/4 tsp. chili powder (1) (optional for 1S)
- 2 bay leaves (5)

MEAT AND FISH

- 3 lbs. bone-in chicken thighs (1)
- 8 oz. turkey, pork or vegetarian bacon (3)
- 1 1/2-2 lbs. cod fillets (or use other firm white fish such as flounder, catfish or tilapia) (2)

REFRIGERATED/FROZEN SECTION

- 1/2 cup shredded or grated Parmesan cheese (3)
- 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese (4)
- 2 Tbsp. blue cheese (5S)
- 12-16 oz. cheese tortellini (3)
- 6 burrito size (large) whole wheat or flour tortillas (4)
- 1 pkg. low fat breadsticks (bake-at-home), such as Pillsbury (5S)
- 1 1/2 cups frozen peas (3)
- 1-2 Tbsp. refrigerated pesto sauce (2S)

PRODUCE

- 1 large yellow onion (5)
- 3 large carrots (5)
- 2 stalks celery (5)
- 9 oz. baby spinach (4)
- 1 head lettuce (5S)
- 1 lb. green beans (2S)
- 1 lb. Brussels sprouts (3S)
- 2 medium sweet potatoes (1S)
- 1 lemon (2)
- 1/4 lime (4S)
- 3-6 cups seasonal mixed fruit such as strawberries, blueberries, bananas, grapes and/or melon (4S)

PRODUCE (CONT.)

- 1 apple (5S)

SHELVED ITEMS

- 1 1/2-2 cups crackers (buttery or whole grain) (2)
- 1 pkg. couscous (2S)
- 3/4 cup wild rice (5)
- 28 oz. crushed tomatoes (5)
- 30 oz. canned pinto beans (4)
- 32 oz. reduced-sodium chicken or vegetable broth (5)
- 1/2 cup salsa (4)
- 1 tsp. pine nuts (optional for 2S)
- 1/4 cup walnuts (5S)

These ingredients will prepare the following recipes

- (1) Simple Spice-Rubbed Chicken Thighs
 - (1S) Sweet Potato Fries
 - (2) Oven-Fried Lemon Garlic Cod
 - (2S) Couscous & Steamed Green Beans With Pesto
 - (3) Tortellini with Crisped Bacon and Peas
 - (3S) Roasted Brussels Sprouts
 - (4) Spinach Burritos
 - (4S) Fruit Salad With Lime Dressing
 - (5) Tomato and Wild Rice Soup
 - (5S) Baked Breadsticks & Green Salad With Apples, Toasted Walnuts And Blue Cheese
- S = used in sidedish for the corresponding recipe