



How to eat during the holidays

Is food the real enemy?

When you think about food, what comes to your mind? Low-fat? No-fat? Low-carbs? Protein? High in nutrition? What about the daily recommend amount per serving?

Some decades ago everyone could eat food, and then along came science and Ta-Dah! processed foods were born, supermarket shelves were replaced with items that could be zapped in minutes, fast food establishments popped up on every other corner all protesting low fat and nutritious. This was the new way to feed your family everything on the go. Wall Street was booming, while our health was taking on new diseases and food allergies.

We were taught new words like saturated fats, polyunsaturated fats, Trans fats, fructose, and color #5, and 6, etc, etc. To top it off we had to learn to count calories, read labels, watch our carbs, and follow the food pyramids for our daily servings.

Food became a chore instead of pleasure, our minds were fixed on the word "Diet", we tend to get nervous around autumn, we run around to book stores, surf the net, trying to find ways not to gain weight over the holidays.

Think about it. In the spring we detox our bodies, (our way of spring cleaning), then summer comes and we eat like rabbits in order to fit into that new bathing suit we bought that is 3 clothes size smaller. Then comes autumn and winter and we stuff our faces with what I call food overkill, we load up on process foods, take outs, low fat chips, cookies ice cream just because the label says low in calories doesn't mean it is good for you. Instead of using plates we use platters, after that, instead of getting out and exercising we hibernate in front of our new cocoon ("HDTV"). Now comes the New Year and we start the cycle all over again.

Food is not for rocket scientist, it is a simple pleasure that sustains life as long as we don't take it for granted. We don't need a book to tell us how to eat or for that matter what to eat, we need to retrain our minds on what food is. Eating a little meat will not kill you, though it might be better to have it as a side dish rather than the main course, and we know it is better eating whole fresh foods, (more local, than processed). During the holidays we should not have to starve ourselves, of run around frantic eating whatever we get our hands on. We can enjoy each season simply by learning to enjoy the pleasure of eating and sticking to smaller portions, (i.e.) an ice cream scoop of mash potatoes or half, a tablespoon of gravy. By keeping our portions small and learning to eat at the table instead of our cars can make a difference, even making it a group effort with the family can be enjoyable.

Here are a few suggestions to keep in mind

- Start incorporating local food rather than processed into your diet
- Start using herbs for flavor in your cooking.
- Re-think your meats as a side dish rather the main meal, this helps incorporate more vegetables.
- During the holidays don't skip breakfast or lunch for the Holiday parties it will only make you eat more.
- When filling your plate remember to keep your food inside the small circle, and don't pile the food on top of each other.
- With smaller portions you will be able to enjoy each selection without the guilt.
- Remember to sit and savor your food, by doing this you can enjoy the company you are around along with the food.
- After the family has finish eating, start a new routine, take a walk with the family or friends; learn to move about after finishing a meal.

Remember the coming Holiday months can be enjoyable and reintroducing our taste buds to what real food is can make a difference.

By Maliki

