

STAYING HEALTHY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

By: Lian Monley

For most expatriates the festive season is a time to relax and unwind and to enjoy spending time with family and friends, and rightly so! Unfortunately, along with all this time spent visiting and relaxing the temptation always arises to over-indulge and to put the year's hard work of choosing the healthier option at the back of your mind.

With some subtle changes, however, it is possible to still enjoy all the festivities and ease the blow when reconsidering New Year's resolutions.

Reducing the fat content

Fish is the best meat for a low fat content and there are many spices and marinades that can add incredible flavour to your meal.

Pork and chicken (without the skin) are also lower in fat than traditional meats such as beef and lamb. In fact, lamb contains the highest fat content. Beef rump has the most fat, with T-bone having less, then sirloin and the least fat is fillet.



Taking the greener option

Salads are a wonderful source of nutrients and can help in reducing the amount of meat you put on your plate. The options for variation in salads is incredible and can always add flavour to your meal. Use a good olive oil and balsamic vinegar as your dressing.



Portion size

Here's the tricky bit. Try and take a little something of everything you would like, placing more emphasis on the salads. And also make sure you don't try and slip in an extra large plate! This way you can enjoy everything and not over indulge.

Washing it all down

Keep in mind that alcohol contains a large amount of calories. By diluting your drinks with diet sodas or water, or choosing light beers you will still be able to enjoy a social drink and reduce the after-

effects of the alcohol.

THERE ARE ALSO SOME OTHER TIPS TO CONSIDER DURING THE FESTIVE SEASON:

Healthier snacking

Try and opt for healthier snacks such as pretzels or popcorn rather than crisps or peanuts and chocolates. Also try and choose healthier options when you go out to eat.

Grilled food has much less fat than fried food. And see what combinations you can make with a vegetarian pizza and remember to dab off the excess oil with a paper serviette. By reducing the amount of calories and fat intake over the entire festive season you will be pleasantly surprised by the end result in comparison with previous years when you may have given in to the more tempting options.

Christmas day

It is always difficult not to over-indulge on Christmas day. But again, select the less fatty morsels. Limit your intake of dark meats for the poultry and remember that most fat is associated with the skin. Depending on your options, rather pick a baked potato than a roasted one, etc. As before, have only one plate for your meal and focus on the salads rather than the meat. There's nothing wrong with a tasty pudding either – just don't devour the entire thing!

A few other general tips

Try and keep active over the festive season. A brisk walk will help to burn those extra calories and help to keep your blood pressure down.

Limit your salt intake and try to add flavour to your meals with spices.

Considering all these alternatives, there is no reason why you cannot have a wonderful festive season and still feel upbeat and fantastic when it comes to making New Year's resolutions!



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