

Feasting: a guide to healthy eating

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wild rice mixed with white rice on the side.)

You're better off using turkey broth, fruit juice, cider or wine in place of oil or fat for basting. If you avoid overcooking the meat, it will stay naturally juicy.

Place drippings in the freezer or refrigerator so that the fat rises to the top; skim it off and turn the juices into fat-free gravy.

Serve lots of veggies. For added flavor, cook them in turkey broth; you won't need to add butter or sugary glaze. Be sure to include a tempting green salad, and/or a pasta salad dressed with olive oil, herbs and spices.

For appetizers, serve crunchy carrot and celery sticks, fresh fruit cocktail, chilled shrimp or perhaps a consommé made of turkey broth and mushrooms.

Provide low-calorie drinks, such as seltzer or mineral water with lemon, fruit or vegetable juices; wine spritzers and non-alcoholic or light beers.

Instead of sugar-laden canned cranberry sauce, make your own by chopping together equal amounts of fresh, raw cranberries and oranges (with a bit of peel). Sweeten to taste with raisins or a low-calorie sweetener.

Unless the family will moan with protest, don't serve bread with the meal; replace with bread sticks (often a hit with the kids) or whole-grain

crackers.

For dessert? Baked apples instead of apple pie, pumpkin custard rather than pie with crust, fresh fruits, sorbets or non-fat frozen yogurt.

Chocolate lovers, a group who tend to suffer inordinate amounts of temptation and guilt during the holidays, will be delighted with these low-calorie health spa sweets (from *Chocolatier* magazine):

CHOCOLATE CHIP BANANA BRAN MUFFINS

1 cup shredded bran cereal (such as Kellogg's All-Bran)
 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons low-fat (2 percent) milk, at room temperature
 1/2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
 1/4 cup granulated sugar
 1/4 cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
 1 tablespoon baking powder
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1 cup mashed ripe bananas (approximately 2 large bananas)
 1 large egg, at room temperature
 1/4 cup vegetable oil

Yields 12 muffins, approximately 175 calories each.

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 400 F. Lightly butter 12 three-ounce muffin cups. In medium bowl, combine bran and milk. Let stand 3-4 minutes until soft. In large bowl, stir together flour, sugar, chocolate chips, baking powder and salt. In another

bowl, stir together bananas, egg, oil and softened bran mixture until blended. Make well in center of dry ingredients. Add liquid ingredients and stir with wooden spoon just to combine.

Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, making each cup 3/4 full. Bake 20-25 minutes, or until muffins are golden brown. Serve warm or cool completely; store in airtight container at room temperature for up to two days.

From the *Spa at Palm-Aire* in Pompano Beach, Fla.

CHOCOLATE FONDUE WITH FRESH FRUIT

1/2 cup half and half
 4 ounces bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
 1 ounce milk chocolate, finely chopped
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
 2 starfruit, cut into 12 slices
 12 strawberries
 2 kiwi fruit, pured and cut into 12 slices
 1/2 papaya, peeled, seeded, and cut into 12 slices

Yields six servings, approximately 189 calories each.

In small saucepan, bring half-and-half to gentle boil. Remove pan from heat. Stir in chocolate until melted. Stir in vanilla until smooth.

Pour chocolate fondue into four small cups. Place cups in center of four plates and arrange prepared fruit around each cup of fondue. Serve fondue warm or at room temperature.

From the *Norwich Inn and Spa*, Norwich, Conn.

CHOCOLATE CUSTARD WITH RASPBERRIES

7 tablespoons superfine sugar
 1/4 cup unsweetened non-alkalized cocoa powder
 2 tablespoons cornstarch
 1 teaspoon unflavored gelatin
 Pinch of salt
 1 cup half-and-half
 1 cup low-fat (2 percent) milk
 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon whole milk
 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
 2 tablespoons vanilla extract
 1 cup fresh raspberries
 1 teaspoon confectioners' sugar

Yields six servings, approximately 220 calories each.

In heavy non-aluminum medium saucepan, sift together sugar, cocoa, cornstarch, gelatin and salt. Whisk in half-and-half, low-fat milk, whole milk and eggs. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly for 3-5 minutes until mixture thickens and comes to boil. Remove from heat and strain into medium bowl. Stir in vanilla.

Spoon custard into six five-ounce champagne flutes. Cover surface of custards with plastic wrap and refrigerate for one hour until firm. Top chilled custards with raspberries and dust with confectioners' sugar.

From the *Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa*, Sonoma, Calif.

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