



Heart-Happy Holiday

G U I D E



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Welcome

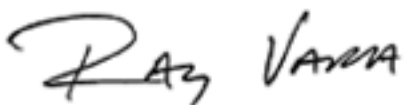
The holiday season includes its fair share of heart health challenges that can be stressful to manage. **As your ally in good health, we want to help you live heart-healthy during the holidays — and all year long!**

Inside this Heart-Happy Holiday Guide, we've included an abundance of tips to help you navigate the holiday season in a healthy, stress-free way. Of course, there's also a bounty of delicious, nutritious holiday recipes for you to enjoy no matter how you choose to celebrate!

It's our way of saying thank you for all you do to support the mission and help families and communities live long heart-healthy lives.

Because of you, we're able to give more families more holiday seasons together — and more moments that matter.

Happy Holidays!



Raymond P. Vara, Jr.
Chairman of the Board
Volunteer, 15 Years
American Heart Association

A close-up photograph of a person's hand using chopsticks to pick up green beans from a white bowl. The person has red nail polish on their thumb. The background is blurred, showing another person and a dark blue garment. The scene is set in a dining environment with warm lighting.

Holiday Health is Here

Staying healthy during the holidays doesn't mean you can't enjoy the festivities. Enjoying a few rich holiday foods with your friends and family won't hurt — if you also plan for meals that are healthy, too.

Enjoy the Flavors of the Season Without Derailing Your Health



“We go from work, to the parties after work, to home, from October to Jan. 1. It just doesn’t stop. And that, for a lot of us, presents lots of roadblocks,” said registered dietitian Annessa Chumbley.

“Do a little bit of mental preparation,” she said. “Know what flavors you like best, so that way you can enjoy the things that you want to enjoy in a small amount, then move on and not feel guilty.”

For example, if you love pumpkin pie, there’s nothing wrong with having a slice. But she cautions against eating it all season long. Instead, go for healthier options with the same pumpkin flavor like a pumpkin spice smoothie or homemade pumpkin pie granola. Or, spoon canned pumpkin into Greek yogurt with toasted pecans.

Tips to Slim Down — Seasonal Favorites

- If cocoa is your drink of choice, use low-fat or fat-free hot chocolate mixes with low-fat or nonfat milk or hot water.
- Halve your cocktails by having a glass of water or sparkling water between each alcoholic drink.
- What part of the bird do you like best? If you reach for the lighter pieces of meat, they have fewer calories than the darker ones. And, taking off the skin reduces fat.

See more tips and read the full article [here](#).



How to Keep Your Holiday Drinking at a **Minimum**

Opportunities for holiday drinks are all around us — whether it's sharing family stories over a cup of eggnog or toasting to the New Year. There's a reason why it's part of so many celebrations, especially during a season when people want to celebrate with loved ones!

Holiday drinking can be done at a safe level, but it can become problematic for your health with overconsumption. Learn to understand your safe levels and more [here](#).

'Tis the Seasoning That Boosts Your **Holiday Recipes**

From anise to za'atar and everything in between, there's an entire world of spices and herbs to add excitement and depth to your healthy at-home dishes. Dried or fresh, the right additions can make your meal.

Do you know how to properly store your herbs to keep them fresher longer? Or that some prepackaged sodium mixes contain dangerous amounts of salt?

Learn these tricks and more [here](#).

There's no better way to add excitement and depth to your healthy at-home dishes. Whether you use them dried or fresh, these flavor boosters will take your recipes to a new level.



Healthy Holiday Recipes

The smell of grandma's pumpkin pie baking or the taste of mom's famous roast instantly brings back memories of cherished holidays with friends and loved ones. Food is often the central focus of many a holiday gathering.

And sharing and swapping recipes with friends and family is always a fun way to enhance any seasonal meal. That's why we want to share our tested and trusted favorite holiday recipes with you. Not only are they crowd pleaser's but they're heart-healthy too. We hope you'll give these a try.



Curried Pork Tenderloin

Cranberry Chutney



This sweet and tart cranberry chutney adds a delicious seasonal twist to this holiday meal.

Ingredients

- 1 lb. pork tenderloin (all visible fat discarded)
- 1 Tbsp. curry powder
- 2 tsp. olive oil (extra virgin preferred)
- 1 cup whole-berry cranberry sauce
- 1 1/2 tsp. grated, peeled gingerroot
- 1/2 tsp. grated orange zest
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp. ground cloves

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Line a small rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil. Set aside.
2. Sprinkle the pork on both sides with the curry powder. Using your fingertips, gently rub the curry powder into the pork.
3. In a large nonstick skillet, heat the oil over

Directions cont.

- medium-high heat, swirling to coat the bottom. Cook the pork for 5 to 6 minutes, or until browned, turning once halfway through. Transfer to the baking sheet.
4. Roast for 20 to 25 minutes, or until the pork registers 150°F on an instant-read thermometer, or is slightly pink in the very center. Transfer the pork to a cutting board. Let stand, loosely covered, for about 10 minutes. The pork will continue to cook during the standing time, reaching about 160°F. Slice the pork.
5. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, stir together the chutney ingredients. Set aside until serving time. Serve with the pork.

Get nutrition information [here](#).

Chile-Cheese Stuffed Mushrooms



Put a kick in this crowd-pleasing appetizer. A hit at any party!

Meatball Ingredients

- Cooking spray
- 24 medium button mushrooms (about 1 pound)
- 4 ounces canned, chopped green chiles (drained)
- 1/2 cup shredded, low-fat sharp Cheddar cheese

Get nutrition information [here](#).

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil.
2. Place the mushrooms with the stem side down on the foil. Lightly spray the mushrooms with cooking spray.
3. Bake for 10 minutes.
4. Transfer the baking sheet to a cooling rack. Turn the mushrooms over. Fill each with the chiles. Sprinkle with the Cheddar.
5. Bake for 5 minutes, or until the Cheddar is melted. Remove from the oven and let stand for 3 minutes so the flavors blend.

Apple Bread Pudding



Whole-grain bread, apples, and cinnamon make a sweet dessert that's healthy. Serve it warm and enjoy with a glass of low-fat or fat-free milk.

Ingredients

- 1 large egg
- 1 large egg white
- 1 cup fat-free milk
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar blend
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves or allspice
- 6 slices light, whole-grain bread, cubed
- 3 medium apples (cored, cut into 1/2-inch cubes)
- 1/2 cup of any one of the following: raisins, unsweetened dried cranberries, fresh or unsweetened dried blueberries, chopped walnuts, pecans, or almonds (optional)

Quick Tips

Cloves are the dried, unopened buds of a type of evergreen tree. The ground cloves in this recipe add a sweet, slightly peppery flavor. Use cloves sparingly because their potent flavor can be overwhelming.

You can find even more holiday crowd pleasers at Heart.org.

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Lightly spray a 9-inch square baking dish with cooking spray.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together the egg, egg white, milk, brown sugar blend, vanilla, cinnamon, and cloves.
4. Stir in the bread, apples, and raisins, cranberries, blueberries, and/or nuts.
5. Pour the mixture into the baking dish. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, or until the bread cubes are golden brown.

Get nutrition information [here](#).

Keep the Holiday Cheer with “Top 5” Tips

It's completely normal to be overwhelmed with the stressors of the holidays and over-indulge in behaviors that can negatively impact your health. Try these tips to reclaim your happy holiday joy and continue prioritizing your health.



5 Tips for Managing Holiday Stress

1

Keep up healthy habits.

Make a pact with yourself during the holidays. Commit to moving more often and mixing in healthier meal choices between your holiday feasts. If you don't completely give up your healthy habits, you won't feel like you have to start over in the new year!

2

Beware of seasonal sweets.

The holidays often dish up extra helpings of indulgent treats. Try preparing [healthy snacks](#) that are ready to eat whenever your cravings hit, or challenge yourself to bring a delicious and nutritious option to your next holiday party using our [recipes and cooking tips](#).

3

Stay active.

Sprinkle some healthy activities into your daily routine, like moving your body or opting for lighter meals between holiday feasts. When the kids are home from school, squeeze in some active chores and trips to the park. Try a family walk around the neighborhood!

4

...But don't be too active.

Give yourself the gift of peace and spend some time resting & recharging for the year ahead. If you need some down time, do something that relaxes you, like [yoga, meditation](#) or [spending time in nature](#).

5

Make a plan for the new year.

New healthy habits are formed with patience and consistency — taking too much on at one time can derail your progress if you start to feel overwhelmed. Lay out realistic, sustainable steps for the months ahead, like committing to ten minutes of movement each day.

5 Blood Pressure Tips for Holiday Health

1

Avoid too many salty snacks.

Too much sodium has been known to increase blood pressure.

2

Practice stress management techniques.

Consider meditation, yoga, or spending time in nature.

Do what works for you!

3

Remember to take your medication.

Try setting a reminder on your phone if you know the holiday hustle will be distracting.

4

Be careful with over-the-counter medications.

Some decongestants may increase blood pressure.

5

Beware of sleep apnea.

If you snore or have serious trouble sleeping, consider seeing a doctor. Sleep apnea has the potential to be life-threatening.

**Have a Happy and
Healthy Holiday**



**American
Heart
Association.**