

## Enjoying the Christian holidays

Healthy eating during celebration days can be tricky. A lot of our traditional ways of celebrating are focused around food, this is something we enjoy and don't want to miss out on due to changing the way that we eat. Our favourite holidays include:



### Easter/lent

The first major event in the Christian calendar is Lent. Lent takes place in the 40 days prior to Easter. This is the opportunity for Christians to replicate Jesus' sacrifice in the desert for 40 days. In ancient times, Christians used to fast for the duration of lent, however nowadays not many Christians will fast for the duration, instead they usually give up a particular food such as chocolate, alcohol or desserts as well as activities such as smoking or social media. Lent ends on Easter Sunday where we celebrate with Easter Eggs, usually made of delicious chocolate.

### Christmas

Christmas marks the birth of Jesus Christ and as such, on Christmas day we celebrate with presents and a Christmas meal. The start of Christmas may mean Christmas parties, advent calendars, several roast dinners as well as alcohol.

### Weekly Celebrations

An additional consideration is the weekly end of service refreshments. At the end of a service, there is an opportunity to grab a coffee and chat with fellow Christians. Most weeks, there is usually some form of cake sale to raise money for a good cause or charity.

Most of these foods can be enjoyed in moderation as part of a balanced diet; however, you may wish to have some alternative options on hand to support your health goals. This might be finding different recipes to try or by moving the celebration away from food and finding new ways to enjoy the day with your friends and family.

This guide is to provide you with some tips and suggestions so that you can still enjoy yourself while also maintaining a healthy balance.



## Healthy Swaps

### Lent

During this time, most of us choose to give up a particular food such as chocolate, alcohol or desserts as well as activities such as smoking or social media. This is a great opportunity to try changing some habits with the support of your community. This can be the start of healthy changes.

### Easter Activities

No easter is complete without a good old fashioned easter egg hunt. A few tips to help with this include:

- Look at the nutrition table on the packet and try to choose those with a lower calorie content
- Instead of buying large easter eggs, switch to smaller versions – this is a great way to reduce calorie intake as well as sugar content too.
- A Cadbury XL Crème Egg Easter Egg contains around 2500 calories, whereas a small Cadbury Dairy Milk Buttons easter egg contains around 400 calories.

Why not also try some other easter activities such as learning how to blow and decorate eggs for a fun Easter activity kids can get stuck into. You will also have leftovers to make a delicious omelette!

### Christmas

A few tips to help around Christmas include:

- Instead of buying chocolate advent calendars, why not purchase alternatives, for example you can get coffee, candle, and personal grooming advent calendars.
- When cooking your delicious Christmas meal try using healthier fats such as olive oil and packing your plate full of lots of seasonal vegetables. Using vegetarian cookbooks to come up with new and exciting side dishes can be a holiday winner to impress your guests.

### Tips for managing alcohol intake include:

- Switch to smaller glasses such as half pints instead of pints and small glasses of wine.
- Switch to lower calorie beers or adding diet/zero sugar mixers to drinks to make a lager shandy or white wine spritzer.

### End of service celebrations

- If you have sugar in your tea or coffee, start by trying to reduce the amount you use – If you have 2 teaspoons of sugar, aim to have no more than 1.
- If you are going to have some cake, try and choose small piece or ask them to cut your slice in half to help reduce the calorie content.



## Trying something different

Of course, it's not just about the food choices, there are lots of other things we can do such as increasing our physical activity levels.

### Lent and Easter

Lent has always been a time to give something up but why not take up something new, a new sport or form of exercise. You might set yourself a target to do 30 minutes of different forms of exercise every day for 40 days.

### Christmas

Instead of purchasing an advent calendar full of chocolate, why not create your own advent calendar of 24 challenges such as on Day 1 aim to complete 1 minute of plank, on day 2 complete a 20 minute walk.

Most of all we hope you enjoy all the celebrations and if you have any questions around how to navigate a social occasion whilst staying on track reach out to your coach.

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