

With the holidays just around the corner, you may be concerned with what may become of your diet plan or waistline, but with a little planning and a healthy mindset, you can still enjoy holiday foods. Here are a few things to keep in mind to get you through the holiday season while maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Green Bean Casserole with Parmesan Crumb Topping



Makes 6 (1-cup) servings

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. green beans, trimmed and cut into 2" pieces

- Cooking spray

Sauce

- 10 small white mushrooms, sliced

- 3 T. whole wheat flour

- 1 c. almond milk, unsweetened (or other low-fat milk)

- 1 c. water

- 2 T. cream cheese

- ¼ c. Parmesan cheese, grated (not packed)

- ½ tsp. salt

- ¼ tsp. ground black pepper

Parmesan topping

- 1 T. olive oil

- 3 sm. onions, thinly sliced

- ½ c. whole wheat or Panko breadcrumbs

- 1/3 c. Parmesan cheese, grated (not packed)

- 3 T. water

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degree F. Spray large baking dish (8x11) with cooking spray and set aside.
2. Bring water to a boil in a large pot. Add beans along with pinch of salt, bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium and cook for 5-6 minutes. Green beans should be firm and not too soft. Drain and add a few cups of ice to stop the cooking process. Set aside.
3. Preheat large skillet on medium high and add olive oil. Add onions and cook until golden brown, stirring occasionally. Transfer to a medium bowl and set aside.
4. Return skillet to heat, spray with cooking spray and add mushrooms. Cook until gold brown. Reduce heat to low and add flour. Stir enough to coat the mushrooms. Slowly pour almond milk and whisk while pouring, until no lumps are left. Add water, cream cheese, Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper and whisk again. Bring to a boil and let simmer to thicken for about 3-4 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, add breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese and water to a bowl with onions and mix with your hands until crumbs appear.
6. Drain green beans, add the sauce and stir to combine.
7. Transfer green beans to prepared baking dish and sprinkle with topping. Bake uncovered for 25 minutes. Serve warm.

Nutrition Info Per Serving: 196 Calories, 7.6g Fat, 12 mg Cholesterol, 459mg Sodium, 20g Carbohydrate, 5.9g Fiber, 9.3g Protein

- Remember to stay active. Food is a large part of the holiday celebration, but moving around more can help counteract our increased calorie intake. Start a new family tradition such as going for a walk, playing an annual flag football game, or enjoy winter activities such as sledding.
- Avoid skipping meals earlier in the day. Going to a party hungry usually leads to overeating.
- Grazing on appetizers at holiday parties can easily increase your calorie intake without you even realizing it. Snack smart: avoid hovering over the food table and just fill a small plate once and sit down, fill up on crunchy veggies, watch out for creamy and cheesy dips, and limit your portions from the meat and cheese tray to limit your sodium and saturated fat intake.
- You may also want to enjoy a celebratory drink or two at the party, but keep in mind those calories can add up, too. Drinks should be limited to no more than 2 drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women.
- At meal time, think of the MyPlate. Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables such as broccoli, carrots, or Brussels sprouts, fill one-fourth of the plate with starchy foods like sweet potatoes, whole wheat roll, or corn, and then the last fourth can be filled with a lean protein such as roasted turkey breast or chicken without the skin. You could also add a side of fruit salad and/or dairy.
- Sweets are often abundant at holiday parties, just remember to keep your portions small since desserts are often dense in calories, carbs, and unhealthy fats.

When you bring a dish to a holiday party, look for a lighter recipe. It will give you a healthy option, along with others who are trying to maintain their weight around the holidays. Try this lighter alternative for a green bean casserole, for a healthy twist for a family favorite!