



Your Holiday Survival Plan by Alexis Williams

Ahh winter... Time to hibernate, sit back with warm drinks and raise a toast to the holiday season with friends. So what if your pants get a little tighter over the cold months? Bathing suit season is miles away...

While this may be the reality for some, Canadian runners and walkers don't hibernate; instead we slosh through slush, sleet and snow in search of P.R.s in the spring. And with great winter and early spring races, it's important to stay healthy and fit over the holiday season.

Does that mean you can't enjoy the parties, festivities and delectable treats the season has to offer? Of course not! You just have to be smart in your choices and you'll survive the holiday season in top form.

Here are a few tips to help you manage the holiday season:

- **Be realistic**—December may not be the month to try to lose weight. Focus on a goal of maintaining if you're in weight loss mode and if you're not, focus on not gaining more than a couple of pounds.

- **Plan ahead**—There are many parties and family gatherings where you can indulge but pick only two or three where you'll let loose. Eat what you want, but have an action plan for the others.

- **Don't go in hungry**—This is classic weight loss advice, but it sure does help you manage indulging. Have a protein/veggie snack prior to parties because the fibre and protein will keep you full and less peckish.

- **Distract yourself socially**—If you hang out by the food all night, you're more likely to keep nibbling. Get one plate and then move away from the food. Go tell your friends some of your funniest running stories!

- **Don't forget about liquid calories**—If the odd festive beverage is your thing, those calories can add up as well. Popular holiday drinks like rum and eggnog are very rich in calories (eggnog [250 mL] with 1.5 oz.

[45 mL] light rum is 456 calories), but there are some great lower calorie options. Why not challenge the staple wine you're used to with dinner and choose one of the refreshing options you may have discovered this summer, like Molson Canadian 67 Sublime (a premium light beer at only 67 calories) or a non-alcoholic option such as sparkling water with a lemon or lime wedge.

- **Bring something healthy**—At potluck and family events, it's easy to make sure you have at least one healthy option. Whether a veggie/hummus tray, fruit or healthier version of a favourite, it will help you and your guests stay on track.

- **Load up your plate with the low-calorie options**—If you like the look of a full plate, add more veggies and fruit and less of the calorie-dense stuff.

- **Remember, it's not the last time you'll indulge**—We often get into all or nothing thinking and tell ourselves that in January there will be no more treats. This kind of thinking leads to overindulging because you panic and feel the need to go overboard as you plan to never indulge again. Have a more realistic view and realize that there will always be another time to indulge.

Let's take a look at some holiday favourites as well as some healthier options that can save you extra calories.

TRADITIONAL	HEALTHIER
3 egg rolls w/. dipping sauce (1 tbsp.) ¹ 522 kcal	3 fresh rolls w/. dipping sauce (1 tbsp.) ² 246 kcal
8 baby carrots with ranch dressing (2 tbsp.) ¹ 170 kcal	8 baby carrots with 2 tbsp. hummus ¹ 75 kcal
medium brownie square ¹ 243 kcal	medium oatmeal raisin cookie ¹ 113 kcal
6 breaded shrimp ¹ 277 kcal	8 plain shrimp ¹ 106 kcal
loaded nachos (8 chips w/. ground beef, cheese, beans) ¹ 569 kcal	baked nachos (15 chips w/. ½ cup salsa) ¹ 155 kcal
eggnog (from carton, 250 mL) ¹ 360 kcal	apple cider (250 mL) ¹ 120 kcal
eggnog (250 mL) with 1.5 oz. (45 mL) light rum 456 kcal	Molson Canadian 67 (341 mL bottle) 67 kcal
Christmas pudding (1/8 pudding, 113 g) ¹ 333 kcal	apple crisp (1/6 pkg, 108 g) ¹ 210 kcal

Research by Rebekah Keith

Reference: 1) Canadian Nutrient File 2) Calorie Count (www.caloriecount.about.com)

As you can see, by making a few simple switches, you can save a lot of extra calories. While this may not seem that important, remember it takes just 3500 extra calories to gain a pound. Keeping in top form this winter may be easier than you think. 🍏



About Alexis

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