

“Food Freedom”

Holiday Guide 2020



HIBISCUSLY
YOURS NUTRITION

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Hi, I am Loni Freeman, Registered Dietitian and owner of Hibiscusly Yours Nutrition LLC. I have more than ten years of experience in the Foodservice & Hospitality industry and currently I work as a Clinical Dietitian in an acute hospital setting.

My passion for community service and great food led me to start my very own business where I provide individualized nutrition counseling for women on their wellness journey.

For far too long, our society has been taught to ride or embrace the latest fad diet wave, omit food groups and feel ashamed about food choices. Particularly, during holiday gatherings people often either:

- 1) binge eat during occasions then begin purging on January 1st
- 2) refuse to eat at all during holiday gatherings quoting the popular phrase “I am being good today”
- 3) feel extremely guilty for partaking in specialty holiday meals

This Holiday “Food Freedom” Guide is designed with a few simple goals in mind:

- ❖ Bring awareness to the various stress factor(s) during the holidays
- ❖ Physically Activity but make it FUN!!
- ❖ Guilt free eating vs Shameful tactics
- ❖ COVID Holiday Meals on a Budget \$\$
- ❖ Small Gatherings w/ Social Distancing
- ❖ Thankful that All Foods Fit
- ❖ Responsible Cocktails
- ❖ Resist the New Year’s Binge Diet

1. Key Stress Factors that Influence Holiday Eating

There is a plethora of reasons why stress rises during the Holiday Season. Individuals are affected on various levels from emotional distress of losing a loved one, depression and loneliness or financial challenges that make it impossible to even think of spending money.

The COVID-19 Pandemic highlights a new reality that will likely affect each household within the nation. The fact that loved ones have been lost/died will make spending time together difficult during the final months of 2020.

Weight stigma, mainly how overweight a person appears, increases significantly during holiday gatherings. Whether it is too much candy at Halloween, filling your plate with seconds at Thanksgiving dinner or feeling uncomfortable in your New Year's Eve outfit, people often reveal how they dread the holiday season.

Financial limitations can also affect how families spend the holiday season. Perhaps they can only afford to celebrate with a "feast" on either Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner as it is customary to prepare huge table spreads of endless dishes and desserts.

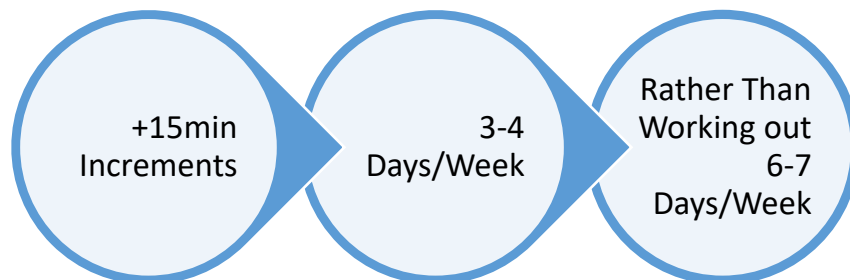
2. Exercise vs. Physical Activity

Don't be obsessed with double time of exercise during the holidays just to keep up with stressful eating for the next sixty days left in 2020. It will not be beneficial to follow the trend of starving yourself and being "good" by restricting food groups and calories just because you desire an extra slice of turkey or apple pie.

It will only increase your stress level and bring less enjoyment to the holiday season when you are skipping meals, omitting food groups and constantly getting on the scale weekly and in some instances, daily. Ask yourself this, if the “number” on the scale will be a burden or a barrier to your holiday festivities, then I suggest **DITCH THE SCALE!!**

Depending on your physical activity level pre-holiday season, try the following tips below:

- ❖ Find an outdoor activity (biking, walking, hiking) that you love and get moving
- ❖ Focus on what feels good for your body rather than exercising solely to burn calories
- ❖ Increase your normal time spent for physical activity vs. excessive daily workouts



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3. Guilt Free-Eating vs Shameful Tactics

Guilt- Free eating is a critical part of understanding how to find “Food Freedom”.

The definition of Guilt is: having committed an offense or wrong doing to someone. This can be interchangeable with “shame” especially when food is involved with the mindset of labeling food as “Bad” or “Good”.

Try these 3 Tips to Assist with Guilt-Free Eating

- ❖ Pleasure – Always Enjoy your absolute favorite foods; taking time to Sip & Savor the Season
- ❖ Portion – Use your Plate as a guide to portion accordingly; stick to (1) handheld item at once and don’t fill over the sides or top of the plate rim
- ❖ Satiety means to not overeat until the feeling of being uncomfortable

Once the shame becomes intolerable, certain tactics are taken, which include:

- ❖ Binge eating during holiday gatherings to feel like “fitting in”
- ❖ Ignoring hunger cues to avoid the judgement of others because of personal food choices
- ❖ Use of Laxatives to “Cleanse”



4. Thankful that All Foods Fit

All foods fit approach focusing on a few key components:

- ❖ Balance of Nutrients when choosing your food selection
 - While a plethora of items will be available it is still possible to eat healthy
- ❖ No “Omission” of Food Groups – Yes to CARBS!!
 - Sweet Potato, Mashed Potato, Mac & Cheese etc. who enjoys a holiday feast without all the famous SIDES!!



Pictured above is an example of a Plate from a Thanksgiving gathering; notice that all the major food groups, Carbohydrates, Protein and Vegetables were selected.

4. Thankful that All Foods Fit cont....

- ❖ Sweets are not the Enemy and with so many variations of cakes, pies and cookies, dessert is likely the GRAND FINALE of your Meal
 - Fruit filled Pies – Apple, Pumpkin & Pecan
 - Cakes – Carrot, Gingerbread & Sweet Potato

Chances are you will more likely offend your Mom or Grandma by skipping a piece of her delectable dessert rather than worrying about how the yummy slice of pie will affect your “diet”.



Picture above is a sample of a holiday dessert bar including 1) Chocolate Trifle Cake and 2) Assorted Guava, Pineapple and Coconut tarts.

5. COVID Holiday Meals on a Budget \$\$

The financial stability of most American households have been affected by the 2020 Pandemic. The unemployment rates are staggering and government benefits like the second stimulus package are uncertain. Some companies will likely not be able to provide holiday bonus or gift card incentives that are much appreciated during this time.

- ❖ Here are a few Tips for making Budget Friendly Holiday Meals:
 - Download Rewards/Savings Apps (Ibotta, Pei or Fetch)
 - Visit Food Banks, Farmers Market or Local Vendors for Items



- Clip Coupons from Grocery Store Sales Paper



- Make a Menu for your Holiday Meal (Cook with a Plan)

6. Socially Distance Gatherings

It is imperative that everyone continues to be Safe during the Pandemic and follow the recommendations of the **Health Experts ONLY!!**

Although holiday tradition calls for large Family/Friendsgiving indoors, resist the urge and practice social distancing for the Wellbeing of Everyone!!

I have actually done a few Virtual Cooking Classes and Hosted Brunches that were really FUN!!! Obviously this is not conducive for everyone but when available plan for alternatives to be Socially Responsible.



7. Responsible Cocktails

When consuming Alcoholic Beverages in any setting, firstly and most important, remember to make a plan to ensure you **Drink Responsibly.**

- ❖ Know Your Limit for Alcohol Consumption
- ❖ Establish a designated driver or alternate means of transportation
- ❖ Hydrate with Water between Drinks
- ❖ Eat a full Meal before consuming Cocktails
- ❖ Mocktails are an Excellent way to stay Sober this Holiday Season
 - Cran-Lime Spritzer
 - Apple & Ginger Iced Tea



**Enjoy
Responsibly**

8. Resist the New Year's Resolution Diet Fad

The number one New Year's resolution is "Lose Weight" every single year and hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent on Diet Trends. Advertisements are endless all throughout the Holiday Season as all the Weight Loss companies and Gyms know without a doubt that on Jan 1st, they can capitalize on weight loss.

While there is absolutely nothing wrong with wanting to feel better and look great, it becomes a vicious cycle when only done for the "Societal Image" of health and body image standards.

Let's focus on more of the Affirmatives in Food Freedom and less of Diet Culture trends.



Finally, remember the reason(s) for spending the “Holiday Season” is to enjoy Family, Friends and the traditions that you and yours hold sacred.

While the enjoyment of food is widely seen as endless and bountiful, there is no doubt that the challenges of 2020 will change that reality for some people.

Using food for the pure nourishment and pleasure that it provides is definitely a treasured part of each family’s holiday experience.

I hope that the tips in this “Food Freedom” Holiday Guide will be of benefit to you as we begin the **2020 Holiday Season.**

Best Regards,

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