



## Weekly Tip:

As a trainer for the National Food Safety Training Program through the Canadian Restaurant and Food Services Association I would like to share my two favourite tips for safe food handling during the holidays.

#1 - do not actually stuff your bird! I know this sounds contradictory to tradition but stuffing poultry actually changes the bird's ability to unify cooking temperatures internally which means that even though it make look 'cooked' your bird and your stuffing may not have gotten hot enough long enough to kill any potentially harmful bacteria!

#2 - to avoid letting bacteria grow to unhealthy levels—never defrost at room temperature. If you do not have room to thaw your bird in your refrigerator (on the bottom shelf), cook your turkey from frozen. Not only will it be safer, it will actually stay more moist and tender!

## A Healthier Holiday

How many times have you said to yourself—I will go back to eating well after the holidays! Or maybe it is more of a whine when you say, 'But it's Thanksgiving!' As you have a third piece of pumpkin pie? If these things sound familiar, don't worry—you are not alone—far from it! One of the most common questions, problems, excuses I get from clients is weight gain over the holidays—the problem is that there is a holiday almost every month so if this is an issue for you, it really is an issue!

Now don't get me wrong, I love some old fashioned treats myself and there is nothing wrong with them in moderation, the holidays become a problem when you can no longer determine for yourself what moderation is. If you eat until you are stuffed and have to joke about undoing your pants—or if you feel bad, guilty or even find yourself justifying what you are eating to yourself and to others—then you have a problem with holiday indulgences and if you are serious about living a healthy lifestyle, that problem needs to be corrected.

So... I bet you are all thinking "Ok Michelle—how exactly do I do that?" As you roll your eyes at me. I can see you you know ;)

Now here are a few of my top tips for making any holiday for that matter a healthier holiday and one that won't sabotage your weight loss or lifestyle goals.

#1 - Change your definition of tradition. Yes our parents and grandparents cooked certain foods certain ways and we all want to keep those feelings from holidays past alive but the reality is that times have changed. Our activity levels have changed, so have our waist sizes. Just because you have always done something a certain way doesn't mean you have to keep doing it. Choose one important food-related tradition to keep and then look for healthier alternatives for the rest, this could mean changing recipes or even foods. Think outside of the box and don't be afraid to experiment.

#2 - Host whenever possible! Holiday gatherings are treacherous for those with healthy lifestyle goals. Not only do we not know what is being prepared and how, but we feel obligated to taste and finish everything put before us whether we are hungry or not. When you host a dinner or an event you have control over what is served and how it is prepared, even if it is potluck because you can be specific as to what you ask others to bring.

#3 - pace yourself! Instead of heaping your plate with everything that looks good—take smaller portions and eat slower. It takes time for your stomach to tell your brain it is full and if you don't breathe before bites you will be overloaded before you even know it! Put your fork down between bites, take smaller helpings so you have to take the time to get more if you still want it, and don't be afraid to hold a conversation over dinner—besides, isn't that what family gatherings are for?

#4—Help with dishes! Seriously I mean that and not just for my own guests! If you get up from the table and start to move around you will actually start to burn off your dinner faster than if you just sit there. An overloaded digestive system will make you feel boggy and slow and less likely to actually do something after dinner. The more you move around, the more you will feel like moving—start a new tradition with a family walk after dinner, play a game of touch football, go to the park—do ANYTHING but sit on the couch and talk about how full you are! Remember that there are little eyes watching you and don't you want their holiday memories to be healthier than ours were?

# Recipe Corner

Delicious and nutritious snack and meal ideas that are perfect for the whole family!  
Straight from Michelle's kitchen!



## Healthier Pumpkin Pie

*This healthier alternative to a holiday favourite with only 160 calories, 9g of sugar and 5g of fat will shock everyone with it's traditional taste! Not the healthiest option for dessert but definitely a healthier way to make an old favourite for those of us who can't imagine Thanksgiving without it!*

**Crust:** blend 1 cup whole grain flour 1.5 tsp. of granulated sugar. Cut in 3tbsp cold margarine with knives or pastry blender— gradually add 2—3 tbsp. of ice water and blend with fork. Roll out to fit bottom of 9” pie shell - the less you work it the better it will be!

**Filling:** 1 Can (15o) pure pumpkin, 1 can (14o) of fat-free evaporated milk, 3/4 cup sugar substitute, 2tbsp cornstarch blended well with 1 tbsp. water and 1/2 tsp. each of cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and ginger.

Bring evaporated milk to a boil and sugar substitute until dissolved, let cool and set aside. Blend cornstarch with water until smooth, set aside. In large bowl mix pumpkin with spices, add milk mixture and blend well. Gradually add cornstarch mixture and spices to taste. Pour into uncooked shell and bake at 425°F for 15 minutes, reduce heat to 350 °and continue cooking for 20 minutes or until knife inserted comes out clean.

Let cool, cut into 8 slices and serve with fat-free whipped topping!

## White or Dark?

When carving your favorite bird this Thanksgiving, someone is sure to ask or be asked, ‘white meat or dark?’ and the question is—which should you choose?

The difference between white and dark meat nutritionally is actually very small. Both choices are lean, high-protein meats that are high in iron, zinc, thiamine, riboflavin and vitamins B6 and B12 but did you know that when it comes to vitamins and minerals, dark meat actually has more? That is because dark meat is found in highly muscular regions of these birds, areas that contain myoglobin—a compound that enables better oxygen transport—more oxygen means more nutrients.

So how do you choose? Some may make their choice based on tastes and texture as white meat has a lighter tastes and is leaner while dark meat is heavier and moist.

Other than taste and texture, the biggest benefit that white turkey meat has over dark is that it is lower in both fat and calories—hence making it seem like the healthier choice for someone looking to lose weight or manage their fat/calorie intake. A 3.5ozs serving of skinless white turkey meat has approximately 161 calories and 4g of fat less than 1 of which is saturated. A 3.5oz serving of skinless dark turkey meat has approximately 192 calories and 8g of fat (< 2g saturated) but more vitamins and minerals. Considering that both choices are low in saturated fat, calories and high in lean proteins—there really is no wrong choice here.

As long as you are not over-consuming your portions (remember that we only need 2-3 servings of meat a DAY), whether you choose white or dark meat, turkey is a great choice for a healthy lifestyle - all year ‘round. With one exception.... Do NOT eat the skin!

I don't care how delicious it looks all crunchy and crisp, eating the skin off of your turkey is a very fast way to sabotage your weight loss plan and clog your arteries with those unwanted saturated fats! Where 3.5oz of white meat is 161 calories and 4g of fat, the skin of a turkey contains a whopping 482 calories and 44gr of fat for every 3.5 ounces! That is more than the limit of fat intake you should have in an entire day in just one or two mouthfuls! That 44 gr contains over 10g of saturated fats and over 25% of your daily limit of cholesterol. Not so appetizing now is it? And don't worry about skinning that bird! Cooking with the skin on will not significantly increase the fat content of your turkey meat—as long as that skin comes off before eating! Cooking your poultry with the skin on will seal in the flavor and moisture.

Another great tip is to cook your bird upside down—breasts down to add extra flavor and moisture to your white meat!