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MINDFUL HOLIDAY EATING

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Whether you are hosting the holiday party, or just there for a good time, food is probably on your brain. And for many people, the holiday eating frenzy can be an emotional battle that makes it hard to practice the empowering principles of intuitive eating.

Many people begin the holiday season with a crash diet, or the hopes of using their will power to keep themselves from eating too much and gaining extra weight. This way of thinking is damaging. Instead of creating a list of “forbidden” holiday foods, try keeping the mindset that nothing is prohibited. Anytime something is deemed “off-limits,” it suddenly becomes much more appealing than if you knew you could have it whenever you wanted. Deprivation also creates guilt, and when guilt and food mix, the result is usually eating too much or eating too little.

This unconditional permission to eat can also be applied to your ability to say no to a food. Don’t let the pressure of being a polite guest override your right to choose when, what and how much you eat.

Getting in touch with your hunger and fullness signals is a great way to enjoy holiday eating without the useless guilt. If you can take a moment to recognize if you are really hungry, or simply eating because of stress or social situations, you will be able to make better decisions when it comes to food. By eating slowly, enjoying the conversation and staying mindful of your fullness cues, you can stop eating before making yourself sick.

Emotional eating habits are often elicited during the stressful holiday months. Know what situations trigger your desire to use food as a coping mechanism, and do what you can to prepare for them. Keep a healthy snack in your purse, take five minutes to meditate in a quiet room, or find a moment to slip away for a quick walk around the block.

Finally, try entering the holiday eating season without thoughts of the New Year’s diet. Having a mental deadline for what you are allowed to eat often causes you to choose less healthy foods and eat more of them than if you had no impending diet looming on the horizon. This type of “last supper eating” does not serve you, and instead work on accepting the idea that food is meant as a means to keep you fed and feeling satisfied all year long.

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Spinach Dip Stuffed Mushrooms

Source: www.lexiscleankitchen.com

INGREDIENTS:

FOR THE CASHEW CREAM

- 1 cup raw cashews
- 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt

FOR THE SPINACH DIP

- 2 tablespoons butter or extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 shallot, minced
- ½ onion, minced
- 3 packed cups fresh spinach
- ½ cup Cashew cream (from above)
- Fine sea salt
- Red pepper flakes
- 1 pound cremini mushrooms, cleaned and destemmed
- Optional: ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese

DIRECTIONS:

Soak the cashews in a bowl of water for at minimum 1 hour or up to 8 hours.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

Heat the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic, shallot, and onion and cook until soft, about 3 minutes. Fold in the spinach and cook, stirring occasionally, until the spinach has wilted. Set aside.

To make the cashew cream: Drain the soaked cashews and place them in a small food processor or high-speed blender. Puree the cashews with the 1 tablespoon of olive oil and ½ teaspoon of salt. Fold the cashew cream into the spinach mixture until evenly combined.

Arrange the mushroom caps on the lined baking sheet and brush the outside of the caps lightly with olive oil. Scoop a large spoonful of the spinach mixture into the cavity of each cap. Top with the cheese, if using.

Bake in the oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until the mushrooms are soft and the cheese has begun to brown. Serve warm or at room temperature.