It’s the holidays and for most of us, that means indulging in a whole lot of comfort food. But why not take healthier means on WHAT we eat, but HOW we eat during this holiday season? Mindful eating might help you reach that approach.

According to Harvard Medical School, mindfulness refers to the practice of being aware and in the now. Applied to eating, mindfulness includes noticing the smell, flavors, colors, and texture of your food. It also means, chewing slowly, removing any distractions, such as turning off the TV or putting away your phone. Mindful eating can help you fully enjoy a meal and the experience of eating holiday food---with moderation and restraint.

Here are a few tips for more mindful eating.

1. **Control portions.** Especially during the holidays, know that second portions of festive treats will be readily available. You don’t have to deprive yourself, just eat smaller portions and less often.

2. **Plan.** Prepare healthy snacks throughout the day. If you tend to get hungry between meals, bring a whole grain, high-fiber snack. Fiber keeps you feeling full longer.

3. **Chew 15 times.** Enjoy each bite and put your fork down. Try to get 15 chews out of each bite. Take time to enjoy flavors and textures in your mouth before swallow.

4. **Turn off distractions.** Have you ever glanced down from your phone, TV, or computer, to only wonder where all your food went? These distractions make us less aware of what and how much we are eating.

5. **Don’t clean your plate.** Many of us were brought up to finish everything on our plate and were not allowed to leave the dinner table until we did. It is okay to not finish the plate. Try packing the leftovers to go. Even though no one likes to waste, overeating doesn’t help either.

Mindful eating offers many benefits throughout the year, but is especially helpful during the holidays. The key to mindful eating is awareness. Simply by paying more attention to WHAT and HOW you eat, you’re more likely to make beneficial changes and make the season more meaningful for you.

Source:
https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/10-tips-for-mindful-eating-just-in-time-for-the-holidays-201511248698
https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/weight-loss/in-depth/weight-loss/art-20044318
### Breakfast
- Whole grain cheerios
- Baked egg muffins
- Sliced ham
- Whole grain tortilla & nut butter
- Whole wheat English muffin
- banana
- stir fry potatoes
- tomato and cheese slices
- grapes
- Milk (1% / whole)
- Milk (1% / whole)
- Milk (1% / whole)
- Milk (1% / whole)
- Milk (1% / whole)

### Lunch or Dinner
- Firm Tofu Stir fry
- Lean beef patties
- Mozarella cheese
- Baked fish fillet
- Split pea soup
- quinoa
- whole wheat bun
- whole grain pasta
- wild rice
- pita bread
- asparagus
- broccoli
- corn
- green beans
- squash
- carrots
- tangerine
- broccoli
- orange slices
- apple
- Milk (1% / whole)
- Milk (1% / whole)
- Milk (1% / whole)
- Milk (1% / whole)
- Milk (1% / whole)

### Snack Am or Pm
- Boiled egg
- Green/red bell peppers
- Baked garbanzo beans
- Edamame
- sweet potato
corn tortilla
- hummus
tangerines
- whole grain crackers
- milk 1%/whole

---

### *Sweet Spinach Muffins*

**Ingredients:**
- 2 cup flour, whole wheat
- 1 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ cup honey
- 6 ounces spinach
- 1 large egg
- ¾ cup milk
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 large banana
- ½ cup unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

**Instructions:**
1. Preheat oven to 350 F, and line a muffin pan with paper liners (or use silicone muffin cups sprayed with cooking spray).
2. Combine all dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl.
3. Melt butter. Blend the wet ingredients in a blender or food processor until completely pureed.
4. Pour the puree into the dry ingredient bowl, and fold together gently until just combined. (Do not over-mix.)
5. Spoon the batter into the muffin pan, and bake for 18-22 minutes, or until the muffins are firm to the touch on top, but not quite browning.
6. Cool most or all of the way before serving.

**Yields:** approximately 18 cupcakes

Source: recipe modified from [www.superhealthykids.com](http://www.superhealthykids.com)

---

### Training Corner

**Introducing Food to Infants**

The CACFP is now requiring parents to advise the provider when an infant is developmentally ready to be offered solid foods.

All providers caring for infants must send a Parent/Guardian Consent Form to the CACFP with both parent and provider signature to avoid any meal disallowances.