

How to Navigate Holiday Parties: Tips from Smart Life

Holidays are on the horizon, and the requisite parties and annual celebrations are about to commence. But this doesn't have to mean ditching healthy eating and revoking wellness routines until resolution time comes in the New Year. There are easy-to-implement ways to successfully navigate holiday parties while having fun, making memories, enjoying the company, all while staying healthy! Here are my Smart Life tips:

Begin with a "pre-party": Holiday pre-partying includes ensuring you are well hydrated and not showing up to parties overly hungry. Having a small, healthy snack before you leave home can offset the dive into the salty snacks like nuts, chips, and pretzels. When you do arrive, opt for healthier choices like raw vegetables with hummus and sparkling water with lemon. Should you choose to partake in drinking alcohol, make sure you're keeping hydrated throughout the day. This can also help offset increased sodium consumption that's common in holiday fare.

Be helpful and bring a dish: Offer to bring along a dish and make that a healthy option. This will give you a solid selection to choose from, but others will also thank you for it! Healthier dishes tend to offer lots of fresh colors, and you can be mindful of sugar, salt, and bad additives when choosing and making a dish. I love to offer to bring a healthy salad, a vegetable platter, or a simply cooked clean protein like baked salmon.

Once and done: Fill up one plate and be done. But know this up front—make your smart choices wisely knowing that this is the plan. Then make the best food choices from what is available, being aware that you are filling up your plate once. Remember

to include lots of color and variety. It's okay to enjoy some goodies –try small bites of one or two goodies and see if that fulfills you. Balance is key!

Liquid calories count: Whatever choices of beverages you choose to include, know that they count towards the “big picture” as well. If you are choosing to drink alcohol, know that lots of holiday cocktails are often full of sugar from fruit juices, soda, and liqueurs. Try to go for a simple glass of wine, or even a wine spritzer (half wine, half sparkling water). If you prefer hard liquor, mix it with sparkling water and a slice of lime or lemon.

Give yourself grace: Beating yourself up overindulging is never a helpful tactic. Fasting, over-exercising or other restrictive tactics to make up for what you may consider to have been poor choices lead to feelings of inadequacy and lower self-esteem. Instead, practice self-compassion and remember all the positive wellness habits you have incorporated into your lifestyle thus far. Attempt to get back into your routines as soon as possible after the holiday party season and remember that it's the long-term practices you put into place that best benefit your well-being.

The Bottom Line

Health is a journey, not a destination. There will be bumps in the road, and yes, many of them can potentially come during holiday season. Remember that you are in it for the long haul, and this is just a different time to navigate. With the above suggestions, I'm confident that you can successfully navigate holiday parties this year and every year – you got this! And if you need some support in getting back on your Smart Life, reach out. I am here to give you the support you need.

Wild Rice and Edamame Salad

Ingredients

- 2 cups wild rice, rinsed
- 2 cups shelled edamame
- 3 scallions, sliced diagonally
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 1/2 cup fresh basil, chopped
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 Tablespoon minced ginger
- 4 Tablespoons lime juice
- 2 Tablespoons brown rice vinegar
- 3 Tablespoons tamari
- 1 teaspoon raw honey
- 2 Tablespoons sesame oil
- 2 Tablespoons toasted sesame oil
- 1 cup chopped walnuts, toasted
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 2 Tablespoons sesame seeds, toasted

Directions

1. Bring 4 cups of water to a boil and add rice. Bring to a boil, cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer until rice grain are tender and most water has been absorbed, about 45-60 minutes. Drain if water remains. Place on a sheet pan, spread out to cool.
2. Blanch edamame in a pot of boiling salted water, about 1 minute. Drain and cool in ice bowl.
3. In a large bowl, combine rice, scallion, carrot, pepper, edamame, and fresh herbs. Toss.
4. In a small bowl, combine garlic, ginger, lime juice, vinegar, tamari and honey; mix. Drizzle in sesame oils and whisk to blend.

5. Add dressing to rice mixture and combine. Stir in walnuts, and raisins, reserving a few to garnish. Top with sesame seeds.

** Recipe adapted from www.greennapkinnutrition.com*

Oat Milk with Muesli and Superfoods

This powerful, filling and fiber-rich breakfast will hold you over on days when you're expecting to eat a late-afternoon lunch. The oat milk lasts three days in your refrigerator when stored in a sealed glass jar.

Not keen on oats or simply prefer seeds or nuts? Just replace the oats with the same quantity of seeds or nuts and blend in their place. Almonds, brazils and hazelnuts need soaking overnight, whereas cashews absorb water more quickly so they only need about three hours of soaking.

Oat milk

1 cup whole oats or raw nuts (soaked in tap water)

1 liter spring or filtered water

2 teaspoons coconut oil

1 drop vanilla extract

2 dates

Muesli & Super Foods

½ cup sugar-free muesli

2 tablespoons Goji berries

1 to 2 tablespoons omega 3-rich seeds (hemp, flax or chia)

To prepare the oat milk:

Soak the oats in tap water for 2 hours and drain. Add the oats and spring or filtered water to a blender and liquidize until smooth. Add the rest of the ingredients and blend for another 30 seconds.

To prepare the rest of the dish:

Pour 1 cup of the oat milk over the sugar-free muesli. Top with Goji berries and seeds.

Protein-Packed Plant Diets That Work

Most people think steak, chicken or fish when they think of protein-packed meals. That's not the entire truth. And unfortunately, this myth is fueled by a healthy meat industry that profits when you buy their propaganda. Turns out, a plant-based diet can pack the same punch as other sources. A complete protein is one that contains all nine essential amino acids that you need to consume through food: histidine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan and valine.

Try these 3 tricks for the ultimate protein-packed plant diet:

1. **Eat a variety of whole foods.** Loading your diet with different vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, peas, beans, legumes and fruits optimizes the amount of the nine essential amino acids you're giving your body. The World Health Organization recommends that 5 percent of our daily calories (a little more if we training or working out) come from protein. On average, fruits have about 5 percent of their calories from protein. Vegetables, 20 to 50 percent. Sprouted seeds, beans and grains, 10 to 25 percent.
2. **Eat more raw foods.** Studies have shown that baking or grilling makes about half of the protein in the food unusable to the human body. Raw or living proteins are an even better source than cooked plant foods. We need 25 to 35 grams of protein a day. That means that if you eat 2,000 calories per day of raw plant foods containing average of 10 percent of their calories from protein, you would get 200 calories worth of protein, or 50 grams. This is more than adequate to support great health. Optimize your intake of raw foods by adding a fresh raw vegetable salad to every meal.
3. **Eat more superfoods: Plant-based sources of complete protein** are referred to as 'superfoods' and they're easily obtainable from supermarkets, health food stores and online. They include:
 - Hemp seeds
 - Quinoa
 - Amaranth
 - Buckwheat
 - Bee pollen
 - Goji berries
 - Chia seeds
 - Flax seeds
 - Spirulina and chlorella
 - Dulse (a sea vegetable)

5 Reasons to Love Quinoa

Quinoa may be a super food, but most people don't find it super interesting. I disagree! It packs the same amount of protein per serving as milk, while giving you loads of nutrients, vitamins and minerals. It can easily stand alone in meals or be incorporated into a variety of healthy and flavorful recipes.

Not convinced to put this powerful grain into your meal rotation yet? Maybe these five reasons will change your mind:

1. **It super fuels your body with energy.** Cooked quinoa contains approximately 8 grams of protein per cup, according to the USDA. It's also one of the few vegetarian complete proteins, meaning it contains all 9 essential amino acids your body needs. Try it for breakfast or lunch to help you power through tough afternoon workouts or long days at work.
2. **It stimulates healthy digestion.** One cup of quinoa contains a healthy serving of 5 grams of fiber, which improves digestion, lowers cholesterol levels, controls blood sugar and helps you maintain a healthy weight.
3. **It's a nutrient-dense food.** Quinoa is an amazing source of iron, magnesium, calcium, potassium, folate (a B vitamin) and more. In fact, a recent study showed that the grain contains the same concentrated amounts of two flavonoids, quercetin and kaempferol, as found in antioxidant-rich berries like cranberries and lionberries.
4. **It's naturally low in calories.** One cup of quinoa boasts just 222 calories. Because of its high levels of protein and fiber, this healthy carbohydrate doesn't convert quickly to sugar in your body. This means it doesn't

spike your blood sugar levels and keeps you feeling fuller longer.

5. **It's a versatile grain.** Breakfast, lunch and dinner? Check, check and check! Quinoa can be prepared in delicious ways at all mealtimes. And research has shown that this superfood's nutrient profile isn't compromised by boiling, steaming or simmering. Toss it in salads, stir-fries, soup and porridge, or shape it into a veggie burger or a sushi roll.

10 Tricks that Speed Weight Loss

When you're trying to drop pounds, these healthy tips may help you shed them faster. Try one or two! All you've got to lose is weight.

You Want it? Be Smart and Make it Happen

Two friends are chatting about their diets. The first one says, *"I want to be healthy and feel great."* The second one says, *"I intend to be healthy and feel great."*

Which one do you think is going to get healthy and feel great? Yup – the one who intends it.

Wanting is simply *wishing* you can have or do a particular thing it. *Intending* means you're committed to achieving something by making a plan for success—and sticking to it!

The Fuel for Desired Results

The key to intention is action – try this to build your intention muscle:

- Get clear on what you want. Create a vision board by gathering images and words that pertain to your goal, and gluing them onto a large piece of construction paper. Hang the collage in a spot where you'll see it often.
- Do something to make your desire happen. Let's say you want to eat four servings of vegetables a day. Your first action may be to go to a farmers' market and purchase a few veggies you can cook for dinner.
- Celebrate your achievement! Don't forget to congratulate yourself for meeting your goal.

How to Have a Great Day... Every Day!

Did you know that you can even set an intention to have a great day?

Rather than diving into your morning and hoping you'll achieve your day's big goal, why not take a moment and set yourself up for success?

Try this **"Setting An Intention to Succeed"** exercise used by professional athletes, speakers, politicians, and performers:

- Upon waking, lie in bed and think about what you have planned for your day (or, find a quiet spot to sit and contemplate).
- Think about your desired outcome. Take a deep breath and visualize yourself succeeding.
- Replay your success several times in your mind.
- Next, add other senses, including sounds, smells,

and touch. For instance, as you replay your success, you now also hear the director offering you the gig, or you feel the physical sensation of your finger hitting the “send” button on your latest assignment.

- Lastly, replay the scene again, adding emotions. Feel your elation at getting the part, or your pride at finally finishing your work.

You can perform An Intention to Succeed, throughout the day as desired.

Get even healthier – Begin your transformation!

Do you intend to lose weight, eat healthy, and feel fantastic? Make a plan to succeed by getting the support you need! As a Health Coach, I specialize in helping people make their own healthy changes. Ready to get started living the Smart Life? Schedule a FREE One Hour Consultation with me today—or pass this offer on to someone you care about!

4 Healthy Lunch Box Suggestions

It’s hard enough to get kids to eat healthy, especially at school when junk food or sugary snacks seem to magically sneak their way into the cafeteria. Try these easy, nutritious lunch box ideas that your kids will actually enjoy instead of toss in the trash.

1. Switch out the traditional unhealthy white bread sandwich for something a little more interesting. One of my favorites is a vegetarian bagel sandwich, which you can re-create each

week with new toppings.

Bagel Sandwich

1 whole grain seeded bagel

$\frac{1}{4}$ large ripe avocado, sliced

Pinch of sea salt

1 tablespoon sprouted sunflower seeds

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sprouts

4 thin slices cucumber

- Slice the bagel in thirds horizontally and save the middle slice for another use – smear with nut butter for your own mid-day snack. Bagels have ballooned in size over the years so the top and bottom part are plenty for a sandwich.
- Mash avocado into the bottom part of the bagel and sprinkle with sea salt, sunflower seeds and sprouts. Arrange the cucumber over the sprouts and cap with the bagel top.
- Cut in half. Wrap well or store in a snug container.
- *This is best made in the morning before school to keep the bagel fresh and soft, not soggy.*

2. Innovate classics, like PB&J, with ingredients that are so yummy, your kids won't know they're good for them. My Nut-Butter Pinwheels, for example, get their sweetness from apples and honey, not sugar-laden jelly, and the nuttiness from natural nut butters. The roll-up lavash makes them a fun finger food.

Nut-Butter Pinwheels

1 whole wheat lavash

2 tablespoons unsweetened almond, peanut or pumpkin seed butter

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup apple, chopped and unpeeled

1 teaspoon honey

2 teaspoons unsweetened granola (optional)

- Cut the lavash in half crosswise and spread both halves with the nut butter. Drizzle with honey and top with apple and granola.
- With the shorter edge of the lavash toward you roll up into a wrap. Do the same with the second half and cut each roll into four pinwheels.
- Store in snug container or reassemble each half and wrap in parchment paper.
- *This can be made a day ahead, but it's really best made in morning before school.*

3. Add a side of veggie sticks. Adding one cup of veggies to meals will help prevent the blood-sugar swings that may make them feel tired and cloud their thinking mid-day. By adding zucchini, celery, carrots and cucumbers to their snack bags, your child can benefit from more energy and better focus. If they can't bear to eat "plain" veggie sticks, add a tablespoon of hummus for dipping.

4. Surprise them with blueberries for dessert. These berries soothe their sweet tooth while boosting their brain power at the same time. The bold color of this fruit comes from anthocyanins, antioxidants that studies have shown activate brain neurons. A recent report from Tufts University suggests that 1 cup of blueberries can increase brain energy by approximately 45 percent. Your kids can enjoy them fresh, dried or frozen all school year long.

What is a Smart Life?

Many of you have asked me why I started Smart Life. The essence of this brand stems from my overall approach to health and how my family and I live. Each component is represented in

the vibrant, energetic colors of the Smart Life logo, as well as the entire design process behind the brand by TLVD. Hopefully, you'll feel as vibrant and energetic when living this way, too. Follow the link above to see The Smart Life journey unfold conceptually, much like it will in your own life.

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Fresh + Healthy + Nourishing

The Smart Life logo is shown through primary colors. Their vividness represents the energy found in naturally bright, antioxidant-filled foods that produce those same effects in your body: bold, colorful and high-energy. The soft gradients remind us that the nourishing food plays into other areas in our life, keeping us strong, focused, powerful and happy. Whether it's fresh organic foods from a variety of food groups, exercise that makes you sweat, or relationships that bring you joy, pursue what feeds you. That's a Smart Life.

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Natural transformation

Natural and whole foods as they appear in nature, superfoods that change your mind and body, workouts that actually work. No chemicals, gimmicks, tricks, false promises or fads. When you nourish your body with real whole foods, support it with vitamins and minerals found in nature, and stay active every day, change happens gradually and proportionally allowing you to achieve balance.

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Balance

The Smart Life refers to the simple math behind balancing all areas of your life. When all the components of your health – food, fitness and lifestyle – work together in harmony and unison, the result is strength, energy, and vibrancy in perfect proportions. When life is in balance, change happens naturally.

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Cycle of Life

The Cycle of Life is the perfect symbol for our core 6 Months to a Smart Life program. Like the Cycle of Life, you become more vibrant and energetic the longer you stay in the program. We've used each month as a milestone, represented in the six golden ratio spirals in a circular arrangement. These reflect the changes you will go through as we work together each week over the course of 6 months, or 24 weeks. And like in nature, you will see your body flourish in response to your efforts.

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Smart + Active + Engaged

When you actively take charge of your health, your mind and body respond. Whether this is upping your workouts, cooking more at home, organizing your kitchen or involving your family in healthy activities, being proactive about health means success. For all of you. This concept is represented in our logo through dimension and depth with abstract highlighting and shadowing. The circular motion and 24 segments show that a Smart Life is about staying engaged and active, not just on the surface, but by making good choices all the time.

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Smart Life's commitment is to be your personal health champion, showing you exactly what good choices look like and how to make them moment by moment. Whether teaching you proven diet strategies, arming you with new fitness tools, or sharing secrets for balancing work and play, my 6 Months to a Smart Life program will help you learn to live a life you love. Book a FREE one-hour consultation with me today and see how one call can change your life.

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8 Fast, Easy Snacks for On-the-Go

When your schedule gets hectic, it's tempting to reach for the vending machine or whatever's nearby to satisfy your hunger, but that's often the worst thing you can do. My rule for snacks is combine protein with carbs to help manage blood sugar levels, and to avoid dairy.

Here is a round up of portable healthy snacks that feed your hunger, not your waistline:

1. Raw nuts mix. Whether store-bought or homemade, a nut mix that includes raw varieties is better than roasted ones, which lowers the nutrients. Make a batch on Sunday and store them in the refrigerator for the week. If you have a sweet tooth, add dried, unsweetened fruit. If your palate leans to savory, sprinkle with spices like rosemary or cayenne.

2. Mason jar dips. You know those glass containers you're saving when you clean out your kitchen (see "9 Ways to Get Organized for Fall")? Fill the bottom with two tablespoons of nut or seed butters or all-natural hummus, then add vegetable sticks, like carrots, celery, zucchini, jicama or peppers. Pop on the top and you're ready to go.

3. Smoothies to go. On Sunday night, make twice your normal amount of breakfast smoothie. Pour the drink into 8-ounce

glass jars and freeze. Store them in the fridge at the office and by the time you're ready to drink, it's thawed.

4. Seasoned kale chips. If you're the domestic type, making these at home is a cinch, or if you haven't used your oven in years, don't worry, store-bought varieties can be just as healthy. To make, trim kale stems, make sure they're completely dry and sprinkle with your favorite seasoning. Personally, sea salt does the trick for our family. Bake at 275 degrees for 20 minutes, or until crisp and dry.

5. Homemade granola bars. Often I'll read snack bar recipes that sound a lot like candy bars, but when made with the right ingredients, you'll have a energy powerhouse that will get you through an afternoon. Most granola bar recipes, especially the raw ones, take less than a half an hour to make and can last your family a week. Even better, they're highly portable and don't require refrigeration. I love this one from Food 52. The biggest challenge you'll have making these is keeping up with the demand.

6. two-ingredient bites. I love pairing two ingredients – sweet and savory or sweet and salty – for an easy quick fix that satisfies hunger and sugar cravings. My favorite combinations:

- organic dates stuffed with almond butter
- sliced green apple with nut butter
- organic brown rice cakes drizzled with brown rice syrup.

7. Salty crunches. On afternoons when stress is high and time is short, the only thing that does the trick are snacks with crunch. I love:

- *roasted chickpeas.* Drizzle in olive oil and toss with your favorite ground spices, then bake 30 to 40 minutes at 400 degrees. If you buy them pre-made, read the nutrition label to know what you're

getting.

- a handful (5 to 8) of *whole-grain or sprouted chips*, such as Garden of Eatin' brand, with freshly made salsa, pico de gallo or guacamole.
- *hummus and baby carrots or celery sticks*. Note: read the nutrition label on hummus to be sure the brand contains no preservatives or additives.
- *nori chips*. Cut these seaweed sheets into strips, drizzle with olive oil and top with seasonings. Bake for 20 minutes or until crispy. If you've got more time, create mini "sushi" bites with leftover brown rice or quinoa and vegetable sticks, no refrigeration required.

8. Healthy pudding. Chia seeds aren't just for smoothies anymore. Make them into a creamy and sweet (or savory, depending on your add-ins) treat in minutes with this delicious and highly addictive pudding recipe:

Chia Pudding:

- 3 tablespoons chia seeds
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsweetened almond milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Liquid stevia to taste (optional)
- Add cocoa powder or pumpkin pie spice for flavor

Combine all ingredients and let sit for 10 minutes stirring occasionally.