

# How to avoid the dreaded winter weight gain

When the cold seasons come around, it's natural to crave heavier or more "comforting" foods. During the winter months, we shift to a phase of hibernation when all those light, delicious raw foods—including fruit, fresh veggies and big green salads – may not be enough to satisfy us. This is because for thousands of years this craving for more calorie dense and heavier foods kept humans alive during harsh winters when food became scarce. One of the things that I advocate with Smart Life clients is actually adjusting what you eat according to the seasons. If you crave warm foods during this time, you can get plenty of them, but eating grounding, hot and savory food doesn't have to translate to packing on the pounds!

My Smart Life eating plan can be adapted to every season. Eating well is not about perfection. We are human, so perfection is impossible. A better approach involves honoring your body and knowing what works best for you and just as importantly, what doesn't work.



## **1. Balance Cooked and Raw Veggies for Maximum Benefit**

While you may not crave as much raw foods, it's good to still incorporate some raw/living nutrition into your diet, no matter how cold it is outside. You can get that by enjoying a green smoothie at room temperature rather than icy cold for breakfast or afternoon snack. Also, still have your salad and raw veggies before you dig into your hot meals or add warm veggies on top of cold salads. This can include roasted beets, steamed broccoli or sautéed lentils—in order to get some warmth without sacrificing the goodness of those enzymes and the hydrating effects a salad has on your body.

## **2. Soups Loaded with Vegetables are Warming and Filling.**

Soups, which I love, give you more digestible nutrients, and create more satiety – you feel nourished, and in fact you are. Soups, especially the organic and vegan soups I create for the **Smart Life soup cleanse**, are filled with plant-based protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals. Moreover, because soups are easy-to-digest, all the organs like the liver and kidneys are given a little time off and they can work on disposing of toxins. These are some of my favorite winter soups:

Sweet Potato, Kale & Chickpea Soup

Lemon Chicken & Kale Soup

Butternut Squash Soup

## **3. Healthy Grains Can Be Warming and Satisfying:**

Complex grains like brown rice, quinoa or buckwheat can be a comfort food when topped with steamed or roasted vegetables instead of heavy ingredients and filler that typically leave you feeling uncomfortable after eating. Alternatively, you can cook a pilaf of your favorite grain with chopped veggies.

Smart Life clients always enjoy this quick and easy recipe of

## Quinoa Pilaf



### **4. Warm-up with Warm Drinks**

There's no other time I hear that people are more susceptible to giving back in to the coffee or sugar-laden drinks from coffee shops than in the winter. The spicy warmth (or just the warmth!), calls to you when it's cold, and it could feel nearly impossible to resist unless you have a few healthy recipe alternatives tucked away in your mind. I'm a BIG fan of hot tea and other hot beverages during the fall and winter months. Here are some great options:

### **Guilt Free Vegan Hot Chocolate**

I have a recipe for a Guilt-Free Hot Chocolate made up of cashews, dates and raw cacao powder. It is simple and incredibly satisfying, especially on a cold night. Find the recipe [here](#).



### **Hot Water with Lemon:**

This is a staple in the Smart Life eating program, but it's a good alternative to coffee first thing in the morning. It helps you detox, it's warm, and the citrus helps perk you up.



### **Enjoy a warm smoothie:**

Have a warm smoothie. Try my recipe [here](#).



### **Spiced Apple Cider:**

While I wouldn't usually cook fruit juice or fruit, this is a nice treat occasionally, if you are really feeling like it. Get an organic, no sugar added apple juice and heat it on the stove at a low-medium temperature and blend in to taste some spices like: cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, clove, vanilla extract. Once warm, pour the spiced cider into a giant mug and add just a little raw honey (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp), to sweeten it up.

Just like anything in life, preparation is key to staying lean and healthy especially during the holidays. As we've learned, while your body may crave warmer and more calorie-dense foods, that doesn't mean you have to start holding on to more weight!

Living the Smart Life is all about listening and adapting to your body's needs, including changes in the seasons. All you have to do is "trust and adjust"! Just as you ate lighter and more raw over the summer, you can shift to more cooked and savory items now that we're in the cold seasons. As long as you keep it simple, clean, largely fiber-filled (i.e. plant-based)—you'll be doing great! You may even emerge from the fall and winter months more fit than when they began.