

Strategies for Success at Holiday Gatherings



Are you going to be faced with small holiday gatherings this season? Plan Z dieters want to know how to keep from gaining the 6 – 7 pounds many do at the holidays. Some of these ideas are meant to be a little tongue-in-cheek. Others are dead serious. I'll let you decide which are which, but I guarantee you, they ALL work.

If you are determined not to gain weight over the holidays, this is how to do it:

Weigh yourself the morning of the big meal.

That always takes care of my urge to overeat.

Dress to impress.

Even if you are just celebrating with your immediate family, if you dress up you'll feel better about yourself and be less likely to drown your sorrows in cocktails or face-plant into the after-dinner cookies.

Scope out the buffet.

Peruse all your food options first. Walk the "buffet" end to end. Count the options that are actually low carb and good for

you. You might discover several good options so you are less tempted to fall into a sugary trap.

Before you “dig in,” go get your drink.

Start a conversation with someone you know so you don't end up in a corner with nothing to do but pick food off your plate.

Keep your hands full.

If you truly want to fend off temptation, keep your hands full. Have a beverage in one hand and if you're a woman, have a purse in the other. A clutch keeps your other hand busy. Guys, it's usually perfectly polite to have your other hand in your pants pocket.

Do not – under any circumstance – arrive hungry.

Indulge in some protein and/or fat before you go. Eat a chunk of cheese or some nuts while you drive on over so you won't be famished when you arrive.

Bring your own entrée.

If the party is a potluck, the hostess won't mind if another dish arrives. The Creole Meatloaf is a Plan Z favorite. Everyone loves comfort food. You can slice this into 1" slices and then cut the slices in half. Display them on a serving dish and garnish with a pile of fresh basil and everyone will think this meatloaf rocks. Save one full piece for yourself. That way you'll fill up on healthy food.



Eat your protein first.

Even if you are at a seated dinner party you can strategically manage your food so you won't have to go back for seconds. Eating your protein first will fill you up. Leave the potatoes until last and hopefully you'll be too full to even touch them.

Set a goal to talk to people.

If you say you are going to have 4 conversations before you hit the buffet you might be so busy talking that food becomes less of an issue. No one can do a good job of eating while they talk. And it's impolite to talk with your mouth full anyway.

Use a small plate or a napkin.

If a bigger plate is your only option, tell yourself how many morsels are going to be your limit. Cocktail caterers tell clients to plan on 6 pieces per person. I would not go over

that. Remember they are figuring some people won't eat at all and some will seriously overeat. You don't want to be in the overeating group. This means six *appetizer* pieces by the way; not six helpings of Aunt Edna's lasagna.

If you are going to attend more than one event in an evening, only plan to eat at one – and stick to the plan.

Figure out who you think will have the better and/or healthier food and do your eating at that party.

Head for the shrimp.

Shrimp cocktail is an amazing protein to fill you up without a lot of calories. And besides, for most budgets, this is a treat! P.S. Cocktail sauce is ZReduction approved!

If you are going to eat chips and guacamole, put your guacamole on a plate, take 3 chips, and re-use them.

Literally scrape the guacamole off with your lips and bite a teeny bit of chip. This works for crackers and Uncle Mitch's cheese ball too, as long as you're eating off your own plate.

Hit the fruit, the guacamole, the veggie platter, and the creamy dips.

Skip the sugary stuff.

Arrive Early. Leave Early.

If you arrive as soon as the party starts you'll probably be there an hour before the food frenzy really begins. You can say you have work to do that night and bow out early. OR...

Arrive Late.

I did this at Thanksgiving once. I told my mom I would be traveling and had to arrive later. Everyone had eaten by the time I got there and not one person (not even my mom) noticed that I never ate dinner. I had eaten before I left home so I was not hungry. OR...

Have the party at your house!

That way you can serve healthy food options that you can eat and enjoy!

Bring a dessert.

Guarantee you'll have a healthy dessert option by bringing your own. Looking for inspiration? Try my Chocolate French Silk dessert. Bring the mousse in a big bowl and cover the top of the mousse with plastic wrap. This can be set on the buffet for all to indulge. No one will know there's no sugar!

After picking up your food from the buffet, go to the other end of the room to eat.

Find someone to eat with besides your significant other so you can get into a conversation and be less likely to go back for more.

Dance.

If dancing is an option get on out there and wiggle!

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in pink ink, appearing to read 'Zola' with a stylized flourish at the end.



Chocolate French Silk

This recipe would be great with berries or a bit of whipped cream on top too.