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SEASON'S EATINGS

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SEASON'S EATINGS

It's the most wonderful time of year—with the most temptations. Stay in control with our strategies and these delicious appetizers

Cover: photography by Leigh Beisch;
Food Styling by Dan Becker;
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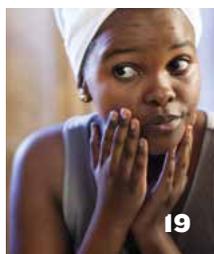
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Holiday temptations are everywhere. Stay in control with expert strategies and our delicious and satisfying appetizers

SEASON'S EATINGS

'Tis the season for socializing! Beyond the major holidays, your calendar is likely packed with office parties, neighborhood open houses, and family get-togethers...and your regular eating schedule is apt to get thrown out of whack. But with these tips—and some new veggie-based appetizer recipes to try out—you can navigate the holiday season in good health.

BY KERRI-ANN JENNINGS

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Mini Curried Butternut Squash Latkes

These Indian-spiced latkes swap classic white potatoes for nonstarchy winter squash, a move that saves carbs and calories while giving an appealing saffron splash of color to the appetizer tray. They're great on their own or topped with a dollop of store-bought raita.

Makes 8 servings (2 dozen mini latkes)

INGREDIENTS

18 oz butternut squash, peeled and cubed
1 small yellow onion, peeled and quartered
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
2 tbsp flour or matzoh meal
1 heaping tsp curry powder
1 heaping tsp coriander seeds, crushed with a mortar and pestle
½ tsp kosher salt
2 tbsp canola oil

DIRECTIONS

1. In a food processor fitted with grater attachment, grate squash and onion. Transfer to large bowl. Add eggs, flour or matzoh meal, spices, and salt and stir.
2. Add 1 tbsp canola oil to a large nonstick pan and heat over medium heat. Drop mixture by heaping forkful into pan and cook until golden on each side—about 3 minutes per side. Add more oil between batches.

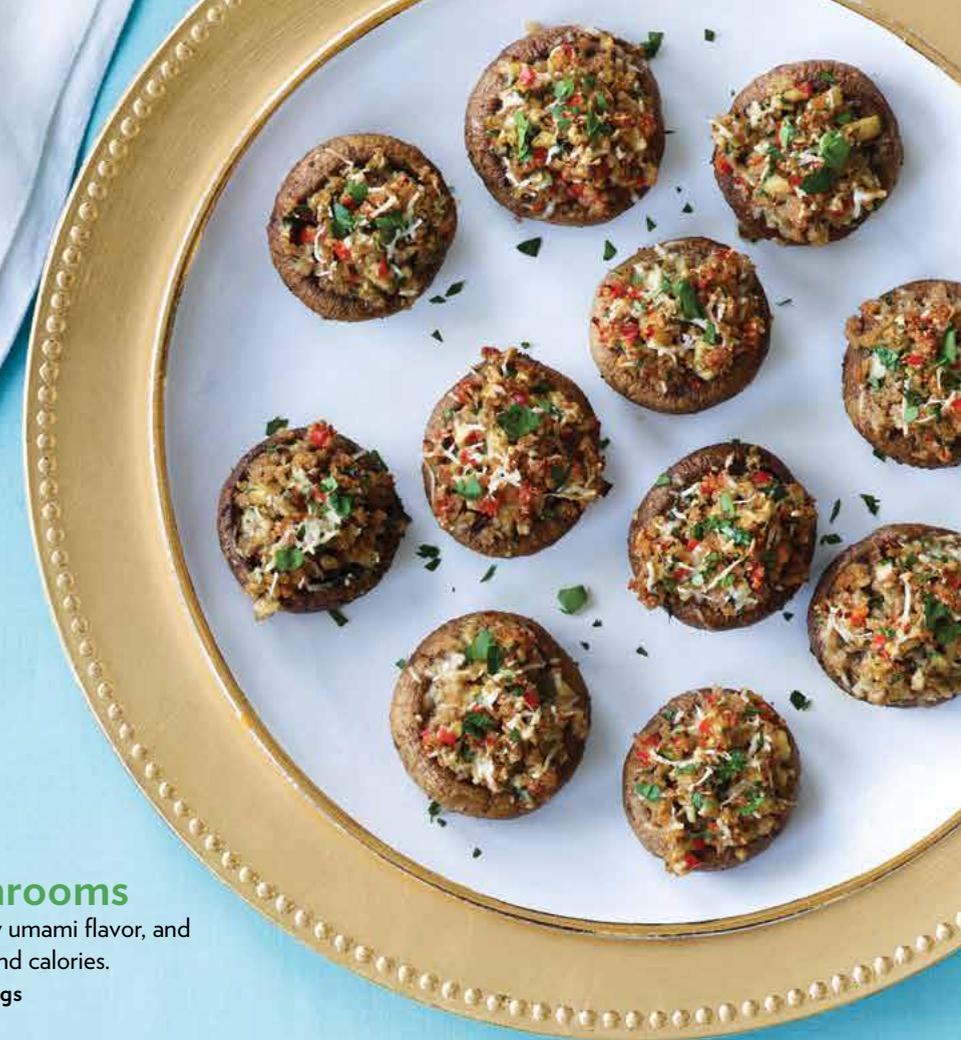
PER SERVING (about 3 mini latkes)
89 calories, 3 g protein, 10 g carbohydrate, 5 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 47 mg cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 2 g sugar, 168 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 49%

PLAN AHEAD

Keep eating regular meals and snacks throughout the day, so that you come to a holiday party or meal moderately hungry but not starving. That serves two purposes, says Mindy Haar, PhD, RD, director of the clinical nutrition program at New York Institute of Technology. Physiologically, it helps because you're not starving and willing to eat anything and everything on the table. Psychologically, you won't think, "I saved all day—I can have whatever I want."

COME PREPARED

Offer to make a veggie-forward side or appetizer, such as the ones on these pages. "As a hostess, I love when someone brings a salad or offers to help by bringing an extra veggie side dish," Haar says.



Stuffed Mushrooms

This crowd-pleaser offers savory umami flavor, and it's super low in carbs—and calories.

Makes 12 servings

INGREDIENTS

24 large white mushrooms with stems attached
1 tbsp olive oil
2 pinches kosher salt
½ cup red pepper, minced
½ cup low- or no-sodium chicken stock (or water, sherry, or white wine)
2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
¼ cup whole wheat panko breadcrumbs
½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese
freshly ground pepper, to taste
2 tbsp chopped fresh basil (and/or parsley)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Wash mushrooms. Gently remove stems from caps, taking care not to break caps. Finely chop stems and set aside. Toss caps with olive oil and a pinch of kosher salt and transfer to foil-lined, rimmed cookie sheet.
3. Coat large nonstick pan with cooking spray and heat over medium heat. Add chopped mushroom stems, red pepper, and a splash of chicken stock and cook until mushrooms begin to soften and turn golden. Add garlic. Cook 1 minute until garlic becomes fragrant. Add breadcrumbs and remaining chicken stock—add more, if needed to make breading moist. Turn off heat. Add most of cheese, reserving some to sprinkle on top. Add salt and pepper to taste and mix in basil.
4. Fill each mushroom cap with a tablespoon of stuffing mixture. Sprinkle reserved cheese on top. Bake until mushrooms are soft when pierced with a fork and filling is golden brown, about 25 minutes.

PER SERVING (2 mushrooms)
38 calories, 3 g protein, 2 g carbohydrate, 2 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 2 mg cholesterol, 1 g fiber, 1 g sugar, 163 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 52%

BE ADVENTUROUS

"Think of the holidays as a more adventurous time for food choices, but don't let your vigilance slide for whatever you need to moderate," Haar recommends.

SIT AND SAVOR

Turn any eating event into a sit-down meal. After you fill your plate, go away from the buffet table and sit and enjoy your food and the company you're with. "If you stand by the table, you'll tend to overeat lots of calories," says Leslie Sparks, MS, RDN, LD, a certified diabetes educator at The Medical Center of Plano in Texas.

Kale-Artichoke Dip

This lightened-up take on classic spinach-artichoke dip is flavorful and filling, thanks to fiber-rich artichoke hearts. Serve with whole wheat pita chips.

Makes 9 servings

MAKE A MEMORY

“We enjoy eating food, but a meal only lasts 20 to 30 minutes,” Sparks says. “The memory of the food lasts a lifetime. It only takes two or three bites to make the same memory as 20 bites.” For your favorite holiday foods, you can get the same satisfaction from a sample as from a hefty serving.

KEEP UP SELF-CHECKS

You might be tempted to skip some glucose self-checks. But when you stray from your eating routine, it’s more important than ever to check your blood sugar regularly. You might even be surprised, Haar says. “If your number is still OK and you ate more than usual, great. You just want to be in the desirable range.”

INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz frozen artichoke hearts, thawed
- 10 oz frozen kale, thawed
- 4 oz light cream cheese, at room temperature
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup plain nonfat yogurt
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ cup shredded part-skim mozzarella

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat an 8-inch square pan with nonstick spray.
2. Place artichokes in food processor fitted with blade and pulse a few times. Add kale, cream cheese, Parmesan, yogurt, garlic, and salt, and pulse until blended.
3. Transfer to prepared pan and spread. Sprinkle with mozzarella. Place in oven and bake until golden brown and bubbling, about 30 minutes.

PER SERVING

104 calories, 7 g protein, 9 g carbohydrate, 5 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 16 mg cholesterol, 3 g fiber, 3 g sugar, 284 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 43%



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