

# SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS

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We are in the swing of the “gauntlet” of the holidays. ‘Tis the Season where our society encourages us to overeat on Halloween candy, binge at Thanksgiving, eat as many goodies as we possibly can through the month of December, and then crash diet in January. Are you tired of this yet? I sure am. Here are some tips for surviving the holidays, whether you have an eating disorder or not.

1. **Eat like it is any other time of the year.** Just because it’s the holidays doesn’t mean that we need to follow the “rules” of the season. Eat when you’re hungry and stop when you’re full or follow your meal plan.
2. **Eat those goodies (in moderation).** Part of the reason that we overeat is because we see tasty seasonal foods as being “bad” or “forbidden.” When we finally allow ourselves to eat a treat, we start to think, “I’ve had one...already screwed up...might as well eat as much as possible and start over tomorrow.” When you are hungry for that desert or special food, eat a moderate portion.
3. **Focus on what matters.** Holidays are a time when we gather to celebrate and enjoy each other. Often, this time of year inspires kindness, patience, and reflection on positive aspects of our lives. Isn’t this much more enjoyable than thinking about what you can and cannot eat at dinner? Shift your focus away from food and reprioritize what is actually important to you.
4. **Create your holiday schedule carefully.** Contrary to what you might believe, you are NOT obligated to attend every holiday function. Choose the parties that you want to go to and make sure you allow yourself time to recuperate and care for yourself instead of running yourself ragged going to events you don’t want to be at in the first place.
5. **Stay off that scale!** You rarely like the number that you see. Avoid the temptation to feel reassured by a number because you’ll likely feel upset and angry with yourself instead.
6. **Be kind to yourself.** The holidays can be extremely difficult, particularly if you are struggling with disordered eating. It’s a rough time and you’re bound to make “mistakes.” Don’t let a few slips become a reason to relapse. Be compassionate with yourself and try to tell yourself what you would tell someone else in the same situation. I bet you would be much kinder to a loved one.