

How to Cheat on Your Diet at Thanksgiving



Whether you're on Plan Z (or any other diet), the holidays can be difficult. Even if you have solid discipline, your relatives and friends can try to sabotage you. Most of us don't have great discipline, so a combination of both can be fatal to dieting success.

I'm going to get right to the list of options that I have found successful in straying from a diet for a day. This won't be successful if you try to do it a whole long weekend but if a day will help you feel more like part of the celebration, then these are strategies you can employ and usually "get away with it" without much damage when you step on the scale the next morning.

First, let's talk **alcohol**. For most, feeling out of the celebration comes from not drinking an alcoholic drink. Or your friends and family push it on you. I have had many dieters who insist on their glass of wine when they get home from work. Let me tell you flat out, that if you do this daily, you'll lose about 60% less weight than you would have if you didn't; and that's if you do it in moderation. Drinking alcohol regularly while you try to diet just doesn't work. Another complication is

that those who start to drink often can't stop at one. If that's you, skip to the next part of this article because if you start and don't stop, it usually leads to a large piece of dessert. Enough said.

If you feel you can be disciplined in your consumption of alcohol, there are a few things that will work. Under the category of "neat" drinks (no mixer included), you can consider cleaner liquors; things like gin, vodka, tequila, bourbon or whiskey. Forget sweeter things like rum and brandy. You can have one drink on ice and usually get away with no weight gain the next day. There are no carbs in clean liquors but there are plenty of calories.

If you want to risk having two drinks, you can use small amounts of the same liquor and top it off in a tall (and I mean TALL) glass with club soda/sparkling water. You can't have mixed drinks like bourbon and Coke and get away with it. The mixers are where all the carbs/calories and artificial sweeteners come in that will mess you up.

Wine/champagne. Depending on your size and metabolism you can get away with one glass of white or red. They just need to be dry. That means pick a dry wine; not a sherry or something like that. No dessert wines. If you don't know dry wines like chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, cabernet sauvignon or Malbec, ask your liquor store manager and they can help. If you are a larger person, you might get away with two; just this once, but I would not push it. Err on the side of one glass and then switch to sparkling water.

Next big priority. Bring a **side dish** that is approved on the diet and pile it on! This means eat your veggies. I'm supplying you with a few to choose from for this article. There are more, but these are popular.

For an **appetizer or snack** before dinner, stick to things approved for the diet, or have a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of nuts.

If you're having **turkey**, stick to white meat. If you're having **beef**, eat the leanest cut you can get. This is time to splurge on a beef tenderloin steak. If the host isn't serving beef tenderloin or prime rib, consider bringing your own and just heat it. They won't mind. Lasagna is not going to cut it. Sorry.

Just about every Thanksgiving table includes **potatoes** of some kind. My husband loves mashed potatoes so much that if we were invited to someone else's house for the holiday, he'd insist we bring mashed potatoes "just in case they don't make any." Eat two tablespoons. That's right. Just a teeny bit. Get your thrill and back away. If I eat a cup of mashed potatoes I can count on 2 pounds pasted to my butt the next morning. You don't want that. Might take you a week to get it back off! Don't even think about the sweet potatoes with the brown sugar and marshmallows. No. Ouch! If you absolutely have a hankering for potatoes, consider butternut squash mash instead.

Speaking of back off, back down on the **gravy**, too. 2 tablespoons are your limit there.

If you want two tablespoons of the **stuffing** and that's your priority, you definitely have to choose between the potatoes and the stuffing. Both won't work.

No bread. Period. No bread.

For **dessert**, might I suggest you make one of the desserts from the Plan Z site. You can choose any one from ZReduction or ZReboot. I have given three popular options with this article. Now here's the trick. Cut your piece so it's 1" wide at the back. That piece might be so narrow it doesn't even hold

together well. But look at it this way, it's dessert. You can have just "one bite." Take it off by yourself. Slink away. Eat it in teeny bites like you're some kind of squirrel. Savor it. Roll it around in your mouth. Lick the plate if you have to. Enjoy the moment. Your time for bigger dessert portions will come.

There are several cheats on this list. If you want to wake up the next day with any chance at a sensible gain of 1 pound, then pick three off the list. If you do them all you could get away with "holiday mayhem" and not gain, or it could be three pounds you're looking at; and that's without tasting Grandma's pecan pie.

Be reasonable. And be happy when you step on the scale. Be safe AND happy this holiday season. Follow these simple rules.

Remember, the average American gains at least 7 pounds over the holidays. You don't have to follow the crowd.

Enjoy!

Cheers,