

Feast Like a Bear

and Go Be Awesome This Holiday Season!

*How to have a great holiday season,
feasting Bearishly along the way,
and crushing it in the new year.*

This ebook's content will be the focus of the Strategic Eating email newsletter through the fall of 2025, as part of the Eat Like a Bear community of resources.

Find many actionable nuggets in the emails.

Sign up for the emails here (unsubscribe at any time):

<https://newsletter.eatlikeabear.com/>

Amanda Rose, Ph.D.

© 2025. All rights reserved.

Medical Disclaimer

The content in this book is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, treatment or diagnosis. For all medical conditions, concerns or questions, always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health or medical services provider. Do not disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking medical care or advice based on the contents of this book or any ancillary materials or communications by its author.

Feast Like a Bear?

At Eat Like a Bear!, we eat and go be awesome.

We eat, draw the line on eating, and go off into the awesomeness of the day.

Our focus is not on food (although we do enjoy big, satisfying meals). Rather, our focus is on spending the rest of the day doing what we love – the “go be awesome” part of the day.

If you’ve just stumbled upon Eat Like a Bear! here in this little holiday book, you might find what we do very odd, but I assure you it’s simple: We’re a community of time-restricted, low-carbohydrate eaters – we get all of our nutrition and calories within a set period of time each day, sometimes in just an hour. I ate just one meal a day to lose 140 pounds (64 kg). It was a giant meal, and it took nearly an hour to eat it. I then drew the line on my eating and went out and engaged in the awesomeness of the world in ways that did not involve food.

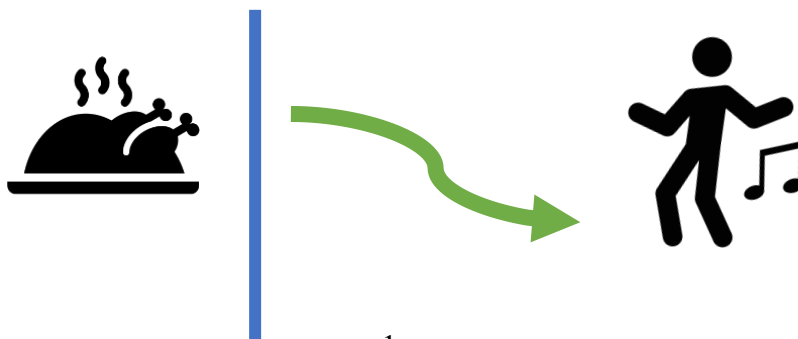
It was my ability to nourish myself consistently each day, draw that line, and then engage positively with the world that was the key to my success, but it is likely also the key to the success you are seeing in the Eat Like a Bear! community.

Holidays provide us with a special case of this and an opportunity to improve our awesomeness game. In fact, holidays have a whole lot of opportunity for awesomeness, but how to feast and draw that line so we can live our best in the year to come?

It may be the top problem the Eat Like a Bear! community faces: Letting the one holiday cookie (or biscuit) become nine hundred and seventy-two. Every year in the community we lose members to the holidays, many of whom return sometime around February, having gained weight. Every one of us has had holidays like that. My goal is that, as a community, we will have far fewer of them.

This year, instead of that usual pattern, we’re going to take this holiday season as an opportunity to make the new year a little bit easier for ourselves. That’s the key theme of this book. There are recipes here too, so I’ve got you there, but the exact recipes probably contribute very little to the holiday eating struggles most of us have.

The recipes will make kitchen planning a bit easier, but the psychology of eating through the holidays will help you live your most vibrant life in the new year. That’s my goal for all of us with this little digital book.



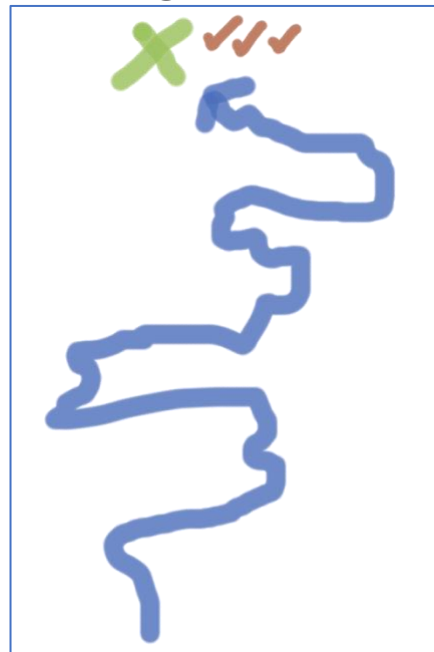
Holidays and the Challenges of Consistency

We all know that successful and long-term weight loss is all about consistency. In the Deep Den materials, I have a strong message of consistent implementation, providing a lot of tools to implement daily. I discuss our ongoing struggle with weight all these decades, seeking that goal at the end of the path but always somehow ending up back where we started, or likely in a place that may be a bit worse. The goal with that course is to get us all headed on a path, leveraging some strategies of daily consistency, including fine-tuning the meal model that is working for each of us

Never Getting There



Working Toward Your Goal



Holiday seasons have a way of turning consistency on its head, requiring us to bring a different and more flexible strategy to those meals.

During the holidays, you need to be strategically nimble and flexible.

I have recipes to help you with those meals, but your long game play is to get extra-strategic in how you navigate the holidays. If you have followed me for a while, you know I am all about that strategy.

First, a concept: Fat and frustrated versus slim and settled.



Fat and Frustrated Versus Slim and Settled

This concept applies not just to the holidays. It is important to understand for long-term weight loss and weight maintenance. Many people ask me the key to weight maintenance. This concept is a big part of it, in my opinion. The challenges of holiday eating give us a good opportunity to practice it each year.

"I'm sick and tired of *always* worrying about being fat!"
- Kimberly Rose

We all share a common goal of weight loss, which looks something like this:



I'll add another under-discussed goal:

We want to be free of the ongoing internal battle we have with food.

As my sister Kimberly famously said to me in early 2022 (which inspired a whole Six-Week Challenge in our private member community), "I am sick and tired of always worrying about being fat."

mic drop....

She is highlighting that internal struggle that we can think of like this:

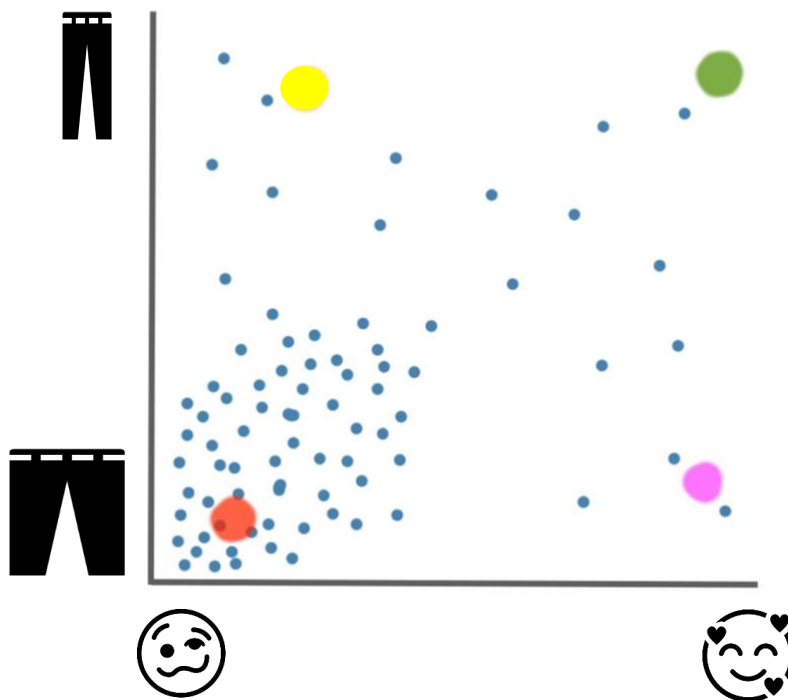


It is a major theme in my psychology teachings: Our biggest battle against the doughnut or the holiday cookie is an internal battle. There will always be a part of us that wants to eat the holiday cookie, and there will always be a part of us that advocates for our long-term health goal. Those parts can end up in a big, bloody battle against each other.

Slender and at Peace

Here's what we really ought to be seeking: to be trim AND to be at peace with ourselves.

I've plotted these two goals on the graph below, just like an X-Y scatterplot from junior high school. On the y-axis we have our body weight – from chunky at the bottom to more trim at the top. On the x-axis we have a spectrum that goes from an internal fight to peaceful existence.



-  The green dot represents where we would all like to be – trim and at peace with that doughnut-eating part of ourselves.
-  The red dot represents where most of us start – chunky and in an internal battle with the doughnut. The doughnut often wins, which is why we're chunky, although we'd all weigh a lot more if the doughnut didn't lose on occasion.
-  The yellow dot represents where many of us find ourselves at the end of a weight loss phase. We struggled and got the pounds off, but we're still really battling. Often, a bad season hits (as it sometimes does in life), and we pack the weight back on and end up at that red dot again.
-  Respect the pink dot – chunky and peaceful. As long as we can meet our long-term health and wellness goals, that pink spot is a great place to be. (In my case, I would pass through that pink dot stage fairly briefly, eating too many doughnuts and not be able to meet my health goals.)

The RED DOT



We all know the red dot space too well – overweight and likely battling not to gain even more weight.

At some points in life, we may have gotten into that yellow dot area. The yellow dot area is better in many ways, but on the yellow dot we are at high risk of returning to the red dot, especially when we have a bad day, and we are unprepared.

I wonder how many people on earth are actually solidly in that green space, being both trim and enjoying a high level of internal peace. My own internal battles have quieted over these years of maintenance, so I can report that the battle can get far, far easier once we recognize the problem and act strategically to move in a more peaceful direction.

We all struggle to some degree, ending up in that red zone. We are at risk of living there forever unless we begin to recognize it and improve our strategy.

Simply recognizing this point is a really important place to begin to make your life easier and filled with less internal struggle.

(This is a very big theme in the Deep Den Library at Eat Like a Bear! which you should browse as you have time).

As you read this, always remember:

When you find yourself in that red dot area, it is more important than ever to stay engaged with this community.

Do not disengage out of shame or perceived judgment. I am not judging you. I am proud that you are here, that you are staying engaged, and that you are continuing to make progress toward that green dot, a lifelong journey.

Full disclosure: I don't consider myself cemented into that green dot area at all. Some days feel a whole lot like yellow or red days. Recognizing this point has helped me maintain my weight through many challenges, by being this nimble and flexible.

Ignore that common feeling of shame on the red dot. We've all been there many times. In fact, some people reading this will still end up on that red dot, but the key to progress is taking this whole holiday season and tackling it better than you have in the past. Next



Leverage the Holiday Season

How do we leverage the holidays to move from red to green?

The fact is that we can totally crush it. If we don't crush it completely, we can make some extremely great progress tackling two of our biggest adversaries: the holiday cookie and that internal voice that tells us how much we deserve it.

That's our goal. Now I am going to give you two stylized examples to help you think about your task.



Two Cases: From Super-Strict in October to Off the Rails Through February

Let's imagine two cases – two people found Eat Like a Bear! in August, while they were in that red dot zone. They were making great progress with their pants fitting (and maybe even with the internal battle).

One stays **super strict** through the holidays, not even opening herself up to that internal battle, keeping the line at zero and not even entertaining a holiday splurge. Peachy. It's as if the holidays had no impact on her weight loss focus, as was my case in 2017.

The second person decides to “**live a little**” during the season, opening up the possibility of the holiday cookie and empowering that cookie-eating part of herself to negotiate for cookies.

That internal battle heats up. Cookies win more often than any of us would hope (as they often do). She ends up solidly in that red zone, kicking herself over her lack of willpower against the holiday cookie.

At some point, that battle gets painful enough that something very critical happens:

She stops paying attention to the internal battle.

Internal battles are painful. It is easier to disconnect from them and just go through the holiday season without thinking about one's weight loss goal.

The problem with that strategy is that it effectively puts the cookie-eater in charge. We will always make that immediate gratification decision if we're not paying attention.

The painful outcome is that the holiday season turns into a cookie-eating binge and then such disassociation from one's health goal that ignoring the goal for days turns into weeks and then into months. That's how people leave the Eat Like a Bear! community in November only to return sheepishly in February (or not return at all), likely undoing all the productive work they had just done.

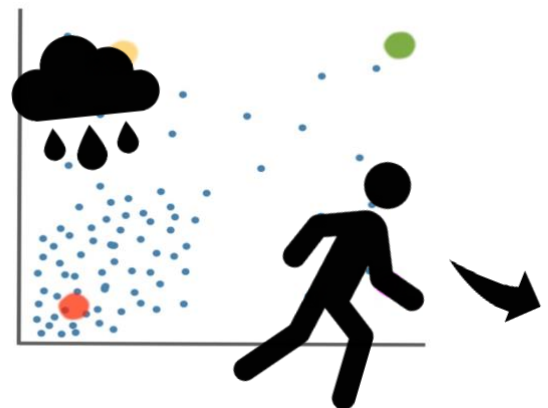
Here's my key advice: ***Don't let a cookie in November lead you to being that person in February.***

My strategy suggestions on the following pages flow from that simple point.

The Cautionary Tale of February

She disconnects from her long-term goals entirely because internal battles can be very painful. It's easier to ignore the battle entirely and walk away from her goals, waking up sometime in February and

The pain of the battle can cause you to walk away from your long-term goal.



Strategic Eating Through the Holidays (and Life)

Everyone who tells you to “just eat one” is not paying attention to our situation. Sure, just eat one if it’s really just one. The reason we’re even here having this conversation is because it has never been just one. I would eat holiday cookies every minute for the rest of my life if I could, but I live in a universe where that has painful consequences. These are strategies I have used to meet my long-term health goals in a world full of holiday cookies.

Strategy 1: Stay Strict

Don’t eat the cookie. I find this strategy to be the easiest by far. In my years of maintenance, I have learned that on my stressful days, it’s easier to be strict. When I let up, I end up in that internal battle, trying to keep myself from overeating.

An underappreciated benefit of being completely strict through an entire holiday season, as I was in 2017, is that you provide critical evidence to yourself that you can get through the holidays without the cookie.

Strategy 2: Lean into the “Night Before” Rule

Make decisions about your eating the night before. Craft your plan in advance. If a box of doughnuts ends up in the break room at work, and they are not part of the eating plan you crafted the night before, then you are not eating them. Period. You already made the decision. You made it last night.

Strategy 3: Pre-eat the Events

If you will be attending an event that includes food, consider “pre-eating” it. Eat beforehand. Perhaps eat most of your food for that day before the event, and then carefully select a small amount of food at the event to eat.

If you arrive at an event nearly full, the event will be far less difficult to face. However, if you do eat at least a bit at an event, I would consider implementing the other strategies I describe here, as well.

Strategy 4: Focus on the Good Food You ARE Eating!

This is a simple but critical one, and one easy to miss among the holiday cookies: As you are out being awesome and gearing up for your next meal, focus on the very satisfying foods you are about to eat. Some people spend a great deal of energy thinking about all they can’t have, end up disappointed in what they can have, and then binge on the holiday cookies and don’t come back until February. There are so many tasty foods that will help you reach your long-term health goals. Focus on them.

Comfort Foods

Foods in this category have a high “reward value” – they make us want to eat more. Your value for them will peak when they hit your mouth. If you struggle with staying at zero, you will struggle even more with keeping one cookie from becoming two (or ninety-seven). Keep that in



Strategy 5: Eat the Cookie First

First, if you're diabetic or have other conditions where a sugar kick is going to pose a problem, don't eat the cookie at all. For the rest of us, if you feel like you ought to eat that cookie for some reason (even though it really is easier to stay at zero than battle the one becoming seventy-three), this is a pretty slick strategy: Eat it first.

I did this recently at a buffet in Arkansas. I started my meal with a slice of pie. From the buffet line, I grabbed a little dessert plate with a slice of pie on it and then loaded a dinner plate with savory items much like you would find in the holiday meal recipes in this book.

I enjoyed the pie, but also found it awfully sweet at the beginning of the meal. I was pretty hungry and therefore very eager to eat the savory dinner items. I ate to fullness and had already told myself that I had eaten dessert (because I had). I ended the meal with coffee and felt very satisfied.

Had I eaten the pie at the end of the meal, I would have had that sugar on my palate, leaving me wanting more. I would have struggled not to eat another slice of pie. I know I would have struggled – I have a good bit of experience with ending meals with pie. If you can stop at just one without struggling, then you can structure your strategy differently.

Although going to zero is always the best and easiest strategy, in my opinion, if you go the “eat it first route,” choosing an option with less sugar is also always a better choice. Fruit and cream would be better than chocolate cream pie.

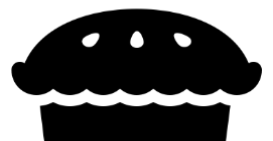
Here's an interesting and critical point about desserts and some of the holiday comfort foods (like potatoes): they have a high reward value. Simply, when we eat them, we want to eat more of them. If you end your meal with them, you will want more. You don't need me to tell you this. 😊

It Will Spike Your Blood Sugar More

I should add that my slick little strategy here is likely to cause more of a blood sugar spike than eating the dessert at the end. It really is far better for weight loss and for our biological factors like insulin resistance to avoid the holiday cookie entirely. However, worse still is eating dessert at the end of the meal and one dessert becoming seventeen. Make the best decision for yourself and your personal circumstances.

Your “Second Stomach” for Dessert

We've all heard of it – that “second stomach” for dessert. You were full, and then you had a cookie for dessert and then another and another. The key reason is that certain foods simply leave us wanting more, even when we're full. Eating the first will likely launch you into that internal



Strategy 6: Don't Weigh Right Afterwards

Weighing is a great tool except when it isn't. Get solidly back into your routine after that holiday meal and then weigh, perhaps a week or so later. Many things could affect your weight right after that big day, including extra sodium in your meal. Don't let these factors distract you from your main goal. Get focused, and weigh later. If you gained a pound, it simply won't matter that much to you because you will already know that you're in front of it and working on it. You will have already empowered yourself against that number.



Strategy 7: Stay Curious

Take note in all these holiday situations of the structures and decisions that are working to keep you focused on your long term. If one of the strategies I describe in this book leads you to a binge instead of drawing the line, consider why, and try it differently next time. If you follow the “dessert first” strategy, for instance, instead of the easier and more effective “no dessert” strategy, AND you find you eat five desserts first instead of one, consider that those extra four servings probably should have stayed in the back room or the freezer, making them far less easy to reach at the beginning of the meal. Surround yourself with the savory items. Change it up and do it a bit differently next time.



Your overall goal should be to make tomorrow a little bit easier on that path to your long-term goal. Keep moving from that red dot zone up toward the green zone.

Strategy 8: Have an Exit Plan, and Be Ready to Pay the Piper

With every event you attend or with any divergence from your eating plan, you need an exit strategy. It is the lack of an exit strategy that has people returning sheepishly in February.

Basically, the extra eating must get cut off in some way. However you decide to structure that, you need to be okay with paying the piper.

You may decide to eat with wild abandon all Thanksgiving Day. Fine. I could gain two pounds doing that, and as long as I'm okay with then needing to lose the two pounds afterward, so be it. In a case like this, you are not likely to face a big internal battle because you simply decide and then live with your decision by either losing the pounds

An Exit Strategy is a basic plan to move yourself from holiday eating back to your regular eating routine. Sometimes holiday eating stretches through a weekend and then extends into February. Make your strategic plan in advance.

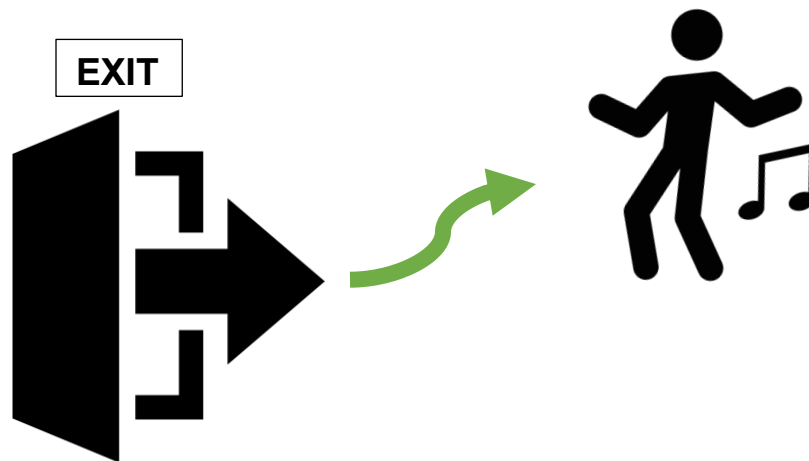
afterward or living with tighter pants. Two pounds on Thanksgiving Day is never really a problem in itself, just like one cookie is never a problem.

If you decide to eat with wild abandon for a month, just be ready to pay the piper for that. I could gain 30 pounds in a month, so I am unlikely to let loose for that long, but I certainly could choose to do so.

Go in with an exit plan and stick to the plan.

I tend to stay fairly strict during holidays and vacations, mainly because it is not worth it to me to pay for those five or ten pounds. I decide in advance that it is not worth it and structure my decisions accordingly, using a combination of the strategies I outline above.

And then, go be awesome. 😊



Strategy 9: Fill your Mind and Heart with Awesomeness

Your mind cannot hold the shame, fear, self-doubt, and second-guessing if it is filled with something else. Be grateful for the many things you have and for the wonder that is in nature. Focus on how you will feel out there in the world, unfettered by the burdens of your weight and internal battles.

Focus on your positive, vibrant future.



My Holiday Approach (Meal Ideas for You)

Most holiday meals center on a protein-rich main dish, such as turkey, ham, or steak. These main dishes do not tend to be the reason for our holiday struggles. It's all about the rest of the meal, which is the focus of the recipes in this book.

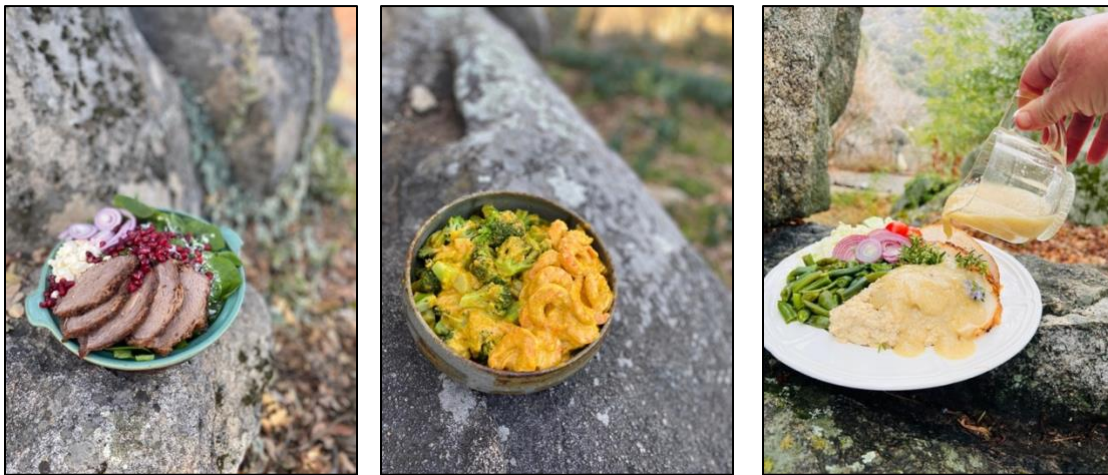
The question is: What else is on our plates?

Again, this is completely up to you, but I tend to keep my choices in a certain range of what I eat throughout the year. I will describe my strategy to you.

As you probably know, I ate in a very structured way to lose 140 pounds (64 kg), and I eat in a similar structured way in maintenance (the main difference being that I eat a bit more now). As you may know from my food books, my meals have four key elements – the “four layers” of the Ridiculously Big Salads/Skillets.

When I eat these Ridiculously Big Meals, they are simple and formulaic.

My holiday eating doesn't diverge greatly from this model. Look at my salad on the left, the skillet dish in the middle, and my holiday plate on the right. They are extremely similar in macronutrients and particularly similar in calories and carbohydrates. They are similar because the side dishes I use in the holiday meal follow fairly closely to what I use in the Ridiculously Big Salads and Skillets, minus the protein layer. In this case, the holiday turkey provides me with the protein.



Might there be fewer or more calories on the holiday plate on the right?

There sure might be! I didn't calculate them. They are in the ballpark and so, as far as I'm concerned, there is nothing on the holiday plate that is going to cause me to end up on a path where I am hiding until February. In fact, I'm probably losing weight if I am sticking to that plate and especially if I add a bit of activity to my day. The only reason I wouldn't eat like this every day is because I consider it to be far too much work, something I teach explicitly to avoid in many of my teachings.

Each Side Dish = Approximately TWO “Ridiculously Big” Sides

Because so many of us in this community follow the Ridiculously Big framework, I have crafted the side dishes here to be in the ballpark of a “Ridiculously Big meal minus the protein on top.”

If I were taking any of my Ridiculously Big dishes to a potluck, I would double them, which is how they appear here.

If I were filling my plate with a variety of these, I would take one-eighth portions of four side dishes or one-sixth portions of three side dishes. This gets me into the range of my regular eating.

I would end up with something that looks like the photo on this page.

Sure, you can choose to eat more. It is a holiday, after all. You won’t lose weight as quickly, but the long-game strategy here is to be able to get going again pretty much right away.

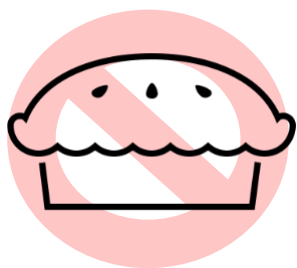
The Side Dishes Are Vegetable-Heavy

Following the strategic eating we use at Eat Like a Bear!, these holiday sides are vegetable-heavy, primarily because vegetables help us get both nourished and satisfied with the entire meal in a far more calorie-minded way than any other food group.

Season them well, and they will also disappear off your holiday table. Anna Sul always fills her plate quickly because her family gobbles up all her side dishes.



The No-Dessert Recipes Holiday Recipe Book 🥰



In January 2019, I learned how vulnerable we all are to the visuals of dessert and the point that we all just overeat them. I implemented a strict “no dessert” rule in the community. This book would sell far, far better with desserts in it, but then many of us would end up not fitting into our pants, including me back here, testing recipes.

If you are seeking dessert, do a Pinterest search for low-carbohydrate desserts. Lean into the alternative sweeteners such as stevia and monk fruit.

Sure, you can meet your long-term health goals with moderate dessert-eating. However, I expect many of us stuck in that red dot zone have a problem with moderating our dessert-eating. Perhaps with more time and practice in our internal negotiations, we may end up being peaceful, moderate eaters.

Enjoy the great-tasting side dishes with that turkey, ham, steak, or Tofurky. 😊

Ridiculously Big Sides for the Holidays

Cauliflower Mash

- Two pounds (900 g) cauliflower florets (fresh or frozen)
 - ½ cup (120 g) butter
 - ½ cup (120 ml) sour cream
 - 4 cloves garlic, chopped (or ¼ teaspoon [1 g] garlic powder)
 - ½ teaspoon (3 g) salt
 - ½ teaspoon (1 g) pepper
-
1. Steam cauliflower for 15 minutes or until tender. (It may take 20 minutes or more if the cauliflower is frozen.)
 2. Move cooked cauliflower to a strainer, place into sink, and allow to drain for 10 minutes or so.
 3. Place skillet on medium heat. Sauté garlic in butter.
 4. Place cauliflower into food processor or high-powered blender. Add the butter and garlic mixture. Blend until smooth. (Alternatively, mash cauliflower mixture by hand with a masher.)
 5. Stir in the sour cream. Season with salt and pepper.
 6. Taste. Adjust for salt and pepper.



Add your favorite flavors, e.g., olive oil, thyme, rosemary, parsley, dill, chives, or bacon.

Creamy Green Beans with Mushrooms

- 2 pounds (900 g) green beans, fresh or frozen
 - 2 tablespoons (30 g) cooking oil, butter, or bacon fat
 - 1 pound (450 g) fresh mushrooms, sliced
 - 6 cloves fresh garlic, chopped (or 1 teaspoon [4 g] garlic powder)
 - 1 cup (240 ml) chicken broth
 - 1 teaspoon (6 g) salt
 - 1 teaspoon (2 g) pepper
 - 1 cup (240 ml) cream
-
1. Place green beans into skillet on medium heat.
 2. Combine dry seasonings into broth. Stir well. Add to green beans.
 3. Cover the skillet. Cook for about 15 minutes if green beans are fresh, 20-25 minutes if frozen. Meanwhile, warm the cooking oil (or butter or bacon fat) in a second skillet on medium high heat. Add the fresh mushrooms. Cook the mushrooms for about 5 minutes. Set aside.
 4. Check green beans for doneness.
 5. When green beans are done, add mushrooms and cream.
 6. Mix and move to a serving bowl.



Holiday Broccoli Bake

- 2 pounds (900 g) broccoli florets
- ¼ cup (60 ml) broth or water
- 1 teaspoon (4 g) garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon (2 g) onion powder
- 1 teaspoon (6 g) salt
- 1 teaspoon (2 g) pepper
- ¾ cup (180 ml) sour cream
- ¾ cup (75 g) grated cheddar, jack, or gruyère cheese
- 4-6 strips of bacon, crumbled

1. Heat oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. Place broccoli in baking dish.
3. Combine broth (or water) and spices. Add to broccoli.
4. Cover broccoli with lid or foil. Bake for 20 minutes.
5. Remove from oven. Check for doneness. Return to oven for more tender broccoli.
6. When broccoli is tender, remove from oven, and turn oven heat up to 425°F (220°C).
7. Remove lid from dish. Dot broccoli with sour cream. Sprinkle with cheese.
8. Return to oven, uncovered, for about 5 minutes or until cheese is melted.
9. Remove from oven. Sprinkle with bacon.
10. Garnish with paprika, green onions, or chives, as desired.



Deli-Style Broccoli Salad

- 2 pounds (900 g) broccoli florets, fresh
- 1 red onion
- ½ cup (120 ml) mayonnaise
- ½ cup (120 ml) Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) apple cider vinegar
- Stevia (or other low-carb sweetener) to taste (I use the equivalent of about six tablespoons [76 g] of sugar.)
- 1 teaspoon each salt (6 g) and pepper (2 g)
- Adjust salt, pepper, and sweetener to taste.

1. Wash the broccoli, then blanch in boiling water for 2 minutes. This stops oxidation or darkening of the broccoli and causes it to become bright green.
2. Place a colander into the sink. Drain the blanched broccoli and rinse it with cold water to stop the cooking process. Move the broccoli to a large mixing bowl.
3. For the dressing, add mayonnaise, yogurt, and apple cider vinegar to a bowl.
4. Blend well.
5. Add stevia or other sweetener to taste.
6. Taste. Adjust for salt and pepper.



Cauliflower Salad, Inspired by the Flavors of Potato Salad

- 2 pounds (900 g) cauliflower florets
- ½ cup (60 ml) Greek yogurt
- ½ cup (60 ml) mayonnaise
- ¼ cup (60 ml) dill pickle juice (or apple cider vinegar)
- 1 teaspoon each garlic powder (2 g) and onion powder (1 g)
- 1 teaspoon each salt (3 g) and pepper (1 g)
- Stevia (or other low-carb sweetener) to taste (I use the equivalent of about six tablespoons [76 g] of sugar.)
- 6 ounces (170 g) canned olives, sliced
- 1 medium dill pickle, chopped
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) water



(This one is best made the day before, as with all potato salads.)

1. Place cauliflower florets into a skillet over medium heat with water. Cover. Steam for about 15 minutes or until tender.
2. When cooked, chop cauliflower to your desired size for the salad (as necessary).
3. Allow to cool for 30 minutes or more.
4. Meanwhile, make dressing by combining yogurt, mayonnaise, dill pickle juice or apple cider vinegar, and seasonings. Blend well. Add to cooled cauliflower.
5. Add sliced olives, chopped pickle, and sliced onion.
6. Taste. Adjust for salt, pepper, and sweetener. Increase tang with the dill juice or vinegar.

Cucumber Salad

- 2 pounds (900 g) cucumbers, sliced
- 1 cup (240 ml) sour cream
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon (3 g), dried dill weed
- ½ teaspoon each, salt (3 g) and pepper (1 g)
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced

1. Peel the cucumbers.
2. Slice the cucumbers into bite-sized pieces, either half- or quarter-rounds, and place into serving bowl.
3. Salt lightly and toss. The salt will begin to draw some of the juice out of the cucumber slices, liquid that will help add moisture to your dressing.
4. In a separate bowl, mix the sour cream, garlic, dill, and pepper.
5. Stir the dressing into the cucumbers, mixing thoroughly until the cucumber slices are well-coated. Add the red onion.
6. Taste. Adjust for salt and pepper.



Spicy Cabbage Slaw

- Large head of cabbage, finely shredded
- 2 bundles green onions, finely sliced
- 2 bundles radishes, washed and diced
- 2 jalapeño peppers, deveined and deseeded, finely minced
- 1 bundle cilantro, finely minced
- ½ cup (120 ml) light olive oil
- 2 small lemons, juiced
- ½ teaspoon salt (3 g)
- 1 teaspoon pepper (2 g)

1. Toss all the prepared vegetables together in a large bowl.
2. Whip up the olive oil and lemon juice in a cup with ½ teaspoon (3 g) salt.
3. Drizzle the dressing over the salad and toss until every vegetable is coated.
4. Allow the salad to sit at room temperature for up to 60 minutes in order for the flavors to meld.
5. Taste. Adjust for salt and pepper.



Fresh Broccoli Salad

- 2 pounds (900 g) broccoli florets, fresh
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) cooking oil
- 6 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and sliced
- 1 red onion, cut into thin rings
- 1 6-ounce (170 g) can black olives, pitted and sliced
- 2 lemons, juiced
- ½ cup (120 ml) extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup (60 ml) apple cider vinegar

1. Wash the broccoli, and blanch in boiling water for 2 minutes. This stops oxidation or darkening of the broccoli and causes it to become bright green.
2. Place a colander into the sink. Drain the blanched broccoli and rinse it with cold water to stop the cooking process. Move the broccoli to a large mixing bowl.
3. Chop the garlic and bell peppers.
4. Heat a skillet on high heat. Add cooking oil.
5. Briefly sauté the garlic and bell peppers. Stir. Keep stirring until you begin to smell the pepper releasing its aroma. Add to the fresh broccoli.
6. Thinly slice the onions and olives.
7. Juice the lemon.
8. Add the onion and black olives to the broccoli. Mix well.
9. Drizzle the lemon juice, olive oil, and vinegar over the salad and toss gently. Taste. Adjust for salt and pepper.



Garlicky Green Beans

- 1½ to 2 pounds (680 g to 900 g) fresh green beans, washed and trimmed
- 3-5 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely minced or pressed
- 2 tablespoons (30 g) butter
- 1 tablespoon (15 g) avocado oil or olive oil
- ¼ cup (60 ml) water or broth
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. Melt the butter with the oil in a deep sauté pan.
2. Add the garlic, and carefully sauté over low heat just to soften a bit and to release the flavor into the oil. Be careful not to burn the garlic.
3. Add the green beans. Use tongs to toss and coat them in the fragrant oil.
4. Add salt and pepper to taste. You can start with about ½ teaspoon of each (3 g salt and 1 g pepper) and adjust at the end.
5. Toss again using tongs to mix in seasonings. Turn heat up to medium, and sauté gently for 3-4 minutes.
6. Add water or broth, and cover to steam.
7. In several minutes the green beans will brighten and soften a bit.
8. Uncover to move them around and check for doneness. Tongs make this easier and are gentle to the beans. They are done when tender, crisp, and still bright, unless you like them more tender.
9. Taste. Adjust for salt and pepper.



Deli-Style Coleslaw

- 1 head cabbage
- ½ cup (120 ml) mayonnaise
- ½ cup (120 ml) Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) apple cider vinegar
- Stevia (or other low-carb sweetener) to taste (I use the equivalent of about six tablespoons [76 g] of sugar.)
- 1 teaspoon (6 g) salt
- 1 teaspoon (2 g) pepper

1. Chop cabbage.
2. For dressing, combine mayonnaise, yogurt, apple cider vinegar, salt, pepper, and sweetener. Mix well.
3. Add dressing to cabbage. Mix well.
4. Taste. Add salt, pepper, and/or sweetener, if desired.



Creamy Broccoli Casserole

- 2 pounds (900 g) broccoli florets
- 1 can (300 ml) condensed cream of mushroom soup
- ½ cup (120 ml) sour cream
- ½ cup (50 g) grated cheddar cheese
- 2 tablespoons (24 g) canned pimento
- 3 tablespoons (45 ml) lemon juice
- ½ cup (15 g) crushed pork rinds (optional)

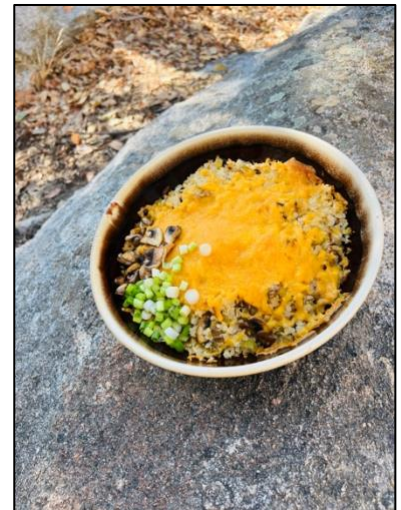
1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. Warm skillet on high heat. Cook broccoli, covered, for about 10 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, mix soup, sour cream, cheese, pimento, and lemon juice.
4. Place broccoli into a 1½ quart (1400 ml) casserole dish (8×8-inch [20×20-cm] dish).
5. Pour cream mixture over broccoli, and top with pork rinds, if desired.
6. Bake for 35 minutes.



Cheesy Cauliflower “Stuffing”

- 20 ounces (570 g) frozen riced cauliflower
- ¼ cup (60 g) butter
- ½ yellow onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
- Approximately six button mushrooms, sliced
- ½ teaspoon (3 g) salt
- ½ teaspoon (1 g) pepper
- ¼ cup (60 ml) broth (or water)
- ½ cup (50 g) grated cheddar cheese

1. Warm skillet on medium-high heat. Melt butter. Add onion and celery. Cook for about 5 minutes.
2. Add mushrooms to skillet. Cook for about 2 more minutes.
3. Add salt and pepper to skillet. Stir.
4. Add broth. Stir.
5. Add riced cauliflower. Stir.
6. Cook mixture for about 8 more minutes. Check for doneness. Cook for a few more minutes, if desired.
7. Add cheese when most of the liquid has been absorbed. Cook for a few more minutes until cheese is melted and incorporated.
8. Taste. Adjust for salt and pepper.



Green Bean Casserole

- 20 ounces (570 g) frozen French-cut green beans
- ½ onion, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons (30 g) butter
- 1 teaspoon salt (6 g); ¼ teaspoon (½ g) pepper
- ¼ teaspoon (1 g) xanthan gum or glucomannan powder (optional)
- ½ cup (120 ml) sour cream
- ½ cup (50 g) grated cheddar cheese

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. Place green beans into skillet on medium high heat. Cover. Cook for about 10 minutes.
3. Separately, sauté onion in butter. Sprinkle xanthan gum or glucomannan onto the top. Add salt and pepper. Stir until thick.
4. Remove from heat. Stir sour cream into onion mixture.
5. Stir mixture into green beans.
6. Place green beans into a 9×13-inch (23×33-cm) baking dish. Top with cheese. Bake uncovered for 15 minutes.
7. (Alternatively, finish the green beans on the stovetop in a skillet on medium heat, covered, for about 15 minutes.)



Turkey Gravy

Traditionally, gravy is simply a combination of meat drippings and fat, combined with broth or water and thickened. Generally, it is thickened with flour. Low-carb dieters will often thicken it with glucomannan powder or xanthan gum. This is what I tend to do. We include instructions here.

The only key difference to note with these alternative thickeners is that you need far less by volume than you do with flour. They can also get extra-clumpy. Whisking them in cold water before adding to the gravy is even more important than it is with wheat flour. Add ¼ teaspoon (1 g) at a time.

- ¼ cup (60 g) butter
- 2 cups (480 g) pan drippings
- ¼ cup (60 ml) broth or water
- ¼ - ½ teaspoon (1-2 g) glucomannan powder or xanthan gum thickener
- Salt and pepper, to taste.

1. Melt butter in skillet over medium heat.
2. Sprinkle ¼ teaspoon glucomannan or xanthan gum into broth or water. Whisk to dissolve powder. Add to butter. Whisk well in pan.
3. Gradually whisk pan drippings into butter mixture and continue to whisk for a few minutes.
4. If gravy needs more thickening, add ¼ teaspoon (1 g) thickener.
5. Taste. Adjust for salt and pepper.



Lower-Glycemic Cranberry Sauce

(Because Anna Sul's kids insist that we include this.)

Anna writes: Cranberry sauce is usually incredibly sugary and not always as popular, but since my family missed mine after I became diabetic and I broke up with added sugar, this extra-flavorful and not-too-sweet recipe was born. It is still best in very small servings.

One difficulty in making sweet sauces without sugar is that many keto sweeteners will quickly crystallize when cooled. My kids, who like to experiment with baking, found that allulose was perfect for cranberry sauce. A monk fruit blend can be used if you will be serving immediately.

This cranberry sauce typically uses red wine instead of water for a once-a-year tradition, but either will work. If you use wine, know that while simmering longer than 30 minutes will eliminate the alcohol flavor and reduce the alcohol content significantly, the finished sauce will still contain some alcohol. In small amounts, this won't matter for most, but be aware.



- 12 ounces (300 g) fresh cranberries (about 3 cups)
 - 1 cup (140 ml) red wine (or water plus two tablespoons [30 ml] lemon juice)
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (120 g) allulose (or stevia to taste)
 - Pinch of salt
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon (1 g) white pepper
-
1. Rinse cranberries and remove any that are squishy or discolored.
 2. Place cranberries, water or wine, allulose, and salt into a medium or large pot or saucepan and stir to dissolve.
 3. Bring to a boil over medium high heat, stirring occasionally.
 4. When cranberries start to pop, lower heat to medium and stir more often until all the berries are soft. Continue to simmer on low 30-45 minutes longer for a softer, thicker texture and to cook off some of the alcohol if you used wine.
 5. If you like a more whole-berry texture, you can cool and serve or refrigerate as is. For the smoothest texture, run the sauce through a food mill or blend and press through a sieve. Serve in a glass or crystal dish to enjoy the ruby-red color.

Lower-Glycemic Holiday Stuffing/Dressing

More from the Sul kids: 😊

Anna Sul writes: Like most holiday dishes, dressing/stuffing is unique to each family that makes it. My grandmother Mary used her homemade turkey broth and drippings from the roasted turkey, the minced heart and liver, and even some hard-boiled eggs! This simple lower-carb dressing is made with a half-loaf of commercial keto wheat fiber bread from Costco. You can replace the fresh garlic and onions with powder or replace the turkey drippings with chicken broth, and it will still give you a serviceable dressing.

Use any low-carbohydrate bread, and be prepared to adjust the moisture just a bit if your stuffing ends up too dry. It will vary by the bread and its dryness.



- ½ loaf Franz Keto Bread or other low-carbohydrate bread
 - ½ pound (225 g) ground sausage
 - 4 ounces (110 g) butter or ½ cup (110 ml) turkey drippings
 - 3 garlic cloves, minced (or 1 teaspoon [4 g] garlic powder)
 - 1 small onion, diced (or 1 tablespoon [6 g] onion powder)
 - 1 bunch celery, thinly sliced (about 4 cups or 400 g)
 - 1¾ cups (410 ml) turkey broth (or a 14-ounce can chicken broth)
 - 2 teaspoons (3 g) poultry seasoning
 - 1 teaspoon (1 g) ground sage
 - 1 teaspoon (6 g) salt
1. Cut bread into cubes.
 2. Spread cubes onto a sheet pan and carefully toast at 350°F (175°C), checking and moving them around every 5 minutes. When toasted and dry, turn off heat and let cool.
 3. Brown the sausage in a deep sauté pan on medium high heat, breaking up into a small crumble.
 4. In a separate pan, heat on medium high. Melt butter.
 5. Add garlic and onion until lightly browned. Add celery. Cover and cook for about 10 minutes. Check for doneness. Cook longer if you'd like a softer celery.
 6. In a separate bowl or measuring dish, combine broth and seasonings. Add to celery mixture.
 7. Add sausage to celery mixture.
 8. Bring celery mixture to a simmer for a few minutes.
 9. Remove from heat, fold in the bread cubes, cover, and let rest until the bread soaks up all the flavors and moisture.
 10. Taste. Adjust for salt and seasonings.
 11. It is ready to be transferred to a serving dish or held uncovered in a warm oven.