

Surviving New Year's Cocktail Parties

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While holidays are generally a happy and merry time, learning how to navigate holiday buffets from Thanksgiving through New Year's is not always easy or enjoyable. Many of us try "pretoxing" in anticipation of the feasts to come, and others obsessively count calories and fat until they are driven to the point of insanity. Well guess what? *RELAX!* Here are some tips to help guide you through the holiday feeding season, allowing you to enjoy both the food and company during the holidays—without busting out of your jeans!

1. Downsize your plate.

Use an appetizer or salad plate when serving your food. Big plates usually mean big amounts of food. Studies have shown that downsizing your plate actually *decreases* your appetite and curtails the amount of food you eat. On the other hand, a full appetizer plate tricks the body into satiety, unlike filling up a dinner size plate, which will only fill out your waistline.

2. Get some zzzzzzz's.

Recent studies show that people who get at least eight hours of sleep a night consume approximately 250-350 fewer calories the following day and are more apt to make wiser food choices. According to research, inadequate sleep suppresses hormones in the brain that control hunger cues, making sleep-deprived individuals are more likely to overeat. What's more, they tend to opt for high-fat, high-carb comfort foods.

3. Think about the drink.

They may be tasty, but mixed drinks made with sugary syrups are laden with empty calories. Skip the eggnog and the madori sour, and instead choose from a wide array of wines and light beers. You'll get your holiday buzz without breaking the calorie bank!

4. Don't skip—unless it's part of a holiday dance.

Always eat normally on the day of a party. Those who skip meals in anticipation of pigging out that night tend to overeat later on. Eating sensibly throughout the day will keep you satiated with stable blood sugar levels, which will allow you to empower a bit of restraint at the holiday table. Pre-holiday meal time, stock up on protein and fiber during the day to keep hunger at bay.

***About the Author:** [Franci Cohen](#) is a personal trainer and certified nutritionist with a masters degree in both nutrition and exercise physiology. She is also the creator of SPIDERBANDS®. With over 18 years of experience, Franci has been a mainstay in the fitness and nutrition industries.*