



Making Your Holidays Meaningful, Manageable, and Maybe Joyful

Do the upcoming holidays make you feel like shouting “Joy to the world!” or “Bah Humbug!”? For most people, the holiday season has strong spiritual significance, brings families together and fosters a sense of “good will to all”. But the contrast between our expectations and reality often leaves us overwhelmed, let down or depressed. With thoughtful planning, the holidays can be healthy, enjoyable, meaningful and manageable.

- What do the holidays mean to you? Think and plan ahead, so that your priorities are straight and in alignment with your values.
- Examine your holiday rituals and traditions. Keep only the ones that are enjoyable, renewing, relaxing, and meaningful.
- Create new traditions that fit your present lifestyle, time constraints, and needs. Don’t be afraid to try something new. Celebrate in a way you have not done before.
- Relax your holiday standards. Leave the perfect holiday homes, tables, parties, clothes, and families to the magazines. Think POTLUCK!
- S-L-O-W down. The number one thing most people want for the holidays is relaxed time with friends and family. Hectic is a choice- if you don’t want a hectic holiday, make changes.

Take Care of Yourself – not only is it the right thing to do and certainly the path in any spiritual tradition, it helps to build stress tolerance and allows you to have more energy and focus.

- Get out and move your body in ways you enjoy – be that walking with dog or folks in the park, jogging, cycling, skiing, or snowshoeing. Try to spend some time in nature appreciating the beauty we are surrounded by. If dressed properly, winter can be truly enjoyable time to be outside and can help alleviate symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder.
- Find time for yourself. Don’t spend all your time providing activities for your family and friends.

Certainly the holidays are a time to appreciate delicacies that aren’t available any other time of the year. Many treats hold meaning and memories. But finding the delicate balance between enjoyment and overindulgence that leaves us remorseful in January eludes many Americans.

- Find ways to indulge your other four senses. Go to a tree lot or candle shop to delight your sense of smell. Enjoy holiday music, look at Christmas lights, hug family members.
- Do not think you must have candy, nuts, chocolate and cookies sitting around. Display a scented candle or holiday greetings instead of food to create a festive atmosphere.
- You don't have to stick to the same foods you've eaten every year on the holidays. How about a meal without cream of mushroom soup in the veggies?
- Holiday recipes don't have to leave guests feeling gorged or guilty. Think "flavorful", not "rich". Include fruits and veggies, and legumes (beans) in your menu. Check out some of the websites listed below for recipe ideas.
- Choose discriminately - enjoy the homemade goodies and special treats that only come around once a year, but if you don't love it, don't eat it.
- Choose small portions of high fat foods like cheese, dips, and fried appetizers. Take half portions for your first helping; take the other half for your second.
- Enjoy larger portions of vegetables, fruits, lean proteins and grains.
- A taste may be all you need to satisfy the craving. Don't feel compelled to clean your plate.
- Don't arrive at the holiday party starving!
- Limit consumption of alcohol, which is a depressant and packs empty calories. Avoid fruity, creamy and frozen drinks. Be sure to serve interesting non-alcoholic beverages at parties.

Much of the spiritual element of the season can be lost to commercial overkill. Consider this: In the United States the average holiday spending is \$863. Add that to average credit card balances of \$7500, and a total national credit card debt of \$565 billion, and you have to wonder – how did we get conned into this?! Certainly NO spiritual path would condone a holiday that leaves many feeling spent and regretful.

- Avoid "gift-giving frenzies". Have a family discussion about this year's gift giving; consider new options (e.g., give gifts only to the children, limit gifts to one big one, and three small ones, have adults choose names from a hat).
- Plan and keep track of expenditures to stay within budget.
- Enjoy holiday activities that are free such as driving around to look at Christmas decorations. Go window-shopping.
- Remember, the best things in life aren't things!

Holidays are a time for memories, which can bring the blues as well as the warm-fuzzies.

- Remember that the holiday season does not automatically banish reasons for feeling sad or lonely; there is room for these feelings to be present, even if you choose not to express them.
- Let go of the past! Don't be disappointed if your holidays are not like they used to be. Life brings changes. Each holiday season is different and can be enjoyed in it's

own way. You set yourself up for sadness if everything has to be just like the good old days. Look toward the future.

- Volunteer some time to help others, especially if you will be away from family.
- If you're alone this year find a few people to involve in a meaningful activity or event in your community. Make new friends. Contact someone you have lost touch with.
- Escape to the mountains or beach if you dislike or are depressed by traditional holiday activities.
- Spend time with people who are supportive and care about you.
- Plan an event for the new year to look forward to.
- Environmental factors can contribute to feelings of depression around the holidays. Some people suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which can result from fewer hours of sunlight as the days grow shorter during the winter months. Phototherapy, a treatment involving exposure to intense light, is effective in relieving SAD symptoms. Talk to your doctor or EAP counselor to find out more about SAD.



Search the internet for great healthy recipes. Here's just a few sites:

<http://walking.about.com/library/day/blidayrecipeholiday.htm>

<http://www.couplescompany.com/Advice/Jason/Nutrition/healthyHoliday.htm>

<http://www.healthynj.org/health-wellness/holiday/links.htm>

for vegetarian ideas galore: <http://members.tripod.com/%7Ehannahdayan/holiday.html>

Recipe of the Month: Holiday Yams

Forget the marshmallows this year and enjoy one of the most nutrient packed traditional holiday veggies.

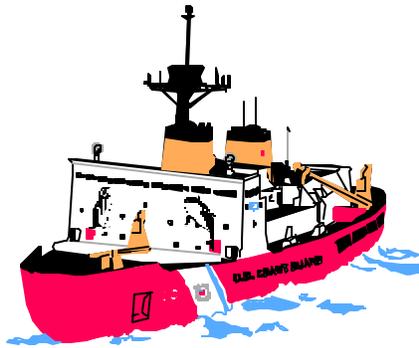
- 3 Pounds fresh yams
- 3 Tablespoons Orange juice concentrate, thawed.
- 1 Teaspoon cinnamon
- Dash of Nutmeg
- $\frac{3}{4}$ Teaspoon Orange rind, grated
- $\frac{1}{4}$ Cup dates, chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ Cup Walnuts , Chopped
- Vegetable Cooking Spray
- $\frac{1}{3}$ Cup coconut (optional for garnish)

Bake yams in a baking dish at 425 for 45 minutes, until soft to the touch. Scoop the yam pulp from the skins. Whip pulp with concentrate, cinnamon, nutmeg, and orange rind until smooth and well blended. Stir in dates and walnuts.

Coat a 1 ¼ - quart casserole dish with cooking spray. Place yam mixture in casserole dish and sprinkle with coconut (optional). May be refrigerated and reheated later. Bake at 350° until warmed through.

Makes 6 (1/2 cup) servings: Per serving – 361 calories, fat: 6.27 grams (15%), carb: 73.7 grams, protein: 4.8 grams, sodium: 21 mg, fiber: 8.28 grams, cholesterol: 0 mg

UNIT OF THE MONTH USCGC POLAR STAR



The USCGC Polar Star, homeported in Seattle, WA, began a 6-month “cruise” to the South Pole this month, a patrol that would leave many fearing for their waistlines and well-being. With the efforts of the Health Promotion Committee, headed by Unit Health Promotion Coordinator (HPC) Senior Chief Russell Koons, members will have many opportunities to stay in shape. One of the biggest wellness challenges underway is food. The HPC is working with Food Service personnel to provide calories, carbs, protein and fat for each meal served, as well as specifying portion size.

Members will be able to participate in a number of fitness activities to accrue points for a program called **Up N Running - Fun and Prizes during Deep Freeze 2004**. Punch cards will be given out to individuals that would like to participate and for each session completed members get a punch. Twelve punches can be redeemed for a Fitness Prize. Fitness activist to choose from to accumulate points include:

ABS 500 - for core conditioning and that ripped look

BANDS OF LOVE - using resistance tubing to increase heart rate and tone muscles

STEP AEROBICS – Back by popular demand

CIRCUIT WEIGHT TRAINING - using real steel and cables

PILATES- designed to strengthen core muscles, help prevent back injury, and improve posture

MARTIAL ARTS - Welcome to the Polar Star Dojo

WALK OR RUN - 27 times around the flight deck or 13 times around the 01 deck equals a mile

Two complementary programs the HPCs will offer include LIFT THE SHIP, where total weight lifted will be tracked throughout the cruise, and RACE TO THE SOUTH POLE, where shipmates will log all their cardio mile-equivalents to try to reach McMurdo before the ship does, then beyond to the South Pole.

In the months prior to deployment, Senior Chief Koons and helpers have been working to put together one of the best fitness centers in the Coast Guard, complete with a cable crossover machine, pull-up station with wide grip and climbing holds, a leg extension/curl station, new speed bags, a heavy bag, dumbbells, jump ropes, fitness balls for core stabilization, and a new treadmill. This will add to the other 6 cardio stations, strength multistation, and gravitron. Interlock matting throughout and a sauna are icing on the cake for this premiere fitness center of the Coast Guard Fleet.

Finally, with all their new-found energy from such a thorough fitness program, members will have access to a new Learning Center, with six SWIII stations and 5 stand-alones for education and morale. This means they will have the opportunity to work on intellectual not just physical wellness while deployed.

Bravo Zulu to Senior Chief Koons and team for making this deployment a real cruise!

Special thanks to Barbara Herry, ISC Seattle Health Promotion Manager, for writing this issue of the Coast Guard's Health Promotion Bulletin.

Bulletin.



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