

Media Release

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How to eat, drink and be merry this Christmas – AND stay healthy!

Tis the season to be jolly ... unfortunately, it's also the time of year when health and fitness regimes get thrown out of the window, some of them never to be seen again!

The good news, according to the United Chiropractic Association (UCA) is you can join in the festive fun without abandoning all that hard work.

Their top tips for a happy Christmas include: Laugh – it's the best medicine of all; dance – it's a great workout; tell yourself you're going to have a nice time – your beliefs are key to how you feel; be grateful for and enjoy what you have; try to do something for others this festive season; and be with the people you want to be with – this way, you'll be happy!



There is even room for your favourite food and drink too, according to the UCA's health and nutrition adviser Cyndi O'Meara. Cyndi, author of *Changing Habits, Changing Lives*, says we can stay fit and healthy AND have fun at the same time.

"It's 2013, think about how many Christmases and New Year's Eves you've had and how many times you've wrecked your mind and body with too much alcohol and food at the many Christmas parties you attend. Why not make this year different?"

"Rather than looking at the cure, let's look at what you can do in order to survive the Christmas Cocktail party. Prevention is a far better way.

"The first thing you have to do is to decide on one particular type of drink," says Cyndi. "If it is wine, then stick to wine; or if you want Champagne then only drink Champagne. If you enjoy beer then don't mix it with any other drink. If you are going to drink spirits, then I suggest you drink them with soda water, water, straight up or on ice. With every glass of alcohol you drink you must match it with a glass of water, so every other drink should be a glass of water.

"When you're standing around drinking and talking it's hard to concentrate on the food coming around, and the hand just seems to go out and grab whatever is in front of it!

An important part of surviving the Christmas cocktail party without ending up the next morning with a food hangover is to think before you grab.

“Decide when you get to the party what you’re going to eat and not going to eat. Decide on one type of meat, so when the chicken wings circle then decide that chicken will be the only meat you will be eating. Do not mix your proteins – this is a sure way to end up with a food hangover. Another good choice would be to have the vegetables and the dips, this will ensure that the chicken wings will be well digested and you’ll get a good night’s sleep. It is good to avoid the fried foods, as the fat slows down the digestive process. By making good choices you’ll avoid feeling horrible the next day and on New Year’s Day.

And remember – you don’t HAVE to eat everything on your Christmas dinner plate. Instead of gorging yourself, eat a normal-sized meal and then take a 20-minute break to see if you are still hungry (it takes this long for the brain to register that the stomach is full). The chances are, you’ll realise you’ve had enough.

Cyndi says: “I used to love trying everything at a cocktail party, but I decided one day that the love of trying everything was not worth the way I felt the next day, or at the end of the silly season when I had a protruding stomach and couldn’t fit into my jeans. Once you’ve made a decision then it’s easy.”

Your local UCA chiropractor can also help to ease aches and pains caused by stress and over-doing the Christmas shopping – they’ll have advice, too, on staying healthy and well over the festive period. There are some ‘no-brainers’, such as taking regular exercise or a daily walk and drinking plenty of water to prevent dehydration.

You could also buy locally-sourced, ethically-produced meat this Christmas – you’ll feel better for it. And try out some recipes rather than buy packaged foods which often have additives and lack nutrition, which combine to cause health problems.

Here are two of our favourite recipes for you to try:

Jamie Oliver’s Pork, Onion and Chestnut Stuffing

Ingredients:

2 large onions, peeled and quartered

1 bunch of fresh sage, leaves picked

3 rashers of smoked streaky bacon, roughly chopped

Freshly ground white pepper

Sea salt

50g stale bread

200g vac-packed chestnuts

1kg higher-welfare shoulder of pork, trimmed and diced

1 whole fresh nutmeg for grating

1 lemon; 1 orange or clementine

Method:

This is basically bish, bash, bosh with a bit of love and you're left with some pretty special stuffing! Preheat your oven to 190°C/375°F/gas 5. Blitz the onions until finely chopped and tip into a large bowl. Tear the bread into small chunks and whiz into breadcrumbs. Add to the onions. Crush and crumble the chestnuts into the mix.

Tip the diced pork into a food processor with the sage leaves, bacon, a level teaspoon of white pepper and a good pinch of sea salt. Finely grate in a quarter of the nutmeg, the zest of half a lemon and 2-3 gratings of orange or clementine zest. Pulse until you've got some chunks – it will take less than a minute – and tip into the mixing bowl. Add another pinch of salt and white pepper (remember, the meat is raw so will need plenty of seasoning) and then scrunch it all together with your hands so it is well combined.

Take just under half the stuffing out of the bowl to use with your turkey and transfer the remainder to a dish which you can serve from. Cook for 50 minutes to 1-hour, until it's bubbling and crispy. Pour away any excess fat. It will be soft and succulent inside and crispy and chewy on the outside. Delicious!

Riverford Organic Farm's Sprouts, Red Onion and Blue Cheese Gratin:

Ingredients:

500g brussel sprouts, trimmed & outer leaves removed

2 red onions, peeled & cut lengthways into 6-8 wedges with the root intact

A few thyme sprigs

Olive oil

100g blue cheese

25g dried breadcrumbs

Method:

The preparation time for this is just 10 minutes. Preheat the oven to 190°C. Toss the onions in a baking dish with the thyme sprigs and just enough oil to coat. Season with salt and pepper. Roast for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, bring a pan of water to the boil. Add the sprouts and cook for four minutes. Drain, then toss with the onions. Roast for 15-20 minutes, until the sprouts are just starting to crisp up a little. Crumble over the blue cheese and sprinkle with the breadcrumbs. Roast for 10-15 minutes, until the breadcrumbs are golden. Serves four – and perfect with roast beef.

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