

## Gratitude or Guilt

By Joan Maiden



It's hard to believe the holidays are fast approaching. This time of year we have a tendency to overindulge. You will read lots of hints of how to stay on your diet—eat only turkey and vegetables, etc, etc. How boring!

I love stuffing and pumpkin pie. Thanksgiving without those treats would be depressing.

You CAN enjoy the foods you love at the holidays without blowing your diet or “cheating”. Here are a few strategies I've found that work:

- Enjoy the foods you REALLY love. Don't feel like you have to try a “little of everything”. I'm not going to waste calories on foods I don't enjoy.
- Start your day with a high protein breakfast. A smoothie is perfect. If you aren't starving, you can make better choices.
- Stay hydrated, especially if having alcoholic drinks. Dehydration can make you feel lethargic and thirst can be confused with hunger. Have a glass of water before you eat and one for every alcoholic drink you have.
- Add some exercise to your day. Starting your

day with a walk is a good way not only to get your metabolism revved but deal with the stress that comes so many times with family gatherings. (One year I walked to my mom's—8 miles. It was a beautiful day and I had no guilt over eating my fill at dinner.) Gather the family for an after dinner walk or throw around the football.

- Balance your calories over 72 hours. Cut back a little the day before and a little the day after and overall you will probably be in the right calorie range.
- Give to others. Some of my most memorable Thanksgivings have been serving meals to the homeless. One year, my daughter and I delivered meals in the slums of San Francisco. The gratitude we received when we handed out a hot meal was overwhelming. (We also got lots of exercise carrying boxes of meals up flights of stairs.) My mom always invited people to our home at the holidays. If anyone didn't have a place to go, they were welcomed to our house.

Let's not forget why we celebrate. Be thankful for good food, family and friends. Gratitude and guilt are incompatible.

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