

December 2010



## Visions of Light Desserts Dance in Our Heads....

Ah the holidays. Visions of sugarplums, cookie exchanges and company parties dance in our heads. Trouble is, we often find ourselves with several post-holiday pounds dancing around our hips. Research has shown that the average person gains nearly seven pounds between Halloween and New Year's Day.

The good news? You don't have to entirely give up your holiday favorites, including delicious desserts, in order to lighten up the season. There are a few simple ways to indulge without the guilt.

### Try these recipe modifications:

- Use non-stick cooking spray to grease the pan when cooking and baking.
- Use heart-healthy margarine spreads, rather than butter or shortening, for baking.
- Use 3 tbsp of unsweetened cocoa powder to replace 1 ounce of unsweetened chocolate.
- Use equal amounts of marshmallow crème in frostings to substitute for butter or margarine.
- Try finely crushed cinnamon graham crackers instead of traditional piecrusts.
- Use 2 egg whites instead of one whole egg when baking.
- Use equal amounts of applesauce or baby food prunes to replace oil.
- Use equal amounts of fat-free plain yogurt to replace sour cream.



[www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)



## TIPS TO EASE HOLIDAY STRESS

If you are experiencing holiday stress, try to decrease or alleviate them by doing these things:

- Talk honestly to someone.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Stick with in your normal life routine as much as possible.
- Set a realistic budget and then stick to it.
- Establish realistic goals and expectations.
- Do not label the season as a time to cure past problems.
- Don't be afraid to say no. That means don't attend parties when you don't really have time, don't take on obligations that will crowd your time, and don't overextend yourself.
- Find time for yourself
- Enjoy free holiday activities
- Try to celebrate the holidays in a different way.

Holiday stress can be quite common, but if you are feeling especially down - for example, your sleep or your appetite is affected, contact your health care provider.

[www.siho.org](http://www.siho.org)

**“Health is the greatest gift, contentment the greatest wealth, faithfulness the best relationship.”**

~Buddha~



## How To Have a Green Christmas

This year, Americans will send nearly 2 billion holiday cards, use more than 38,000 miles of ribbon and leave millions of Christmas trees on the curb. Does that mean you should feel guilty for having a great time? Nah. Neither does it mean forgoing any of the elements that make the holiday season special. "You don't have to sacrifice the celebration for sustainability," says Zem Joaquin, founder of [ecofabulous.com](http://ecofabulous.com) and eco-editor of *House & Garden*. Her advice: be "eco-wise." Here are a few secrets for an environmentally friendly—but still festive—holiday season.

**Lights.** Buy strings of LED lights, which look the same as conventional incandescent bulbs but last longer and use 80 to 90 percent less energy. LED lights, like the 300-light garland for \$8.99 at [homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com), are also safer since they barely warm up. And invest in timers that automatically shut off your lights and cost as little as \$9.99.

**Shopping.** Instead of coming home with 15 shopping bags, bring your own to the store. Afraid of being stopped for shoplifting? Danny Seo, author of "Simply Green Giving," fastens receipts to the outside of his bag with a binder clip.



**Wrapping.** Instead of buying your paper, get creative with what you have around the house. Wrap presents in posters, decorated grocery-store bags or pages from glossy fashion magazines. Or put a small present in a beautiful scarf and "make the wrapping part of the gift," says Jennifer Hattam, lifestyle editor for *Sierra* magazine. If you love traditional wrapping paper, buy the recycled versions from sites like [fishlippaperdesigns.com](http://fishlippaperdesigns.com) and [paperorganics.com](http://paperorganics.com) (\$4.99 for two 24- by 36-inch sheets). The latter site also sells biodegradable ribbon made from cotton and soy-based inks.

**Trees.** "Always go real," says Seo. "A fake tree is petroleum based. It's not biodegradable." One answer is to buy or rent a live tree (see [livingchristmastrees.org](http://livingchristmastrees.org) for more information). Or get a cut tree and, after the holidays, take it to the county recycling facility, where it can be turned into mulch.

**Cards.** This year consider going paper-free. Direct friends to your family blog or create a free multiphoto card or an online slideshow on [photobucket.com](http://photobucket.com). You can add holiday music, snowflakes and bits of text, and then e-mail friends and family a link.



**Parties.** Use metal flatware and real glasses and dishes—especially if you own an Energy Star-certified dishwasher, says Jenny Powers of the Natural Resources Defense Council. If you're using disposable plates, pick recyclable paper, not plastic or Styrofoam. Use cloth tablecloths instead of throw-aways. Then wash them in cold water to save energy. See [all-laundry.com/environment.asp](http://all-laundry.com/environment.asp) for more tips. And if you need a new party outfit, check out [treehugger.com](http://treehugger.com) for suggestions on how to "green" your wardrobe. Then kick back and toast the holidays with a glass of (organic) champagne.

Newsweek

## Spice Cookies



### Ingredients:

- 1/2 c. whole wheat flour
- 1 1/2 c. all purpose flour
- 2 t. ginger, ground
- 2 t. cinnamon, ground
- 2 t. allspice, ground
- 1/2 t salt
- 1 t. baking soda
- 1 stick margarine
- 1/2 c. brown sugar
- 1/2 c. very ripe banana, pureed
- 1 t. decorating sugar, candy sprinkles or sugar in the raw

### Directions:

- Sift all the dry ingredients into a mixing bowl. Place the margarine in a mixing bowl, then add the sugar and mix until creamy. Add the banana and continue to beat at medium speed for 2-3 minutes. If the mixture looks loose, add one tablespoon of the flour mixture to the wet mixture. Add all the flour mixture in small amounts until combined.
- Divide the dough into balls, wrap and press each one into a flat disk.
- Chill for at least two hours. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place the dough balls between two sheets of wax paper and roll out as thinly as possible. Stamp with a small (1"- 1 1/2") cookie cutter. Sprinkle sugar; bake 10 minutes. Immediately after cooking, transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool. Store cookies in an air-tight container for up to one week.

Number of Servings: 36

### Nutrition Facts:

- Serving Size 1 serving (2 cookies)
- Calories - 61.1
- Total Fat - 2.6g
- Saturated Fat - .5g
- Polyunsaturated Fat - .8g
- Monounsaturated Fat - 1.2g
- Cholesterol - 0 mg
- Sodium 47.3mg
- Potassium 21.2mg
- Total Carbohydrates - 9.2g
- Protein - .8g

[www.sparkpeople.com](http://www.sparkpeople.com)

## Child's Pose

### Starting Position

Come to hands and knees with your hands shoulder-width apart, knees hip-width apart, abs engaged, and back flat (spine neutral)

### Action

Keep your knees and ankles separated and the tops of your feet on the floor as you shift your weight back over your heels, lengthening your spine, relaxing your head and neck, and reaching forward through your fingertips. Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

### Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from your ears.

