



by [Jackie Newgent](#)

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## 6 Ways to Eat Less but Stay Satisfied this Holiday Season

*Clever and festive ways to prevent portion distortion*

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"Keep portion sizes in check!" While that's excellent advice, it's often challenging to put into practice, especially during the holiday season. So here are six seasonally-friendly tips to help you eat healthful portions (and to stop eating when you're satisfied).

## 1. Try "single-size" recipes.



*Petite Pumpkin Pie / [jackienewgent.com](http://jackienewgent.com)*

There are so many interesting ways to transform savory dishes into petite and memorable delights. For example, serve or bake mac-n-cheese or other cheesy dishes in colorful ramekins. Pipe decadent mashed potatoes using a pastry bag into beautiful culinary parchment cups. Bake mini meatloaves or pumpkin pies directly in individual cups of a muffin tray. Cook holiday stuffing in 4-ounce foil baking cups. Ladle creamy soups into demitasse or espresso cups. Or serve scrumptious salad dressing on the side in shot glasses. These cuisine tricks will make you want to savor your food slowly and help you eat a right-sized serving.

## 2. Choose plates that encourage proper portions.



[livligahome.com](http://livligahome.com)

It's not necessary or practical to precisely weigh and measure everything that goes on your plate to meet healthful guidelines, like those represented by MyPlate. And you don't need to dine from uninviting, divided eco-unfriendly Styrofoam plates to do this. There's lovely and functional portion-friendly dinnerware available now. Shop around for your favorite, or add it to your holiday gift wish list. Styles range from subtle and elegant to purposeful and casual. This type of dinnerware can lead to more mindful, well-balanced, healthier eating just by using it. But if you have no plans to purchase this type of dinnerware, aim to simply use 10-inch rather than 12-inch dinner plates.

### **3. Serve meals on plates of a contrasting color to make your brain happy.**

In addition to utilizing portion-friendly plates, consider the color. Food psychology research suggests that the more color contrast between your food color and plate color, the less you'll likely eat—or overeat! So if you want to eat fewer calories and you're eating a mainly red meal, like spaghetti generously tossed with marinara sauce, you're likely better off serving it in a white rather than red pasta bowl or plate to keep your serving size in check. The flip side of that is if you're eating a mostly white or light colored meal, such as turkey breast and mashed potatoes, your best

bet is to serve that on a colorful plate to help prevent overindulgence. Test out the easy experiment yourself!

#### **4. Let snacks help you out.**

During the holiday season when it's easy to overindulge on empty-calorie holiday treats, it's especially important to plan satisfying, weight-sensible snacks (like in-shell pistachios). Pistachios are one of the lowest calorie snack nuts and pack 6 grams of protein in each serving! The visual cue of the empty shells coupled with the time it takes to crack the snack may help you manage portions for mindful holiday noshing. Plus the nuts make a tasty holiday snack for guests to nibble on during a festive cocktail hour. You can simply dress up a cheese board with in-shell pistachios (my favorite is Wonderful Pistachios) and crisp local apple wedges.

#### **5. Let vegetables help you out.**



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Fill half of every breakfast, lunch, and dinner plate or bowl with non-starchy vegetables whenever possible. It'll naturally help you eat less of the rest. More specifically, a recent study suggests that you'll become satisfied on fewer overall calories since non-starchy vegetables are considered satiety-enhancing, low-energy-dense foods. Some simple vegetable dishes in which to fill half of your plate include

grape tomato and fresh basil skewers, pan-grilled jumbo Portabellas, roasted or grilled eggplant "steak," mashed cauliflower, and balsamic-splashed arugula salad.

## **6. Use a smart phone or other mobile device to assist you in eating smartly.**

Download and use an app such as Eat Slower that's designed to help you slow down your eating pace. When you eat (and chew) more slowly, your brain will be signaled of your hunger satisfaction before you've overeaten. If used as designed, an app like this could result in you eating less. Also be on the lookout in the near future for the world's first wearable device which monitors eating habits to help you improve them. It's called BitBite. Pretty cool!

*Disclosure Note: Jackie Newgent is on the consumer advisory board of Pistachio Health Institute.*



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