



Axminster Hospital
Chard Street
Axminster
EX13 5DU
01297 631782

info@projectfood.org.uk
www.project-food.org.uk

We all know how easy it is to get caught up in the hype over festive foods, especially when we see all the tasty treats being advertised on TV. Unfortunately though, these are often not the healthiest foods and can be high in saturated fats and sugars.

In this festive edition, we'll talk about the nutrition of holiday treats, how to avoid festive panic-buying and suggest a few helpful snack swaps.

Happy holidays!

From Hannah and the Project Food team

A special thank you to our volunteer Lily for her work on this newsletter.



Focus on...Festive Foods

A lot of the traditional festive foods we like to have over the holidays are energy-dense but nutrient-poor, this means they will give us a lot of Kcal (energy) but not many of the nutrients we need to thrive (and often a lot of those that we really don't want too many of!). These are mostly saturated fats, sugars (including carbs), and salt. But why is it that we often reach for these foods during winter?



As the months get colder we tend to crave comforting foods, creamy macaroni cheese, warming pie and mash, and don't forget the box of chocolates! As well as being tasty, there is some science behind why we reach for comfort foods. Studies have shown that, on average, people tend to consume 86 extra Kcal a day in the winter months, and this may be due to hormones. Sunlight is a factor that triggers the release of Serotonin (the happiness hormone), but as the daytime shortens we get a lot less sunlight. Sugars and carbohydrates increase our Serotonin levels (as they trigger the release of insulin), explaining why we reach for those foods when we're feeling a bit down, which is a common feeling in the wintertime.



Food is very important in helping us through the dark, cold months. But, it doesn't have to be the energy-dense but nutrient-poor foods we reach for. Overleaf, you'll find some mood-boosting festive food ideas and our recipe this month is a delicious low sugar shortbread.

It's not unusual to see huge displays of food being advertised on TV and in magazines over the holidays. The adverts and social media can make you feel that you need an army's worth of food to feed your family on Christmas Day. We all know that's not really the case, but it's easy to get swept up in the idea, but this leads to around 270,000 tonnes of food being thrown away over the festive period, in the UK alone.

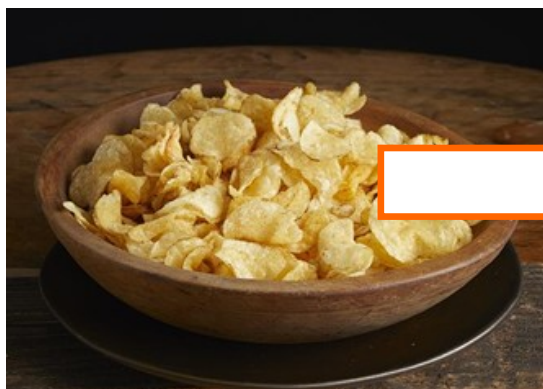


So, here are some helpful ideas on how to prevent Christmas food waste.

- Check the temperature of your fridge (it should be set at 5°C or below), to make sure your food stays fresh.
- Don't be one of the 80% who throw away food close to its use-by, you can freeze it to eat later on (use the internet to find out how to freeze/ if certain items can be safely frozen).
- Try not to get caught up in panic buying and think realistically when shopping. You also don't have to stick to the traditions, if your family doesn't like turkey, there's no point buying it only to throw it away later, maybe consider another option that everyone will love!



Easy (and tasty!) Christmas Snack Swaps



Shop-bought crisps are usually high in salt and use a lot of oil (which is high in saturated fats). Instead, why not make your own! Cut a corn tortilla into triangles and sprinkle with some seasoning. Bake in the oven for 10 mins at 150°C.



Chocolate is high in sugars and fats, although it can be enjoyed occasionally, why not mix up your treats and try a popcorn trail mix? All you need is popcorn (ideally low/no-sugars), nuts, dried fruit, and seeds of your choice, mix them all and enjoy! If you've got a lot of Christmas chocolate, you could even break it up into bits and mix through, for that little extra sweetness.

