

Healthy, Tasty Desserts

This holiday season, you can enjoy traditional treats with a more healthful twist.



While holiday memories often center on family meals, including special, traditional desserts, many families may be concerned about the extra calories—but there are some smart and simple ways for families to overcome this challenge.

To preserve your traditions and help your family's waistline, you may want to consider making some swaps that will still satisfy your family's sweet tooth but offer more nutrients and fewer calories, less saturated and *trans* fats and added sugar.

As you plan your holiday get-togethers, consider these tasty dessert ideas:

Pile on the fruit. Fruit by itself makes an excellent dessert. Try placing a bowl of clementines or apples on the holiday table. The fruit looks beautiful and is easy to eat, even for children. Offer a fruit basket to friends instead of a plate of holiday cookies. Make a winter fruit salad with your traditional meal.

Update family favorites with healthy add-ins. If homemade breads are your family's treat of choice, try baking with whole wheat flour or adding in healthful options such as bananas, blueberries, cranberries, apples, walnuts and pecans. Just be sure to use nuts in moderation since they are high in calories. This holiday

season, you can enjoy traditional treats—with a more healthful twist. Try the healthy Banana Nut Bread recipe from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/syah/banutbre.htm.

Make it a mini. You may have noticed that food portions have grown quite a bit over the past few decades. Fortunately, you don't need to eat a large dessert to enjoy it. Consider serving bite-sized desserts instead of full servings. Mini pies, cake pops and one-bite cookies are all ways you can control your family's portion sizes. Just remember, just because they are smaller in size doesn't mean you should eat more of them.

Learn More

For more ways to encourage physical activity, as well as eat right and reduce screen time, visit **We Can!** (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition)[®] at <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>. Developed by the National Institutes of Health, **We Can!** provides parents, caregivers and communities with free tips, tools and guidance to help children ages 8–13 maintain a healthy weight by improving food choices, increasing physical activity and reducing screen time.

Full text available at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/news-events/matte-articles.htm>

We Can! is a program from the National Institutes of Health that offers resources for parents, caregivers and communities to help children 8-13 years old stay at a healthy weight through eating right, increasing physical activity, and reducing screen time.

To learn more, go to <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov> or call 1-866-35-WE CAN.

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