

# Slim Tips from Food Folks

BY JOAN KAY WESTLAKE

**C**hefs, cooks and restaurant folks are surrounded by food. Sampling, nibbling, eating—it's a tough job but they do it. It's a career that could turn anyone into Moby Dick. Here are some tips from the food pros on how to hold back the festive fat that might help you wade through the holiday calories.

Steve Butler, chef at the Gentle Strength restaurant in Tempe, suggests replacing red meat with lean poultry and fish. Also, he uses egg whites for whole eggs to decrease fat and cholesterol levels. To help keep calories down, increase high fiber foods such as raw fruits and vegetables, whole grains and beans.

Also, Butler uses low-fat and reduced fat dairy products. He highly recommends consuming fat burning foods such as daikon, a long, white oriental radish. Use it raw in salads, chopped in stir frying or grated for oriental coleslaw flavored with a touch of tamari sauce and dill.

"Cook while you are hungry," said Butler.

"Hunger increases your creativity. Sip on a glass of wine while you cook, you deserve it and it is good for your health. But sip and only one glass."

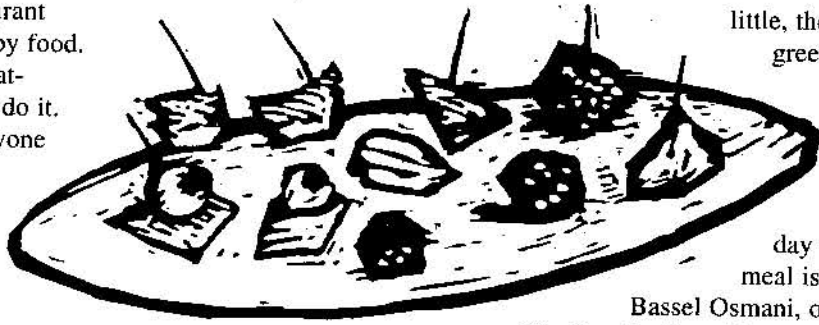
Kurt Zuger, executive chef at the Buttes Resort

in Arizona, points out that traditional holiday fare such as turkey is very healthy if you stick to the breast portions and skip the skin. To lighten up greasy, cooked-in-the-turkey dressing, Zuger moistens bread cubes with de-fatted chicken or turkey broth, adds dried fruit such as pears and cherries, and then covers and bakes. Holidays at the Zuger table abound with hearty, healthy vegetable dishes such as boiled potatoes seasoned with herbs and a touch of olive oil, steamed vegetables with garlic, couscous with diced vegetables and roasted peppers, and lightly spiced corn.

The Buttes chef also advises careful pre-planning to reduce stress-induced eating. Sauces and stocks can be made days in advance. Don't wait until the big day to try and create everything.

Marlene Phillips, who works at the Beaver Street Brewery in Flagstaff, says that it is very difficult working around all the great food at this popular Northern Arizona cafe. Her strategy is some days she feasts but the next day it is salads only.

"But watch that salad dressing," said Phillips. "A trick I learned is to have the dressing on the side, dip your fork into a



little, then pick up the greens. Also, use a flavored vinegar, the raspberry here tastes terrific."

Starting out the day with a healthy meal is the suggestion of Bassel Osmani, owner of Tempe's Pita Jungle. He said you want to eat quality

calories, not empty ones such as a donut which Osmani called "an atomic bomb" for the jarring and negative effects it has on the body.

The Tempe cafe recently expanded its breakfast menu and now opens its doors at 7 a.m. Osmani says that some of the new healthy menu items include whole wheat pancakes made with apple juice instead of milk, omelets of egg whites or sautéed vegetables with egg whites in a pita. He said that the best options are high in fiber, high in nutrition and low in fat but high in flavor.

Osmani admits that he is careful not to overeat. If you must munch, choose carrots or celery, not a half dozen cookies.

Selecting food that fill you up helps assuage chronic overeating. A study at the University of Sydney, in Australia, revealed what culinary folks have always known - certain foods satisfy better than other. At the top of the list was the potato. Volunteers ate 240 calories of a food and then two hours later responded to questions on an index designed to quantify how hungry they felt. High-fiber foods such as grains and vegetables were a lot more filling than high-fat, processed fare such as chips and cookies. This means that you'll be hungering for another cookie more quickly than for another baked potato.

Results of the study indicate you will feel more satisfied longer if you eat popcorn instead of peanuts, whole grain bread instead of croissants, fish instead of steak and cheese instead of yogurt.

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## TIDBITS

Weight Watchers offers some additional tips on holiday food control:

- ☞ Save holiday shopping until the last minute so those chocolate chips and other goodies aren't laying around the cupboards calling your name.
- ☞ Eat lightly and exercise the day of a big party, but don't arrive starved.
- ☞ Have only one alcoholic beverage if you are going to imbibe; sip club soda or seltzer the rest of the time.
- ☞ If you have the party, send leftovers home with guests.
- ☞ Try to plan holiday events around activities such as trimming the tree, taking a holiday lights stroll, caroling or making ornaments. Don't make food the focus.
- ☞ If you blow it one evening, don't go crazy and give up, it is just one time, get back on the healthy eating cart.