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How to work off your Thanksgiving dinner



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BURN OFF YOUR HOLIDAY FAVORITES

It's difficult not to indulge a little (or a lot) when it comes to Thanksgiving dinner. Find out how you can work off those high-calorie favorites with our guide.

We asked Adam Gilbert, founder and chief body tutor of MyBodyTutor.com, a website that helps people achieve their health and fitness goals, about how to work off a big holiday meal.



Appetizers

"Those tempting finger foods seem innocent at first, but they add up quickly when we are at the holiday office party and there is an endless array of hors d'oeuvres," warns Gilbert. "Popping just three or four of these bite-sized treats can rack up about 450 calories."

Burn it off: Torch that 450 calories (and enjoy the crisp fall air) with a 75-minute hilly hike.

Lighten up: When it comes to the appetizers, Gilbert recommends sticking to things such as shrimp cocktail, crudites, olives and nuts. You can have 12 shrimp for around 165 calories.



Stuffing

Stuffing is a holiday staple, and although we love it, a single scoop (one cup) of this savory side dish can bring approximately 350 calories to your plate, notes Gilbert. Having seconds or thirds means the calories really start to add up — before you even put anything else on your plate.

Burn it off: Gilbert suggests an intense hit of exercise to eliminate the calories from this beloved side dish. "Take a hot yoga class for 30 minutes and you will torch the 350 calories from the stuffing."

Candied

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Lighten **sweet** your stuffing outside of the turkey to cut calories and cut stuffing into individual half-cup servings **potatoes**

 Candied sweet potato

While sweet potatoes are one of the most nutritious foods out there, Gilbert reminds us that during the holiday season they are often layered with marshmallows, butter and brown sugar. "A three-quarter-cup serving of this classic holiday dish can easily cost you 400 calories."

Burn it off: Work your body in a whole new way to burn off your serving of sweet potatoes. Indoor rock climbing for 45 minutes can burn up to 400 calories, says Gilbert. Not to mention you'll get a full-body workout.

Lighten up: Make this side dish healthier by swapping out marshmallows for cinnamon and crumbled walnuts on your sweet potatoes. "The flavor is similar and you can enjoy a heaping scoop without the side of guilt," Gilbert says.



Prime rib

Many households opt for prime rib as their protein pick, but the calories can add up. "A popular and impressive choice of meats for holiday get-togethers, this cut comes from the fattiest part of the cow, which translates to lots of calories," affirms Gilbert. "An 8-ounce serving of prime rib averages about 600 calories."

Burn it off: To burn off the 600 calories in the prime rib, you'll have to go for a 60-minute jog.

Lighten up: If the option is available, for the main course stick to lean proteins such as white-meat turkey and beef tenderloin. "They are less-fatty cuts and have more protein. This means we are going to feel fuller longer," Gilbert explains.



Eggnog

Eggnog might be more associated with Christmas, but it's widely available starting now and a staple from November onward at many social occasions — and it packs a high-calorie punch. "While it may be a symbol of the season, the primary ingredients in this holiday delight are eggs, sugar, milk and heavy cream," Gilbert says. "This means you're tossing back about 300 calories in a single 8-ounce serving."

Burn it off: Depending on where you live (i.e., there's no snow yet), rollerblading for 35 minutes will burn off the 300 calories from the eggnog. Or go for a one-hour walk at a moderate to quick pace.

Lighten up: If you're going to have eggnog, skip the booze and only opt for a half-serving on ice. Then switch to lower-calorie drinks. Opt for a glass of red wine or Champagne for only about 100 calories per serving.





Pecan pie

Even though pecans are packed with healthy fats, vitamins and minerals, Gilbert tells us that an average slice (one-eighth of 9-inch-diameter dish) of pecan pie contains more than 500 calories. "Most of the calories come from the filling, which is typically made from sugar and corn syrup," he explains. And if you add ice cream, this holiday treat tops out at 800 calories.

Burn it off: Indulged in a slice? Gilbert suggests playing a game of touch football for an hour, which will burn off a little more than the 500 calories from the slice of pecan pie. If you had yours a la mode, play for an hour and a half, and the 800 calories are gone.

Lighten up: Have a smaller slice and skip the ice cream altogether.



Mashed potatoes

This staple in most holiday spreads is a classic crowd-pleaser, but it's often packed with calories. "Traditionally prepared, most recipes call for generous amounts of butter and milk, which give this dish its rich, creamy taste," Gilbert says. "One cup of mashed potatoes topped off with gravy will add 260 calories to your meal."

Burn it off: Have fun while you stay fit. Gilbert suggests playing Ping Pong for an hour to burn off the 260 calories from the mashed potatoes. Or if you prefer something more vigorous, take a 30-minute bike ride.

Lighten up: Using Yukon Gold potatoes can help you cut calories. "They have a naturally rich, buttery flavor so we won't need to add the extra calories by piling in the creams and butters," Gilbert explains. He also suggests using cauliflower in place of potatoes. "The silky-smooth texture is almost identical to potatoes but with way fewer calories. It's a real game-changer."

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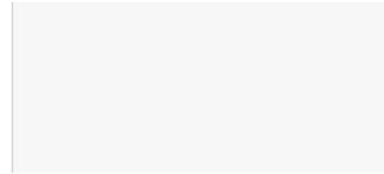
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