

# MY HOLIDAY MEAL PLAN

BY JENNIFER BERMAN



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## JENNIFER BERMAN'S PERSONAL GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON MERRY AND BRIGHT

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'Tis the season to be festive and full of holiday cheer, which can often lead to over-indulging on decadent treats for weeks on end. The good news is that there are plenty of ways to be happy, healthy, **and** stay on track with your health goals during the holidays. I am sharing my top tips for staying on track this season and how consistent daily habits set us up for success with our health goals.



And instead of sharing my traditional 7-day meal plan, I'm sharing my guide to healthy holiday swaps for traditional festive favorites. Here's to a happy, healthy holiday season!

### HEALTHY HOLIDAY HACKS

- Stay on schedule as much as the holiday festivities allow and get plenty of sleep and rest.
- Be your own best advocate for your health--giving yourself what you need, like taking a relaxing bath, a nap, prioritizing healthy food, or taking a walk are easy ways to take care of ourselves and feel our best.
- Keep moving forward even if you have one day of eating foods that don't make you feel your best. Get back on track at the next meal and put it behind you!
- Embrace the power of consistency! Daily, healthy habits are what make the difference in keeping us on track, even during the holiday season.

### FAST, EAT, REPEAT

I practice intermittent fasting and fast for 16 hours most days and have an 8-hour eating window. I usually try to stop eating around 6pm and start my eating window at 10am or after the next day. If I wake up hungry, I will eat earlier; I listen to my body. Most days I have 2 meals and 1-2 snacks. Please note, this is what works best for me and my body. Staying in tune with your own body's dietary needs and consulting your physician as needed will ultimately serve you best!

### 'TIS THE SEASON TO STAY FIT AND BE FESTIVE

Many people let their exercise go during November and December, come into January having gained around 10 pounds, and feel as though they must start over. Start exercising now and take small steps to do what you enjoy, even if it's just a daily walk. Remember, consistency is key over time! If you're already working out, keep it a priority during the holiday season and you'll sail into the new year already feeling great.

### IT'S TIME TO MOVE YOUR BODY!

We have plenty of on-demand fitness classes on [apcnourish.com](https://apcnourish.com) to help you stay on track when you can't leave the house. Also, there are live, on-site classes at the that APC Corporate Fitness Center that you can participate in during your workday when you're at the office. I hope to see you there soon!



# Gotta Eat This!

## FUEL YOUR DAY, THE JENNIFER BERMAN WAY!

When planning a meal, I make sure to incorporate lean protein, healthy fat, and fiber, and I also factor in how I can fuel my body with the most nutrients. I aim to have a large salad everyday with as much variety as possible. Usually, lunch is a large salad with a lean protein with a healthy fat as the dressing. A protein packed salad is a convenient, nutrient-dense meal option that I can often switch up with a variety of healthy toppings.

## SNACKS THAT LOVE YOU BACK

My favorite snacks are fruit paired with nuts or almond butter, hummus with carrots or cucumbers, organic turkey or beef jerky, hard-boiled eggs or avocado. Type 2 diabetes runs in my family, so I avoid processed sugar as much as possible. If having a carb, I will pair with healthy fat to avoid a spike in blood sugar. By pairing the carb with a healthy fat, it slows the digestion of the carb and its absorption in the blood. This helps prevent spikes in glucose levels after eating.

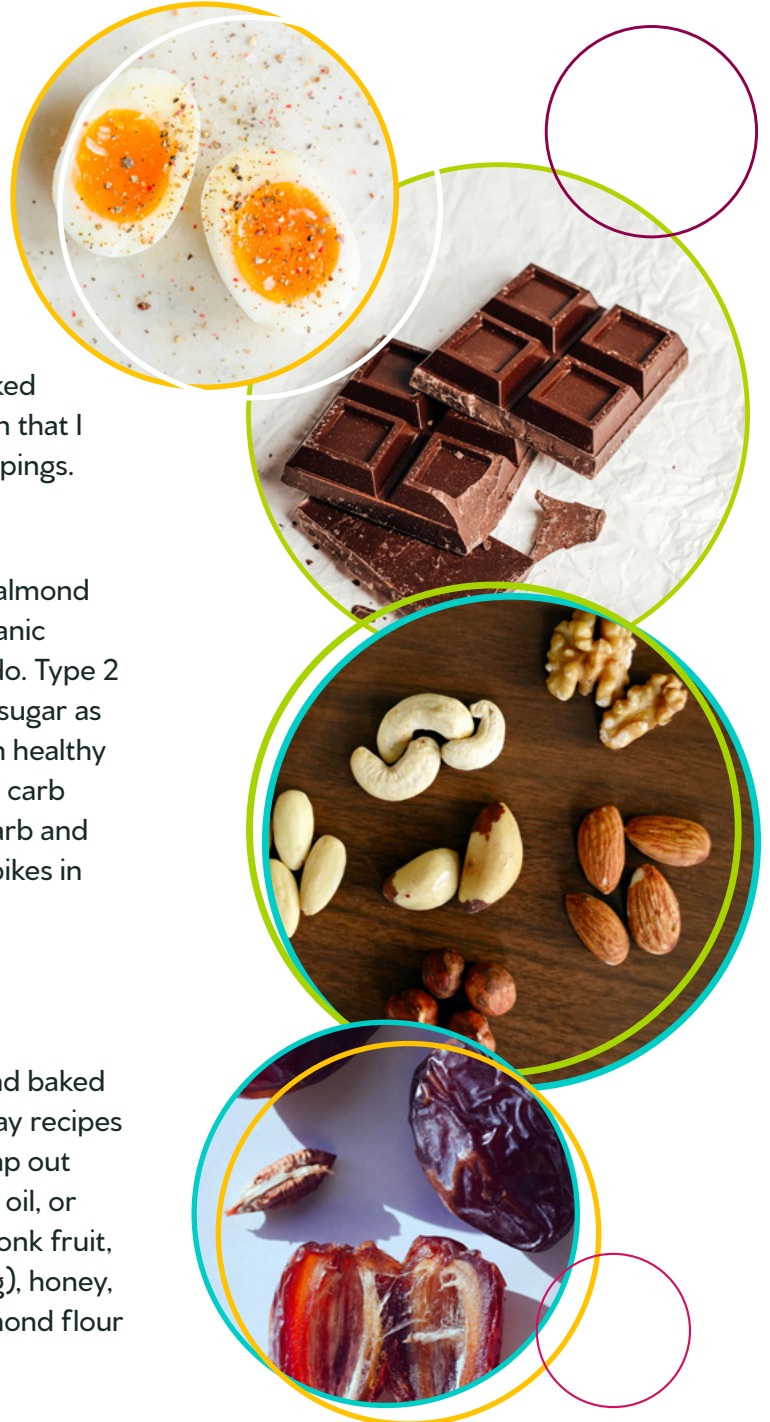
## EAT THIS, NOT THAT: HOLIDAY INGREDIENTS EDITION

The holidays are often filled with sweet treats and baked goods but making a few healthy swaps for holiday recipes is a simple way to stay balanced this season. Swap out seed oils with grass-fed butter, olive oil, coconut oil, or avocado oil. Instead of white sugar, use dates, monk fruit, stevia, confectioner's erythritol (great for baking), honey, or maple syrup. Skip the white flour and use almond flour or coconut flour instead.

Check out my guide to a happy, healthy holiday menu. Cheers to making healthy choices...during the holiday season and beyond!

*I have recommended certain name brands\* solely as an example because of known flavor or nutritional content, but you may substitute other brands as well.*

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# WHAT'S ON THE MENU

## HEALTHY HOLIDAY BREAKFAST DISHES

### VEGGIE BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

- 1 C onions
- 1 C chopped red bell pepper
- 1 pound fresh asparagus cut into 1 inch pieces
- 2 C chopped baby spinach
- 12 eggs
- ½ C heavy cream
- 4 ounces white cheddar cheese, shredded
- 2 Tablespoons Fresh parsley
- 1 T olive oil
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 2 avocados, halved, seeded, peeled and chopped
- 1 C fresh tomato, chopped
- 2 T pepitas

Preheat oven to 350. Grease a 2 qt. rectangular baking dish and set aside. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat and sauté onion and bell pepper until onion is translucent. Spoon mixture into prepared dish. Sprinkle with asparagus and chopped spinach. Set aside.

In large bowl whisk together the eggs, cream, ½ C of cheese, parsley, salt and pepper. Pour over mixture in dish. Stir to combine. Sprinkle with remaining cheese.

Bake for about 45 minutes or until egg mixture is set. Remove and let stand for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with avocado, tomatoes and pepitas before serving.

**Not Your Mama's Casserole!** Who says a breakfast casserole must be laden with hashbrowns and butter to be delicious? Adding veggies instead is such a simple way to give your casserole a nutritious boost.

### YOGURT PARFAIT BAR

I like to put all the ingredients out and let the kids and family make their own yogurt bowl. I use unsweetened Greek yogurt as the parfait base. A few topping ideas- chia, hemp and flaxseeds, walnuts, blackberries, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, oats, almond or peanut butter, cinnamon, and a drizzle of honey over the top.

### FLAXSEED PANCAKES WITH ALMOND BUTTER

- 1 C ground flaxseed
- 4 eggs beaten
- 1/3 C unsweetened almond milk
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ½ T coconut oil
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 4 T almond butter
- 2 C frozen blueberries

Mix all the ingredients in a bowl (mixture will be sticky). If you need to, add more almond milk or water for desired consistency.

Heat your skillet over medium heat on the stovetop. Once hot, melt coconut oil. Pour ¼ C batter for each pancake and spread with spoon. Let cook 2-3 minutes per side until edges begin to firm. Flip and cook on opposite side for 2-3 minutes.

Melt almond butter in the microwave and drizzle over pancakes. Microwave frozen blueberries until juicy and warm. Serve over pancakes.

**Flaxseed** is a great way to get in fiber, omega-3 fatty acids, and B vitamins. It may aid in stabilizing blood sugar levels, may reduce blood pressure, and help lower cholesterol levels.

# HEALTHY HOLIDAY APPETIZERS

## BEET HUMMUS

- 3 medium beets
- Small amount of coconut oil
- ¼ C tahini
- ¼ C fresh lemon juice
- Sea salt to taste

Cut beets into quarters. Toss in small amount of coconut oil and place in a covered dish. Roast for 30-40 minutes or until tender.

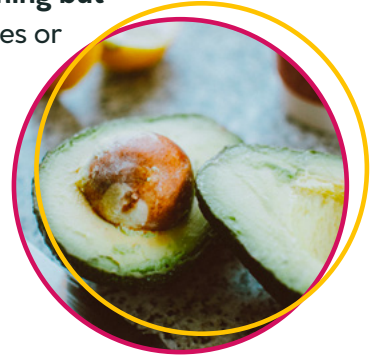
Once cooled, add to food processor or high-powered blender. Add remaining ingredients and process until smooth.

## COTTAGE CHEESE DIP

Cottage cheese seasoned with **Everything but the Bagel** seasoning served with veggies or **Mary's Gone Crackers**.

## CREAMY AVOCADO DIP

- 2 ripe avocados
- 1/2 C plain Greek yogurt
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 garlic clove minced
- Salt and pepper to taste



**Greek yogurt is a great substitute for sour cream. This protein-packed yogurt boosts nutrition without sacrificing flavor or texture in your favorite recipes. Win-win!**

# HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL SIDE DISHES

**ROASTED ROOT VEGETABLES:** Chop sweet potatoes, beets, butternut squash, parsnip, carrots, red onion, and garlic. Toss in a generous amount of olive oil, add salt and garlic powder. Bake at 375 for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Make sure you cook them until lightly browned. They taste like candy!

**MOM'S FAMOUS GREEN BEANS:** This recipe is adapted from my mother's famous green beans. She will only use pole beans because she says they're the best. Snap, string the beans and wash. Snapping them is the time-consuming part and the rest is easy. Using a large pot add beans and water until the beans are covered. Add 1 or 2 tablespoons of butter, salt, and lemon pepper. Bring to a boil and then turn down to simmer until desired tenderness and water cooks down.

**"EAT THE RAINBOW" SALAD:** This is an easy way to get your micronutrients and its super filling. Mixed greens or romaine lettuce or both. I use what I have on hand. Add red bell pepper, tomatoes, cucumbers, sliced beets (I buy the packaged ones that are already cooked), green onions, broccoli sprouts, cabbage (I use the packaged cabbage mix that's already grated). Add chickpeas or black beans. Sometimes I'll add a little feta and pine nuts. If you want to make it more festive for the holidays you can add some goji berries or other unsweetened dried berries. This is just an idea to get you started...use what you have on hand, which is great way to use up those veggies in the fridge before they go bad.

## BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE

- ¼ c balsamic vinegar
- ¼ c water
- 2 T olive oil
- 1 T Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. honey
- 1 garlic clove minced
- Salt and pepper to taste

Did you know that most store-bought salad dressings are packed with hidden sugars and unhealthy seed oils? Make your own at-home salad dressing in less than five minutes for an instant condiment upgrade!

# HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL SIDE DISHES

## CAULIFLOWER MASHED POTATOES

- Steam or boil 2 heads of cauliflower
- Drain and try to get as much water out as you can
- Mash with fork
- Add 2 T butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$  C sour cream or Greek yogurt
- Salt and pepper to taste

## LEMON PEPPER ASPARAGUS

- 2 T coconut oil
- 2 cloves garlic chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$  C fresh lemon juice
- Sea salt and pepper

In a large skillet, heat oil on high heat. Add asparagus and garlic. Stir-fry until crisp yet tender. Add lemon juice, salt and pepper.



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# HEALTHY HOLIDAY DESSERTS

## ALMOND BUTTER FUDGE

- 1 bag dark chocolate chips
- $\frac{3}{4}$  C creamy almond butter

Melt bag of dark chocolate chips in a double boiler over medium heat so it doesn't burn. Fold in almond butter and mix well. Grease 8x8 pan, then pour mixture into pan. Put in the freezer for 1 hour then transfer to fridge for 1 hour. Cut into small squares.



## CHOCOLATE PUDDING

- 3 dates
- 1 can full fat coconut milk
- 2 avocados
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. sea salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  C cacao powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  T vanilla extract
- Handful of spinach

Soak dates in water for about 30 minutes. Blend soaked dates to make a paste and add remaining ingredients and blend well. Put into fridge for at least 2 hours, then serve cold.

# HEALTHY HOLIDAY DESSERTS

## CHOCOLATE WALNUT BUTTER DATES

- 2 pitted Medjool dates

Add 1 T dark chocolate chips and 1 T walnut or almond butter to a bowl. Microwave until melted. Stir together to combine. Pour over dates and enjoy.



## PUMPKIN CHEESECAKE MOUSSE

- 12 oz. softened cream cheese
- 1-15 oz. can unsweetened pumpkin puree
- ½ c confectioners erythritol
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 2 T pumpkin pie spice
- ¾ C heavy cream

In large mixing bowl, combine the cream cheese and pumpkin puree. Using a hand mixer, cream the 2 together until there are no visible clumps and the mixture is smooth and creamy. Add erythritol, vanilla, heavy cream and pumpkin spice. Continue to blend until all ingredients are incorporated and mixed well. Refrigerate for 1 hour before serving.

# HEALTHY HOLIDAY BEVERAGES

## HOLIDAY “MOCKTAIL” DRINK

- Sparkling water with 1 T of fig vinegar.

Fig vinegar has a fruity flavor and is believed to aid in digestion, strengthen the immune system, and protect bone health. Swap your next cocktail for a “mocktail” and add a splash of fig vinegar.



## HEALTHY HOT CHOCOLATE

- 2 C milk
- 2 T raw cacao powder
- 1 T maple syrup or honey
- ½ tsp. vanilla
- Pinch of sea salt

Combine all ingredients in a small saucepan over medium heat and whisk until smooth and heated. Grab your favorite, festive mug and enjoy!

