

December Is Out to Get You

It's not surprising that most adults report at least some holiday weight gain – pounds that are increasingly difficult to burn off as time goes on.

It's not just Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanzaa—December is also host to a whopping nine food holidays, from National Cotton Candy Day to National Egg-Nog Day. You're not being paranoid: December really is out to get you, and your diet, in trouble. And although you don't have to celebrate each one, here's some help from eDiets.com on how to have your dessert and your waistline too.

The eDiets.com Holiday Helper

Dec. 4, National Cookie Day: This is all about how the cookie crumbles. Satisfy your need to celebrate with trans-fat free Walnut Cookie Crunchies. Toast $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of chopped walnuts in an oven at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Lightly spray two baking sheets with cooking spray. Wisk 2 cups of unbleached flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup powdered sugar, $2\frac{1}{2}$ t of baking powder, $\frac{1}{2}$ t of cinnamon and $\frac{1}{4}$ t each of ginger and nutmeg. In a separate bowl, combine 1 cup of brown sugar, 3 T of vegetable oil, 2 T of molasses, and 3 large egg whites. Mix well and stir in walnuts. Drop level tablespoons of the batter onto baking sheets and cook at 350 for 10 minutes.

Dec. 7, National Cotton Candy Day: Ask your local grocery or health food store for a Cotton Candy Melon. It has an intense flavor and is usually more savory and juicy than your average melon.

Dec. 8, National Brownie Day: Substitute vegetable oil with applesauce in a brownie mix, or buy a brownie-flavored energy bar for your fix.

Dec. 13, National Cocoa Day: Don't limit yourself to celebrating on December 13. Here's a day you can celebrate fully, and regularly, without worrying about your waistline. Cocoa contains the constituents of chocolate with no sugar and very little fat.

Dec. 16, National Chocolate Covered Anything Day: Drizzle a tablespoon of fat-free chocolate syrup over fresh-cut fruit for a treat that's lower in fat and calories than chocolate-covered berries.

Dec. 17, National Maple Syrup Day: Use a tablespoon of all-natural maple syrup with your morning oatmeal for a change of taste.

Dec. 24, National Egg-Nog Day and **Dec. 25, National Pumpkin Pie Day** can be perfectly combined into a Christmas eve snack –in moderation! To get rid of the leftovers, leave them for Santa.

Dec. 28, National Chocolate Day: Stick to moderation. Just an ounce of high-quality dark chocolate, eaten slowly, is a perfect way to end the month, and look ahead into the new year.

For more information about healthy eating during the holiday season and starting New Year's resolutions, we are happy to put you in touch with Pamela Ofstein, Director of Nutrition Services at eDiets.com