

# Episode: Holiday Healthy Eating



## Full Transcript

HEALTHY EATING FOR BUSY WOMEN PODCAST  
WITH KAT RENTAS

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Hello everyone. How are you doing this week? It is Thanksgiving week in the U.S. so we are getting ready to go out of town to visit family in just a few hours. I'm a big fan of what I call the "cozy holidays", so for us that's Thanksgiving, Christmas, even Halloween — that's a cozy holiday right? You guys with me? There's holidays that are just a bit warmer. And really I think that's just because the weather tends to be a bit cooler, so you can cozy on up, eat some good food, and spend time with family. Anyways, Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays because of the food. Hands down. I love me some mashed potatoes, stuffing (that's my absolute favorite), turkey (ehh, that's okay — but with gravy it's delicious) and then canned cranberry sauce. Now, this will be controversial. Because you're either pro-canned cranberry sauce or anti-canned cranberry sauce. I've seen some heated debates around this. So, I'm curious. Are you into canned cranberry sauce? Or non-canned? That's what you can take away from this episode. But really, I think it's important to acknowledge that my favorite part of the holidays is the yummy food. And this really surprises a lot of you, that I so often talk about just loving food and loving eating those foods that aren't necessarily the most nutritionally valuable. And I understand why that's fascinating to so many, because I've been there, but if you've been with me for sometime on this podcast, you know that I'm all about teaching you that you can enjoy the heck out of any foods that you love, without losing control with it. Or without negatively impacting your health. Pleasure with food does not equate to eating more, my friends. So that's something we're going to talk about today. I did notice that the title of this episode is another sneaky title that may attract some new listeners who are looking to micromanage their eating during the holidays and eat perfectly. And, you guys, this happens so often. I think my most popular episodes are one's where the titles sound like they're going to offer you "the right way to eat" or "the best way to eat perfectly" and

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then women come in here, listen to the podcast, and it just blows their minds. So many of my clients have actually joined my program after listening to the "Clean Eating" episode alone. That's a popular one that's created a shift in so many. Also, even recently, the "Counting Calories" episode. They'll come in wanting to know how to count calories or eat clean, and I'm like, "Let's just hold on a second and change your entire perspective around this". It's secretly my favorite thing about what I do. So good. But, I digress. Today, let's talk about "Holiday Healthy Eating" and by that I mean let's talk about how you can enjoy your food during the holidays without feeling like crap and self-sabotaging. That's all we're talking about here. So, first, let's paint a picture of how most of you will have experienced the holidays in the past with food. This is how I've experienced the holidays in my past, and it's what comes up for my clients before they join my program. What usually happens is, before the holidays, you're living in this on-going emotional stress response. So, it's what you would consider a busy season of work life, family, whatever it is you spend your time doing. It all is stressing you the F out. And it's usually around this time of the year that you don't manage those stress levels, because you're in the mindset that you'll relax when the holidays come around. So, just to clarify, this can mean that you're feeling a lot of building stress at work, or at home with the kids, but you just turn a blind eye to this emotional stress, let it keep building, because you'll decide that you'll take a break when the holidays come around. So, you'll relax when Thanksgiving comes or when Christmas comes. That's when you'll take a break. And I want you to look at this time like moving yourself emotionally and stress-wise up a hill. So, when our stress-levels and emotional levels go unchecked, and we're suppressing this state, it actually becomes more heightened over time. So, if you think about your emotions and stress levels like a beach ball, during the holiday season a lot of you will turn a blind eye to this, stop prioritizing yourselves, and be unconsciously pushing

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this beach ball deeper and deeper underwater. The pressure will build. So, then what happens when you finally get to quote unquote "take a break" during the holidays. You let go of that beach ball and it comes shooting out of the surface. You've climbed that mountain and realize you have far to fall. When the pressure of your stress and emotional state builds before the holidays, when Thanksgiving comes around, for instance, you'll find yourself seeking comfort in the food in a way that feels totally helpless and out of control. Because those emotions will come shooting out of the surface and you'll feel compelled to seek that comfort from them. Is this making a bit of sense? For me, I would build up this stress prior to the holidays. So, I would kill myself at work, overwork like crazy — for many of you with kids, or you manage teams at work, you're giving more of yourself to others during this time, rather than giving back to yourself. So, stress is high. Anxiety is high. And you don't process this because you're focused on being busy. When it's time to relax and allow yourself to feel this, you're not going to want to primitively, because it's uncomfortable. This is when the overeating during the holidays comes in. And while it's happening, your brain will provide you seemingly legitimate reasons for losing all control with food at that time. Whether that's at the Thanksgiving table or during the Christmas or Hanukkah holidays — whatever you celebrate, chances are there's going to be some yummy food. Your brain will compel you to lose control with the food. So, maybe you'll think, "I deserve this. I've worked really hard this season", or "This is about being present with my family and enjoying this time", or "I don't want to restrict myself over the holidays" — that's my personal favorite. These are all very pretty, seemingly innocent thoughts, right? We'll justify unconsciously overeating during the holidays because we just want to enjoy ourselves or we don't want to restrict ourselves. You guys. Your brain will come up with whatever reasons it needs to, to convince you that

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losing control with food is a good idea. It'll feel like a whole other part of your brain that exists. It's just your primitive brain, but many of my clients equate it to that devil on the shoulder? And you don't need to see it as negative, but it will be this compelling voice that's having chatter about why you should lose control. And then, what happens? The post-holiday meal guilt comes in. Maybe it's shame. You feel awful emotionally about yourself. First off, because all of that emotion that you were attempting to suppress with food will come back stronger. But also, now, because you have more evidence in your mind for feeling shame or guilt on top of the stress you were already experiencing. I want you to think back on past holidays and walk through this for yourself. What emotional state did you come to the holidays with? What emotions did you believe you wouldn't have to feel during the holidays? So you were excited about it? That you wanted to escape from? And how did your brain provide you compelling reasons for escaping your day-to-day emotions through the food? What did it feel like after the holidays? I think this is why the New Year's Resolutions with health exist. It's not very useful, right? It's like we've just accepted that we're going to lose all control and agency with food over the holidays, gain weight, not take care of ourselves — but oh, wait, it's fine. We'll get started on January 1st and change our lives overnight. No big deal. See how our brains give us excuses for losing control over the holidays? I'm thinking I should do a podcast on New Year's resolutions, because this is a strong point. And if you feel a bit called out right now, good. Just kidding. But really. We've all been here. And we want to start catching our brain on its thinking. Because this thinking is what got us the results with food and body that we didn't want. It's what led to the results with food and body that you didn't want. So, let's change it. Let's do things a bit differently this year. And, with all of that being said, none of this means that you shouldn't enjoy the food during the holidays.

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In fact, it's the opposite. If you're allowing yourself to lose control with food, that's not enjoying the food. You can't. You cannot allow yourself to experience the natural pleasure of the foods you're eating if you're rushing through the meals and focusing on "filling up" with the foods as quickly as possible. This blocks your ability to get that natural pleasure from the foods that are useful for you. We were meant to experience pleasure with food. We were not meant to manipulate those pleasurable foods for emotional comfort. Did you hear that? I'm going to say it again. We were meant to experience pleasure with food. We were not meant to manipulate those pleasurable foods for emotional comfort. Most of you will be at a point, where your body has lost touch with what foods it actually finds pleasurable. Because you'll be equating pleasure with over-pleasure. With "filling up" with pleasurable foods in an emotional way. This isn't pleasure. This holiday season, I want you to lean into enjoying the food you're eating. Because here's also what nobody tells you. Celebrating with food can be great. Bonding over food is lovely during the holidays. But just watch out for your brain that wants to escape emotion. Because it will use this as compelling reasons to escape your life. To escape your emotional experience. If you're willing to slow down and not escape emotions during the holidays, you will be able to enjoy them more fully. Because you won't be walking around with that beach ball being held under water. It will have been released, you'll have felt the feelings, and then you'll be able to intentionally make food choices that serve you. Now, there is a process to this, which is what my clients learn to do, but you can start now by just taking notice of what feelings you're not willing to feel during this time. I also want to talk about your relationship to food during the holidays. Right now, you may think your relationship to holiday food is enjoying it, but it's likely not. It's to escape your life in the food. It's to feel a moment of comfort from the human experiences you're having. This is not enjoying your food. To enjoy your food, you can't be

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coming from an urgent, desperate place to fill up with it. It should feel like the most non-urgent, intentional eating experience. For instance, when the pumpkin pie used to come out, or really anything chocolate, I would have this story that it was my favorite food and that I would allow myself to eat as much as I wanted during the holidays because I deserved it, and I could just have this treat this time of the year, because why not? I had this beautifully crafted story that made it totally OK for me to unconsciously eat that pie and have no control with it whatsoever. When this was my relationship to that pumpkin pie, you know how often I really tasted that pie and found deep pleasure in it? Zero, my friends. Zero. I wasn't even really enjoying it. I was filling up with the comfort of it. When I think back, I was never sitting and slowly focusing on the pleasure of the food. I would get a slice, bring it to the table, eat bite after bite after bite so quickly, and then it would be done and I would get another. It all would seem to happen in the blink of an eye. It's like I didn't even know when the first bite started and when the last bite occurred, not until I felt physically sick. Now what's interesting is collectively, especially in American culture, this is normal by society's standards. We'll all kind of bond over this unconscious eating that's void of deeper pleasure with food. We'll all rush through our meal, fill up like crazy, then all bond about how we're in a "food coma". Right? There's another episode I should do. I could talk all day about how fascinating it is that as a society, we make it normal to be in a "food coma". Almost like it's this cute, endearing thing, right? So interesting. Start questioning everything we find to be normal with food. It really will serve you. But, what I want you to know today, before we embark on this holiday season and into Thanksgiving, is that I want you to enjoy the heck out of your food. Not in a way where you're trying to "fill up" voids of your life with it. But in a way where you're allowing that natural pleasure with food in. In a way where you're going deeper with that pleasure, rather than wider with it and eating more unconsciously. I want you to

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know that food was always meant to be pleasurable, and these holidays are a time to experience that pleasure. And enjoying that pleasure, doesn't mean we automatically have to eat more or lose control with the pleasure. You can celebrate food without losing control of it. You can bond over the foods you're eating without feeling helpless to how much of it you eat. Practice savoring each delicious bite of food during the holiday, and I highly, highly recommend focusing on "filling up" in ways other than food. Fill up with love, fill up with connection, fill up with gratitude, fill up with joy, fill up with fun, or fill up with peace. Whatever else can fill that void that you're trying to fill with food, find that somewhere else that serves you. Because there is so much to be thankful for, and when we find those things and allow ourselves to fill up with them, it can be a bit easier to not feel like we have to fill up with the foods that we love during this holiday season. That's my for you. Alright, I hope you have a lovely Thanksgiving holiday for those of you in the U.S. If you're not in the U.S. and you stuck with me, I hope you still took some value from this episode. Thanks for being here with me today and I'll talk with you next week.