



## How our holiday food traditions help us reconnect with healthy habits

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/wellness/how-our-holiday-food-traditions-help-us-reconnect-with-healthy-habits/2015/12/21/9eba3484-a35e-11e5-ad3f-991ce3374e23\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/wellness/how-our-holiday-food-traditions-help-us-reconnect-with-healthy-habits/2015/12/21/9eba3484-a35e-11e5-ad3f-991ce3374e23_story.html)

At first glance, the holiday season seems to be anything but healthy, with its piles of party food, elaborate dinners and cookies, cookies, cookies. But underneath that candy-cane coating is a surprisingly nourishing core. You see, good nutrition is much more than what we eat and the grams of saturated fat or sugar a food has. It is also, maybe more importantly, about the way we eat and how we approach food. If you look a little deeper, you can see how the underpinnings of our holiday food traditions may help us reconnect with healthy habits that would serve us well throughout the year.

For one, during the holidays, we make time to cook. Even better, we tend to make traditional recipes and cook them with loved ones. Whether it is baking cookies with kids, making tamales assembly-line style with the family or sharing a homemade potluck dinner with friends, this kind of cooking and sharing is a remarkably healthy thing to do.

Today, when our day-to-day meals are more likely than ever to be store- or restaurant-bought, the cooking we do from scratch during the holidays can remind us of how gratifying and valuable preparing food can be. Those who are already good in the kitchen but who rarely find the time, or who find it a chore when they have to do it year-round, may be inspired anew by the joy cooking brings. Children and culinarily challenged adults have a golden opportunity to learn important skills and gain confidence in the kitchen when they roll up their sleeves and cook with family and friends.

Even if you're not making an especially nutritious recipe, understanding the ingredients and processes that go into preparing food can go a long way toward making informed choices about what we eat down the line. And if the holiday cooking experience sparks a desire to cook more throughout the year, it can be a boon to health, because food prepared at home tends to be more-sensibly portioned with more of what's good for us (fiber, essential fats and necessary nutrients) and less of what's not (too much sodium, excess calories and saturated fat).

There is also tremendous value in revisiting the traditional foods of our heritage this time of year. Cooking the same foods that our grandmothers and great-grandmothers prepared connects us with who we are and our larger community. When we share that food with those from different backgrounds we share something of ourselves and create real bonds and mutual understanding. It's a healthy counterpoint to the trend toward every-man-for-himself eating and the untethered food fads we face today. Not to mention that the ingredients Grandma used were most likely minimally processed and additive-free — qualities well worth shifting toward. >

Honoring food traditions also helps to instill a deeper respect for what we are eating, encouraging us to savor it thoughtfully rather than gobbling it down. That mentality reminds us that there is an alternative to the norm of eating off a paper wrapper on our laps in our car or munching mindlessly at our desks.



Finally, during the holidays, we make a point of sitting down to a meal together and enjoying it in a leisurely way. We take the time to connect around the table instead of dashing in a dozen different directions. Even if everything isn't **picture-perfect**, such as if there is a **mopey** teenager or a **cranky** uncle at the table, sitting and eating together is positive — it forges important bonds between us, helps us reconnect with others and, in turn, improves our sense of **well-being**. The relaxed nature of a holiday meal has benefits, too, allowing us the opportunity to take it all in and to feel fed physically and emotionally. That's a feeling that we would do well to recapture throughout 2016 and beyond.

**Match the words with their meanings.**

- |                              |     |                          |     |
|------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. at first glance           | ( ) | 16. tremendous           | ( ) |
| 2. elaborate                 | ( ) | 17. heritage             | ( ) |
| 3. underneath                | ( ) | 18. counterpoint         | ( ) |
| 4. candy-cane                | ( ) | 19. untethered           | ( ) |
| 5. saturated fat             | ( ) | 20. fad                  | ( ) |
| 6. underpinning              | ( ) | 21. additive-free        | ( ) |
| 7. potluck                   | ( ) | 22. to instill           | ( ) |
| 8. chore                     | ( ) | 23. to savor             | ( ) |
| 9. year-round                | ( ) | 24. to gobble down [sth] | ( ) |
| 10. golden opportunity       | ( ) | 25. to munch             | ( ) |
| 11. to roll up one's sleeves | ( ) | 26. picture-perfect      | ( ) |
| 12. nutritious               | ( ) | 27. mopey                | ( ) |
| 13. informed choice          | ( ) | 28. cranky               | ( ) |
| 14. boon [to sth]            | ( ) | 29. well-being           | ( ) |
| 15. fiber                    | ( ) |                          |     |

- a. not physically connected or fastened to something
- b. containing a lot of careful detail or many detailed parts
- c. the state of feeling healthy and happy
- d. something good or very helpful
- e. to prepare for hard work
- f. when first considering something, before having a chance to look at it carefully
- g. a job or piece of work that is often boring or unpleasant but needs to be done regularly
- h. under or below
- i. an excellent chance to do or get something
- j. one made based on complete and unbiased information
- k. easily annoyed or upset
- l. to enjoy food or an experience slowly, in order to enjoy it as much as possible
- m. a style, activity, or interest that is very popular for a short period of time
- n. happening, existing, or present during the whole of the year
- o. to put a feeling, idea, or principle gradually into someone's mind, so that it has a strong influence on the way that person thinks or behaves
- p. to eat food too fast
- r. containing no additives
- s. support, strength, or the basic structure of something
- t. to eat something, especially noisily
- u. containing many of the substances needed for life and growth
- w. a type of fat found in milk, meat, eggs, cheese, etc. that is thought to be bad for your health
- x. a substance in certain foods, such as fruit, vegetables, and brown bread, that travels through the body as waste and helps the contents of the bowels to pass through the body easily
- y. an informal meal where guests bring a different dish that is then shared with the other guests
- z. in a depressed condition; low in spirits



v. features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages, or buildings, that were created in the past and still have historical importance

q. perfect in appearance

ö. very great in amount or level, or extremely good

ä. the combination of two or more different tunes played at the same time

å. a piece of flavored hard candy shaped like a cane

### Answer key

1. ( f. )	7. ( y. )	13. ( j. )	19. ( a. )	25. ( t. )
2. ( b. )	8. ( g. )	14. ( d. )	20. ( m. )	26. ( q. )
3. ( h. )	9. ( n. )	15. ( x. )	21. ( r. )	27. ( z. )
4. ( å. )	10. ( i. )	16. ( ö. )	22. ( o. )	28. ( k. )
5. ( w. )	11. ( e. )	17. ( v. )	23. ( l. )	29. ( c. )



