



## How to Look After Your Gut This Christmas with Healthy Food

The festive season is a time of joy, celebration, and indulgence. While it's tempting to dive into rich meals, sweet treats, and endless glasses of bubbly, it's important to remember your gut health. A healthy gut not only supports digestion but also strengthens your immune system, boosts your mood, and keeps your energy levels high—all things you'll need during the busy holiday season.

Here are some simple yet effective ways to care for your gut while still enjoying the festive cheer:

### 1. Start with a Balanced Breakfast

Before the festivities begin, fuel your body with a nutritious breakfast. Opt for gut-friendly options like:

- Greek yogurt with fresh berries (these can be frozen and left out to slightly defrost) and a drizzle of honey/nuts and seeds for added diversity to your diet.
- Porridge topped with a handful of nuts and seeds.
- Wholegrain toast with smashed avocado and a sprinkle of chili flakes.

These meals are rich in fibre, which support gut health and help keep you full longer.

**Alison's Top Tip** – try a baked oat recipe – these are warming and delicious. I go for apple and cinnamon for a gut friendly boost to my fibre. Add pecans for a real treat too.



## 2. Prioritise Fibre-Rich Foods

Christmas meals are often heavy on refined carbs and low on fibre. Counterbalance this by incorporating:

- Vegetables like Brussels sprouts, carrots, and parsnips roasted with a dash of olive oil.
- Legumes such as lentils or chickpeas in salads or side dishes. Tinned is absolutely fine!
- Whole grains like quinoa or brown rice as a base for stuffing or salads.

Fibre aids digestion and helps maintain a healthy gut microbiome. 94% of us don't eat enough of it, so think 'fruit and veg' and think 'pulses and wholemeal' at each meal time.

## 3. Eat more Fermented Foods

Fermented foods are natural sources of good bacteria which are beneficial for your gut. Include foods like:

- Sauerkraut as a tangy side dish.
- Yogurt-based dips or desserts.
- Kombucha as a festive, non-alcoholic drink option.

These can complement your traditional Christmas dishes while supporting digestion.

**Alison's Top Tip** – add pesto to low fat natural yoghurt to serve with crudites!



#### 4. Stay Hydrated

Alcohol and salty foods can dehydrate your body, disrupting gut function. Keep your hydration levels up by:

- Drinking plenty of water throughout the day.
- Enjoying herbal teas like peppermint or ginger.
- Alternating alcoholic drinks with glasses of water or mocktails.

Alison's Top Tip – make sure your second wee of the day is pale straw in colour –

<https://www.achn.co.uk/content/uploads/Alisons%20Top%20Tips/ACs%20Top%20Tips%20Hydration.pdf>

#### 5. Be Mindful of Portions

Overeating can strain your digestive system. Try to:

- Serve smaller portions and go for seconds only if you're still hungry.
- Eat slowly and savour each bite to help your body recognise fullness.
- Balance indulgent treats with healthier choices.

Alison's Top Tip – keep your fruit bowl in sight, accessible to all and full of the yummy fruit in season at this time of year.





## 6. Add Spices to Support Digestion

Many traditional Christmas spices are gut-friendly. For example:

- Cinnamon can help regulate blood sugar levels.
- Ginger aids in digestion and reduces nausea.
- Turmeric has anti-inflammatory properties.

Use these spices in your cooking or add them to teas and desserts.

## 7. Don't Forget to Move

Physical activity helps stimulate digestion and reduce bloating. Incorporate movement into your festive routine by:

- Going for a brisk walk after meals.
- Joining family or friends for a winter hike.
- Dancing to your favourite holiday tunes.

## 8. Take Time to Relax

Stress can negatively impact your gut health. Christmas can be hectic, so make time to relax by:

- Practicing mindfulness or meditation.
- Spending quiet moments with a good book or music.
- Prioritising quality sleep to allow your body to recharge.



### 9. Plan for Healthy Snacks

Keep gut-friendly snacks on hand to avoid overindulging in less healthy options. Some ideas include:

- Raw veggies with hummus.
- A small handful of mixed nuts.
- Fresh fruit slices with nut butter.

### 10. Listen to Your Body

Finally, the best guide to your gut health is your body. Pay attention to how different foods make you feel and adjust your choices accordingly. If you indulge one day, balance it out with lighter meals the next.

### Enjoy the Festive Season with a Happy Gut

Taking care of your gut, this Christmas doesn't mean giving up your favourite holiday treats.

By incorporating these tips, you can strike a balance between indulgence and nourishment, ensuring you feel your best throughout the season. Here's to a happy gut and a joyful Christmas!

---

AC HEALTH &  
NUTRITION

---