



# my VIVA®



# Mindful Holidays: Your Path to Peace

— Practical Mindfulness for Joyful Holidays —





# Table of Contents

• My Viva's Holiday Eating Strategy .....	pg. 3
• Monthly Calendars .....	pg. 7
• Holiday Recipes .....	pg. 9
• Action Plan .....	pg. 23





**This booklet was developed and designed by My Viva Inc.**

# Holiday Reflection

The holiday season can be a time of joy, connection, and celebration, and it often brings added demands. Routines shift, expectations grow, and food can take on a bigger role in gatherings and traditions. For many people, this mix can make it harder to stay connected to their health goals or feel confident in their choices.

Let's start by taking a few moments to reflect on past holiday experiences. Check off the statements that resonate with you:

I find the holidays very relaxing

I spend quality time with family and friends

I am able to fit in all the activities through the holiday season that are important to me

I maintain my normal exercise routine throughout the holidays

I am mindful of what I eat and/or drink over the holidays

I have realistic expectations for the holidays and succeed each year in achieving them

I stay on budget

I feel overwhelmed with my schedule

I have a tendency to overspend

I wish I had more time to get organized for the holidays

I feel pressure to make the holidays special

I overeat over the holidays

I stop exercising over the holidays

I miss my grandparents/mom/dad spouse/significant other/sister/ brother/ child/friend... during the holidays

My traditions throughout the holidays cause me more stress than pleasure

I feel disappointed in myself every year the holidays are over

If you checked off more on the right, it may sound like the holidays are potentially a challenge for you. Remember, this is okay - it happens.

You can't always control what the holidays bring, but you can pay attention to the things within your reach. Focusing on what you can do to look after yourself, even in small ways, can make a meaningful difference by the end of the day.

## Holiday Guilt

If you have ever experienced a holiday season that did not live up to your expectations - you are not alone.

Guilt is a very common emotion elicited (whether it be over the holidays or during the rest of the year.) Guilt has a purpose - It lets you know when you have done something your conscience is not okay with, and helps you develop a better sense of your behavior and how it affects yourself and others. Guilt also prompts you to re-examine your behavior so you don't end up repeating the same action over and over again.

### Here are some tips on how to combat your guilt:

- **Recognize the kind of guilt you have and its purpose.** Ask yourself if there is something to be learned from the guilt you are feeling?
- **Make changes sooner rather than later.** Ongoing guilt can become a burden and increase your stress level, which can send you into a tail spin causing a cascade of emotionally driven decisions that will inevitably perpetuate your guilt.
- **Accept your actions and move on.** Accepting your behavior is key to taking responsibility. Once you have done so you need to let it go and move on. Obsessing about it keeps you in a tail spin which is the perfect breeding ground for more regretful behavior.
- **Learn from your behavior.** The feeling of guilt is trying to get your attention so you can learn something from your experience. If you learn from your experience you will be less likely to do it again in the future.
- **Perfection doesn't exist.** Striving for perfection is pointless as it is impossible to attain. When you make a "mistake", recognize you are human and learn from the experience. Do not engage in days, weeks, months... of self-blame, or beat up your self-esteem. Some of your best lessons in life may have been rooted in a "mistake" you once made.

# Map Out Your Holiday Schedule

“If you don’t know where you are going, you’ll end up someplace else.”

- Yogi Berra

The key to balance during the holiday season is organization. If you have a plan you are more likely to stick with it and feel less stress because you know what to expect. Having a plan in place will not prevent the surprises that are inevitable, but you will feel more grounded and more confident about dealing with them.



## Creating Mindfulness

The first step in helping map out your action plan is to figure out what your current reality is **without judging yourself**. In order for you to be successful in changing/achieving your goals you will need to know what you are currently doing.

# Map Out Your “Proposed” Holiday Schedule

## Tip:

Using the monthly calendars for November and December; take a few minutes to map out your schedule.

Write down your commitments for the following areas:

- Work days
- Vacation days
- Routine activities - exercise, grocery shopping, chores...
- Holiday parties - work, family, friends...
- Child activities - including school concerts, extracurricular activity celebrations
- Family activities - shopping, packing, wrapping, baking, skating, movie watching...
- Birthday celebrations, memorials
- Whatever activities we have missed



# HOLIDAY CALENDAR

DECEMBER

**Write It Down, Make It Happen**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

# HOLIDAY CALENDAR

JANUARY

**Write It Down, Make It Happen**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



# **Mindful Holiday**

## **Recipes**

# Sweet and Spicy Roasted Nuts



Makes 12 servings (1/3 cup per serving)

## Ingredients:

• 1 cup almonds	• 1/4 cup sunflower seeds
• 1/2 cup walnuts	• 1 tbsp pure maple syrup
• 1/2 cup unsalted cashews	• 1/2 tsp kosher salt
• 1/4 cup pumpkin seeds	• 1/4 - 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper



## Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 325°F.
2. Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl and stir to coat evenly. Place nut mixture on a parchment paper-lined rimmed baking sheet, spreading into a single layer.
3. Bake for 10 minutes. Stir nuts, then return pan to oven.
4. Continue baking, stirring every 5 minutes, until nuts are toasted, about 15 minutes. Cool completely on pan before serving.

*Note: Roasted nuts may also be prepared using a slow cooker.*

### Slow cooker instructions:

1. Lightly grease a slow cooker pot with cooking spray, or line with parchment paper.
2. Place all ingredients inside slow cooker, stirring to evenly coat nuts and seeds.
3. Cover and cook on high for 15 minutes. Stir and reduce heat to low.
4. Cook uncovered for 1 1/2 - 2 hours, stirring every 20 - 30 minutes until nuts are coated with glaze.
5. Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Nutrition analysis per serving: 163 calories, 6 g protein, 14 g fat, 7 g carbohydrate (5 g of available carbohydrate), 2 g fiber, 99 mg sodium  
Plate portions: 1 protein, 1 fat

# Festive Holiday Cucumber Bites



8 servings

## Ingredients:

- 1 English cucumber, sliced into rounds
- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
- 4 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 Tbsp. dill, chopped
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. garlic
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, halved



## Preparation:

1. Combine yogurt, cream cheese, dill, garlic, and lemon juice in a food processor and mix until smooth.
2. Put cream cheese mix into a piping bag and make swirls on top of each cucumber slice.
3. Place one half tomato on top of each swirl.
4. Form cucumbers into a shape of a Christmas tree.
5. Serve and enjoy!

Nutritional analysis per serving: 85 calories, 5 g fat, 5 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate (5 g available carbohydrate), 1 g fiber, 59 mg sodium

Plate portions: 0 grains and starch, 0 proteins, 0 vegetables, 0 fruit, 0 fat, 0 dairy

# Roasted Asparagus



Makes 4 servings (1 cup per serving)

## Ingredients:

- 4 cups asparagus, woody ends trimmed off
- 1 tbsp balsamic reduction (see note)
- 1 tsp salt



## Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Place asparagus in a single layer on a parchment paper or foil-lined baking sheet. Bake until asparagus is tender-crisp, about 5 - 8 minutes.
3. Drizzle with balsamic reduction and sprinkle with salt.
4. Serve hot and enjoy!

*Note: Balsamic reduction can be found in most major grocery stores. A commonly stocked brand is "Nonna Pia's".*

Nutritional analysis per serving: 43 calories, 0 g fat, 4 g protein, 8 g carbohydrate (4 g available carbohydrate), 4 g fiber, 65 mg sodium  
Plate portions: 2 vegetables

# Glazed Carrots

 4 servings

## Ingredients:

- 4 cups carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 tsp. honey
- pinch salt
- 1 tsp. olive oil



## Preparation:

1. Bring a pot of water to a boil.
2. Add carrots and cook until almost soft, ~8 minutes.
3. Drain carrots, and place into a pan.
4. Add the rest of the ingredients and sautee on medium-low heat for another 8 minutes.
5. Serve and enjoy!

Nutritional analysis per serving: 68 calories, 1.4 g fat, 1.2 g protein, 13.7 g carbohydrate (10.1 g available carbohydrate), 3.6 g fiber, 127 mg sodium

Plate portions: 0 grains and starch, 0 proteins, 2 vegetables, 0 fruit, 0.25 fat, 0 dairy

# Thyme and Orange Infused Cranberry Sauce

 8 servings

## Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup honey
- Juice of one medium orange
- 2 sprigs thyme
- 1 tsp. orange zest
- 4 cups cranberries



## Preparation:

1. Bring water to a boil with the honey, orange juice, thyme and orange zest added.
2. Add cranberries, reduce the heat to a simmer & stir. Continue to cook until cranberry skin starts to rupture.
3. Reduce heat and stir occasionally until the sauce thickens to desired consistency.
4. Remove thyme sprigs and let the sauce cool - the sauce will continue to thicken as it cools. Serve and enjoy!

Nutritional analysis per serving (8 servings): 60 calories, 0 g fat, 0 g protein, 16 g carbohydrates (14 g available carbohydrate), 2 g fiber, 1 mg sodium  
Plate portions: 0 grain, 0 proteins, 0 vegetables, 1 fruit, 0 fat, 0 dairy

# Gluten-Free Gravy

 8 servings

## Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup onions, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1/2 cup zucchini, peeled and chopped
- 1/2 cup mushrooms, chopped
- 2 tsp. thyme
- 1 tsp. sage
- 1 tsp. oregano
- 1 tsp. basil
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 4 cups vegetable, chicken or beef stock, low sodium



## Preparation:

1. Combine all ingredients in a pot. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes.
2. Remove from heat, remove bay leaf and discard.
3. Mix until smooth in a blender or food processor.
4. Return to pot and put back onto the stove, if sauce is not thick enough, continue to simmer until you've reached desired consistency
5. Serve and enjoy!

Nutritional analysis per serving: 17 calories, 0 g fat, 1 g protein, 4 g carbohydrate

(4 g available carbohydrate), 0 g fiber, 489 mg sodium

Plate portions: 0 grains and starch, 0 proteins, 0 vegetables, 0 fruit, 0 fat, 0 dairy

# Sweet Potato Cauliflower Mash

 6 servings



## Ingredients:

- 3 cups sweet potato, small chopped
- 3 cups cauliflower, chopped
- 1/4 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper



## Preparation:

1. Steam sweet potato and cauliflower in a large steaming basket over a large pot of boiling water until very tender (may need to do this in batches).
2. Mash the sweet potato and cauliflower together until the mixture has reached a smooth, creamy consistency. Using an immersion blender will help speed up the process.
3. Mix in Greek yogurt, garlic, and salt and pepper. Garnish with freshly chopped parsley, serve and enjoy!

Nutritional analysis per serving: 77 calories, 0.2 g fat, 3.1 g protein, 16.7 g carbohydrates (13.6 g available carbohydrate), 3.1 g fiber, 251 mg sodium  
Plate portions: 1 grain, 0 protein, 0 fat, 0 dairy, 1 vegetable, 0 fruit

# Slow Cooker Herbed Bread Stuffing



Serves 8

## Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 1/2 cups sliced white or brown mushrooms
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 3/4 tsp dried sage
- 1/2 tsp poultry seasoning
- 1/2 tsp dried thyme
- 6 cups whole wheat bread cubes, lightly toasted
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 1 1/2 cups no-salt-added chicken broth, or more as needed



## Preparation:

1. Heat butter in a large frypan over medium heat. Add onion, celery, and mushrooms, and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in salt, pepper, sage, poultry seasoning, and thyme.
2. Combine vegetable mixture with bread and parsley in a large bowl and stir to combine. Pour broth over bread and toss to combine. Bread cubes should be evenly damp but not soggy.
3. Spoon mixture into a slow cooker.
4. Cover and cook on high heat setting for 45 minutes. Reduce to low heat setting and continue cooking, stirring every hour, until heated through, about 2 - 3 hours.
5. Serve and enjoy!

Nutritional analysis per serving: 196 calories, 8 g fat, 8 g protein, 25 g carbohydrate (21 g available carbohydrate), 4 g fiber, 403 mg sodium  
Plate portions: 1 grains and starch, 1 protein, 1 fat, 1 vegetable

# Herb Roasted Turkey Breast

 8 servings

## Ingredients:

- 1.5 kg to 2 kg (3 to 4 1/2 lb) skin-on boneless turkey breasts (1 to 2 breasts)
- 2 Tbsp olive oil, divided
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp fresh chopped rosemary
- 1 Tbsp fresh chopped sage
- 2 tsp fresh chopped thyme
- 3/4 tsp salt, divided
- 3/4 tsp ground black pepper, divided
- 1 cup no-salt-added chicken broth\*
- Lemon wedges, for serving (optional)\*



## Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Add 1 Tbsp olive oil, garlic, rosemary, sage, thyme, 1/2 tsp salt, and 1/2 pepper to a small bowl and stir to combine.
3. Using your fingers or a wooden spoon, gently loosen the skin on the turkey breasts, being careful not to tear the skin. Rub herb mixture under skin until meat is coated evenly with herb mixture.
4. Brush turkey skin with remaining 1 Tbsp olive oil, then sprinkle with remaining 1/4 tsp salt and 1/4 tsp pepper on all sides.
5. Place a wire rack in a roasting pan and place turkey on rack. Add chicken broth to roasting pan.
6. Roast turkey until internal temperature reaches 165 °F, about 75-90 minutes. Remove the turkey breast and tent loosely with foil; let rest for 10 minutes.
7. Slice turkey and serve with lemon wedges, if desired.
8. Enjoy!

\*Ingredient not included in nutritional analysis

Nutritional analysis per serving: 326 calories, 17 g fat, 41 g protein, 0 g carbohydrate (0 g available carbohydrate), 0 g fiber, 329 mg sodium  
Plate portions: 6 proteins

# Slow Cooker Beef Roast

 10 servings

## Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 lb. beef round roast
- 1 tsp. dried basil
- 1/2 tsp. dried thyme
- 1 tsp. marjoram
- 1/2 tsp. salt or to taste
- 1/2 tsp. ground pepper or to taste
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 10 carrots, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup red wine
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce



## Preparation:

1. Trim the roast of excess visible fat.
2. Combine basil, thyme, marjoram, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Stir to combine and set aside.
3. Place the roast in the bottom of a slow cooker. Sprinkle the spices all over the roast, turning to coat thoroughly.
4. Pour the wine, water and Worcestershire sauce over the roast into the bottom of the pot. Top the roast with onions and carrots.
5. Cook on low for 8-10 hours or until the meat is falling apart. When the meat is done cooking, shred and toss in the juices to keep it moist.
6. Serve and enjoy!

Nutritional analysis per serving: 170 calories, 3.3 g fat, 25.3 g protein, 6.5 g carbohydrate (4.7 g available carbohydrate), 1.8 g fiber, 322 mg sodium  
Plate portions: 0 grain, 3 protein, 2 vegetable, 0 fruit, 0 fat, 0 dairy

# Savoury Lentil Loaf



6 servings

## Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- ½ cup onion, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup Portobello mushroom, small diced
- ½ cup carrot, peeled and grated
- 1 can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can lentils, drained and rinsed
- 1 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. sage
- 1 Tbsp. thyme
- 1 Tbsp. parsley
- 4 Tbsp. nutritional yeast
- ¼ - ½ cup rolled oats

### Glaze

- 1 shallot, diced
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 3 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- ½ cup red wine
- ½ cup vegetable stock, low sodium



## Preparation:

1. Heat oven to 350 °F.
2. In a small pot, heat the oil and add the shallots.
3. Allow to cook for 2 minutes then add the rest of the glaze ingredients.
4. Allow to simmer and thicken.
5. Line a loaf pan with parchment paper.
6. Heat oil in a fry pan and add onions. Cook until soft.
7. Add mushrooms, garlic and carrots and cook for 5 minutes.
8. In a large bowl, mix the rest of the ingredients and add the onion, mushroom mixture.
9. Mash until combined but leaving some texture.
10. Pour into the loaf pan and push down until flat on top.
11. Cook for 40 minutes.
12. Remove from heat and spread shallot glaze over top.
13. Return to oven for 5 minutes.
14. Serve and enjoy!

Nutritional analysis per serving: 187 calories, 4 g fat, 13 g protein, 28 g carbohydrate

(20 g available carbohydrate), 8 g fiber, 228 mg sodium

Plate portions: 2 grains and starch, 2 proteins, 1 vegetables, 0 fruit, 0 fat, 0 dairy

# Dark Chocolate Bark



18 servings

## Ingredients:

- 2 cups of dark chocolate
- 1 cup of assorted dried fruit and nuts



## Preparation:

1. Melt chocolate slowly either in the microwave or on the stove top. Being sure to stir often.
2. Pour melted chocolate onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
3. Sprinkle the dried fruit and nuts over the chocolate.
4. Place into freezer and allow to harden.
5. Remove from freezer and break into pieces.
6. Serve and enjoy!

Nutritional analysis per serving: 205 calories, 14 g fat, 3 g protein, 17 g carbohydrate (13 g available carbohydrate), 4 g fiber, 6 mg sodium

Plate portions: 0 grains and starch, 0 proteins, 0 vegetables, 0 fruit, 0 fat, 0 dairy

# Gingerbread Mousse

 4 servings



## Ingredients:

- 1 can coconut cream
- 2 Tbsp. maple syrup
- 1Tbsp. molasses
- ½ tsp. vanilla
- 1 Tbsp. cinnamon
- 2 tsp. ginger
- ¼ tsp. nutmeg
- ¼ tsp. allspice



## Preparation:

- Put coconut cream into the fridge the night before preparation.
- Put all ingredients into a large bowl and mix with an electric egg beater on high.
- Pour into 4 containers and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
- Top with vanilla Greek yogurt, or a ginger cookie.
- Serve and enjoy!

Nutritional analysis per serving: 66 calories, 2 g fat, 1 g protein, 12 g carbohydrate (11 g available carbohydrate), 1 g fiber, 12 mg sodium

Plate portions: Treats are just as the name suggests; they are a treat for you and meant to be enjoyed mindfully. We want most of your calories to come from nutrient-dense foods that nourish and support your body. Treats can be added in addition to your meal plan for the enjoyment and balance of life.



# **Mindful Holiday**

## **Action Plan**

# Holiday Extras

Food is often the focal point of celebrations and our celebrations happen all year long. In December you may celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanza and ring in the New Year with a big party. Then there's Valentine's Day, Easter, family vacations, summer barbeques, birthdays and Halloween.

Research studies have proven environment plays a huge role in how much you eat. Celebrations are often more challenging because it is usually not the vegetable and fruit trays you are faced with. Treats are often more prevalent due to more social gatherings and parties.

If treats are something you are concerned about, the "all or nothing" thinking will simply get you into trouble. Instead approach the celebrations with restrained versus restrictive eating behavior. Plan to have some of your favorites and enjoy them.

## Map Out Your “Proposed” Treats For The Holiday Season

**Here are some tips on how to combat your guilt:**

1. If you have a routine number of times you eat out throughout the week, schedule it into your calendar.
2. With your pen put a small check mark on your calendar in the date box for the number of times you will be likely to treat yourself that day. For example, if you have a birthday party and a holiday party on the same day you need to ask yourself if you will have anything extra to eat or drink at these functions. If the answer is yes, then put 2 checkmarks in the box. Remember to include the inevitable treats at the office.
3. Using the calendars, every holiday/vacation day you have, place a check mark in the box. For situations like traveling and eating in restaurants, we know that larger portions and food served outside the home increases the risk of overconsumption.
4. When you are done, add up all of your check marks and write the number down.
5. During a non-holiday month how many treat days would you normally have?
6. Do you have more or less proposed treat days planned compared to your normal non-holiday routine?

# Action Plan

Before putting this into action, let's dig into the "why". Complete the steps below to start building your action plan.

## Step 1:

What would you define as a successful holiday season?

## Step 2:

What are some of the road blocks preventing you from achieving success?

# Action Plan

## Step 3:

List one or two previous holiday challenges you want to tackle this season. Reflect on past holidays in situations that were challenging or successful. What would you have done differently? What would you have done the same? What does success look like this time?

## Here are some Tips:

- **Start small** - avoid the temptation to pick the hardest one or pick too many things to change.
- **Focus on** what small things you can do differently.
- **Write down your goals** - this will make it more real.
- **Find someone to be accountable to.** It's easy to give up on yourself, but much harder when you have a support system in place.

# Get Started!



## Mindful Holidays: Your Path to Peace

Practical Mindfulness for Joyful Holidays

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