



THE NUTRITION BARRE PRESENTS:

A MINDFUL (NOT MINDF*CKED) HOLIDAY SEASON

BE THE MASTER OF YOUR HEALTH
AT EVERY GATHERING THIS YEAR!

— BY KRISTEN LEIGH SENESE



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This isn't your mama's holiday nutrition + fitness guide.

Craving holidays and pie? Welcome to The Nutrition Barre!

We're all about mindful, diet-free nutrition and fitness.

Let me be your no-nonsense guide this festive season—first up, some housekeeping:

YOU WON'T learn how to burn off dinner and dessert.
(Or that spinach artichoke dip.)

YOU WON'T be forced to complete 2hrs of cardio to *earn* your traditions.

YOU WON'T be told what you can and can't eat.

YOU WILL be shown how to navigate the holidays while feeling your absolute best.

YOU WILL HAVE HOMEWORK.
ACTION = RESULTS!

How to use this guide:

**Whatever the odds, whatever you've read—
Embrace life, and have a blast!**

- Tip puzzling? Skip it!
- Do you have a better plan? Please do it!
- Feel like "pigging out"? Go ahead—I won't stop you!

Are you seeking a guilt-free holiday? Keep reading, and take action!

No all-or-nothing here—choose a few tips that resonate. Care to plan? We've got a map at the end. Let's make this season a blast!

Disclaimer: This guide isn't a prescription, diagnosis, or tailored plan. Consult your healthcare team regarding nutrition, fitness, and overall well-being. If advice contradicts your received guidance, please don't hesitate to disregard it. Heed your body and intuition—should something feel amiss, refrain from it.

LET'S DIG IN, SHALL WE?

mindf*cked to mindful:

Embrace the festive season with mindful behavior and nifty mindset tricks—it's the perfect start! (Fear not, we'll dissect a typical holiday bash soon.) Let the fun unfold!

It's not a one-time feast—indulge in your favorites anytime to avoid scarcity!

You don't need to treat turkey, mashed potatoes, mac-n-cheese, pie, and cookies as exclusive treats. Savor them year-round—what a delight! Enjoy what you crave, skip the rest, and relish the culinary adventure. Giving food too much power takes it away from you. Imagine a world where you're indifferent, and food doesn't control you.

**IF YOU SKIP
THIS PART,
BE PREPARED TO
BE MENTALLY
*Unprepared***

Ditch the "scarcity" mindset—no holiday survival mode needed! Embrace the freedom to choose, dodge the food frenzy, and savor the season. It's revolutionary!

Indulge vs. Overindulge

Savoring a few bites vs. devouring the tray—it's a game-changer! Indulging in pie doesn't derail progress; no need for the "guilt trip" trophy. Enjoy your favorites and keep rocking the festive vibe!

Flip the script!

Tired of holiday overeating tales? Head into the season with confidence—control, and enjoyment hand in hand. Author your own festive success story!

Beyond food, the holidays rock!

Shake things up by adding games, karaoke, sports, crafts, and more to the mix. Keep it fresh, spice up the fun, and revel in the holiday spirit!

Comfort is key!

Tight pants won't stop us from savoring Grandma's mashed potatoes. If you love 'em, rock 'em. No tight-pant-induced, second-helping guilt trips here! Don clothes that feel fabulous. I'll be in leggings/sweats from dawn to dusk. Thanks for coming to my *FED TALK!*



before the gathering

eat:

Skip the "calorie-saving" trap!
Arriving hangry leads to overindulgence. Nourish yourself with nutrient-packed, satisfying meals pre-party.



remember:

Restricting and binging flock together.

byod:

BYO-nutrition! Pack your nutrient-dense faves for peak festive feels. Share your culinary prowess and spread the love.



before the gathering

water:

H2O power! Pre-party hydration sharpens hunger radar. Sipping enough means no thirsty "hunger" pangs. We're only human—let's outsmart thirst.



workout:

Pump it up pre-party!
Sweat before the obligations start to dodge skipping your movement altogether. Time flies!

meditate:

It's about to get LOUD!
Give yourself a quiet moment before arrival. Get centered. Prepare yourself.



during the gathering

Slow and steady wins the race!

Savor every moment, morsel, and memory. Speed eating scrambles hunger cues!

Plate it up!

Skip grazing and savor every serving on a dish. Nix the guesswork and plate your nibbles for portion control bliss.

You're in charge!

Leave the clean plate club behind and listen to your hunger signals. You make the rules now, so end when you want.

Hold your horses!

Before diving for seconds, give it a minute or two. Savor the flavor and decide if you're ready for more. Mindful munching wins again!

Don't Like It? Don't Eat It!

Life's too short to waste on foods you don't enjoy. If someone tries to guilt you into eating something you don't like, say no thanks and move on. Your taste buds and well-being come first!

Lead with Veggies!

Want to indulge without overdoing it? Start with nutrient-dense veggies on your plate. They'll fill you up and give your body the fuel it needs. Then you can add in your favorite treats without going overboard.

Tracking Troubles!

Tracking your food intake can be helpful for certain goals, but it's not always necessary or practical. Don't let the pressure to track every calorie ruin your holiday fun. Instead, use portion control and mindfulness to stay on track without the stress.

Palm of hand: 1 serving protein

Fist: 1 serving fruits/veg

Both hands cupped: 1 serving carbs

Thumb: 1 serving fats

appetizers

Plate up your faves, and skip the rest. Sit, relax, and munch—protein first for satiation. Bring your own dish too!

Examples:

Deviled eggs
Shrimp cocktail
Mini meat/faux meatballs
Bean dip
Roasted chickpeas
Cowboy Caviar
Buffalo Chicken/Chickpea Dip

dinner

Protein = Your BFF

Fuel up on protein and veggies first, then indulge in your favorite carb and fat sides. Protein is your digestion's best friend - it's the most filling macro and takes the most energy (calories burned) to digest. If you want to avoid the munchies, load up on protein. Trust me; I'd instead devour a whole tray of mac-n-cheese than half a turkey (or half a lentil loaf), so that's why we start with protein and veggies.

Swaps

If you dig it and won't miss it, "healthier" swaps are wonderful.

Examples:

Cauliflower mash instead of white potato.
Low-fat Dairy/Dairy-free ingredients
Grain-Free Stuffing
Less butter/cream: (sometimes ½ of what the recipe calls for is fine and won't ruin it. Unless you're baking).
Chickpea/Hearts of Palm/Edamame pasta
Low Sugar: Use less or stevia/truvia if that doesn't upset your stomach (*don't come after me if you're a stan for the insta-gurus that shriek about sweetener for attention. We're talking one dish, maybe two, for one day. Chill, Chad.*)

Build Your Plate

Fill ½ your plate with veggies (salad, roasted vegetables, green beans)
Next, ¼ your protein (turkey, tofurky, lentil loaf, etc.)
Next ¼ your starch (mac-n-cheese, potatoes, bread, pasta, stuffing)
Fat topper: butter, gravy, sour cream

**Remember those portion sizes based on your hands if that's helpful. Grab as many servings that will satisfy you.*

dessert

Take a little break after dinner/before dessert, but don't prolong it too much. Your digestive system is already working hard, and that extra sugar hit might spark a feeding frenzy or indigestion. It's like opening the dishwasher mid-cycle and throwing in a greasy pan. Play it safe!

Build Your Plate:

Option 1: 1 slice of pie

Option 2: ½ slice of pie and some cookies, or a ½ slice of another pie.

Option 3: ¼ slice of pie, a few cookies, and a few of something else. Little bites of whatever you want to try.

**Remember, put these sweets on one plate and sit f down!*

alcohol

Sip, Sip, Hooray!

Stay hydrated with water/seltzer/spritzers between cocktails. Don't forget to eat before you start drinking, and stick to one type of alcohol for the day.

Cheers to You!

Alcohol may not be your BFF, but if you indulge, do it on your terms. And for those on the sober train, YOU'VE GOT THIS. Stand your ground with a simple "no thanks" and rock your night like the boss you are.

walk the talk

Stretch your legs after dessert? Yes, please! It aids digestion and feels good. The calories are done, but your gut needs some TLC. A walk is a great way to show it some love. Get moving if you can!

leftovers

No one's forcing you to eat leftover turkey and cranberry sauce sandwiches for the next week, so don't feel obligated. If you don't like leftovers, give them to someone who does, or skip them altogether. Your taste buds will thank you.

as a guest

Take advantage of the opportunity to take leftovers home. You don't have to eat everything in one sitting like a squirrel. Mindfully enjoy the dishes over the next few days, and even freeze some for later. It's an easy way to add variety to your meals and fit them into any tracking you're doing.

as the host

Get your guests involved in the clean-up and make it fun by putting together doggy bags filled with leftovers. Use meal prep containers and create "TV dinners" for your guests to take as they leave. This helps relieve food pressure and prevents overeating. Plus, you can share the love with neighbors and community members who would appreciate a warm meal. Don't let those leftovers go to waste!

Eating Leftovers:

You don't have to recreate the same meal. Get creative!

cranberry sauce

Topper for yogurt, oatmeal, dips. Add to smoothies. PB & Cranberry sandwich. Spread for any sandwich.

turkey/protein

Sandwich, stir fry, salad, wraps, tacos, burritos, soup, pasta.

veggie sides

Veggie patties/pancakes, mashed potato bowls, scrambles, stir fries, salads, sandwiches, soups.

after the gathering

The Scale:

Don't let the scale stress you out! If seeing a higher number the next day will trigger you, skip the weigh-in. Give your body time to catch up and readjust, which can take 2-5 days.

You Can't Gain Fat Over 1 Meal:

Don't panic over a sudden weight gain after a big meal - gaining 7 lbs of fat from one feast is scientifically impossible. The extra weight is mostly from water retention and digestion, so don't stress and let it go.

Post-Gathering Meals:

Don't force yourself to eat breakfast if you're not hungry the morning after. If you need something to keep your energy levels up, try something light, like yogurt, oats, or a smoothie. Eat your first full meal when you're ready.

Avoid Overtraining:

What you ate yesterday can't be "burned off" today. Move on by moving your body towards today's goals. Overtraining may lead to overeating.

Avoid Under-eating:

Don't starve yourself to make up for yesterday. Your body needs calories every day. Restricting too much can lead to binges.

Skip The Guilt Trip:

Eating food isn't shameful, so don't turn a holiday gathering into a shame festival if you eat more than planned. Feeling physically uncomfortable is temporary.

Use That Extra Fuel:

Those extra nutrients stored in your body can be used for making gains if you have the energy and are training. Muscles are fed, so hit the gym for a heavy lifting session or a long run.

Rest Days Are Cool Too:

If you're not feeling your best, it's okay to take a rest day, go for a walk, or practice Yoga. Relaxation is essential too.

OPBS: other people's bullsh*t

Shut down diet pushers and boundary vampires with a quick response and move on to more interesting conversation topics.

WHAT THEY'LL SAY

VS

WHAT YOU'LL SAY

"That's all you're eating?"
"That's too much food."

"Are you on a diet?"

"Don't you want to have more of my [insert-dish-you-dont-like-here]?"

"But it's the Holidays!"

"You're not drinking?"

"I'm good with this amount of food, how are you?"

"I'm actually on a search for a fun show to watch, any suggestions?"

"Not yet, maybe later." or
"I'll take some home."
"How's your dog?"

"I know, I love this time of year. I'm pacing myself. It's chilly today!"

"I'm sober". or
"No."
"Can I get you anything?"

Don't let others dictate your holiday eating choices. Brush off their nonsense with quick answers and don't feel pressured to explain yourself. Your body and health are your business, and you owe no one an explanation. Just be prepared, getting on your soap box may open Pandora's Lunchbox.

your plan starts now:

Feel good this holiday season by putting yourself first! Start by writing down your plan for prioritizing your needs. This is the crucial first step to success. You get to define what success means to you, so go in with confidence and come out feeling amazing. Print out or fill in this plan on your computer to get started!

What will a “guilt-free” holiday look like to you?

What will you do to achieve a "guilt-free" holiday?

How do you want to feel before your holiday meals?

How do you want to feel after your holiday meals?

What kind of movement will you do the day of the event?

What kind of movement will you do the day after the event?

your plan starts now:

Keep going! You're doing great.

What foods will you eat with pleasure this holiday season?

What foods will you skip?

What NON-Food activities will you enjoy with family and friends?

What are your go-to responses for OPBS (other people's bullsh*t?)

What will you do with leftovers?

Overall, how do you feel about enjoying your holidays while also honoring your body?



About Me

(Content Warning: Diet culture and eating disorder language ahead. Proceed with caution.)

Hi, I'm Kristen, and like many others, I fell victim to diet culture in the '90s. I was called "tubby" at 12, which led me to years of yo-yo dieting, including Slim Fast, Atkins, and Weight Watchers.

I even delved into extreme methods like purging and diet pills. But it all led to a decade-long struggle with binge eating and obesity. At 37, I hit rock bottom and knew I needed a change.

For years, I was exhausted, depressed, and a sweaty mess by the time I got to work, thanks to those dreaded subway stairs. My blood pressure was rising, and I had episodes of passing out at concerts and on the train.

Addicted to alcohol, weed, and all the snacks, I was a far cry from the competitive dancer I once was. I went from kicking high like a Rockette to kicking and screaming through life.

In March 2020, I contracted Covid-19 after attending the last concert on earth (or so my husband and I called it). At first, it was just a mild fever and some chills, so I thought I had beaten it. But the next day, I felt like death. My fever spiked; I was dizzy and nauseous and could barely move. I had all sorts of aches and pains, and even the thought of food made me ill.

The worst part was that the Telehealth doctors kept telling me to ride it out and only go to the ER if I felt like I was dying. I even asked one of them, "But what if I die in my sleep?" Talk about ending a conversation fast. After 2 1/2 weeks of pure hell, I finally started to eat again. But even that was a struggle - I chipped a tooth on a cracker, and the Pedialyte and Gatorade turned my teeth into chewy chiclets.

After surviving Covid-19, I humored the thought of food and tried soup next. It was a slow start, but eventually, I could eat a little pasta.

While sick, I played my life backward, forwards, and sideways, unhappy with how this story was ending (if it was). Surviving Covid-19 made me want to live as mindfully as possible. I dug deep into science to understand why I had a respiratory disease with barely any respiratory symptoms, and I discovered that it could show up in many different ways.

The science showed me that my body was so inflamed when the virus started to populate in my cells that it would be a rough ride before it started. My goal, if I survived, was to work on being the absolute worst "host" ever. The rest of my story ends well: I lost 100 pounds without dieting, became an "athlete" again, and invested my time in earning multiple nutrition and fitness credentials.

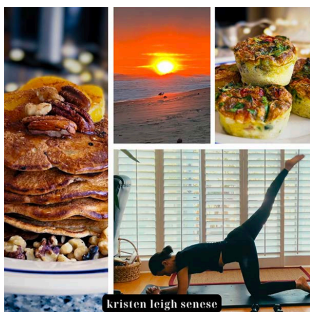
I share this so that you can see where I'm coming from.

Diet culture almost ruined my life, but hitting rock bottom made me see the light. Don't let it be the same for you.

It's not about the scale. There are many other victories in this process. My number is just one of the many positive byproducts of working on my behaviors.

Follow me on Instagram (@thenutritionbarre) or subscribe to my newsletter for more weekly guidance.

I also wrote a massive guide to jumpstarting your morning with healthy recipes, barre workouts, and mindset and behavior change resources. You can buy this guide here:



LINK TO PURCHASE:
<https://krisleighsen.gumroad.com/l/thebreakfastbarre>



THANK YOU!

I hope this guide is helpful for any gathering you attend.

Holidays, birthdays, conferences, work parties, vacations, and more; these tactics work as long as you choose the ones that fit your lifestyle best, and most importantly, you stay consistent. "Every day, *in some way*." If you take a mindful approach to your health instead of the next fad/crash diet, you'll see lasting results vs. quick fixes. Thank you for reading.

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