

Eating Over Christmas: A Calm, Gentle Guide for Your Gut



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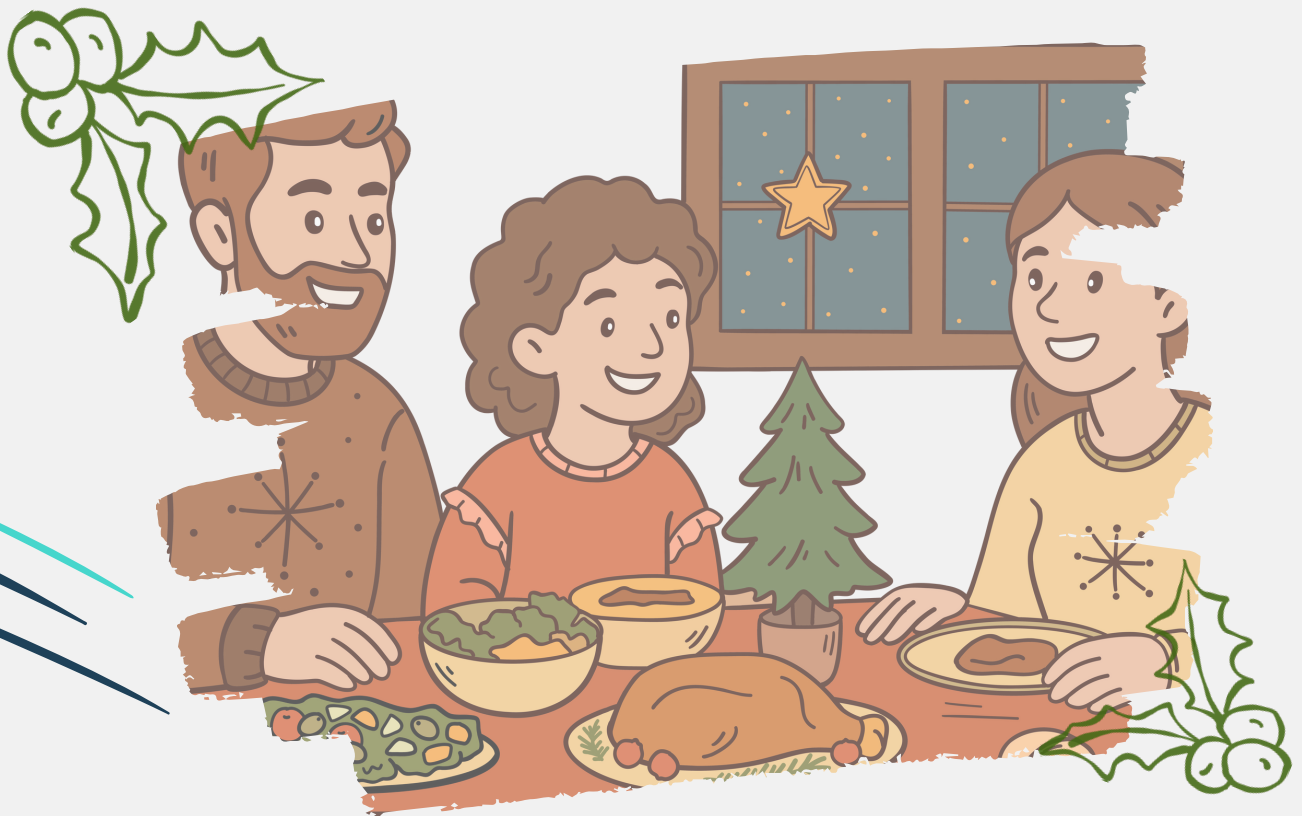
Christmas eating can bring up a mix of excitement and worry 🧑🏻‍🎄

Many people enjoy the food and social time... but also notice changes in their digestion: bloating, wind, reflux, constipation, looser stools, or feeling "off". This guide is here to offer reassurance, not rules, and to help you enjoy the season while keeping your gut as happy (and calm) as possible.



Social dining is good for your gut - genuinely!

Eating with others isn't just emotional - it's biological.



WHEN WE EAT IN COMPANY, WE'RE MORE LIKELY TO:

- slow down
- enjoy the moment
- laugh (good for the vagus nerve!)
- breathe more deeply
- feel safer in our bodies.

THIS SHIFTS THE NERVOUS SYSTEM INTO A CALMER STATE THE REST-AND-DIGEST MODE WHICH HELPS:

- digestion
- gut motility
- nutrient absorption
- bloating reduction
- gut-brain communication.

**SHARING MEALS IS ONE OF THE OLDEST FORMS OF HUMAN CO-REGULATION.
YOUR GUT GENUINELY BENEFITS FROM CONNECTION.**

A Christmas meal fits perfectly within a healthy diet.

A SINGLE DAY (OR EVEN A WEEK) OF FESTIVE MEALS IS NOT A SETBACK. A HEALTHY DIET IS SHAPED BY PATTERNS, NOT PERFECTION.

A Christmas meal usually includes:

- Potatoes
- vegetables
- fruits
- herbs
- nuts (stuffing, nut roasts)
- wholegrains (gravies, breadcrumbs)
- protein
- and variety.

This is exactly the kind of diversity the gut microbiome loves.

Even things like:

- Gravy
- cranberry sauce
- roast veg
- sprouts
- red cabbage
- stuffing
- puddings
- mince pies

...all contribute plant fibres, spices and polyphenols.



Your gut isn't judging your plate - it's responding to the mix of plants, colours and fibres you're giving it.



WHY BLOATING AND WIND CAN INCREASE AT CHRISTMAS (AND WHAT HELPS)



1

MORE VARIETY THAN USUAL

Good for the microbiome – but sudden changes can cause temporary extra fermentation → wind and bloating.

What helps:

- ✓ smaller portions of high-fibre veg if you're sensitive
- ✓ gentle walking after meals
- ✓ avoid piling everything on one plate – spread foods over the day.

2

EATING MORE QUICKLY OR WHEN EXCITED

Fast eating = more air swallowed → bloating.

What helps:

- ✓ a few breaths before eating
- ✓ pausing between bites
- ✓ putting cutlery down occasionally.

3

FIZZY DRINKS + ALCOHOL

Both introduce gas and relax the gut.

What helps:

- ✓ alternating with still water
- ✓ warm drinks (herbal teas) to settle the stomach
- ✓ pacing alcohol.

4

RICHER FOODS

Cream, cheese, butter, chocolate (all delicious and fine) but can slow digestion and increase reflux.

What helps:

- ✓ don't lie down after eating
- ✓ a short walk instead
- ✓ spacing richer foods throughout the week.

5

STRESS OR EMOTIONAL INTENSITY

Christmas is joyful for many – and overwhelming for many too.

Stress + excitement = tightened diaphragm + tense gut wall = bloating.

What helps:

- ✓ taking short breaks
- ✓ deep belly breathing
- ✓ grounding techniques
- ✓ slower eating
- ✓ staying warm (cold can trigger digestive contraction).



Tips for enjoying Christmas food...

AND SUPPORTING YOUR GUT!

1 Add colour when you can

You don't need to avoid whole food groups & you don't need to take lots of supplements.

2 Keep meals slow and social

Talk, laugh, put your fork down - this calms the gut more than any supplement.

3 Stay gently hydrated

Not a rule - just a steady drip of water through the day.

4 Walk after meals

A 10-minute stroll supports gut motility, reduces bloating, and helps your nervous system unwind.

5 Don't "save up calories" for a big meal

This often leads to:

- eating too quickly
- overeating
- more bloating
- blood sugar dips

Eat normally throughout the day - your gut prefers rhythm.

6 Enjoy festive foods without guilt

Guilt tightens the gut and delays digestion.

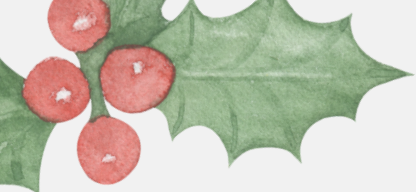
Pleasure relaxes it. Your gut responds to how you feel about the food as much as the food itself.

7 Consider gentle herbal supports

Peppermint tea, ginger tea, fennel tea

All can help symptoms, not as rules - just options.





THE BIGGEST MESSAGE? YOUR GUT WILL BE ABSOLUTELY FINE



You don't need to "fix" your Christmas eating.
You don't need to detox.
You don't need to avoid the pudding.
You don't need to compensate in January.

The gut is adaptable, resilient, and responds beautifully to:

- **Variety**
- **calm eating**
- **gentle movement**
- **joy**
- **social connection**
- **regular meals.**

Christmas fits perfectly into that!

