



# Dessert Detox



## Healthier Swaps for Christmas Classics

The holidays may be merry and bright—but some Christmas foods come with *not-so-nice* surprises. While we all love a good gravy boat, a festive cookie tin, or a warm cup of eggnog to arouse the Christmas spirit... a lot of seasonal favorites are packed with additives and preservatives that your body definitely didn't put on its wish list. We're uncovering the hidden ingredients that can leave you feeling sluggish instead of spirited—and showing you how to enjoy all the holiday foods without the unwanted “extras.”

Too much chocolate at Christmas can leave you feeling less jolly than you'd expect—especially when a lot of holiday treats are made with cheap, “fake” chocolate loaded with added sugars, oils, and artificial flavors. These ingredients can cause energy crashes, stomach discomfort, and overall sluggishness. To enjoy the real deal, look for chocolate with a short ingredient list—ideally cacao or cocoa listed first, minimal added sugar, and no weird oils or flavor enhancers. A good rule of thumb: the fewer ingredients, the better the chocolate.

Fruitcake may be a holiday classic, but many store-bought versions are packed with artificial dyes, processed candied fruits, and syrups that turn a once-wholesome recipe into a sugar bomb. For a healthier twist, try versions made with naturally dried fruits like dates, apricots, and cherries, plus warm spices and a touch of honey or maple syrup for sweetness. You can even swap in whole-grain flour or add nuts for extra nutrients and texture.

Eggnog might taste like a cup of pure holiday cheer, but many store-bought versions come with a long list of additives, like artificial flavors, excessive sugars, and preservatives. Some brands also rely on thickening agents and shelf-stabilizers that take the “real” out of this traditional drink. For a healthier spin, try making your own with simple ingredients like real milk (or a dairy-free option), eggs, vanilla, and a touch of maple syrup or honey. You can even buy cleaner versions made with minimal ingredients and no artificial additives.

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**Source:**

Chef's Corner: *Top 5 Holiday Foods that are Bad for your Health!* (2021)

<https://topchefmeals.com/content/top-5-holiday-foods-are-bad-your-health>