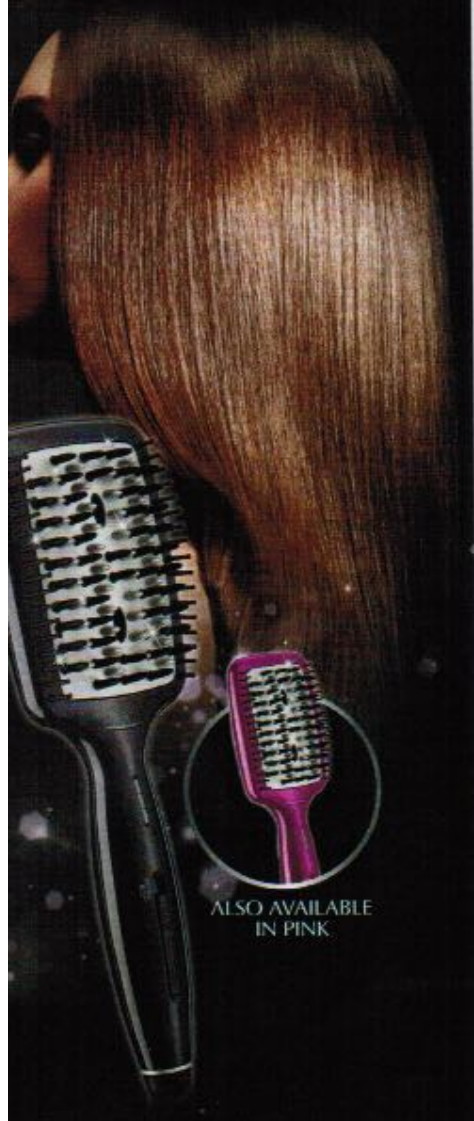


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## Feeling Good



# ARE YOU A SAVVY HOLIDAY EATER?

Take this quiz to find out if  
you're the smartest  
snacker at the crudité tray.

BY Karen Asp

**THERE'S AN ART** to navigating the end-of-year calorie extravaganza, and these six questions will reveal the true depth of your mastery. For each correct answer, treat yourself to an extra almond from the spiced mixed nuts!

**1. True or false: A glass of wine before dinner helps you eat less.**

Answer: False. Studies have found that people who drink alcohol before a meal end up eating 7 to 30 percent more than those who abstain. Alcohol may affect a part of the brain involved in regulating eating behavior,

amplifying response to appealing aromas, says David A. Kareken, PhD, director of the neuropsychology section at Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis. On top of that, alcohol lowers inhibition and impairs judgment ("More pie? Sure!").

**2. You're seized by a powerful craving for cheese straws. What should you do?**

- A. Tap your forehead with your finger
- B. Tap your ear with your finger
- C. Tap your feet on the floor
- D. Stare at a blank wall for 30 seconds

Answer: A. While all these hacks can reduce cravings, head tapping worked significantly better than the others, reducing participants' food desires by 29 to 51 percent in a 2014 study. "Watching your finger while you tap it along your forehead may interfere with the processing of food cravings in the brain," says Richard Weil, study coauthor and director of the Mount Sinai St. Luke's Weight Loss Program in New York City. To do it right, place your finger at your temple and then lightly tap across your forehead, following your finger with your eyes; repeat in the opposite direction. Tap when the craving hits and repeat until it subsides.

**3. How many packets of sugar are in one candy cane?**

- A. One
- B. Three
- C. Six

Answer: B. A typical five-inch candy cane contains around 10 grams of sugar, the equivalent of roughly three packets of the sweet stuff. Consuming high amounts of added sugars can lead to increased body fat, heart disease, and skin aging, says Monica Auslander, a registered dietitian and founder of Essence Nutrition in Miami.

**4. You've been doing a lot of socializing and eating out. But some of those restaurant dishes could contain at least \_\_\_\_\_ times the number of recommended calories.**

- A. One or two

**B. Two or three**  
**C. Three or four**

Answer: B. A study in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* found that 92 percent of restaurant meals surveyed in three U.S. cities significantly exceeded 570 calories, the approximate amount an average woman can be expected to eat in a single meal. Entrées from American, Chinese, and Italian restaurants were the highest, averaging 1,495 calories each. Eating an apple or a bowl of high-fiber cereal before dinner can help you avoid overeating, says Susan B. Roberts, PhD, study coauthor and senior scientist at Tufts University's Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging in Boston.

**5. Which slice of pie is "healthiest"?**

- A. Pumpkin
- B. Apple
- C. Pecan

Answer: A. Pumpkin comes in at roughly 320 calories per slice, compared with 410 for apple pie and a whopping 500 for pecan pie. And pie made with real pumpkin is a relatively sensible dessert choice: It's rich in vitamin A, potassium, and magnesium, Auslander says.

**6. You love to spend your days off watching movies. Which are likely to be the most fattening?**

- A. Comedies
- B. Musicals
- C. Tearjerkers

Answer: C. People can eat approximately 30 percent more when they watch a sad movie as opposed to more upbeat entertainment, according to one study. Snacking is comforting, researchers theorize. So when you're curling up with a sentimental holiday classic, keep popcorn out of reach until the angel gets his wings.