



## What's Your Holiday Eating Style?

When answering each question, try not to judge yourself, and try not to overthink it. Go with the initial intuitive response that pops into your mind. First thought, best thought!

### True or False

1. I often skip breakfast or eat a light lunch. T / F
2. I tend to overeat one or two certain types of food. T / F
3. I diet in between holiday events to make up for my overeating. T / F
4. I feel really guilty when I overdo it or eat "bad" foods. T / F
5. Once I have one bite of a "forbidden" food such as desserts, dairy, baked goods or salty/crunchy food, I tend to go out of control and can't stop. T / F
6. I sometimes worry about being hungry or not getting enough to eat. T / F
7. When I don't feel good about myself, I decide that I need to lose weight or go on a diet. T / F
8. I have gone to great lengths (driven out of my way, spent lots of money, etc.) to get the food I'm craving. T / F
9. I overeat more when I am feeling down, upset or angry. T / F
10. I head straight for food as soon as I'm done with work. T / F
11. I tend to eat more when I am bored or alone. T / F
12. Sometimes, out of the blue, I'll find that I'm incredibly hungry. T / F
13. I feel uncomfortable saying how I really feel. T / F
14. My food choices are healthier when I'm feeling good about myself. T / F
15. The holidays make me depressed, they never live up to my expectations. T / F
16. When someone makes a comment about my weight it makes me want to eat more. T / F
17. I never seem to have enough time to eat right or to cook. T / F
18. I'm so busy this time of year that I often feel "tired but wired." T / F
19. I seem to be constantly doing something but I feel like I never get anything done. T / F
20. Eating is one of the only things that helps me unwind. T / F
21. Food gives me a pick-me-up or a reward to make it worth all my hard work. T / F
22. My food choices are usually whatever I can grab that's quick and convenient. T / F
23. I find myself nibbling a lot when I'm cooking or working at my computer. T / F
24. I crave crunchy/salty snacks and/or chew a lot of gum. T / F
25. My weight usually goes up during the holidays. T / F
26. It's too much work to eat well during the holidays. T / F
27. Usually, during the holidays, I stop caring about whether or not I'll gain weight and just decide to deal with it in January. T / F
28. I often go back for seconds or third helpings of food. T / F
29. I hate feeling deprived or left out when other people are eating. T / F
30. I stop exercising during the holidays, I'm just too busy. T / F
31. Food is one of main things I like about the holidays. T / F
32. I'll probably never lose weight anyway, so I might as well just enjoy myself. T / F



## The Four Eating Styles

### **Rollercoaster Eating:** *(If you answered mostly true to 1-8)*

You have a lot of rules about food and you tend to be very black or white in how you think about your eating – you’re either “good” or you’re “bad”, you’re up or you’re down. You alternate cycles of dieting or restricting yourself and then overeating or bingeing, especially in the afternoon and evening. You find that certain foods trigger your overeating, and this makes you feel powerless. You experience a lot of guilt and shame when you eat forbidden foods or when you overeat. You may feel you don’t “deserve” to have a treat or a large meal every now and then. You spend a lot of time thinking about food, your next meal, what’s acceptable or not, and are generally driven by an overriding theme of restriction or controlling your appetite.

#### **Strategies:**

- Regular nourishment with appropriate timing is critical, as is releasing judgements and rules about food.
- Call a cease-fire with food! Work on cultivating trust in the moment, instead of making rules. You probably have a pretty strong inner rebel.
- Resistant to letting go? How are those rules workin’ for ya?

### **Emotional Eating:** *(If you answered mostly true to 9-16)*

You tend to eat in response to strong emotions, or to avoid feeling them. You may not be aware of specific emotions, but may experience this as an uncomfortable feeling, to which eating provides some form of relief or distraction (criticism, disappointment, tension/arguing, feeling criticized, feeling undervalued, even invisible). You may be extremely sensitive and intuitive, and may have a tendency to focus more on the needs or concerns of others than on your own. This leads you to feel that you are doing all the work in relationships, and food becomes your reward. If you think about it, you find that you sometimes eat to fill up. During the holiday season, with more family time, more juggling, and higher expectations, you may become very aware of the gap between how things are and how you wish they were, and you find food to be a source of comfort. Sometimes food feels like a friend you can’t imagine giving up. Another clue to this style, you tend to

eat in secret.

**Strategies:**

- Find a safe method of self-expression – simple journaling is a great place to start.
- Practicing supportive, compassionate self-talk, treat yourself like you would a best friend, look for other forms of nourishment.
- Important for you long-term: boundaries, receiving support, speaking your truth

**Stress Eating:** *(If you answered mostly true to 17-24)*

For you “Busy” has become way of life. You are constantly in a state of hurried tension, whether from being overscheduled or overcommitting, or often from a sense of dissatisfaction with either your work or your romantic life. You may have a wide range of food cravings, chosen somewhat intuitively to ease your tension, or even anger: salty, crunchy things, lots of chewing (gum), alcohol to “take the edge off”. Your eating is triggered by stress or frustration, and you eat to numb out. You use your busy-ness as an excuse for not taking time for meals, yet instinctively know that your energy level would be higher if you ate healthier. You feel resentful that other people get to relax and have fun, but this doesn’t seem to be OK for you. You experience a sense of “tunnel vision” during the holidays, only being able to focus on your tasks and to do list while you long to slow down enough to appreciate the meaning of the season. You may exercise or not, but when you do it only adds to your sense of duty or responsibility. Perfectionism may be one of your challenge areas that prevents you from easing up on yourself. You operate based on a lot of “have to’s” rather than “want to’s”

**Strategies:**

*(We are probably all dealing with some of this right now, so this applies to everyone)*

- Unapologetic time for exercise that calms you (non-negotiables)
- Some kind of spiritual practice or time in nature, take of the blinders, open your heart
- When you have a thought around what you “HAVE” to do, ask who says?
- Asking for support, and/or saying “no”
- [Cortisol Manager Supplement](#): High cortisol is a result of the pattern, AND feeding the pattern
- Relaxation – Chilling out!
  - Simple meditation, golden light (handout)
  - Time out (bubble bath)
  - Holiday Survival guide quick meditations

**Snowball Effect Eating:** *(If you answered mostly true to 25-32)*

Think of a snowball rolling down a mountain getting bigger and bigger, that’s kind of what this style is like. Your resolve and determination to embrace healthful eating wavers tremendously! You may be inspired to make a change by an external factor – such as seeing a picture of yourself, your jeans being too tight, or a comment by a loved one.

You'll start out strong but as soon as you are tempted, and "fall off the wagon" your incentive decreases dramatically and you essentially give up. You kind of end up saying WTF. Because your motivation was mostly external (approval seeking) you lose steam easily. This style involves some self-abandonment, as you make gratification in the moment (and relief from the "hard work" or "hunger") more important than your long-term goals. You continually promise yourself "I'll start tomorrow, or next Monday, or next Month", but then what that comes you already feel defeated because you have so much work ahead of you.

**Strategies:**

- Ask yourself what's really fueling your motivation?
- Connect with why it's important to YOU to keep healthy commitments to yourself
  - How much more energy you'll have
  - How great it feels to be toned
  - How you'll have higher self-worth, not "other-worth"
- Relax the all or nothing ideas about eating healthy, and avoid the tendency to cut out everything you like
- Practice tasting just a little – mindful eating with all the senses
- Find the internal inspiration for your choices,
- Make your own opinion matter most, if you are happy the way you are, that's totally OK!

You may be a blend of these styles, or all of them! Totally OK! We all have stressors in our lives, and we all have different sets of skills in how we respond to them. What is a trouble area for one person may come really naturally to someone else. The main idea is not that there is anything WRONG with you, but a greater level of self-awareness and compassion so that you can CHOOSE your responses differently.