

## Reflux Gone Forever Presents the Perfect Holiday Dinner Menu

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When the brilliant colors of autumn are gone and the weather starts to turn a bit nippy, we look ahead to the holiday season with wonderful images of the past dancing in our heads. It's a magical time when we are reunited with friends and family; a time when children are the happiest and all of us are at our very best. Needless to say delicious food will be the cornerstone of all this festivity.

Whether it's Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Years, it's truly a challenge to prepare food that is acid reflux friendly. During the holiday season, we are tempted to indulge in all those fatty, sweet and acidic foods that we enjoyed so much in childhood. We like to think of this as comfort food, however, acid indigestion is anything but comfort to those who suffer from it.

Complete abstinence from acidic, fatty and sweet food would defeat the purpose of celebrating the holidays. Dishes that do not bring back memories of childhood would do the same. Thankfully, there are simple ways to make seasonal dishes healthier without ruining all the fun.

It is important to point out that when attempting to reverse the symptoms of acid reflux, diet is the most important consideration. That old adage, "You are what you eat", is absolutely true. If you eat and drink acidic foods and beverages, you too will be acidic. Some people just can't tolerate the acidity.

7.5 pH is the ideal alkaline body level. You can test the pH level of your saliva with pH paper, which is available at any pharmacy. Many medical authorities claim that all illness, including cancer, cannot exist in an alkaline body. If this is true, it is certainly food for thought!

Most people who suffer from acid reflux have a damaged esophagus. In order to heal this condition, the esophagus must be allowed to repair itself. By eliminating food and drinks that are irritants, this can be accomplished. Avoiding anything which relaxes the LES (lower esophageal sphincter) is another important consideration. The LES is the muscular valve which separates the esophagus and the stomach. When this valve relaxes stomach fluids splash up through the LES into the esophagus and throat causing acid reflux.

Stomach acid has been compared in strength to the acid in your car battery. When one experiences acid reflux, burning lacerations develop on the lining of the esophagus, and the LES is further weakened. Until this damage has had a chance to heal, spicy foods, such as acidic tomato products, hot peppers, raw garlic and raw onions should also be eliminated from the diet. They will further irritate the condition. Smoking, drinking alcohol and eating chocolate also relaxes the LES, thus impeding the healing process.

It is important, in the beginning, to eat alkaline easy to digest food until the esophagus has healed. Allowing at least three hours after eating before lying down is an important habit to develop. Eating slowly and chewing food completely in a relaxed, pleasant and stress free environment is also must do.

If you can't resist that holiday drink or chocolate dessert then it would be wise to let moderation be your guide. Also, keep in mind that eating too much of even the most alkaline food can cause indigestion, as well.

I have created what I consider to be the perfect holiday menu. The dishes below retain the important flavors of the season, yet are healthy enough for most acid reflux sufferers to enjoy in comfort. The entire family will love this dinner. It is also quick and uncomplicated to prepare. This menu will feed six easily with leftover beef.

Bon appetite!

#### SOUP COURSE

##### Country Style Creamed Pumpkin Soup

1 pat of unsalted butter  
¼ cup natural chicken stock (Kitchen Basics, if possible)  
1 Cup finely minced yellow onion  
15 oz can pure pumpkin  
Chicken stock (fill empty pumpkin can)  
½ cup maple syrup  
¼ tsp. cinnamon  
Freshly grated nutmeg  
¼ cup half & half  
Crumbled nitrate free bacon, chopped chives and ¼ sour cream in squeeze bottle (optional)

In a 2 qt. soup pot heat butter and stock to the simmer.  
Add minced onion and cook covered stirring occasionally until tender and translucent.  
Blend in pumpkin and can of stock. Cook at the simmer for 10 minutes.  
Blend in maple syrup and spices. Simmer another 5 minutes.  
Take off heat and add half & half & mix well.

Note: This dish is best made the day before. Reheat in a double boiler.  
Serve in a soup terrine and offer garnish on the side. Garnish with bacon for the non-gerd guests and chives for others. After plating the soup, make decorative zigzag patterns with sour cream from the squeeze bottle.

## MAIN COURSE

### Roasted Beef Tenderloin with Caramelized Root Vegetables

1 (4 to 5 pound) trimmed & tied tenderloin roast  
Olive oil  
Head of garlic, peeled and sliced  
Salt and pepper  
Fresh rosemary chopped  
3 parsnips & 3 turnips peeled and cut into 1" pieces  
½ pound peeled baby carrots  
15 small pearl onions, peeled (make an X with knife at the root end)  
1 pound new potatoes cut in half  
Olive oil  
Salt and pepper  
Fresh chopped thyme  
Parsley for garnish

Heat oven to 425 degrees F.  
Place roast in roasting pan.  
Massage thin coat of olive oil into roast.  
Rub sliced garlic over roast and discard.  
Season with salt & pepper to taste.  
Insert meat thermometer into thickest area of roast.  
Place vegetables in bowl & coat well with olive oil.  
Season with salt & pepper to taste and mix well. Sprinkle with chopped thyme.  
Empty vegetables into roasting pan around beef.  
Roast for 40 – 50 minutes until the thermometer reads 140 degrees F.  
Stir vegetables several times to keep moist.  
When beef is done, remove to warm platter and tent with foil.  
Let roast rest for 20 minutes.  
If vegetables are not done, stir and continue to roast until tender and caramelized. Garnish with parsley.  
Serve with horseradish sauce to those who are non-gerd and au jus from the cutting board, for those more sensitive.

Note: If using a convection roasting oven, adjust the cooking time accordingly.

## SALAD/CHEESE COURSE

### Belgium Endive, Toasted Walnuts & Blue Cheese with Walnut Vinaigrette

6 heads Belgium endive leaves washed & dried  
1 cup toasted walnuts (toast lightly in heavy pan and shake skins off)  
½ pound crumbled good blue cheese (Gorgonzola, Stilton or Roquefort)  
4 tbsps. Sherry vinegar  
1 large shallot finely minced  
¾ cup walnut oil

¼ cup olive oil  
Salt & pepper to taste:

In a bowl, whisk vinegar & shallots together. Slowly drizzle oil whisking continually until dressing becomes thick & creamy. Season with salt and pepper.

Toss together in a salad bowl; endive, walnuts, blue cheese and dressing.

## DESSERT COURSE

### Rustic Apple Tart with Apricot glaze

5 Golden Delicious apples, cored, peeled, quartered & sliced ¼ inch thick (toss in bowl with a little lemon juice to retard discoloration)

¼ cup sugar

1 tsp cinnamon

½ cup apricot jam

¼ cup dark rum

1 sheet commercial puff pastry (Dufour if you can find it, or any brand in the super market freezer case)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Slice apples with a mandolin or by hand and place in bowl tossing with lemon juice.

Place sheet of pastry on floured surface and turn edges in to form a border.

Place pastry on parchment paper covered cookie sheet & adjust.

Arrange apple slices neatly overlapping in alternate rows.

Sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon.

Place on middle rack of hot oven.

Bake for 40 – 45 minutes, or until golden brown.

Microwave apricot jam & rum in plastic wrap covered bowl on high for 30 seconds. Whisk to blend.

Paint finished tart with apricot mixture with pastry brush while still warm.

Serve with ice cream or crème fraiche. Garnish with a sprig of mint or fresh raspberries.

Note: This wonderfully festive dessert can be prepared hours before dinner is served. If you should use the wrong apple and, or if your apple patterns go amiss, don't despair. You can't go wrong with this rustic dish. It will look appetizing anyway it turns out. Just say that you intended it to be that way!

Bon appetite!

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