

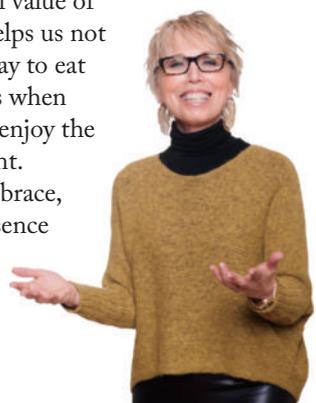
# December's 12hh Goal: EAT MINDFULLY

'Tis the season to find that elusive, delicate balance between feasting with family and friends and remaining aware and in control. **BY KATE MEYERS**



**T**HE FIRST 11 INSTALLMENTS OF OUR YEARLONG HEALTHY Habits program were designed to foster a better relationship with food in tangible, practical ways: Eat less sodium, eat more fruits and vegetables, fit fitness into your healthy-eating routine. To end the year, though, befitting a season of celebration, reflection, and giving, our focus turns to the intangible: the mind, and specifically how it relates to all the delicious offerings on the holiday table. The concept of mindful eating centers around the emotional and spiritual value of food—how it makes us feel, and how it helps us not just to live but to thrive. It says that the way to eat less is to pay attention more. This happens when you teach your brain and palate to deeply enjoy the experience of eating in the present moment.

Mindfulness is a difficult practice to embrace, especially now, as overabundance is the essence of the holiday season. However, that's why this is the perfect time to make it a priority. If you practice mindfulness now, you can say "never mind" to those frustrating resolutions come January 1.



HEALTHY HABITS HERO

**GENEEN ROTH**  
*Author of several books, including Women Food and God and Lost and Found: One Woman's Story of Losing Her Money and Finding Her Life, California*

Geneen Roth stopped dieting 35 years ago. The author and motivational speaker estimates that over the course of 16 years, beginning with her first diet at age 11, she

gained and lost more than 1,100 pounds. Her binge-eating, binge-dieting cycle led to anorexia and an amphetamine and laxative addiction. "I was obsessed with being thin," Roth says. "I thought that if I could just be strong and disciplined and keep the weight off,

*Continued on page 58*

## THE 12 HEALTHY HABITS CALENDAR



PHOTOGRAPHY: RANDY MAYOR; FOOD STYLING: BLAKESLEE WRIGHT GILES; PROP STYLING: LINDSEY LOWER; PORTRAIT: JAYMES RAMIREZ; STYLING: RACINE CHRISTENSEN

I would be happy. I kept thinking it was like a set of dominoes that would suddenly click into place, but it never happened.”

By the time she turned 27 years old, Roth found that she had hit a life-threatening rock bottom: “I had taken myself to such an extreme of suffering. I had starved myself practically out of existence and binged myself to gaining double my weight,” she says. “It was then that I recognized that I could not live that way anymore.”

Since her revelation more than three decades ago, Roth has counseled thousands of people on issues related to food, and she has authored nine books. Chipper, happy, and healthy at 62, she has distilled these lessons into her “If Love Could Speak” guidelines, which are designed to enable those with unhappy relationships with food to be kind to themselves (no suffering, no punishment involved). “Eat when you’re hungry; eat sitting down in a calm environment that’s not the car; eat without distractions; eat what your body actually wants; eat until you’re satisfied; eat with the intention of being in full view of other people (that means not sneaking); eat with gusto and pleasure, and you will lose weight 100% of the time,” Roth says.

We asked Roth to share her thoughts on the mindful practices that can allow a person to eat with sanity, kindness, and enjoyment—and to thrive, especially during the craziness and the joy of the holiday feasting season.

A bite of chocolate, mindfully savored, can be deeply satisfying. Find the recipe for this truffle on page 60.



Part of mindful eating can be paying attention to the beauty of what we eat.

## Geneen’s Top 4 Strategies for Finding Peace in Your Relationship with Food

**1 LISTEN TO YOUR BODY.** “Food affects your energy. Whether you’re listening or not, your body gives you instant information when you eat. I know within the first couple of minutes I eat something if it’s giving me energy or draining it. Mindfulness of the body is something hardly anyone has. It takes practice. Your body is there to give you that information, but most people don’t listen to it. They don’t want to.”

**3 STOP MULTITASKING.** “Eating while doing something else prevents you from being truly satisfied with what you eat, so you keep going for more. When you’re mindful, you’re not on Facebook, you’re not driving. You’re not doing other things—you don’t have the attention to spare. Allow yourself to have the food and enjoy it.” In party season, you don’t have to insert food into every moment of every social event. Mind your food; then mind your friends.

**4 FOCUS ON WHAT YOU HAVE.** “We lost all our money a few years ago [investing in what turned out to be a Ponzi scheme], and we were living with such terror, regret, shame, and blame that the only way I could get through the night was to focus on what I hadn’t lost—my favorite teacup, for instance, or my dog and our friends. Many people eat because they are focusing on what they don’t have, feeling there’s constantly something missing. They look to food to fill that hunger.” Roth is talking about gratitude here, thankfulness, and the presence of mind to avoid the easy substitute of food or alcohol. One thing to be thankful for this season, of course, is food itself—not a contradiction if you can consume it mindfully, moderately, and with thanks.

**2 EVALUATE YOUR SATISFACTION.** Stop halfway through eating, and rate how you feel. “There’s a difference between

satisfied and full,” Roth says. “Use a scale of 1 to 10, where 4 and 5 are satisfied. Between 6 and 10 is getting full. Satisfied is, ‘I’ve had enough; I could stop.’ Full is, ‘I’ve eaten so much that my stomach precedes me when I walk.’”

When rich holiday treats are all around, it’s especially important to enjoy mindfully, find satisfaction, and then stop. Besides, Roth says, “food tastes much better when you’re a bit hungry.”

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HEALTHY LIVING

12HH

## Perfectly Satisfying

Don't swear off treats—savor them. "At the holidays, we eat a piece of cake and then are handed pie," says Healthy Habits Coach Allison Fishman Task. "Focus on one thing, a small treat, and truly savor it." These rich, fudgy, tender truffles fill the bill: only 88 calories each, but mind-blowingly good.



### Champagne Truffles

Hands-on: 20 min. Total: 3 hr.

- 1/4 cup Champagne, at room temperature
- 1 tablespoon light-colored corn syrup
- 6 ounces milk chocolate, finely chopped
- 2 ounces bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa

1. Combine first 4 ingredients in the top of a double boiler. Cook over simmering water until chocolates completely melt, stirring constantly. Pour mixture into a 9-inch pie plate.

Cover surface with plastic wrap. Refrigerate 2 hours or until firm.  
2. Scoop chocolate mixture with a spoon into 15 equal portions. Roll each portion into a ball. Place cocoa in a shallow bowl. Roll chocolate balls in cocoa to coat completely. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

**SERVES 15** (serving size: 1 truffle)

**CALORIES** 88; **FAT** 4.8g (sat 3g, mono 0.8g, poly 0.2g); **PROTEIN** 1.1g; **CARB** 10.2g; **FIBER** 0.9g; **CHOL** 3mg; **IRON** 0.6mg; **SODIUM** 10mg; **CALC** 24mg

—Additional reporting by Kimberly Holland; recipe by Deb Wise