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Etiquette guru offers help for Thanksgiving dieters, vegans and vegetarians



When you're vegan, eating at someone else's house can be difficult. It's even more difficult at Thanksgiving. (on.aol.com)



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"But I made it just for you," says Aunt Rose. "You can have just a little bit, it's a holiday," says Cousin Bob. Are you dreading holiday gatherings filled with food pushers this year?

We interviewed April Masini of "Ask April Fame" to get her expert insights on dealing with all the diet dilemmas that arise this time of year. She's the author of "**Think & Date Like A Man: (Be the woman who gets the man she wants...and keeps him!)**".

"Many times hostess (and others) think they're doing something nice for you, by offering or pressing you with food — without realizing that you don't eat meat, or you don't eat pork, or you don't eat carbs and sugar, etc. When this happens there are things you can do to protect yourself, and your relationship with the host," says April.

First, focus on being polite, saying something such as "You're so considerate to think of me!" But use your judgment when it comes to how you handle the situation.

"When your host presses you to eat what you don't want to, or take seconds and thirds...choose one of these:"

- "You know, I normally don't eat (fill in the blank with meat, sugar, carbs, etc.) but I did want to take a taste of what you made because it looks amazing!!"
- or "You are such a wonderful chef, if I did eat meat, I'd live on this (fill in the blank with turkey, pie, bread, etc.)!"

For those who are vegan or vegetarian, holiday gatherings can feel like you're walking on eggshells (and you don't eat eggs). April suggests bringing your own offering to the table:

- If you're not a meat eater consider Tofurky, a turkey inspired tofu food that you can find at most health food markets.
- Veggie lover? Let's be honest. The side dishes at **Thanksgiving** are what we all sit down at the table for, if we're being honest. Go for green beans, brussels sprouts, yams or sweet potatoes, homemade cranberry sauce and creamed or sautéed spinach.
- Salad is the uninvited guest at most Thanksgiving meals. It's also extremely healthy and it will fill your plate so you don't fill it with less healthy stuffing and cranberry sauce. Don't count on anyone to provide one, but if you're hosting or if you're delegated a side dish — or even if you're not — bring a great salad that has a little goat cheese, some pomegranate kernels and chopped almonds tossed in.