

## MARKET ROUNDUP FESTIVE FOOD

# Enjoy festive food guilt free

**Hodema Consulting Services' Damascus office manager, consultant Elissar Saddy, advises on healthier festive menus**



Food is an essential, if not the most important, part of any celebration in every corner of the world, regardless of culture and religion. Different countries use food in different ways to help celebrate special occasions like Christmas, Eid, New Year, birthdays, and weddings. Festive food is meant to complete our joy and make the celebration even happier but sometimes it is not as rosy as it seems.

### Healthy foods

Festive food is usually appealing and beautifully festooned. When the food is so nicely decorated, the temptation gets out of control. In most cases, instead of having just a few pieces, we end up overeating. And as festive food frequently consists of an elevated level of sugar and a high percentage of fats the outcome can be detrimental.

According to a number of researches, people gain, on average, two kilos over Christmas, having swallowed 6,000 calories on Christmas Day alone, three times the necessary amount. However, staying in shape during the festive season is not impossible. By using new ingredients in traditional sweet recipes and by cooking using the "right" methods and measurements, things are made easier. This season, caterers and manufacturers are adopt-

ing these measures and using "the healthy trend" to their benefit.

So before attacking grandmother's traditional sweet recipes, think a little differently by alternating a few basic ingredients and using your imagination:

- Favor healthy food and quality ingredients
- Replace fruits with organic fruits
- Make desserts with plums, raisins, apples, pears, apricots and figs
- Substitute sugar with fructose or saccharine
- Use orange, lemon zest and brandy for taste
- Focus on spices such as cinnamon

### Festive food footprint

According to researchers at the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom, the carbon footprint of the turkey and trimmings tuck this Christmas will be the equivalent of 6,000 car trips around the world! Most of us are not aware of the total food quantity being wasted each year. A typical festive dinner for 8 people equals 20 kg of carbon dioxide emissions.

Festive seasons are marked by not only by good food but by massive amounts of food. In 2007, food wasted in the United Kingdom augmented by a con-



siderable 80% during the Christmas and New Year period, according to statistics revealed by the Love Food Hate Waste campaign led by WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Program). Hotels, restaurants and private houses were throwing away 30% of the food they bought. Consumers, as well as hotels, restaurants, and food processors and manufacturers are making more and more effort to be "green".

Sustainability is not only achieved by reducing electricity or decreasing water consumption. Ecological sustainability is attained when global efforts are made in different fields, and this definitely includes the food and beverage industry, as various natural resources are used through-

out its value chain. So, this festive season the hospitality industry should try to:

- Measure the demand
- Focus on quality, not quantity
- Implement an appropriate waste management system
- Finally, look for ingredients that are not only healthy and nutritious, but also good for the environment as well.

Ideally, try to offer better sustainability in the field and healthier nutritional results on the table. However, at the end of the day, being indulgent from time to time is a must and if not during festive seasons, then when? [www.hodema.net](http://www.hodema.net)

## NORDIC Yule log created for Christmas 2009 by Charles Azar, executive pastry chef, InterContinental Phoenicia Beirut



This Yule log is an amalgam of white chocolate mousse infused with Earl Grey tea perfumed with orange flower blossom, and milk chocolate Jivara supreme with raspberry spreads between two Madeleine biscuits layers. It is covered with white chocolate velvet, decorated with handmade snowmen in marzipan.

### Madeleine biscuit

- 440 g caster sugar
- 440 g whole eggs
- 100 g milk
- 500 g flour
- 15 g baking powder
- 250 g butter
- 4 g salt
- 1 vanilla pod
- 1 lemon zest

Sift the flour and the baking powder. Mix the eggs with the sugar, salt, lemon zest

and vanilla. Add the sifted dry ingredients, the milk and the melted butter. Set aside in the fridge for 24 hours. Spread the mixture in a 60x40 tray. Bake at 180°C for 12 minutes.

### Jivara lactée supreme with raspberry

- For custard
- 250 g cream
- 250 g milk
- 100 g yolks
- 50 g sugar

### For raspberry Jivara supreme

- 1,500 g cream
- 1,500 g raspberry pulp
- 2,850 g Jivara Lactée 40%
- 900 g cream 35% fat
- 24 g gelatin

Mix the yolks with the sugar. Heat the milk and the cream. Strain and add the raspberry pulp. Gradually pour this mix-

ture over the chopped chocolate. Add the cream. Stir carefully with a spatula, immediately pour the mixture onto the layers of Madeleine sponge, as for a millefeuille, in a 60x40cm tray. Freeze.

### Light Tea-Flavored mousse

- 800 g full fat milk
- 1,600 g cream
- 130 g Earl Grey tea
- 40 g orange blossom water
- 1,500 g white chocolate ivoire
- 32 g gelatin

Infuse the tea in the milk for 12 hours in a fridge. Finely sieve. Soak the gelatin in plenty of water. Heat the milk and add the drained gelatin. Pour the hot liquid on the chocolate. Add the orange blossom water. Incorporate the whipped cream.

### Assembly

Remove the log from the mold and spray with white chocolate. Decorate the log with crystallized sugar stars and marzipan snowmen. [www.intercontinental.com](http://www.intercontinental.com)

