

### Tips for Coping with Holiday Stress & Depression

Most often, the holiday season often brings uninvited guests stress and depression. No big surprise. The holidays often present a messy array of demands—cooking, shopping, cleaning, traveling, and entertaining. One may also feel sad, anxious, or stressed because the traditional holiday plans may look much different this year.

Don't let the holidays be something that disturbs you. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, so you can deal with them before they lead to tailspin. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find **peace and joy** during the holidays.

**88%**  
of Americans feel the holiday season is the most stressful time of the year!

#### Recipe - Cream of Pumpkin Soup

Makes: 2 servings      Cook Time: 30 minutes

##### Ingredients:

- 1/2 lb acorn or butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into chunks
- 1/4 cup chopped leeks (or onion)
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp cumin seed
- 1 tsp dried turmeric
- 1 tsp salt, plus more to taste

##### Directions:

1. Place a steamer tray into a pot with about 2 inches of water. Bring water to a boil and steam squash until soft, about 15 minutes.
2. In a soup pot, stir-fry leeks in vegetable oil until soft but not browned, about 3-4 minutes.
3. Add soy milk, steamed squash, and spices and simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Blend all together with an immersion blender or food processor (in batches, if necessary) until smooth. Add salt to taste.



Source: The Blue Zones Kitchen

### When stress is at its peak, it is hard to stop and regroup.



Face it, stress and depression can ruin your holidays and hurt your health. Be real, plan ahead, stay active, and seek support.

#### Give these helpful tips a try:

1. Acknowledge your feelings.
2. Reach out
3. Be realistic
4. Keep it comfortable
5. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
6. Set aside differences
7. Stick to a budget
8. Be mindful of sensory overload awareness
9. COMMUNICATION
10. Plan ahead
11. Learn to say no
12. Don't abandon healthy habits
13. Take a breather
14. Seek professional help if you need it

### Advice & Comments from INTERACT

- "The most stressful part about the holidays is being away from family." - Robin, DSP
- "The pressure to do things a certain way is most stressful to me." - Lisa, DSP
- "Giving out gifts to everyone is stressful, and when I get too stressed, I just take a nap." - Peter, participant
- "Taking a walk helps me when holiday stuff starts to get me." - Laura, participant
- "I love the holidays and not a one of them stresses me out." - Derrick, participant
- "I don't worry about giving the biggest, newest, fanciest gifts, I simply enjoy the time I spend with my family." - Ashleigh, DSP

Compiled by Brooke Wilson, INTERACT Supervisor

Sources include: <https://solarmentalhealth.com/holiday-depression/> and <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/>