



Santa Claus makes his appearance at several spots this year after taking some time off during the pandemic. NEWS-PRESS FILE

Santa

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Museum at Roberts Ranch, 1215 Roberts Ave, W., Immokalee. Take photos with Santa Claus, plus take a little candy and gift home with you. First 50 children get to craft own horse ornament to decorate the tree at home. Free and RSVP not required. More at colliermuseums.com.

GOLDEN GATE

Santa's Celebration: 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, Dec. 4, at Golden Gate Community Center, 4701 Golden Gate Parkway. Music, games and take free photos with Santa and his helpers. \$3 per person. Register online to reserve your spot at <https://bit.ly/3BXLRmr> and paid receipt must be shown before entry. 239-252-4180 or collierpark-s.com

EAST NAPLES

Cookies & Milk With Santa: 9-11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 11, at Donna Fiala Eagle Lakes Community Park, 11565 Tamiami

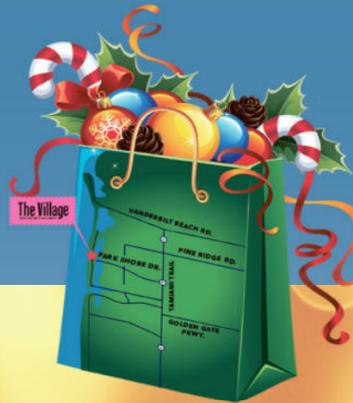


Santa Claus returns to Bass Pro Shops and other retail outlets in Southwest Florida this year. ANDREW JANSEN/SPRINGFIELD NEWS-LEADER

Trail E., Naples. \$2 per person. Enjoy cookies and milk with Santa. Pre-Registration required, no walk-ins. Register at <https://bit.ly/3mY1g8s> and visit collierparks.com or 239-252-3527 for more.

Dave Osborn is the regional features editor of the Naples Daily News and News-Press. Follow him on Instagram @detroitdave88 and on Twitter @NDN_dosborn.

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Maintain Don't Gain: Tools to Prevent Holiday Weight Gain

by Sebastien Saitta

According to a 2016 study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, the average American's weight increases by 0.4 percent over Christmas and 0.2 percent over Thanksgiving. While this may not seem like a lot, the issue lies in the fact that most people are unlikely to lose the extra weight when the holiday season is over. This scenario repeated over the years can lead to big weight gains during one's lifetime.

"Unfortunately, holiday parties and an abundance of those not-so-good-for-you holiday treats this time of year make it difficult to avoid adding unwanted pounds, especially for those already struggling with their weight," says Megan Greer, Worksite Lead at Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida. "When you add the normal stress that one can feel during the Holidays, overall well-being can be negatively impacted."

All hope is not lost. The good news is that there are simple ways to come out on the other side of the holidays the same weight you are now. Here are five easy-to-follow Blue Zones tools and tips to make this happen.

Practice Hara Hachi Bu

This Okinawan saying which means to stop eating when you are 80% full is practiced by some of the longest-lived and healthiest people in the world. The idea is to slow down when eating and pay attention to how full you get. By the time you reach 80%, the reality is that you are completely full because there is a lag time between your stomach

and your brain signaling that it has reached capacity.

Eat the cookies and pie

You read that right. It would be downright cruel to tell everyone they can't enjoy their favorite holiday desserts. Also, telling yourself you're not allowed to eat any dessert hardly ever works. The trick is to fill your plate first with healthier items like fruits, nuts or even dark chocolate. Save a small space for that indulgent dessert last and pay attention to how your body feels. Chances are, when you fill up on the healthier items first, you are less likely to eat that massive slice of pumpkin pie. Instead, you will enjoy just enough to satisfy that craving.

Get outdoors and move naturally

This one is simple, especially with the beautiful weather Southwest Floridians enjoy this time of year. Unwind at the end of the day with friends and family, and take a walk around your neighborhood. Get started on those gardening or landscaping projects that you held off during the rainy summer months. Or, wipe the dust off those bicycle seats, grease up the chains and go out for bike ride. The key is to just get moving and look for the opportunities to make it happen.

Substitute with healthy ingredients

The holidays can be a fun time to experiment with substitutions – and to see if anyone notices. Chances are they won't. Instead of using vegetable oils or butter in your dressings, gravies, or your favorite casseroles, use heart-healthy olive oil. Looking to add some extra

creaminess to your dishes? Try using yogurt instead of heavy cream. You'll enjoy the richness with about a quarter of the calories! Also, try flavoring your dishes more with your favorite herbs and spices. You'll find all that extra salt is unnecessary.

Join Maintain Don't Gain Holiday Challenge

This community-wide challenge is free and a great way to join hundreds of like-minded people who don't want their well-being to slip this Holiday season. Participants can sign up for this seven-week challenge as individuals or as a group. The goal is for you or your team to maintain your weight within two pounds per person. The challenge begins Nov. 22nd and finishes January 3rd for the weigh-out. Participants will receive weekly emails with healthy recipes and tips to help stay motivated and fit throughout the holiday season. Register today at MaintainDontGainBZP.Eventbrite.com.

Brought to Southwest Florida by NCH Healthcare System, in collaboration with Sharecare, Inc., Blue Zones Project is part of Southwest Florida's well-being improvement initiative that encourages changes in the community that lead to healthier options. For more information, visit southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com.