

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #274: Food Planning

Hello! If you're listening to this around the time it's being released then you are nearing the end of the year. Only a couple of months left. Are you usually a person who gives up at the end of the year and then starts the new year fresh? If so, do you want to do it differently this year?

It's so easy to justify not trying and not putting in effort to not binge and to overeat less in the final month or two of the year because you're going to start over on January 1st, or 2nd. But, this year, you could instead end the year having made progress, you could end the year on a positive note, and in the beginning of the new year, you could simply just be continuing to binge less and less.

If that sounds like something you want to do this year, then I want to invite you to join my final Stop Binge Eating Program of 2023 where I will help you do it. It is so much easier to do this when you're committed to a program and when you have someone to guide and help you the whole way through.

Registration will be opening next week on November 9th and we'll work together through December, through the end of the year, and through the first few months of 2024.

Go to coachkir.com/group to join the waitlist so you can register as soon as it opens next week, on the 9th, and that will be the same page where you'll register once it's open, in case you're hearing this around that time.

This year can be different. Your eating can be different. You can be different.

I will help you do it and we will do it together. Let's end the year on a high note this year!

Alright, now let's move onto today's episode topic – food planning.

For the members of my program, I give them a daily check in that I recommend they do everyday, it just takes a few minutes and it sets them up for success for the day. And actually, there's been so many people who have told me that they have better eating days when they do the check in than when they don't.

And something that's on that check in is space for them to write down what they want to eat for the day. They can write down what they want for their meals, snacks, and joy foods.

Now, I don't want you to think that this means that planning your food is something you need to do to stop binge eating. It's not. It's optional. And there's always people who don't want to do it, and that's totally fine if they're making eating decisions they want to make without planning.

But, I put that in there and I'm talking about it today because for a lot of people, there are great benefits to doing it. And there are some people who would really benefit from doing it but have resistance to doing it, which I'll also talk about today.

So today I want to talk about those benefits and also, talk about what food planning is not.

And what it is not, is a diet. That's usually the first thing a lot of people think of when I suggest planning what you're going to eat. They think it's too much like a diet and either they're scared to do it, because diets have failed them so many times in the past and have made them feel deprived so many times or, they've done enough diets and simply do not want to do another one.

And like I said, what I'm talking about here, planning your food, is not a diet. And here's why.

What diets as we know them usually entail is a plan that's made by someone else. It's someone else telling you what you should eat, what you shouldn't eat, and how much you should eat.

I actually used to work at a weight loss center where we would hand out plans for the week, which would tell you exactly what you're going to eat, food that you'd actually buy at the center, and there was also a few things they'd need to buy at the grocery store so they'd get very few opportunities to make any decisions for themselves. The plan also included a specified amount of calories they were supposed to eat each day.

What would happen for some, or really most people is that they wouldn't want to eat everything on there and would feel resentful eating what they were told to, they'd feel deprived when they couldn't eat things off the plan, and some people would still be hungry after eating their food for the day.

I remember when I first started working there and I got two weeks of free food to go along with two weeks of the plan, I was so hungry. Sure I lost weight but I was too hungry in the process and there was no way that would have been sustainable for me.

And even when people aren't following a diet as strict as that one, when they're doing one on their own, they're still following rules that are put into place by someone else.

Most diets will tell you what foods you can't eat. For example, if you're following a paleo diet, you can't eat anything that our ancestors from long ago didn't eat. If you're following a calorie specific diet, you can't eat more than x number of calories. If you're following a strict low carb diet, you can't eat more than x number of carbs or foods that have more than x number of carbs.

Now, I'm not saying you shouldn't do those kinds of things. If you love them and it's exactly what you want to do, then go for it.

But for most people, especially people who binge eat, they backfire. The person doing paleo wants to eat something their ancestors didn't have, like a cookie or something, and they either feel deprived when they can't eat it, which can increase their desire for it, or they do eat it, feel guilty about it, and end up bingeing on the cookies, and maybe other things too while they're off the plan. They'll get back to paleo tomorrow.

The person on the calorie restricted diet might be hungrier on certain days and if they're not allowed to eat enough calories to support their hunger, they might force themselves to get too hungry, which can cause urges to binge or, they go over their calories for the day and fall into all or nothing where since they've already gone over, they might as well keep eating.

I was a calorie goal person for many years and that happened to me very often.

And the person who is doing strict low carb, might go through all the same things as what I just described where they binge on high carb foods they haven't allowed themselves to eat, or binge on carbs when they accidentally go over their carb limit.

This all happens when people are following a diet, a way of eating that isn't aligned with what they want to be doing. And here's where it's tricky. They might be telling themselves it's what they want because they feel good and they manage their weight well eating this way. But if it was really how they wanted to be eating, why do they end up doing all these things that aren't the diet when they binge? Clearly the diet isn't meeting their true wants and/or their body's needs and that's why the urge to binge becomes present. They are and/or their body is deprived and that's what causes the urge that drives bingeing.

So when you're planning what you're going to eat in the way I'm recommending today, you're doing it in a way that *will* meet your wants and your body's needs so you don't feel deprived either mentally or physically.

You're deciding what you're going to eat by considering what you want to eat and what's best for your body and sometimes that might align where what you want is also what's best for your body and sometimes you might decide to just do what you want and sometimes you might decide to do what's best for your body even if it's not the most appealing for you. But, when you're not aligning both, it's important that you aren't unaligned more than you are aligned.

One of the biggest problems people who binge fall into is doing too much of one or the other.

They do too much of what they want without any regard for their body which means they're eating foods they want to eat and amounts of foods that might make their body feel awful. They're not caring about their body, only about what they want.

Or, they do too much of what's best for their body without any regard for what they want which means they only choose the healthiest options even if they don't really like it or even if it's not satisfying.

Now again, it's okay if you sometimes choose to eat something that's not the best option for your body, like, it's okay to eat foods that aren't super nutritious, or if you choose to eat when you're not hungry or overeat a little bit, it happens, or if you eat something that's not your favorite or isn't super delicious just because you want to fuel your body with something nutritious. All of this is okay.

But ideally, it would be best if most of the time you ate foods that you like that your body also likes and in amounts your body likes.

And when you're planning your food, you're going to aim for that most of time. And you're also going to make room for joy foods that you're going to eat simply for enjoyment.

And all of this is going to be *your* decision and no one else's.

You're not going to plan something because you think you should, you're going to do it because you want to.

You're not going to not plan to eat something because you think you can't. You can, so plan for it.

That's the difference between this and diets. This is all your decision and when it's yours, there is no deprivation, only empowerment.

Now, of course you can use recommendations and rules from diets you've done and follow nutrition advice you've received if you want to but I have to stress, *if you want to*.

You can use parts you like of Paleo or Whole 30 or Weight Watchers and disregard the parts you don't.

Again, it's all your choice and I can't say that enough. There are no should's or can't, only wants and don't wants.

And here's the main benefit of planning for what you want and making the decision ahead of time for what you want to eat.

It helps you to get really clear on your true wants.

Some of the time, when we are in the moment when we have to make a decision about what we're going to eat right now, we can get wrapped up in indecision or in emotions we're feeling or we don't have a lot of time to decide.

And then, we make a decision that doesn't really align with what we really, truly want. So after we eat we're left feeling either mentally deprived because we didn't choose what we really wanted or our body doesn't feel good. And I bet we've all had times when a poor decision about a meal has somehow lead into a binge.

So when you make your decision ahead of time, when you have time, when you're relaxed, when you're not caught up in emotions, then it's more clear to you what you'd like to eat that's what you want and what would be good for you body and you're likely to make a decision that you will be happy with.

It just helps with decision making.

Personally, I love deciding ahead of time because it makes in the moment decisions so much easier. There's nothing to really decide except that I'm going to honor the decision I made before.

On weekdays when I'm working, when it's time for breakfast or lunch, I don't spend time or energy deciding what I'm going to eat. I already decided ahead of time, so I just get right to preparing my food. It's great. No thinking necessary which is great because I do a lot of thinking at work already. I don't need to do more, this is my break time.

Now, planning what you're going to eat doesn't have to be super specific like that though. You don't always have to know exactly what you're going to eat. People often ask me how they can plan when other people are involved or if they don't know what will be available.

And you can still create a plan, and this is what you can plan.

You can plan to do the best you can with what's offered. You can set that intention. You can plan to stop when you're full.

Now, I know these sound obvious but so many of you aren't doing that. You're planning to give up on eating in a way that is good for your body because there's too many unknowns. You're worrying about what you'll eat and how it will affect you. You're deciding ahead of time that it's gonna be a disaster and you're going to end up bingeing.

But you don't have to. You can decide that you're going to do your best. That in itself is a great plan when there is so much unknown.

That's what I do when that happens. I don't freak out or panic, I decide I'll do my best which calms me down.

Then when I'm in the moment when it's time to eat, I'm calm and I can more easily eat what I want, considering myself and my body, and do my best to stop when I'm full.

And then there's the question of what to do when you don't feel like eating what you've planned. Maybe when it's time to eat it it sounds unappealing.

Now, you have options. You can eat it anyway but, you have to make sure you like your reasons for eating it anyway. Remember, this is your decision and not something you have to do. Just because you planned it doesn't mean you *have to* eat it. Eat it because you want to.

You could also eat something else but again, make sure you like your reasons for choosing whatever it is that you're choosing instead.

Take a moment to think through your new decision, consider your body, consider your future self, instead of impulsively choosing something that's completely different from what you'd planned that's going to make you feel physically terrible.

And also, if this happens often, where you're not wanting what you planned, it's worth looking into whether or not you're planning what you truly want to eat or if you're planning according to what you think you should or can't eat.

It's so important that anything you're planning is all your decision and not based on should's or can't's.

Now, I want to touch on what I said a moment ago, "just because you planned it doesn't mean you *have to* eat it."

This plan you're making isn't a strict, inflexible, must be followed plan.

When people think it is, they beat themselves up if they don't follow it, or they say no to something they really want to say yes to, or they decline invitations from people to go out to eat or to enjoy a joy food together.

And all that can cause guilt, resentment, and deprivation, which is not what we want here.

What we want is for you to do what you want so if that means changing your plan, then do it. But again, know and like your reasons for doing it and think through your decision, thinking about your future self and your body.

Now, you might say, "if you're just going to change the plan then what's the point of having one at all?"

First, you're not always going to change it and if you are, you have to take a good hard look at the plans you're making and make sure they're really what you want or if they're based in diet culture and other people's decisions or if you're being unrealistic about what your body will need or what you'll want. For example, if you keep planning a salad for lunch and are never wanting a salad, stop planning for the dang salad and plan for what you really want in the moment.

Plan for what will be satisfying and you can look to what you've been eating and what has been satisfying and what hasn't to know that.

Second, having the original plan can still help you to change your mind in the moment. If you did plan for a salad, you've shown yourself that you want something your body will appreciate. You didn't plan for chicken tenders and fries, which by the way, it's 100% fine if you do but in this example, that wasn't your intention for today. So when you're changing your plan, you can use the original one to do your best to stay close to what you'd originally decided for yourself. It can still help you with the decision making process.

Third, life happens, people offer things, things come up, some days our bodies are hungrier than others, and it's okay to change direction. This plan you're making is a guideline, it's a decision making tool. It's not set in stone. It's there to help you, not to run your life. Your happiness and your wants and your body's needs matter so if a change to your plan would support those things, then make the change.

You're not doing anything wrong if it's what's best for you or what's best for your body.

It's like if you make a simple, enjoyable plan for yourself for Saturday and then you're invited to something super fun that you know you'll love. Don't say no to the super fun thing simply because you have this other less enjoyable but still enjoyable plan. Do what you want to do the most as long as it's not going to negatively impact you.

And the last things I want to say about what planning can entail are these.

You can also plan to be spontaneous meaning, you can decide to decide in the moment, kinda like what I talked about before when you don't know what you'll be eating. Like for dinner tonight, I'm not making a solid plan, I'm going to be spontaneous. But honestly, I have some ideas that I'll probably choose from based on what I have in my home.

But sometimes, there are days when I'm with my boyfriend or friends and we're making in the moment decisions about what we're going to do for lunch or dinner. And I totally allow for that. I plan to be spontaneous and make the decision in the moment instead of trying to be super strict and specific.

And what makes this work is that I'm be intentional about how I want to feel after I eat, I'm considering my future self, and I'm deciding to stop when I'm full.

If you're going to make a decision in the moment, you have to think it through and consider your future self.

Also, you can plan options and then decide in the moment which option you are most in the mood for. I do that sometimes when I know I'm going out to eat somewhere but there are a few things that look good. Then I let my future self, when it's time to order, make the decision from those options.

So how you plan is up to you, what you plan is up to you, and whether or not you plan is up to you.

And making decisions ahead of time can help you stay out of indecision which will use up too much of your precious time and energy and could result in you making a hasty decision that you later regret.

Planning your food ahead of time is just going to help you make decisions in the moment. Either you simply honor the decision you made, easy peasy, you use your original plan to guide a new plan if you're not in the mood for the original plan or if plans change, you can plan for options, and if you can't make a specific plan or don't want to, you can still plan to do your best, plan to consider your future self, and plan to stop when you're full.

And whatever you decide, whatever food and amount you decide to eat, these are all your decisions you're going to make.

Make your eating decisions in a way that will result in you getting exactly what you want for you and for your body.

Alright, so that's what I have for you today and if you want help with making eating decisions I will happily help you in The Stop Binge Eating Program. Again, registration is opening for this next round, the final round of 2023, on November 9th and if you join this round, you're going to commit to not giving up toward the end of the year. You're going to finish the year strong, having already made progress, and you won't be starting over in the new year, you'll just keep going. Join the wait list at coachkir.com/group so you can register as soon as it opens and get to work right away and I'll talk to you next time.

Bye bye!