What if peace on earth could begin at the dinner table? Imagine experiencing an inner peace, free from incessant worry about what to eat. It’s hard to enjoy the holidays when you are preoccupied with eating or worried about what to say to relatives who have an annual tradition of telling you what and how to eat.

Consider your Intuitive Eating Bill of Rights, as we enter the holiday season, to help you foster inner peace with food, mind and body.

1. You have the right to savor your meal, without cajoling or judgment, and without discussion of calories eaten or the amount of exercise needed to burn off said calories.
2. You have the right to enjoy second servings without apology.
3. You have the right to honor your fullness, even if that means saying “no thank you” to dessert or a second helping of food.
4. You have the right to say, “No thank you,” without explanation, when offered more food. It is not your responsibility to make someone happy by overeating, even if it took hours to prepare a specialty holiday dish.
5. You have the right to stick to your original answer of “no”, even if you are asked multiple times. Just calmly and politely repeat “No, thank you, really.”
6. You have the right to say “Not right now thanks but maybe later” to appease the pushy host/hostess. If there isn’t a “later” then remind yourself that there is tomorrow and you won’t perish today.
7. You have the right to eat pumpkin pie for breakfast.
8. You have the right to feel less than “cheerful” no matter what others are saying about the ‘true spirit’ of the holiday season. You have the right to honor your true feelings and respond to them with compassion.
9. You have a right to notice how your body responds to different foods and to eat foods that look good, taste good and make you FEEL GOOD.
10. You have the right to share your inner peace with food, without judgement! Others may just even be jealous!
11. You have the right to enjoy your food immensely even if a loved one with food challenges is present.
12. You have the right not to participate in diet/weight talk.
13. You have the right to eat others’ forbidden foods without feeling guilty.
14. You have the right to say a graceful “Thank you” when someone compliments you without denying their comment or putting yourself down.
15. You have the right to feel the painful feelings that may come up at holiday time and to ask for support from someone safe.

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