

What if You Get Audited?

What the I.R.S. looks for and why



“Audit” is a word that can strike fear into the hearts of taxpayers.

However, the chances of an Internal Revenue Service audit aren’t that high. In 2017, the most recent statistics available, show the I.R.S. audited 0.5% of all individual tax returns.¹

Being audited does not necessarily imply that the I.R.S. suspects wrongdoing. The I.R.S. says that an audit is just a formal review of a tax return to ensure information is being reported according to current tax law and to verify that the information itself is accurate.

Remember, this article is for informational purposes only, and is not a replacement for real-life advice. So make sure to consult your tax, legal and accounting professionals before modifying your tax strategy.

The I.R.S. selects returns for audit using three main methods.

Random Selection. Some returns are chosen at random based on the results of a statistical formula.

Information Matching. The I.R.S. compares reports from payers – W-2 forms from employers, 1099 forms from banks and brokerages, and others – to the returns filed by taxpayers. Those that don’t match may be examined further.

Related Examinations. Some returns are selected for an audit because they involve issues or transactions with other taxpayers whose returns have been selected for examination.

There are a number of sound tax practices that may reduce the chances of an audit.

Provide Complete Information. Among the most commonly overlooked information is missing Social Security numbers – including those for any dependent children and ex-spouses.

Avoid Math Errors. When the I.R.S. receives a return that contains math errors, it assesses the error and sends a notice without following its normal deficiency procedures.

Match Your Statements. The numbers on any W-2 and 1099 forms must match the returns to which they are tied. Those that don't match may be flagged for an audit.

Don't Repeat Mistakes. The I.R.S. remembers those returns it has audited. It may check to make sure past errors aren't repeated.

Keep Complete Records. This won't reduce the chance of an audit, but it potentially may make it much easier to comply with I.R.S. requests for documentation.

Happy Thanksgiving, and have a great weekend!

Source: MarketingPro, Inc.

Golf Tip of the Week



Tips for Cleaning Your Grips

Lots of golfers make cleaning their grips a priority in the summer because their hands are sweating in the heat, but cleaning your grips in the winter is just as important because your hands may actually be drier than normal. Here are some easy tips when cleaning your grips:

- There are fancy solutions on the market that will help you clean your club grips, but all you really need is some good, old-fashioned soap and water. Dawn liquid soap is one of the best for getting off grease and grime.
- Make sure your water is super-sudsy. This will help you clean your grips more easily.
- Simply fill a bucket with sudsy soap and water, then use a clean cloth to collect some suds and rub them into your grip.
- Try to get more soap than water on the grip.

- Once you've scrubbed, run the grip under warm water. Don't make the water too hot, as this can destroy the glue underneath your grip.

Cleaning your grips this time of year will help if your hands are dry while playing.

Tip adapted from Golf Monthlyⁱ

Recipe of the Week

Sweet Potato Casserole



Thanksgiving is here! If you still need a last-minute dish, this sweet potato casserole is sure to be a hit with any crowd.

[6 to 8 servings]

Ingredients

For the Filling:

- ½ stick of butter
- 1¾ pounds of sweet potatoes (approximately 3 or 4 whole potatoes)
- ½ cup milk
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- A sprinkle of salt
- 2 large eggs

For the Topping:

- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup brown sugar, packed
- ½ stick butter, melted
- A sprinkle of salt

- 1 cup pecans, chopped

Directions:

1. Peel and cube the sweet potatoes and add them to a large pot of salted water. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and let them simmer until tender, about 15 to 20 minutes.
2. Mash the sweet potatoes.
3. For the filling, preheat the oven to 350° F. Whisk together the butter, mashed sweet potatoes, milk, brown sugar, vanilla, salt, and eggs. Transfer to a baking dish.
4. For the topping, combine the flour, brown sugar, butter, and salt, and mix until the ingredients clump together. Stir in pecans and spread evenly over the sweet potato mixture in the baking dish. Bake until the top is golden, about 25 to 30 minutes.

Recipe adapted from The Food Networkⁱⁱ

Health Tip of the Week



Healthy Holiday Eating: Part 2

We're back with more healthy holiday eating tips to help you navigate all the delicious food, without adding inches to your waistline.

- **Take 10** - Before you go back for seconds, take a 10-minute break. It can take close to 20 minutes for your stomach to inform your brain you've reached satiety, so if you eat too quickly or go back for that second helping right after you're done with your first, you might end up overeating. Instead, get up, walk around, and maybe even mingle for 10 minutes, then see if you're still hungry.
- **Eat a Pre-Party Snack** - If you're on your way to a holiday party, eat a healthy snack before you go, so you don't arrive famished and want to eat everything in sight. The best pre-party snacks combine lean protein with complex carbohydrates, such as an apple and peanut butter, a turkey sandwich, or a couple hardboiled eggs.
- **Dust Off Your Dancing Shoes** - One of the most fun ways to work off a few extra calories is to hit the dance floor! After you're done eating, take some time to get moving and enjoy the music. If you're at a party without dancing, go for a walk with friends and family between dinner and dessert.

Tip adapted from Harvard Universityⁱⁱⁱ

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Sources:

1. [irs.gov/statistics/enforcement-examinations](https://www.irs.gov/statistics/enforcement-examinations) [1/30/19]

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ⁱ <https://www.golf-monthly.co.uk/features/the-game/how-to-clean-your-golf-clubs-and-grips-69550>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchen/sweet-potato-casserole-3364945>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/12-tips-for-holiday-eating-201212245718>