

Tips for Eating Out

Eating Out

Eating out is an experience. It should be a time to sit back, relax and enjoy good foods and beverages with others.

Almost anywhere you eat out, you can make good choices. Many restaurants have entire sections of their menus dedicated to more healthful options.

Before you go, read through the following tips for eating out. Place a checkmark next to the ones you plan to try — then challenge yourself to make the best choice possible!

Tips for Eating Out

- Do your research.**
Go online to read the menu options and decide what you will order before you arrive. That way, you won't be tempted by other menu options in the moment.
- Press pause.**
Take time to consider what you are most looking forward to when you go out to eat. Make a plan so you can enjoy it! If you love dessert, have water to drink and make sure your main meal includes plenty of vegetables.
- Have a small snack.**
Eat a small snack before you go. You'll be less likely to overeat due to feelings of being over-hungry ("ravenous").
- Drink plenty of water.**
Drink water throughout the day and order a glass of water to sip on before your meal. Sometimes being hungry is actually your body saying, "I'm thirsty!"
- And remember, beverages add up!**
Beverages matter too! Make sure to make wise choices as you choose what to drink. Extra calories and sugar often come in a glass.
- Pass on the appetizers.**
Ask your waiter or waitress not to bring appetizers to the table — even if they're free (chips, bread)! Fill up on the healthful meal you order instead.
- Stay on the lookout.**
Look for menu items described with the following words: steamed, sautéed, grilled, garden fresh, broiled, roasted or poached. It's a hint they're likely a healthful choice!
- And avoid these.**
Avoid menu items described with the following words: fried, breaded, battered, melted cheese on top, creamed, escalloped, buttersauce, pan-fried and au gratin. These are likely some of the least healthful options on the menu.
- Ask questions!**
Your waiter or waitress is your friend — ask a lot of questions to make sure you know exactly what you're ordering. You may want to ask questions about how items are prepared or if salt is added during cooking.

(over)

❑ **Make your requests.**

Don't be shy — make your requests!
It's perfectly OK to ask:

- that salt not be added to your meal
- to have the dressing, sauce or gravy served on the side
- to substitute lemon juice or vinegar and oil for salad dressing
- to substitute vegetables for potato chips or french fries
- for a vegetarian option such as veggie pizza with half the cheese.

❑ **Save some for later.**

When you place your order, ask that half of your meal is packed into a to-go box right away. That way, you'll enjoy a proper portion at the restaurant and have lunch for the next day!

❑ **Slow down!**

You've gotten your food, now it's time to eat! Try taking each bite at a slower pace to avoid rushing through the experience without enjoying it.

❑ **Think outside the box (or menu).**

Even if it's not on the menu, ask if they have other options for dessert such as a fresh fruit cup, frozen yogurt, sherbet or gelatin.

❑ **Put it in the past.**

If you overeat, it's OK! Consider it a celebration and move on. Take your next meal as an opportunity to get back on track and think about what you can do differently next time.

❑ **Drive by the drive-thru.**

Try to only eat out when you have time to enjoy the experience of sitting down with your food. For times you can't avoid fast food, keep a mental list of better options. You **can** find something good tasting and good for you!