

Dining Out Strategies

- ✔ **First rule of thumb: do not skip meals before dining out in order to save calories.** This will only backfire by causing your blood sugar to be unbalanced and set you up for overeating once you get to the restaurant.
- ✔ **Eat a snack with protein before heading out (if you are really hungry),** such as celery and nut butter, a handful of nuts or seeds, or some fruit. This curbs hunger and prevents overeating (or diving into the bread/chips basket).
- ✔ **Drink water with fresh lemon** before eating. Ask for no ice (better for digestion).
- ✔ **Think about how you would like to feel after the meal.** Before ordering or putting something on your plate ask yourself "is this going to make me feel the way I want to feel?"
- ✔ **Ask for the bread (or chips) to be taken away** so it's not too tempting.
- ✔ **Start with fresh vegetables, soup or a salad** to be sure to get some nutrients into your cells and avoid the craving feelings often caused by starchy/sweet appetizers.
- ✔ **If you are going to a buffet, look over the buffet before putting food on your plate.** Take small portions to start (you can always go back if you are still hungry, but putting larger amounts on your plate will most likely lead you to eating more.
- ✔ **Take 2 -3 deep breaths before eating.** This sets your body up for good digestion. Digestion works best when the body is in a relaxed state. Take breaks—put your fork down and breathe deeply several times during the meal. Pay attention to your hunger level at several times during the meal.
- ✔ **Ask for a take home box before you eat.** When your food comes figure out what would be an appropriate portion size for you and put the rest in the box. (how awesome is it to have leftovers)!
- ✔ **Chew your food.** Chewing your food is the first step in digestion. It not only helps with digestion, but also helps minimize overeating.
- ✔ **If you are dining with a group of people, take a step back and enjoy** the important part of the meal – their company and conversation. Allow yourself to feel gratitude for the food and company.
- ✔ **MOST IMPORTANT: Do not overeat!** Which is quite tricky to accomplish when dining out but do the very best you can. Practice eating slowly and think of the leftover food as tomorrow's yummy lunch or dinner.



Want some ideas on what to eat when dining out? Below are some simple suggestions:

Breakfast

- Oatmeal (made from whole oats, unsweetened/plain) with some sprinkled nuts, cinnamon. Add one teaspoon of sugar or honey or maple syrup if desired. Ask for a side of fruit (they might have bananas or berries depending what's in season).
- Scrambled eggs and fruit
- 2-egg veggie omelet, fruit, avocado
- Yogurt/cottage cheese
- Some breakfast places have a buffet with oatmeal toppings – you can make your own cereal with walnuts, seeds and raisins

Lunch or dinner

- Salad with beans or grilled chicken, salmon, steak or shrimp; ask for olive oil and lemon or vinegar; add salt and pepper. Use olive oil/lemon/vinegar as dressing rather than bottled dressings.
- Vegetable soup, such as gazpacho, minestrone; or chicken and vegetable.
- Grilled/broiled chicken, fish with side of veggies. Sweet potato.
- Lean hamburger or turkey burger. Veggies or salad on the side.
- Shrimp cocktail
- Fajitas with 1-2 tortilla wraps – just choose your protein (shrimp, beef, or chicken) and some guacamole; small amount cheese
- If a meal comes with fries or something not as healthy ask if you can substitute it for veggies (or an extra side of veggies if you are already getting some).



RESTAURANT GUIDE FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF MENUS

Chinese food

- Enjoy steamed veggie dumplings instead of fried (veggie and shrimp far better than meat filled). Go for rice paper spring rolls stuffed with bright veggies instead of traditional egg roll, chicken wings or BBQ ribs.
- If you love egg rolls, consider scooping out the inside and eat it on its own to avoid the deep-fried shell.
- Remember you can ask for different veggies if you don't like the ones your dish comes with. Some of our favorites include broccoli, and Bok choy, and string beans. Keep the baby corn at bay (little nutritional value plus GMOs).
- Stay (far!) away from deep-fried dishes like General Tso's Chicken. Look for the section of the menu that offers "healthy or lighter fare" with plenty of great options that offer more veggies and less oil. You may be weary of skipping out on your standard order, but you may find a new favorite, flavorful dish. If a lighter menu isn't available, ask the restaurant to use less oil and up the veggies. And you can always ask for a dish to be steamed with sauce on the side (then you control how much you use but still get some flavor).
- Pass on the noodles, which are made from refined white flour and often arrive drowning in oil.
- Ask for brown rice instead of white, which is higher in fiber and 21 nutrients.
- Pick up those chopsticks! We know that eating more slowly will help you fill up faster. Unless you're truly a chopstick pro, picking up a pair will slow you down and hinder shoveling your food with the same ease of a fork or spoon.
- Share your favorites: If your mouth waters at the sight of lo mein, there's no need to say goodbye forever. Get a small order, but be sure to really share with friends or family as a treat. Don't make it your main course, but having a bite or two will help you get your fill of a favorite flavor without any added guilt.

Pizza

- Pile on the veggies. Adding toppings like mushrooms, broccoli, peppers, tomatoes, onions, or salad will allow you get the fiber-rich benefits and other nutrients.
- Steer clear of meat toppings like pepperoni, ham, or sausage. These are largely processed.
- Always opt for thin crust if available. This means less white flour, and less refined carbs.
- Eat a salad before you dig into the pie, which will fill you up.



Sushi

- As tasty as they are, spicy rolls and Philly rolls are filled with lots of junk. anything with tempura means it's fried, so these are best avoided or limited.
- Choose a mix of rolls that only include fish and vegetables like cucumber, radish, scallion, or carrots, and treat yourself to one "treat roll" like Spicy Tuna.
- Ask for your rolls to be wrapped in cucumber instead of rice, and fill up on starters like miso soup, a little edamame, or seaweed salad.
- Instead of dunking each piece into salty soy sauce, try swirling your chopsticks around in the sauce first to get a few drops on them, then picking up your sushi—you'll still get the flavor with way less sodium.
- Ask for tamari (or bring your own packets) if you want to keep the soy sauce wheat-free.

Indian

- Don't start with samosas—they're delicious, but they're also deep-fried.
- While a little basmati rice is often necessary with Indian food, it's easy to overdo it. Limit yourself to around a half-cup (or roughly the size of your fist.)
- If you'd rather have bread than rice, skip the empty-calorie naan, which is made from white flour. Pick roti instead, which is the whole wheat version.
- Anything labeled "tikka masala" means it's made with high levels of cream and ghee butter. Instead, choose delicious tandoori dishes (which are grilled in a tandoor oven and feature plenty of complex spices.) If you want something creamy, order a side of raita, the refreshing cucumber and yogurt sauce, which is way less fat-filled than creamy dishes.
- Add an order of protein-rich veggies like chickpeas (chana masala), spinach (saag), or flavorful lentils (daal) – yum!

Mexican food

- Stay away from refried beans, which are usually filled with lard or pork. Instead, stick with a small serving of black or pinto beans.
- Skip nachos, which are fried chips topped with greasy extras like cheese and sour cream. Alternatively, promise yourself a set amount of chips to start and then have them take the basket away if possible!
- Choose a dish that's wrapped in a soft tortilla and make sure it's filled with lots of veggies, flavorful salsa, and some lean protein like shrimp or chicken. Ask for cheese on the side so you can control how much you sprinkle in, and choose a little heart-healthy guacamole versus sour cream.
- If you're really watching your refined carbs, unroll your burrito or tacos, and just eat the filling.
- Take it easy on the rice—if you find you really want it, limit yourself to a serving the size of your fist.



Diner food

- The first rule of thumb: Always ask to substitute French fries. Instead, try a steamed veggie, a side salad, or a plain baked or sweet potato.
- If you're ordering breakfast-style food, stick with veggie-filled omelets and ask for a slice of tomato instead of hash browns (if they have roasted potatoes that is an option too).
- Steer clear of diner tuna or chicken salad, which are typically packed with crazy amounts of mayo. Instead, try grilled chicken on pita, or a turkey sandwich.
- Go for a turkey burger or a veggie burger instead of a beef cheeseburger. Consider leaving off one piece of the bun and use lettuce as a "topper" or wrap the whole thing in lettuce.
- Dinner-size salads are always a safe bet, so long as they're not drowning in dressing. Always ask for the dressing on the side (ideally olive oil and vinegar), and forgo croutons and bacon. Instead, top your salad with lean protein like grilled chicken or shrimp.
- Look to Greek-style dishes, such as Chicken Souvlaki. This often comes with a filling Greek side salad and yogurt tzatziki, so forgo the pita if you're watching your carbs.
- Note: diners are notorious for giving large amounts of food. Keep mind of your portions!

Lastly, make it a point to always drink water with meal (ideally with lemon) as opposed to sugary soda (or chemical-laden diet varieties). This will work to flush out the extra salt you're ingesting, and keep you hydrated.

Many of the same rules would apply to takeout.

However with takeout, we suggest finding a few places that are convenient to you and get to know the chefs or kitchen staff. Let them know some of your requirements. They want your business – especially if it will be somewhat regularly.

If you have food sensitivities, let them know about it and see if they are willing to make accommodations for you. Once they get to know you and you become more familiar with their menu, it will be much quicker to choose healthier options from them.

When you bring the takeout home, portion out how much you want to eat and put the rest in the fridge. You will be happy tomorrow ☺

