



Nutritious Eating Out

Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison, Health Services online

When eating out, try these tips to make choices that are consistent with your regular eating goals:




Before you leave home:

- Eat a small portion of something so you don't arrive at the restaurant overly hungry.
- Think about what you might order so you don't rush into a decision at the restaurant.

When ordering:

- Choose items that indicate "low-fat" or "heart healthy" to be consistent with a lower-fat meal plan.
- Avoid dishes described as buttery, buttered, fried, pan-fried, creamy, scalloped, au gratin, extra crispy, sautéed, and à la mode; these will be high in fats from butter, oil, cheese, cream, or ice cream.
- Order dishes that are grilled, broiled, steamed, stir-fried, roasted, and poached; these are generally much lower in fat and calories.
- Ask to have your food prepared without butter or cream.
- When selecting a side dish, choose steamed or raw vegetables, a baked potato, or plain rice.
- Order potatoes baked, broiled, or roasted rather than fried. Ask for butter or sour cream on the side, or substitute salsa or chives.
- Ask for steamed vegetables or a salad instead of fries, and fresh fruit instead of coleslaw.
- Get a broth-based soup, such as minestrone or chicken noodle, which will have fewer calories than a cream soup.
- Choose breads and pitas over croissants.
- Order water — it's free! Be careful of unlimited refills on soda and lemonade.
- When ordering pizza, order half the amount of cheese and choose vegetable toppings. Eat one or two slices and take the rest home for another meal.
- Choose seafood, chicken (without skin), or lean meat.

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- At a deli, pick turkey, ham, or lean roast beef, which are lower in fat than tuna salad, salami, and bologna.
- Order a salad and split an entrée with a friend.
- Order dressings and sauces on the side so you can control how much is used.
- Ask if you may order a half-portion, or have half the meal boxed up ahead of time.
- Avoid all-you-can-eat buffets. Almost everyone overeats when there is so much variety and unlimited portions.

While waiting for your meal:

- Drink a full glass of water before your meal arrives.
- Avoid ordering alcohol before your food arrives, since it increases your appetite.
- Set a limit on bread and tortilla chips.

When eating:

- Eat salads, vegetables, and fruit before the main entrée. This will fill you up and allow you to take more calorie-dense food home with you.
- Eat slowly. It takes about 20 minutes for your body to realize it's full!
- If ordering dessert, split it with others at the table.

Tips for ordering at different types of restaurants:

Fast Food:

- Order burgers without cheese, special sauces, and/or bacon.
- Try a grilled chicken sandwich.
- Don't super-size.



Chinese:

- Choose entrées with a lot of vegetables.
- Avoid egg rolls and egg drop soup.



Italian:

- Avoid cheese- and meat-filled pastas.
- Order tomato or marinara sauces; avoid white sauces.



Mexican:

- Use salsa instead of sour cream, cheese, and/or guacamole.
- Try chicken fajitas.
- Limit deep-fried foods such as chips, taco shells, and chimichangas.



Steakhouses:

- Three to six ounces of meat is a typical portion (about the size of one to two decks of cards). Take the rest home for another meal.
- Ask to have your meat trimmed of all fat before cooking.
- Ribs, T-bone, and Porterhouse steaks tend to be the fattier cuts; order sirloin or tenderloin steaks for a leaner cut of meat.
- Choose a garden salad instead of the Caesar salad.



Lorie Eber is a Mayo Clinic Certified Wellness Coach, NASM Certified Personal Trainer, Gerontologist and author. Lorie Eber Wellness Coaching provides group and one-on-one guidance and support to teach clients the skills they need to live a healthy lifestyle.