



Healthy Eating Out Tips

Special occasions, travel, nights when you get home late and don't want to cook...all these mean that sometimes restaurants are the option of choice. Eating out may not seem like a good idea when you are trying to manage your weight, but a night out doesn't have to mean a night off your healthy eating habits.

Here's how it's possible to eat out, guilt-free, with good health in mind.

Be as prepared as you can be

1. Bring pre-packaged fat-free dressing with you, so you have choices.
2. If you're not familiar with the restaurant, call ahead or look up their menu online before going out.
3. Keep a bag of small apples or some other healthy snack in your car all the time, and eat one before you go into a restaurant. This will not only satisfy your hunger, but will remind you to eat wisely.
4. Before you leave home, make an educated choice about which dishes fit best within your healthy eating plan for the day. At the restaurant, if the daily special sounds just too good to miss, do some last-minute computations to be sure you really want to change your choice.

Start Out Right

5. Order a small broth-based or vegetable soup before your meal. It's very satisfying and can keep you from overeating.
6. Start with a side salad (minus bacon, cheese and croutons). Ask for fat-free dressing on the side; and be sure to dip your fork into the dressing, then into the salad.
7. Be sure to drink your water. If you decide to order unsweetened iced tea or diet soda, always order water with it, too. If you want a second beverage, ask for a refill of the water.

Choose Wisely

8. Don't even open the menu! Simply know what you want to eat before you get there.
9. Avoid anything fried.
10. Ask for dressings, sauces, butter and sour cream on the side or not at all.
11. Choose lighter fare like marinara sauce rather than Alfredo. Keep it simple.

12. Whatever you order, make sure that it has loads of vegetables and fruits. Even if it's pizza, make it a slice loaded up with veggies; or a portobello mushroom sandwich instead of a deli sandwich; or a vegetable omelet instead of a cheese one; or fruit salad instead of pastry.
13. Don't be afraid to ask for substitutions. Most good restaurants will accommodate your requests.

Manage Your Portions

14. If you must eat at a buffet, survey the food items before you put anything on your plate. The key is to remind yourself that you're eating to be satisfied, not to get your money's worth.
15. Always ask if you can get a smaller portion of the item you order. If not, have the waiter bring a to-go box with the meal. Before you start to eat, put half the item in the box.
16. Split your entrée with the person you're with. If you have the impulse to finish everything on your plate, it's better to not have all that food in front of you.

Have a Good Attitude

17. Do your best and don't beat yourself up. Practice the art of: *Breathe, Accept, Move on.*
18. The celebration is about being out with your family and friends, not about food being served. Enjoy yourself and remember that the meal does not need to be a punishment or your enemy.

Working with you for lasting change, Lynda Pedley

Adapted from Weight Watchers