

## Want to Watch Calories When Dining Out?

### Tips for Eating Smart

Watching calories while eating out? The good news is in today's restaurants you have plenty of options! Here are a few tips from the National Restaurant Association on how to make the most of your dining-out experience.

#### Do your homework

Learn how many calories your body needs per day when taking into account your lifestyle and activity level, and plan your meals for the day - if you have a big breakfast, have a lighter lunch, for example.

Identify general dishes and food items that fit into your diet (such as fish, salads and whole grain bread) so you recognize them on restaurant menus and know what to look for.

Before going out to eat, identify healthier menu choices using the restaurant's Web site or a site like [HealthyDiningFinder.com](http://HealthyDiningFinder.com). Many restaurants provide nutrition information online and in stores these days.

Talk to the staff, manager or chef of restaurants you visit frequently to get their help in identifying items on their menu that are the best options for your dietary needs and preferences.

Here are a few basic low fat dining tips:

- Choose restaurants that offer low fat or low cholesterol choices from the menu.
- Find several restaurants that will cater to your needs and make them your favorites. When you become a regular, you become special. Then you won't have to worry about what is in a dish every time you pop in for a meal.
- Ask to substitute salads, grilled vegetables or a baked potato to replace French fries, chips or other fat laden side dishes.
- Ask for any salad dressings or fatty sauces be served on the side. (You are the one in control of how much you add)
- Ask that cheese, butter or added oils be left off.
- If different size portions are offered, go for the smaller size or share an entree with a friend.
- Choose low cholesterol or low fat cooking methods. (Steamed, poached, grilled, baked, roasted, braised, boiled or au jus)
- Beware of dishes that are described with words like fried, creamed, in cheese sauce, scalloped, hollandaise, béarnaise, basted, sautéed, au gratin and anything that states "with or in butter".
- Do not be afraid to ask how the chef or kitchen prepares something or to make low fat special requests. Many chefs are stepping on the healthy eating bandwagon, so don't be timid. If they are health conscious, they will delight in telling you how they can still make low fat gourmet dishes that are tasty.

- If low fat salad dressings are not available, ask for lemon juice or vinegar. (Balsamic vinegar adds great flavor without a sour taste.)
- Limit the amount of butter, margarine, or olive oil used on bread, breadsticks or baked potatoes.
- Ask for mustard, salsa or low fat yogurt instead of mayonnaise, sour cream or butter.
- Ask for low fat milk for your coffee instead of cream.
- Substitute lower fat fruit desserts for pastries and cakes or try a light fruit sorbet.
- These condiments are ok:
  - Salsa
  - Cocktail sauce (be aware that it is high in sodium)
  - Soy Sauce (be aware that it is high in sodium)
  - Mustard
  - Stone Ground Mustard
  - Lemon
  - Herbs and Spices
  - Vinegar
  - Ketchup
  - Grated Parmesan Cheese (if used sparingly)
  - Horseradish
- Limit or skip these condiments and additions:
  - Butter or Clarified Butter
  - Margarine
  - Real Bacon or Real Bacon Bits
  - Cheese
  - Hollandaise or White Sauce
  - Regular Salad Dressings
  - Sour Cream
  - Cream Cheese (unless they state that it is low fat or Neufchatel)
  - Cream
  - Whipped Cream

#### What to choose at Restaurants that serve International Foods:

**Chinese:** Choose wonton or hot & sour soup, boiled, broiled, steamed, or lightly stir-fried entrees; dishes with steamed rice, water chestnuts, Chinese vegetables, broccoli instead of egg drop soup, fried entrees, fried rice and eggs rolls.

**French:** Choose steamed mussels, mixed green salads with vinaigrette dressings, French bread, bordelaise or wine based sauces instead of croissants, pate, hollandaise, mornay, béchamel or béarnaise sauces and creme caramel.

**Indian:** Choose papadum or papad (lentil wafers), curries with a vegetable or lentil (dal) base, shish kabob, tandoori chicken or fish, steamed vegetarian fare instead of fried and stuffed vegetable turnovers, curries made with coconut milk, and deep fried foods.

**Mexican:** Choose grilled fish or chicken breasts, ceviche, pico de gallo, jalapeno peppers, chicken fajitas, chicken or vegetable enchiladas with red sauce or salsa

instead of nachos, carnitas or chorizo, sour cream, cheese, guacamole, quesadillas, flautas, chimichangas or beef burritos and flan.

**Italian:** Choose pasta primavera with red clam sauce, marinara sauce, Italian ices, roasted peppers or minestrone soup instead of fried calamari, tortellini, ravioli or lasagna, alfredo and pesto sauces and gelato.

**Japanese:** Choose fish or vegetable sushi, steamed vegetables, tofu dishes and broiled chicken instead of deep fried pork dishes, shrimp or vegetable tempuras.

### **Enjoy your restaurant experience**

Virtually all restaurants offer healthy menu items. If you know what to look for and opt to customize your meal, you can have a nutritious meal whenever, wherever.

Remember, don't deprive yourself of the foods you love. All foods can fit into a well-balanced diet.