

Healthful Dining Tips

Suggestions for healthful menu options



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There are many different dining occasions – from the special dinner event to an everyday meal or snack. If you're looking for an enjoyable experience, but trying to eat healthier, here are some tips to help guide you. Joy Dubost PhD RD, Director of Nutrition at the National Restaurant Association provides some practical tips for those seeking more healthful menu options.

Breakfast Tips

- For a serving of whole grains, choose oatmeal or whole grain pancakes or waffles. You can top the oatmeal with fruit and a handful of nuts or try topping the pancakes or waffles with fresh fruit.
- Look for egg whites or egg beaters, which will lower the intake of saturated fat and cholesterol. You could also order a vegetable omelet in order to get a serving of vegetables. If you choose to accompany your eggs with bacon, try turkey bacon, turkey sausage or Canadian bacon.
- Bagels large in size can provide up to 500 calories. You may want to consume ½ of the bagel and save the other ½. Top off your bagel with low-fat cream cheese or margarine spread.
- Dry cereal (preferably low in sugar) with low-fat milk is another great choice especially if you top with fresh or dried fruit.
- When ordering a coffee drink, ask for low-fat or skim milk and sugar-free sweeteners and flavored syrups. If you like a specialized coffee drink and do not want to substitute ingredients, order a small instead of a large. Make sure to

ask your server if light options are offered.

- In order to get enough fruit servings per day (approximately 2 cups per day), don't forget to add a piece or cup of fresh fruit, or drink 100% juice.
- For a boost of calcium and vitamin D, choose low-fat milk and/or yogurt options.

Lunch and Dinner Tips

- If you have a few minutes, do some research ahead of time. Many restaurants have menu options and nutrition information available on the restaurant's website. Review the nutritional



information and plan ahead what healthful menu items you will order. You may also want to explore www.HealthyDiningFinder.com which provides healthful menu options for restaurants located within a selected mile radius of your zip code.

- Many restaurants are happy to make substitutions or prepare items by request. Be sure to ask your waiter if this is an option.
- Eat slowly and enjoy the experience. Be mindful of the flavor combinations and savor the food not the abundance.
- Start your meal with a salad with lots of vegetables and fruit, which are packed with nutrients and fiber. Vinaigrettes can be deceiving. Some vinaigrettes and creamy dressings can have the same amount of calories and total fat. Ask if the restaurant offers a light dressing or order the dressing on the side so you can control the amount added.
- To save on calories, you may want to skip the bread and butter and/or olive oil. If you choose to have some bread, choose one slice and have

the waiter remove the rest.

- Choose broth-based soups and those that are packed with vegetables. Creamy soups are typically higher in calories.
- Look for menu options that incorporate beans, lentils and nuts which are high in protein and fiber.
- Some restaurants will offer small or half portions of many appetizers, entrees and desserts. Look for terms like small, half and regular. Some restaurant may offer smaller sizes but don't advertise them. Ask your server if you can get a smaller size. If this is not an option, ask your server to provide a take-home container when your meal is served. You can split your meal in half right away and save the other half to enjoy the next day. You also may want to share a main dish with a friend.
- Choose menu options that contain vegetables. Substitute fried side dishes for vegetables or fruit. Choose steamed, grilled or raw vegetables to save on calories. Be sure to ask if your vegetables come with butter or a sauce and specify



if you would like them without.

- Limit consumption of fried items. This includes all types of fried food, including flash-fried, pan fried, deep-fried, and lightly fried.
- Choose items that are grilled, steamed, broiled, poached and roasted.
- Steer clear of butter or cream sauces on pastas and entrees. Look for tomato-based sauces. Substitute cream sauces or mayonnaise based condiments with a healthier option, such as barbeque sauce or honey mustard.
- When ordering pasta or rice, ask if the restaurant has a whole wheat or whole grain option, such as brown rice or whole wheat pasta.
- For meat options, chose sirloin, eye round or tenderloin steak or roast, which tend to be leaner cuts. You may also choose skinless chicken or turkey breast. Grilled or broiled fish topped with flavorful seasonings is also a great option.
- Substitute cheese and cheese sauces, with vegetables or salsa. Try topping your baked potato with vegetables and salsa instead of butter and sour cream.

- You may want to skip dessert, or order what you want and just take a few bites. You could also share the dessert with the rest of the table. You may also choose healthier choices such as fresh fruit or sorbets.

Beverages

- You may choose to order a small or diet soft drink instead of a large or regular soft drink.
- When ordering ice tea, ask for unsweetened ice tea and/or sweeten with a sugar substitute.
- Try regular water or club soda with a fresh lime or lemon. No calories!

For more information on healthy eating when dining out visit www.HealthyDiningFinder.com

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The National Fisheries Institute – Salmon*

*Page 4: Chevys – Fresh Mex Cilantro Lime Chicken Salad with Apple
Chipotle Vinaigrette
American Meat Institute – Pork with Fruit Salsa*

