

# Tips to Eating Out

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## A Brief Note

We like eating meals out at our favorite restaurants, and we know that you do too.

Whether you are heading out for a special meal, or avoiding yet another night of cooking in the house, we want to make sure that you have the knowledge and tools to make good choices as you comb through the menu.

Much of the advice contained in this document comes from a similar document published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service (we feel the need to give credit where it's due).

## Why Eating Out Is Hard

Although many restaurants have recently embraced farm-to-table concepts and using natural ingredients, eating out at restaurants can present challenges because:

- Portion sizes are usually large
- Restaurant food may be highly seasoned and high in sodium
- Many restaurant dishes are prepared with butter and high-fat oils
- Multiple course meals make it easy to over-eat

Use the strategies and tips on the following pages to keep yourself on the right track as you enjoy meals out at your favorite restaurants.

## General Dining Out Strategies

**Avoid temptation:** if you normally don't do well with places such as all-you-can-eat buffets, it may be best to pick another location

**Appetizer for dinner:** If an appetizer appears to be a more appropriate size than an entrée, order it!

**Split it:** For large entrées, consider splitting one with a friend

**Ask for toppings on the side:** Whether it's gravy, salad dressing, or other toppings, asking for it on the side helps you control your fat and excess calorie intake

**View the menu online:** Find dishes that look delicious and are healthy before you even step foot in the restaurant

## Deciphering the Menu

We know you are likely not a “foodie”. Use these key words to guide your entrée selection:

| Look For                          | Avoid              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Baked                             | Alfredo            |
| Boiled (in wine or lemon juice)   | Au fromage         |
| Broiled                           | Au gratin          |
| Grilled                           | Basted             |
| Lightly sautéed                   | Breaded            |
| Poached                           | Butter sauce       |
| Roasted                           | Casserole          |
| Steamed in its own juice (au jus) | Cheese sauce       |
|                                   | Creamed            |
|                                   | Crispy             |
|                                   | Fried / Deep fried |
|                                   | Hollandaise        |
|                                   | Pot pie            |

# Ordering by Meal

## Appetizers

|                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Broth-based soups | Melons or fresh fruit     |
| Steamed seafood   | Bean soups                |
| Shrimp cocktail   | Salads (low fat dressing) |

## Entrees

|                 |                                 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Poultry         | Vegetables                      |
| Fish, shellfish | Pasta (w/ red sauce or veggies) |

## Salads / Salad bar

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Greens: lettuce, spinach  | Chickpeas, kidney beans  |
| Veggies: tomatoes, mushrooms, carrots, cucumbers, peppers, onions, broccoli | <b>Skip:</b> deli meats, bacon, eggs, cheese, croutons, regular dressing |

## Side Dishes

|         |                        |
|---------|------------------------|
| Veggies | Whole grain rice/pasta |
|---------|------------------------|

## When Eating Ethnic Food – Look For:

| Chinese                              |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Zheng (steamed)                      | Cooked in light wine sauce                      |
| Gun (boiled)                         | Hot mustard sauce                               |
| Kao (roasted)                        | Reduced-sodium soy sauce                        |
| Shao (barbecue)                      | Dishes without MSG added                        |
| Poached                              | Hot and spicy tomato sauce                      |
| Lightly stir-fried in mild sauce     | Sweet and sour sauce                            |
| Spinach or broccoli                  | Moo shu vegetables, chicken, or shrimp          |
| Fresh fish fillets, shrimp, scallops | Steamed rice                                    |
| Chicken without skin                 | Lychee fruit                                    |
| Lean beef                            | Hoison sauce* with assorted Chinese vegetables: |
| Bean curd (tofu)                     | Oyster sauce* (made from seafood)               |



## When Eating Ethnic Food – Look For:

### French

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Dinner salad with vinegar or lemon juice (or a reduced-fat dressing) | Rice and noodles without cream/butter |
| Crusty bread without butter  | Chicken without skin                  |
| Fresh fish, shrimp, scallops, steamed mussels (without sauces)       | Fresh fruit for dessert               |

### Italian

|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Lightly sauteed with onions                                  | Artichoke hearts           |
| Manzanne (eggplant)  | Red clam sauce             |
| Sun-dried tomatoes   | Primavera (no cream sauce) |
| Shallots   | Lemon sauce                |
| Light mushroom sauce   | Capers                     |
| Red sauces, Light red sauce or light red or white wine sauce | Peppers and mushrooms      |
| Piccata (lemon)  | Crushed tomatoes           |
| Grilled  | Florentine (spinach)       |

## When Eating Ethnic Food – Look For:

| Middle Eastern  |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Lemon dressing, lemon juice                             | Garlic / Garlic sauce           |
| Basted with tomato sauce                                | Chopped parsley / onion         |
| Herbs and spices (parsley, rosemary, basil, dill, etc.) | Rice or bulgur (cracked wheat)  |
| Mashed chickpeas  | Couscous (grain)                |
| Fava beans  | Marinated and barbecued         |
| Smoked eggplant   | Grilled on a skewer             |
| Tomatoes, mushrooms, green peppers, and cucumbers       | Charbroiled or charcoal broiled |
| Spiced ground meat                                      | Baked                           |
| Stuffed with rice and spices                            | Fresh fruit for dessert         |

## When Eating Ethnic Food – Look For:

### Japanese

|   |   |
|---|---|
| House salad with fresh ginger and noodles | Chicken, fish, or shrimp teriyaki, broiled in sauce |
| Rice                                      | Soba noodles (used in soups )                       |
| Nabemono (soup/stew)                      | Tofu (or bean curd)                                 |
| Yakimono (broiled)                        | Grilled vegetables                                  |

### Indian

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Tikka (pan roasted)  | Paneer                              |
| Cooked/marinated in yogurt   | Chicken or shrimp kebab             |
| Cooked with green vegetables, onions, tomatoes, peppers, and mushrooms | Lentils, chickpeas (garbanzo beans) |
| With spinach (saag)  | Basmati rice (pullao)               |
| Masala   | Matta (peas)                        |
| Tandoori   |                                     |

## When Eating Ethnic Food – Look For:

### Mexican

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Shredded spicy chicken                         | Rice and black beans                           |
| Topped with lettuce, tomatoes, and onions      | Served with whole-wheat tortilla               |
| Covered with enchilada sauce                   | Marinated                                      |
| Grilled  | Picante sauce                                  |
| Served with salsa (red) or salsa verde (green) | Simmered with vegetarian chili or tomato sauce |

### Thai

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Barbecued, sauteed, broiled, boiled, steamed, braised, or marinated | Served in hollowed-out pineapple                     |
| Basil sauce, basil, sweet basil, or basil leaves                    | Napa, bamboo shoots, black mushrooms, ginger, garlic |
| Lime sauce or lime juice  | Hot sauce  |
| Chili sauce or crushed dried chili flakes                           | Bed of mixed vegetables                              |

## When Eating Ethnic Food – Look For:

### Steakhouses

Lean broiled beef (no more than 6 ounces)—London broil, filet mignon, round and flank steaks

Baked potato without added butter, margarine, or sour cream (try low-fat yogurt or mustard)

Green salad with vinegar or lemon juice (or a low-fat dressing)

Steamed vegetables without added butter or margarine (try lemon juice and herbs)

Seafood dishes (usually indicated as “surf” on menus)

### Fast Food

Grilled chicken breast sandwich without mayonnaise

Single hamburger without cheese

Grilled chicken salad with reduced-fat dressing

Garden salad with vinegar or lemon juice (or a reduced-fat dressing)

Low-fat or fat-free yogurt