

Tips for Healthy Dining Out

Eating out at restaurants is now a regular part of our lives. The problem is that most restaurant meals tend to be too high in calories, fat and sodium and too low in fiber, vitamins and minerals. The typical restaurant meal now has over 1,000 calories (not including appetizers and desserts) – or about half of what an adult should have for an entire day. Check out these tips to help you make satisfying and healthful choices when dining out.

✓ **Read the menu carefully.**

Go for menu items that are prepared more healthfully. Choose items that are grilled, poached, roasted, steamed and broiled. Words that signal lots of added fat and calories include Alfredo, au gratin, batter-dipped, breaded, butter or buttery, cheese, cream or creamed, crispy, deep-fried, fried, gravy or pan-fried.

✓ **Downsize your meal.**

Ask if you can get a smaller portion. Some restaurants offer luncheon, senior or light portions. If a smaller portion is not available, ask for a doggie bag and take the rest home for another meal.

✓ **Look for healthful choices.**

Use the USDA's MyPyramid to help you make your menu selection. Choose entrees made with whole grains, lean meats, and vegetables. Be willing to try something new!

✓ **Supersize your veggies.**

Order a side salad or a side of vegetables instead of French fries or cole slaw. A typical side order of French Fries can easily add 600 calories and 31 grams of fat to your meal.

✓ **Share the calories and fat.**

If you really want to order that fried appetizer or rich dessert, then share it. A typical fried appetizer can add over 700 calories to your meal, a slice of cheesecake can sneak in another 500 to 1000 calories.

✓ **Be careful of liquid calories.**

Liquids can add more calories to your meal. A 20-ounce regular soft drink or lemonade, can add over 200 calories. Instead of a refill, ask for water with a slice of lemon. If you are ordering an alcoholic beverage, a wine spritzer or light beer are lower calorie choices.

✓ **Order salad dressings on the side.**

Ordering your salad dressing on the side can control how much calories and fat you add. Salad dressings can easily add 200 or more calories to your meal.

✓ **Order tomato-based sauces.**

Cream sauces, hollandaise and cheese sauces taste great but really pour on the extra calories and saturated fat. Tomato-based sauces pack more vitamins and minerals and can count as a vegetable serving.



Surprise! Surprise!

Here are just a few little surprises that the Center for Science in the Public Interest found when they analyzed a few popular restaurant dishes. While exact calorie count will vary from restaurant to restaurant you may want to try something from the healthier choice column. Keep in mind that it takes just an extra 500 calories a day to cause you to gain a pound a week, so a few small changes really can add up to better health!

Instead of...	Order...	Saves You...
Baked Potato, Loaded	Baked Potato (w/1 Tbsp. sour cream)	340 Calories 28g Fat
Prime Rib (12 ounces, untrimmed)	Filet Mignon (9 ounces, untrimmed)	600 Calories 51g Fat
BBQ Baby Back Ribs (14 ribs)	BBQ Chicken (6 ounces)	500 Calories 46g Fat
French Fries (2 cups)	Vegetable of the Day (1 cup)	530 Calories 28g Fat
Fettuccine Alfredo (2½ cups)	Spaghetti with Marinara (2½ cups)	700 Calories 85 g Fat
Tuna Salad Sandwich (11 ounces)	Turkey Sandwich (9 ounces)	460 Calories 50 g Fat
Egg Roll, Fried (One Each – 4”)	Hot and Sour Soup (1 cup)	225 Calories 17g Fat
Sweet & Sour Chicken w/Rice (3 cups)	Stir-fried Chicken w/Rice & Veggies (3 cups)	315 Calories 13g Fat

