

Tips to Eat Healthier When Eating Out

- Drink plenty of water before going to dinner; we often eat to satisfy thirst.
- Choose menu items that use healthy cooking techniques such as baking, steaming, boiling, sautéing, or roasting.
- Skip appetizers—they are meant to stimulate your appetite and get you to eat more.
- Opt for high-salt and high-calorie sauces and dressings on the side so that you can add only the amount you need.
- Avoid creamy sauces and soups (unless explicitly plant-based), and opt for vegetable-, fruit-, or herb-based sauces or vinaigrettes.
- The sauces on many Asian-style and other dishes include soy sauces, fish sauce, fermented sauces and pastes, and pickled ingredients which are generally high in sodium. Again, try to get sauces on the side and add only as much as you need, ideally to steamed or lightly stir-fried vegetables, plant-based sources of protein, and brown rice or other whole grain items.
- If watching your salt intake, avoid or limit salty condiments like soy sauce, pickles, olives, or ketchup.
- Avoid processed meats (cold cuts, sausages, bacon, etc.)—these are filled with salt and linked to some cancers, diabetes, and heart disease.
- Leave off the cheese, which is high in sodium, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
- Eat your salad or veggies first so that you fill up on nutritious foods with fewer calories.
- If there aren't healthy main dishes on the menu, look at the side dishes and salad options and order a couple to serve as a meal.
- Ask for what you want—this can include using less or no added oil or salt, excluding an ingredient, or substituting a healthier item (for example, substitute salad for fries, or a tomato sauce for cream sauce).



- Ask your server or chef for recommendations that meet your dietary needs.
- Ask for added vegetables in dishes that don't have them (or don't have many vegetables). An example would be to add broccoli or mixed sautéed vegetables to a pasta or noodle dish. (You can also do this at home!)
- Avoid chain fast-food or fast-casual restaurants. If this isn't possible, look online at the restaurant's nutrition information to identify a few healthy choices at the place(s) you frequent.
- Look for items made mostly or entirely with whole, plant foods—like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes—made using healthy cooking techniques.
- Opt for whole grains instead of white or refined grains or breads.
- Ask the server to take away the breadbasket (or not to bring it in the first place) if it isn't whole grain bread.
- If your meal is large, ask for a take-out container and pack away half (or more) of your meal at the start so that you're not tempted to clear your plate and overeat. This also makes two meals out of one!
 - You can also ask for a half- or appetizer-sized portion instead of a full-sized portion. This often helps reduce the price of the meal as well!
- Split a meal with someone else.
- For dessert, have fresh fruit or a small piece of dark chocolate. Alternatively, order a bite-sized dessert or split a single dessert with others.

