

EAT OUT, EAT HEALTHY: Here's how

Many people find that eating at restaurants can be hard on the diet. Restaurants usually offer an array of high-fat, high-sugar, and deep fried foods that can be tough to resist. But, eating out doesn't have to be off limits.

Before choosing what to eat, you need to decide where to eat. One of the best ways to stay on the healthy track is to do some research first. Many restaurants offer calorie counts and other nutrition information on their website. Check out which foods fall within your diet with regards to calories and fat. This can help you steer clear of foods that may seem healthy, such as certain salads, but are actually loaded with calories.



And, making changes to dishes is a good way to get exactly what you want. Think about whether the restaurant:

- Will allow you to make substitutions without hassle or extra cost
- Uses healthier cooking methods, such as broiling, grilling, and baking instead of frying

*Once you've chosen your place, it's time to pick your plate.
Follow these guidelines for a healthy and enjoyable meal:*



Don't be afraid to ask questions. Ask the server about how a dish is prepared and what comes with it. Does it come with butter or oil? Can these items be placed on the side or taken off completely?



Eat slowly and watch portion sizes. Many restaurant portions are big enough for two meals. Consider splitting your meal with another person if this is allowed. Or, ask the waiter to box half of your meal right away.



If possible, ask for no salt to be added to your food. And, just say "no" to the salt shaker on the table.



Skip the pre-meal bread that often spoils your diet and appetite. Ask for no bread to be brought to the table.



Choose foods that taste good without being fried, such as grilled chicken, seafood, and fresh vegetables.



Watch out for drinks. Many beverages, such as lemonade, juices, and alcoholic drinks, are high in calories. Stick to water and drink plenty of it before and during the meal. This may help stave off hunger.



Be creative with dessert. Don't look at the tempting dessert menu. Instead, ask for a bowl of fresh fruit if you're craving something sweet. Or, keep sugar-free mints or gum with you to pop in your mouth after dinner.