



Eat Out and Still Lose Weight!

Dining out can be part of a healthy eating plan, as long as you make smart choices.

The Temptations of Eating Out

No cooking, no cleaning up afterwards, someone waiting on you for once—you just can't beat the convenience factor of eating out. It's no wonder Americans dine out an average of four times per week, according to statistics.

But unfortunately, the more you eat out, the more you will be faced with temptations that can make it extremely difficult to stay on track. Blame it on oversized portions, fatty ingredients (butter, oil and cream, oh my!), caloric cocktails and decadent desserts, all of which can easily deter you from your healthy eating intentions.

If you're aware of the pitfalls of eating out and are armed with strategies to keep calories in check, you *can* enjoy the experience without feeling deprived or guilty. All it takes is a bit of planning and a dash of resolve (hey, it's worth it for a night off, right?).

First Things First

Keep in mind, even if you use all the strategies in this chapter to choose the healthiest eatery and most diet-friendly dishes, you're still more likely to overdo it than if you'd eaten a home-cooked meal in the comforts of your own home. That's why we recommend trying to limit your meals out.

How many times can you eat out and still slim down? **People in the National Weight Control Registry—an ongoing study that tracks successful losers—average about three restaurant meals (including one fast food) weekly, so that's what you should shoot for.** You can work your way down to this number: If you're at 10 meals per week right now, try to get down to eight or nine in the next week or so, then drop to six or seven, and so on. Talk to your coach if you're having any trouble tapering down. And when you do dine out, make sure to use the advice in this session so you don't blow an entire day's worth of calories in one sitting.



Plan Ahead

Eating healthfully starts before you get to the restaurant—so, prior to heading out, make sure you...

1 Don't arrive TOO hungry.

You'll want something of an appetite (a 2 on the Real Appeal hunger scale), but you don't want to arrive at the restaurant so hungry that you're unable to make smart decisions. Aim to have a healthy snack that has a balance of protein or healthy fat, and fiber, about two hours before your meal. Real Appeal snacks that fit the bill include: Apple Cheddar Melt (page 116), Spinach Dip (page 126) and Black Bean and Basil Dip with Carrot Sticks (page 129).

2 Rate the meal's significance.

Sometimes, a meal out is for a special occasion or it's at a restaurant you've been dying to try. Other times, it's not so unique—it might be out of convenience or just a casual catch-up with a friend. The point is, decide ahead of time how special this meal is. If it's not a big deal, make the healthiest choices you can and treat it like any other meal at home. If it's a special meal, you may want to indulge a little more, in which case you can accommodate by lightening up—not skipping—your other meals just a little. Keep in mind, you still need to practice portion control during those special meals, which ideally should be a once-a-month-sort-of-thing.

3 Opt for healthier restaurants

Most every restaurant—even fast food joints—have at least a few healthy dishes. But the following types of restaurants

generally offer a wider selection of dishes that fit your calorie budget:

- Chinese
- Seafood restaurants
- “Salad bar” restaurants, where you can create your own salad
- Restaurants offering small portions or half-sized sandwiches (like Noodles & Company and Au Bon Pain)

But even these restaurants have crazy-high-cal foods! The advice on the pages that follow will help you steer clear of the fattening fare and place a slimming order.

4 Know before you go.

Most menus are available online; take a few minutes to browse and decide what you want ahead of time. The Real Appeal food tracker has foods from 800-plus restaurants and cafes, so you shouldn't have any trouble zeroing in on the healthier dishes. Ordering a healthy meal is a lot easier to do when you're not rushed or distracted, so if you can't preview the menu online, take your time going through it when you're at the restaurant. To search for restaurants in your area offering healthy choices as well as nutrition info for their menu items, go to healthydiningfinder.com.



Restaurant Roadblocks

Once you're at the restaurant, make sure you know how to navigate some common roadblocks.

Freebies

Basking in the breadbasket will make it tough for you to stick to your daily calorie goal. If the other people at your table are in agreement, ask the waiter to take the basket away, or even better, not to bring it in the first place. If not, ask the server to bring you a sparkling water right away and sip that to keep your hands busy. The exception: when you plan to order only a protein-and-veggie-based entrée (such as grilled chicken with veggies), you can have a small roll (the size of a tennis ball or a woman's fist).



Enormous Portions

You could easily consume a day's worth of calories in one meal when you eat out. Keep calories in check by ordering a half portion—some restaurants offer this—or choosing an appetizer as your entrée. You can also try creating your own version by asking to have half of your meal wrapped before it arrives at the table. (Bonus! You'll have lunch for tomorrow!) Another option: Split an entrée with a friend and order a green salad to round out the meal.



Alcohol

This might be a tough one to swallow, but alcohol has a number of strikes against it. It doesn't satisfy hunger, meaning calories from alcohol are in *addition* to the meal. Plus it can actually lower your inhibitions—for instance, after a couple glasses of wine (200 calories), ordering dessert may suddenly seem like a good idea. If you do decide to have a drink, stick to just one (two for men), and have it with the meal, not beforehand (so you don't get *too* buzzed). How many ounces in a "drink"? See page 21 for details.



Fatty Ingredients



Restaurant meals are often loaded with butter, cream, oil and sauces that add lots of extra calories to your meal. There's no shame in asking your server how food is prepared and to request any adjustments if necessary. For instance, order double veggies instead of a veggie and starch, the sauce to be on the side, or minimal oil to be used during cooking. Also, be on the lookout for red flags (see right) when choosing!



Dessert



Believe it or not, you don't have to always pass on dessert. When you do order something sweet, try to use the three-bite rule: Take three slow bites and then set it aside. This works especially well if you're sharing with one or two other people—the temptation to take a fourth or fifth bite is eliminated and you don't feel like you're wasting food. If you're ordering solo, ask the waiter to take away the plate soon after you finish that third bite. Another option is to save dessert for home, when you have more control over your portion and the ingredients.

Become a Menu Master

How to Master the Menu

Common menu terms can clue you in to how healthy—or unhealthy—a dish is. Keep the following red (unhealthy) and green (healthy) flags in mind when ordering.

- Au jus
- Baked
- Boiled
- Broiled
- Dry rub
- Grilled
- Marinara sauce
- Poached
- Primavera
- Puttanesca
- Red sauce
- Roasted
- Steamed
- Alfredo sauce
- Au gratin
- Battered
- Bernaise
- Blackened (unless seared with a little oil)
- Buttery/buttered
- Creamy sauce
- Crispy
- Fried/deep-fried
- Gravy
- Grilled bun (usually grilled with butter or oil)
- Hollandaise
- Melt
- Smothered
- Tempura
- White sauce

real tips

Many of these tips will not only help you stick to your daily calorie count, but will also help you avoid getting too much sodium. That's a win-win for your heart and your waist.




One more reminder: Eating out is not solely about food—it's about people, relationships and fun. It's about enjoying uninterrupted time with family and friends. You can do all of this just as easily over grilled chicken and salad as you can with a burger and fries.

Dining Out





Dos and Don'ts

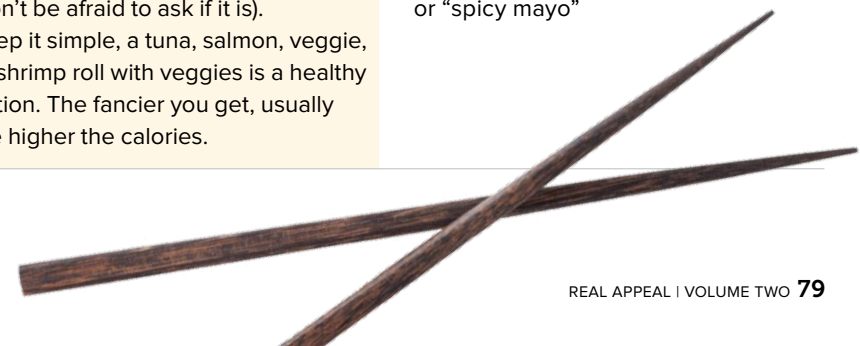
by Cuisine Type



	DO	DON'T
 <p>Pizza*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose thin-crust instead of thick Order extra veggies, and, if you like, extra sauce Order a grilled chicken salad or green salad for the group to share (or a side salad for yourself) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get toppings like sausage, pepperoni, extra cheese or multiple cheeses Order a bigger pizza than the group can (or wants to) eat Order soda
 <p>Mexican*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order extra lettuce and tomato on the side Use salsa instead of creamy sauces Opt for whole beans instead of refried beans or beef Have either a tortilla or rice—not both Either skip sour cream, cheese, guacamole or choose just one of these options and stick to about 2 tablespoons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order deep-fried items, including chimichangas, chalupas, taquitos, chile relleno Eat no more than a cup (a fist size) portion of rice Get dishes smothered in cheese and/or sour cream
 <p>Convenience Store</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose healthy picks, including: string cheese, whole grain-and-nut-based granola bars (approximately 150 calories), fruit (banana or apple), low-fat yogurt (plain if they have it), whole grain chips (1–1.5 ounce bags only), low-fat chocolate milk, and mini (one serving) pouches of trail mix or nuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose high-fat, high-calorie snacks, including: large bags of chips, nuts, trail mix, soda, sweetened teas, sweetened coffee drinks, juices, energy drinks, large energy bars, hot dogs and nachos

* Looking for the best choices at McDonald's, Domino's and other fast food restaurants? See page 192 of the Real Foods Nutrition Guide.

	DO	DON'T
<p>Chinese</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start with wonton, egg drop or hot and sour soup Get steamed vegetable dumplings instead of egg rolls or fried spring rolls Order steamed brown rice instead of fried rice (if you get rice at all) Order tofu/meat/chicken lightly stir-fried, steamed, roasted or broiled Look for broth-based dishes (ask if you don't see them on the menu!) Order steamed veggies instead of rice Choose low-sodium soy sauce, vinegar or ginger dipping sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order a full entrée for yourself Indulge in crispy wonton chips Order anything breaded; the breading is like a sponge for oil during cooking Order General Tso's chicken or sweet and sour chicken—they're deep-fried and often contain 1,000 calories or more per order!
<p>Burgers/fries*</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skip the cheese or have half of a cheeseburger and save the other half for another meal Skip the sauce or order it on the side Ask for extra lettuce and tomato Skip fries or share a small order Order from the kids' menu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get double, triple or extra large anything Order extra cheese or sauce Get a milkshake, soda or other high-calorie beverage
<p>Indian</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose whole wheat Roti or Naan, if ordering bread at all Choose "Tandoori" chicken or seafood; which means that it's baked (and still tasty, thanks to great marinades) Order chicken Tikka 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order deep-fried items, such as samosas Overdo it on rice (most Indian restaurants give you four times the portion you should eat) Order Paneer, coconut- or cream-based curries or dishes made with ghee (clarified butter)
<p>Sushi</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order appetizers such as miso soup, edamame, seaweed salad or a regular salad with ginger dressing on the side Order steamed veggie or shrimp shumai dumplings Go for brown rice if it's an option (don't be afraid to ask if it is). Keep it simple, a tuna, salmon, veggie, or shrimp roll with veggies is a healthy option. The fancier you get, usually the higher the calories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order fried dumplings Order crunchy rolls, which means they've been deep-fried Order tempura anything (tempura is deep-fried) Order rolls with "spicy sauce" or "spicy mayo"



Beware: Surprising Saboteurs on the Menu

Don't get duped by healthy sounding options that are anything but healthy.



Turkey or Veggie Burgers



Large portion sizes and fatty condiments can make these just as calorie- and fat-laden as their traditional burger counterparts. Make sure to skip the mayo and other dressings, or ask for them on the side. Also ask for the bun to be “plain” as they often toast it in butter. If it’s a very large bun, eat only half of it.

Salads



A salad is a healthy choice, right? Sure, if it’s all greens and other vegetables, maybe 3–5 ounces of chicken (or other protein), and perhaps a few tablespoons of nuts or grated cheese. But beware; some restaurant salads can have more calories than a burger thanks to large portions of high-calorie toppings, such as bacon, gourmet croutons, fried noodles, candied nuts, and an overload of high-fat dressing.

Wraps



While wraps are often filled with veggies (a good thing!), **those veggies typically come along with lots of dressing and cheese.** In addition, the wrap itself usually has more calories than three slices of bread, so leave at least half of the outer layer behind.

Tuna/Egg/Chicken Salad Sandwiches

These are often swimming in mayonnaise. Make one yourself at home and you’ll use a lot less mayo.



Burrito

Burritos can be SO healthy, but order them out and you’re looking at carb overload: a tortilla so big it’s the equivalent of three slices of bread, filled with rice (another carb) and other goodies. The end result: a meal that’s lacking balance and stuffed with calories. To prevent this, you can either leave most of the tortilla behind or order a bowl with no more than a fist-sized portion of rice.



Bran Muffins

These are usually loaded with sugar and not much nutrition. Plus, most are large—you could easily put away 400 to 600 calories per muffin. Starting your day with a heavy dose of sugar only sets you up for an energy crash.



How to Avoid Dining-Out Disasters

In a perfect world, we'd all enjoy a well-balanced meal eaten in a relaxing and supportive setting three times each day.

Yeah, right! In real life, we're eating while standing at our kids' soccer game or in the car on the way home; we're ordering our meal through a window or grabbing something quickly at the gas station. The fact is, life can make it challenging to choose the healthiest options.



Check out these problem scenarios and how to eat without overdoing it.



Substitutions Policy

Situation: The restaurant has a strict “no substitutions” policy.

Solution: Take your time with the menu and try to find something that is good as-is. Second best option: Find something that would be easy to modify yourself once you get it. For example, take the cheese off of a sandwich or pick tortilla strips off the top of a salad.



The Buffet

Situation: You're at a lunch meeting and are limited to a set menu or buffet.

Solution: You may not have control over the options, but you do have control over which options you put on your plate and how much of each you'll eat. If there's undressed salad or steamed veggies, fill half your plate with these lighter options. Then opt for grilled or baked chicken or fish. If there are no light options, have a small portion of whatever seems the healthiest. For instance, if there are chicken tenders and chicken wings, opt for the tenders, which don't have the fatty chicken skin. If there's pasta with marinara and pasta with cream sauce, opt for the marinara.

If you're truly stumped, have a small portion of something to hold you over, and eat something healthful once the meeting is over.



Group Pressure

Situation: Your meal mates are pressuring you to “loosen up and treat yourself.”

Solution: Smile, place your healthy order, and change the subject. Remind yourself how good healthy choices make you feel. If they still won't drop it, a simple “I appreciate your input, but I'm really happy with my choice” should put a stop to the ribbing.

Situation: Your family complains about having to go to a “healthy” restaurant.

Solution: Assure them that they'll find something on the menu they'll like, and that, hey, they can eat wherever they like when they're not with you! You might also point out that when you're healthier, the whole family benefits!

The Fittest Fast Food Finds

Think you can't order a healthy dish at the drive-through or your local chain restaurant? Before hitting the drive-thru log online to see the calorie count of what you may order. That way, you can enjoy eating out without blowing your calorie budget. For suggestions, turn to page 192 of the Real Foods Nutrition Guide.

I'll make smart choices while dining out



Commitment Contract

Dining out can be part of a healthy eating plan, as long as I make smart choices.

I'll learn how to enjoy restaurant meals while still sticking to my Real Appeal plan by using the following strategies.

- If I eat out more than three times a week, I'll start cutting back. I'll plan to eat out only _____ time(s) this week.
- I'll plan ahead: If eating out this week, I'll look online to choose a plan-friendly restaurant and a dish that's reasonable in calories. I'll order the _____ when I eat at _____ this week.
- Meanwhile, I'll continue my other healthy habits (weighing in, tracking, staying within my calorie range, keeping my kitchen well stocked so I can make more meals at home) to the best of my ability.

My signature: _____