

# Tips for Eating Smart When Dining Out

*Watching calories while eating out? The good news is in today's restaurants you have plenty of options! Here are a few tips from the National Restaurant Association on how to make the most of your dining-out experience. By Shelia Cohn, R.D.*



- Order salad dressing and other sauces on the side. This way, you have control over how much or how little you add.
- When ordering grilled fish or vegetables, ask that the food either be grilled without butter or oil, or prepared “light”, with little oil or butter.
- When ordering pasta dishes, look for tomato-based sauces rather than cream-based sauces. Tomato-based sauces are much lower in fat and calories. In addition, the tomato sauce (or marinara sauce) can count as a vegetable.
- Drink water, diet soda, or unsweetened tea or coffee instead of regular soda or alcoholic beverages. This will save a lot of calories each day.
- Share a dessert with a friend. Half the dessert equals half the calories.
- Share an appetizer. Same rule as above applies.
- When choosing a soup, keep in mind that cream-based soups are higher in fat and calories than most other soups. Soup can serve as a great appetizer to a meal, or as an entrée. Most soups are low in calories and will fill you up, so you eat less.
- Order steamed vegetables as a side dish instead of starch.
- Ask for salsa with a baked potato instead of sour cream, butter, cheese, or bacon. Salsa is very low in calories and a healthy alternative with a lot of spice.
- Stop eating when you are full – listen to the cues your body gives you.
- Order sandwiches with mustard rather than mayonnaise or “special sauce.” Mustard adds flavor with virtually no calories.
- Take half of your meal home. The second half can serve as a second meal! (Two meals for the price of one: What a deal!)
- If you want to eat less, order two appetizers, or an appetizer and a salad, as your meal.
- If you have a choice of side dishes, opt for baked potato or steamed vegetables rather than french fries. Even if choices are not listed, ask your server to substitute vegetables or a baked potato for french fries.
- Look for items on the menu that are baked, grilled, dry-sautéed, broiled, poached or steamed. These cooking techniques use less fat in the food preparation and are generally lower in calories.
- Don't be afraid to ask for special low-calorie or low-fat preparation of a menu item. The restaurant industry is one of hospitality and customer choice. We aim to please.
- Plain bread or yeast rolls are relatively low in fat and calories. It's the butter and oil you add that increases the fat and calories.
- Choose entrees with fruits and vegetables as key ingredients. Enjoy the flavors they offer. Fruits and vegetables are a good source of dietary fiber as well as of many vitamins and minerals.

- Choose foods made with whole grains. Examples include whole-wheat bread and dishes made with brown rice.
- Enjoy foods that are flavored with fresh herbs rather than fats such as oil and butter. Herbs add a unique flavor to any dish!
- If you are craving dessert, opt for something low fat, like sorbet, fresh berries or fruit.
- Remember not to deprive yourself of the foods you love. All foods can fit into a well balanced diet.