



Making Healthy Choices at Restaurants



Overview

If you are trying to lose or maintain your weight, dining out can present a lot of pitfalls. It's easy to overeat at a restaurant, and it's easy to eat more salt, fat, sugar and cholesterol than you realize. But by following a few simple guidelines, you can make your restaurant experience as healthy as possible.

Make Informed Choices

First, make informed choices before you order. Many restaurants list calories and other nutrition information, either in the menu or elsewhere. If you can't find this information, ask your server. Choose options that have a lower calorie count.

Choose Healthy Options

Stay away from foods that are fried or sautéed. Don't order foods that are described as creamy, breaded, battered or buttered. These can greatly increase calories. Order your food grilled, baked or steamed. Consider fish or poultry options. Ask to have the skin removed from chicken before it is served. Trim fat away from meat before you eat it.

Control Portions

Many people overeat at restaurants because they are served huge portions. So look for smaller meal options. Ask your server to split your meal before it is served to you, boxing up half in a take-home container. Avoid buffets. And stop eating when you are full.

Extras Really Add Up

Be aware that extras really add up quickly. Sugary sodas, alcoholic drinks, appetizers and desserts can greatly increase the calories of your meal. Drink water. Skip the appetizer, or order the healthiest option. Don't order dessert. Order coffee or tea instead. Or split a single dessert with others.

About That Salad ...

One major mistake many diners make is assuming that salads are always healthy. They aren't. Salads are often loaded with mounds of cheese, bacon and creamy salad dressing. These salads can contain more calories, salt and fat than other menu options. So choose your salad carefully, and ask for the dressing on the side so you can control how much you eat. By following these simple tips, you can dine out without regret.