

# Eating Out Healthy: How to make smart choices at restaurants

Going out to eat doesn't have to mean being unhealthy. Use this handout to learn more about how to make healthy choices while eating at restaurants.

## Try to:

- Drink water, seltzer, or other low-calorie beverages.
- Eat smaller portions. Take half of your meal to-go to eat at a later time.
- Fill up on fruits and veggies before your main course comes.
- Go for grilled, broiled, or baked options.
- Order lean meats, such as chicken, turkey and fish.
- Look at the menu before you go, when you're not hungry sitting at the restaurant.

## Avoid:

- Sodas or sugary beverages like sweet tea and lemonade.
- Huge portions. Don't force yourself to finish your food all in one sitting.
- Eat too much free bread or chips.
- Fried, breaded or battered options.
- Meats high in salt and fat like ham, bacon and sausage.
- Salads that are overloaded with cheese, bacon, ham and creamy dressings.

Making healthy changes can seem overwhelming at first. Just remember that it doesn't have to happen overnight. Small changes can make a big difference!

Large order → Small order

Side of fries → Side of fresh fruit

**Remember:** Some restaurant foods have extra calories and are high in salt and fat. Eating too much of these foods can put you at risk for certain health problems, such as obesity and heart disease.



# Healthier Restaurant Food Options

Healthy eating is all about balance. Here are some healthier food options you can order:

## Dunkin' Donuts



Instead of **sausage, egg, and cheese croissant**

**High in salt and fat**

710 calories 1120 mg sodium



Try the **veggie egg white sandwich**

**Full of fiber, low in fat**

290 calories 550 mg sodium



## Chick-fil-A



Instead of a **spicy chicken deluxe sandwich**

**Breaded meat**

**High in salt and fat**

550 calories 25 g fat



Try the **8-piece grilled chicken nuggets**

**Lean, grilled protein**

**Low in fat**

130 calories 3 g fat



## Taco Bell



Instead of a **Cheesy Gordita Crunch Supreme**

**Too much cheese**

**Sauce is high in fat**

520 calories 29 g fat



Try a **Soft Chicken Taco**

**Full of lean veggies and protein to fill you up**

170 calories 8 g fat



## Domino's



Instead of a **medium MeatZZa Pizza**

**Thick crust and fatty meats**

**High in salt and fat**

270 calories 13 g fat



Try a **medium Pacific Veggie Pizza**

**Thin crust and full of veggies to fill you up**

230 calories 8 g fat



# Eating Out Tips: When you're eating at a...

## Mexican Restaurant

- Avoid eating too many chips and salsa. Fix a small plate for yourself or skip it so that you don't get too full.
- Stick to corn tortillas, which are lower in calories, fat, and salt than flour tortillas.
- Grilled fajitas are lower in fat than fried foods like taquitos and are just as filling.
- Go for black beans instead of refried beans for extra fiber and less fat.
- Skip cheese dips and sour cream, which are high in fat and calories.

## Italian Restaurant

- Bread baskets are high in calories. Be mindful of how much you eat. Go easy on the butter and oil.
- Choose tomato-based sauce like marinara instead of creamy sauces like alfredo.
- Go for a whole wheat pasta or thin crust for pizza.
- Avoid salads loaded with cheese & creamy dressings. Try a mixed greens salad with vinaigrette on the side.
- Choose chicken (not fried) and seafood instead of salty meats like sausage.

## Thai Restaurant

- Choose summer rolls instead of fried spring rolls.
- Thai-style veggies are a great low-calorie choice as a side dish to an entrée.
- Thai iced tea is high in sugar. Try unsweetened iced tea or hot chamomile tea instead.
- Tom Yum, a soup packed with shrimp and veggies, is a great choice.
- Pass on menu items with "Pla" in the name, which means "fried", and add on extra fat and calories.

## Chinese Restaurant

- Order steamed brown rice instead of fried rice to avoid large amounts of MSG and salt.
- Fill up on steamed veggies like bok choy, cucumber, or baby corn.
- Try a flavorful baked or broiled tofu dish for less salt and fat than fried tofu.
- Skip the extra soy sauce.
- Chicken and broccoli is a great option that is lower in calories and packed with flavor and protein.

