

Restaurant Tips

- 1) Never go to a restaurant hungry!
- 2) Remember, you can't "save" calories for a big meal at the end of the day and expect your body to respond the same way as eating the proper amount of calories throughout the day. Make sure you don't skip any meals or snacks earlier in the day.
- 3) Remember to count the time it takes to sit down, order and be served when you are planning your meal time. Use half meals or bars to fill in any time gaps that may come up.
- 4) Almost all restaurants are portion-controlled. They have a standard weight for each item on your plate. The manager or chef will know these portion sizes (lunch portions are smaller than dinner portions even if the menu has the same options).
- 5) If you go to the same places frequently, call or go in at a non-busy time and ask the manager about how things are prepared (grilled in butter, any added fats, portion sizes, etc...)
- 6) If you are still unsure about the portion sizes, order what you like To-Go, take it home, take it apart and weigh and measure it to see exactly what you are getting.
- 7) Choose restaurants that are accommodating.
- 8) All major chains have nutritional breakdowns of their menus on their websites. Look things up before you go so that you can make the best decisions possible when you're there. This is especially helpful when traveling.
- 9) Always order foods separately, with sauces and dressings on the side. The more control you have in what you're eating, the closer you will be able to get to your meal parameters. (Fajitas are a good example, each item comes separately so that you can put them together how you wish).
- 10) When traveling, stick to restaurants you know or have looked up on the internet beforehand. Most chains also have a section with tips on how to order (i.e. "heart healthy", "low fat", etc...)
- 11) Read the items on the menu very carefully to determine exactly how they are made (for example, does the healthy salad you are ordering have pine nuts, high fat croutons, dried fruit, cheese, etc... in it?)
- 12) Pay attention to portion sizes at home so that you can be confident in eyeing them at the restaurant.
- 13) Watch for the common things people forget to count when eating out, that are either on the table or mixed into your food (chips, bread, alcohol, dried fruit, crumbled bacon bits, crumbled cheese, pine nuts, croutons, etc...)
- 14) Breakfast is one of the most challenging meals to eat out. Here are some breakfast tips:
 - Most restaurants have a "heart healthy" menu that will be a much better option to start with.
 - Egg substitute may be cooked in butter, lard, or a lot of oil; ask how it is cooked (they can always use a cooking spray)
 - Watch portion sizes of hash browns, pancakes, waffles, etc... Try to match them up with what you eat at home.
 - If you can't find any lean protein on the menu, you can always add a little protein powder to milk, juice or yogurt before the meal and then have the rest of the carbs and fat at the restaurant to finish out the meal. This is especially handy at work meetings and conferences where they may only serve carb and fat options.
- 15) When eating at a buffet, go look over everything available before getting in line. Have a clear idea of what you will choose before you start.
- 16) Review the "Restaurant Shockers" handout in your red folder.
- 17) If you choose things that will obviously not fit your meal parameters, go ahead and enjoy them! Just make sure they are worth it!
- 18) Ask for a more in-depth restaurant review at any class (topics include how to make a restaurant meal fit your specific nutrition parameters, menu comparisons, etc...)