

Smart Eating

Does eating out or holidaying come with a package? Giving in to temptation, bogged down by extra calories and stumped energy levels? Many of us would agree that eating is one of the pleasures of life. You might enjoy preparing meals at home or love going to restaurants where someone else does the cooking. Most people like to eat out once in a while, and many go to restaurants on a regular basis. Either way, delicious food shared in the company of family and friends is a delightful way to have fun and take good care of yourself. Restaurants and Cuisines are growing at a mind-boggling rate and eating out has almost become a way of life for many.

Celebration with special foods is common. These foods may become part of your fondest memories. Unfortunately, some of the foods you've learned to eat for pleasure are not always foods that are best for your health. In addition, the rush of daily life can promote skipping meals, eating while on the run, or selecting whatever's available whether or not it's a healthy choice. It's really difficult for a person to strike a balance between an individual's likes and availability. However, maintaining this delicate balance helps a lot in our health and well being.

Here are some tips to come out rejuvenated and refreshed after your outing.

- **Appetizers:** start your meals with appetizers like clear soups or salads without rich dressings. Pass the breadbasket if trying to lose weight.
- **Limit Alcoholic beverages:** Avoid drinking more than 2 medium drinks of wine or other alcoholic beverages before the meal. Alcohol stimulates the appetite and can also reduce awareness. Calories from alcohol are stored preferentially as fats.
- **Snack Smart:** Go for roasted or baked snacks. Remember to order snacks, which provide few calories in large portions.
- **Salads:** Include salads as a part of the main course. Ask for the salad dressings "on the side". Ask for a wedge of lemon or some seasoned nice vinegar instead of very oily ones.
- **Portion Size:** If trying to cut calories it may be a good idea to share the main course and take a salad or clear soup as filler. Eat less or reduce portion sizes when eating out, as the food is usually higher in calories outside.
- **Vegetables:** One must look for vegetables with less gravy or without gravy as gravies are loaded with fat and calories. Try grilled vegetables with olive oil.
- **Avoid dishes** that require too much frying of the ingredients.

- ***If an individual is a non- vegetarian***, choosing baked/ roasted/ grilled poultry would be beneficial. Choose fish/poultry to mutton/beef/pork. Prefer lean cuts of meat.
- ***Do not be afraid*** to ask for your foods to be prepared without high fat ingredients or sauces.
- ***Desserts:*** Skip desserts if possible, or choose light ones without cream, or deep fried ones. If temptation overtakes you or you are a sugarholic, share your favorite ones with your friends.
- If you have over eaten in a particular meal, then ***balance in the next meal***.

There is no formula for eating right, which can be used for everyone. Find your own unique solution. Following the principles of healthy eating, eating with awareness, along with common sense is all that is needed.

Dining out can be a pleasant way to spend time with friends and family. Dining companions can help by respecting your diet and not encouraging you in to ordering rich dishes. With a little effort eating out can be a joyful experience without much burden of calories on your bodies.