

The Ultimate Restaurant Survival Guide



**Success Strategies for Making the Absolute Best Food
Choices When Eating Out Without Sabotaging Your
Weight Loss Efforts**



The Problem with Eating Out

I'm going to get right to the point with you by saying this: Eating healthy is not easy to do! It's even more difficult to try to make healthy choices when you're dining out. Statistics show that we Americans spend roughly HALF of our food budget on meals purchased outside of our homes? Fast food restaurants appear to be the happy recipients of money spent on convenience foods that, for the most part, fill us but do little else to nourish us. Statistics also show us that when we eat fast food twice or more during the week we have a 50% greater risk of obesity.

What Makes It So Hard for Us to Eat Healthy When Eating Out?

There are many different factors that make it difficult for us to eat in a healthy manner when we dine out. The following are 10 reasons which I believe contribute most to our unhealthy choices:

- ☑ Tempting Menus – that promise great taste without much mention of what else we'll be getting once we eat that particular food
- ☑ Extra Large Portions – The Super-sized variety that provides us with great “value” for our money spent
- ☑ Festive Atmospheres – Make it easy to overlook supportive eating...especially when everyone else is eating those tempting foods right in front of you
- ☑ Convenience – Can cause us to choose the drive through instead of stopping at the grocery store or health food store to make a healthier food choice
- ☑ Low Availability of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables – They are pretty hard to find at the fast food places, and not so easy to find on the menu of some of the “sit-down” eating establishments as well
- ☑ Hunger – Boy does this one have the potential to ruin everything you've been working so hard to accomplish

- ☑ Our Recent (and not so recent) History of Making Healthy Food Choices – Especially when we're in a bad recurring cycle of making all the wrong daily food choices
- ☑ Time Constraints – Time pressure can keep us from taking a healthy lunch to work, or possibly keep us from taking the time that we need from our busy day to sit and eat something healthy rather than scarf down a cold-cut sandwich at our office desk
- ☑ Lack of Planning – This tends to cause the most damage the night before our day begins. Many of us fail to eat well when we don't set the time aside to plan our meals and then prepare them **THE NIGHT BEFORE**
- ☑ Personal Stress – Can cause overeating as well as tempt us to crave those unhealthy "Comfort" foods that we always go to when we're anxious, bored, tired, frustrated, angry, or depressed

Did you know that a typical meal at a burger restaurant consists of a sandwich, some fries, and a drink which when added up can quickly come in at or over 1,700 calories for something like a Triple Big Burger with a large fries and a 16 oz. soda.

A better option would be a regular single patty burger, small fries, and water, which is about 500 calories.

Though eating out may save us some time, when done consistently over a period of time, we can also get ourselves in a lot of trouble by consuming foods that can have a negative impact upon our health, and provide us with more calories than we need and lead to weight gain.

Unfortunately, with our busy and hectic lifestyles, it seems unavoidable that at some point in time, we'll find ourselves needing to eat at a fast food restaurant. Seeing that this will likely be you at any given time, what will be your strategy for making the most of your fast food meal...and for that matter...any restaurant meal? I truly believe that **YES**, it is possible to enjoy yourself and still make supportive choices when you eat out. Following a few simple rules can make it possible for you to maintain your healthy eating plan and can assist you as you work toward your weight loss goal.

So, How Do We Eat Out With Success?

First, when we find ourselves reviewing the menus in fast food restaurants, we should beware of advertising that promotes healthy alternatives to unhealthy foods. **Fast food, by its very nature, is not healthy.** That means that it will be very important for you to review the nutritional charts at the restaurant so you can be aware of what is in the food you're about to eat. Don't be deceived by "healthier" food items that end up being just as unhealthy, if not more unhealthy, than the selection you'd usually make.

It's imperative that you know exactly what you are ordering and plan ahead. Your best line of defense is to look up the nutritional information of your favorite fast food meals online. My personal recommendation is for you to go to the website for each restaurant you'd typically visit and do some fact-finding. You may be VERY surprised by what you find. Some other websites that you can go to that will give you some great reliable information include the following:

- ☒ calorieking.com
- ☒ dietfacts.com
- ☒ healthydiningfinder.com

As you make your "healthier" food selection from these menus, be sure to keep the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (developed by the FDA) in mind. These guidelines recommend that we eat a **balanced** diet – meaning that we should eat foods from each of the major food groups, and that we eat a **variety** of foods from each food group, and in **moderate** amounts. Some other guidelines are that we limit the amount of **fat**, **sugar**, and **salt** that we intake when we eat our meals.

According to KFC's nutrition information, just a single extra crispy chicken breast has a whopping 440 calories, 27 grams of fat, and 970 mg of sodium.

A healthier choice is the drumstick, which has 160 calories, 10 grams of fat, and 370 mg of sodium.

Is It Possible to Eat Out...AND...Eat Healthy?

When you find yourself at a fast food restaurant...or any other type of restaurant...What you order will be the **KEY** to your success at that particular meal. It is extremely easy for you to blow your entire daily menu plan in just one meal, so you must **CHOOSE VERY WISELY!** Please remember that the goal is not necessarily to eat the healthiest food items on the menu, thereby not enjoying your time out, but more so to choose a fairly healthy alternative to those foods that you **KNOW** will sabotage what you're trying to do with your eating plan.

Below Are Some Tips for Making Better Choices

- Choose your restaurant very carefully. Look for restaurants that offer salads, baked potatoes, vegetables (you can't get enough of these), whole grain breads, and other healthy foods.
- Know what you want to order before you go to the restaurant. Success could be as easy as "planning ahead".
- Ask for your food the way you'd like it. If you want it baked or broiled, then ask for it. Many restaurants are very agreeable to custom-make your food.
- Eat a light snack before you go to the restaurant. This will help you not to over-eat once you get there.
- Split and share a meal with the person who accompanies you to the restaurant. This will cut your calories in half and also your restaurant bill. Perhaps, splitting a meal might permit you to eat "not-so-healthily" if there is a particular food item you are craving, but just don't want all the calories, fat, and sodium.
- As soon as your food comes, order a "Doggie Bag" so you can immediately put some food aside. This will be another great way to cut down on your calorie intake for that meal.
- Know that an average fast-food meal can run as high as 1800 calories or more.
- Avoid king-sized, jumbo, giant, deluxe, or super-sized. Larger portions typically mean more calories, fat, cholesterol, sugar and salt for you...not what you want if you're trying to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight.

- Order an appetizer instead of a full-blown meal. These will definitely help you save on calories and other “unhealthy” ingredients in that meal.
- Make it your business to know the nutritional value of the foods you order. Sometimes “good choices”, are higher in the nutrients or calories. Fat-free or Low-Fat items may have plenty of sugar or salt and calories!
- Order your meats grilled or broiled. Beware of fried foods. They will pack on more calories, and most of them will be from fat.
- Choose grilled or broiled sandwiches with meats such as lean roast beef, turkey or chicken breast, or lean ham.
- Choose the salad, but watch out for high-fat toppings like dressings, bacon bits, cheeses, and croutons. A typical salad dressing packet contains 150 to 250 calories. When you consider that many salads already have around 400 calories *without* any dressing, you can see how fast the calorie count can mount.
- Order your food plain, without toppings, rich sauces, or mayonnaise. Add flavor with mustard, and crunch with lettuce, tomato, and onion.
- Stop eating your food as soon as you feel full

When dining at Mexican Restaurants, look for rice, beans, salsa, and even avocado when selecting your meal. When you add cheese, sour cream and tortilla chips your meal can quickly turn unhealthy, so it's best to have your meal without them.

Be sure to remember portion control since these places tend to serve tremendous amounts of food.

Kill the Condiments: They often contribute large amounts of calories, sugar, sodium and fat. Those you should de-emphasize in your daily eating plan include the following:

- ☒ Special Sauces
- ☒ Mayonnaise
- ☒ Cheese Sauces
- ☒ Creamy Salad Dressings
- ☒ Tartar Sauce

☑ Ketchup

- Watch out for the old **“Bait-and-Switch”**. These are the food items which are either fat-free or sugar-free, but which secretly give you something else that you don’t want. As an example: fat-free foods typically just replace the fat with sugar which means more calories for you that you were not aware of and didn’t plan for in your daily menu plan.
- If you know you’re going to be eating at a fast food restaurant at some point during the day, you can just plan to make all the other meals you would eat that day contain the right amount of calories, carbohydrates, fats, and protein so that you can keep yourself “within reach” of your normal calorie consumption for the day.

Eating out can be very enjoyable, and does not need to be totally eliminated from your life. The key is to make the right choices and balance your meals out with good nutrition at home. By making better choices when you eat out, your experience is still very much enjoyable (if not more), and you continue to make progress toward your weight loss goals. You also won’t be burdened with the guilt that often results when poor nutritional choices are made when dining out.

Studies have found that many people tend to eat more calories at sub shops than at places like Burger King or McDonalds. This may be because they feel so good about eating better that they then feel justified in adding other food items like chips, sodas, cookies, and extra condiments like mayo.

Tips for Eating Smart When Dining Out

You can dine out on occasion and still stay on track. The key is to plan ahead, choose wisely and you'll find foods that fit into your meal plan and which are still enjoyable.

- **Avoid restaurants that offer Buffets** – They promote over-eating and other unwise food choices
- **Say NO to the Bread Basket** – Simply ask your server not to bring it
- **Watch your portion sizes very carefully** – Servings can often be 2 – 4 times greater than the meal you’d normally eat. When ordering, ask for a box to put some food in to take home with you, or simply ask for ½

portion of the normal sized meal. Either strategy will help prevent over-eating.

- **Watch Your Salt** – Fast food restaurants serve food that tend to be very high in sodium which is a big contributor to high blood pressure. Don't add salt to any food that you eat at a restaurant.
- **DRINK YOUR WATER!** – Drink at least one 8-oz glass or larger of water before and during dinner. This will not only save you on some calories from a flavored drink or beverage, but will also help you to feel full sooner...and consequently...you will eat less.
- **Begin your meal** with a nutritious salad or bowl of soup (broth-based). This will help you to eat less. By going with the salad, you're dramatically improving the nutrition of your meal...and the main course hasn't even come yet.
- **Ask for your sauce and salad dressing to be served "on the side"** – This will help you to control the amount of calories you will consume and you can still enjoy the flavoring of the sauce or dressing.
- **Make sure you place your order first** – You're less likely to be influenced by the choices of those who accompany you to the restaurant...and maybe you'll set the tone for their food choices ☺
- **Eat Slowly** – Savor the flavors and textures of your food, and enjoy the company you're with. When you eat slowly, your body is much more able to send and receive signals of fullness in a timely manner. When you're full it's time to stop eating.
- **Have dessert later** – A great trick to play is instead of ordering dessert at a restaurant, go somewhere else. By the time you get there, you will not be as hungry and will end up eating half or even skipping dessert entirely.
- **Remember the big picture** – Think of eating out in the context of your whole diet. If it is a special occasion, or you know you want to order your favorite meal at a nice restaurant, make sure your other meals that day are super-healthy. This will give you more freedom to eat your meal "guilt-free" and you will be better able to enjoy your experience much more.

Tips for Making Healthy Restaurant Selections

Entrees:

- Order the smallest entrée or share it with others
- Request vegetables without butter or sauces
- Split your baked potato in half
- Request butter and salad dressing on the side

Deli:

- Go light on the meat
- Choose mustard, vinegar, and peppers
- Request baked chips or pretzels
- Watch high-sodium pickles, olives, chips, and smoked/cured meats

Chinese:

- Choose dishes with more vegetables
- Request plain rice instead of fried rice
- Order steamed dumplings instead of egg rolls
- Select chicken or seafood dishes instead of beef, pork or duck

Italian (Pizza):

- Start with a Garden Salad
- Stick with the thin crust, and say no to the cheese-stuffed crust
- Choose low-fat toppings like pineapple, grilled chicken, spinach, broccoli, onions, tomatoes, mushrooms and peppers
- No extra cheese!

Fast Food Burgers/Sandwiches:

- Order regular, small, or junior-sized burgers
- Order grilled chicken instead of fried chicken
- Avoid mayonnaise or special sauces
- Split the small order of fries or replace it with a salad or fresh fruit

Pancake/Waffle Houses (IHOP is my husband's favorite)

- Request a light-stack of pancakes
- Ask for butter on the side
- Request egg substitutes
- Fill omelets with vegetables

Mexican:

- No tortilla chips & salsa before your meal
- Go with the soft "un-fried" tortillas instead of the hard ones
- Order guacamole and sour cream on the side so you can control your portions when you eat

Fast-Food Breakfasts:

- Order bagels with the cream cheese or butter on the side
- Use jelly instead of butter
- No high-fat sausage/bacon biscuits and croissants
- Get your specialty coffee black or with skim milk

Making Healthier Choices

BURGER RESTAURANTS	
Less Healthy Choices	Healthier Choices
Double-patty hamburgers with cheese, mayo, special sauce, and bacon	Regular single-patty burger without mayo or cheese
Fried chicken sandwich	Grilled chicken sandwich
Fried Fish sandwich	Veggie burger
Breakfast burrito with steak	Egg on a muffin
French Fries	Baked potato or a side salad
Milkshake	Yogurt parfait
Chicken Nuggets or tenders	Grilled chicken strips

FRIED CHICKEN RESTAURANTS	
Less Healthy Choices	Healthier Choices
Fried Chicken, original or extra crispy	Skinless chicken breast w/o breading
Teriyaki wings or popcorn chicken	Honey BBQ chicken sandwich
Caesar salad	Garden salad
Chicken and biscuit bowls	Mashed potatoes w/o gravy

TACO RESTAURANTS	
Less Healthy Choices	Healthier Choices
Crispy shell chicken taco	Grilled chicken soft-taco
Refried beans	Black beans
Steak Chalupa	Shrimp Ensalada
Crunch wraps or Gordita-type burritos	Grilled “fresco” style steak burrito
Nachos with refried beans	Veggie and bean burrito

SUBS & SANDWICHES	
Less Healthy Choices	Healthier Choices
Foot-long sub	Six-inch sub
High-fat meat such as ham, tuna salad, bacon, meatballs, and steak	Lean meat such as roast beef, chicken breast, lean ham, or vegetables
The normal amount of high-fat cheese (Cheddar or American)	One or two slices of lower-fat cheese (Mozzarella or Provolone)
Adding mayo and special sauces	Adding lower-fat dressing or mustard
Keeping the sub “as-is”	Adding extra vegetables
Choosing white bread or wraps	Choosing whole-grain bread

ITALIAN & PIZZA	
Less Healthy Choices	Healthier Choices
Thick crust	Thin crust
Garlic bread	Plain rolls or breadsticks
Antipasto with meat	Antipasto with vegetables
Pasta with cream or butter-based sauce	Pasta with tomato sauce and vegetables
Entrée with a side of pasta	Entrée with a side of vegetables
Fried dishes	Grilled dishes

Are You Too Busy To Eat Healthy?

Whether you're traveling or dealing with a busy schedule, you can still eat healthy if you use the right strategy. In fact, good nutrition is even more important during the hectic times than it is when all is right in your World.

Healthy eating promotes a strong immune system and helps your body to withstand stress even better. The problem is that during busy or stressful times, thoughts of eating healthily can sometimes take a “back-seat” to more pressing issues. The following healthy-eating strategies can promote healthy nutrition even when you need to eat on the run.

Make your own healthy snacks portable and easy for on-the-go nutrition. When prepared ahead of time, such as the night before, they can be easily transported

and readily accessible when needed. Your body will thank you with more energy, improved performance, and better health.

Healthy Eating Strategies & Foods

- High Quality Meal Replacement Shakes (Contact me if you need suggestions about healthy options)
- Apples and Nuts (pistachios or almonds)
- Celery sticks with peanut butter
- Pita bread with peanut butter or hummus
- Whole wheat wrap with deli meat (low-fat/low-sodium)
- Low-fat cheese cubes and grapes
- Hardboiled eggs
- Trail mix (high fiber cereal, flax seeds, almonds, dried fruit)
- Vegetable sticks with hummus
- Yogurt and grape nuts
- Whole-wheat crackers and low-fat string cheese
- Cottage cheese in mini-containers with a piece of fruit

I hope that this Restaurant Survival Guide does exactly that---help you to survive restaurants (and enjoy them) during those times when you do eat out. As a busy mom, it's very likely that a restaurant visit or two throughout the week will be a part of your experience. But never fear! With these tips and strategies, you don't have to worry about whether you're sabotaging your weight loss efforts, and you can be confident that you're receiving adequate nutrition to keep you functioning at a high level.

Remember...We're Here for You!

If there's any way we can help you to apply these tips and strategies into your lifestyle in a way that benefits both you and your loved ones, please don't hesitate to reach out to us on our website – www.2goodhealth.biz or simply email me us at 2goodhealthcoach@gmail.com. As always, feel free to reach out by phone at 706-675-5157. It would be our pleasure to serve you in any way possible!
