

YOUR RESTAURANT GUIDE TO POSITIVE DINING

Before you do anything, DECIDE how you'd like your meal to go.

- 1) *It's a special occasion ... you really don't care today, **or***
- 2) *You'd like the meal to be half the usual fat and calories, **or***
- 3) *You're tired of restaurant foods putting weight on you. You'd like the meal to be as healthy for you as what you would make at home.*

Remember, not every little thing you eat has to be perfect! But not everything has to be loaded with "artery-clogging, waist-widening" fat either! The choice is yours! Here's how to get the right food, prepared the right way, and in the right amounts . . .

- 1) **Be assertive about your questions with the server.** (Allow your server the opportunity to earn a good tip!)
 - Ask for thorough explanations of how items are prepared, because most of the time the menu is not complete in its description.
 - Items usually **not** worth inquiring about further include those described as buttery or in butter sauce, white sauce, cream sauce, alfredo sauce, hollandaise sauce, au gratin, fried, pan-fried, broasted, and ala mode.
 - Items **worth** inquiring about further include those described as baked, broiled, steamed in broth, in its own juice, poached, fresh, roasted, in marinara sauce, sautéed ("Can this be sautéed in wine or broth?"), and stir-fried ("Can this be stir-fried in broth?").
 - Look for healthier options featured on the menu. **Many** restaurants are offering these!
 - Insist on having the sauces or dressings served on the side.
- 2) **To get the *right amounts*:**
 - Share an entree (order another salad and another serving of the vegetable. No need to halve these portions!)
 - Order an appetizer with sides to make a smaller meal. For instance: shrimp cocktail, baked potato, salad, and vegetable.
 - Ask that half of the meal be doggie bagged before it is served to you. (Or ask for a doggie bag to be served with your meal. You divide it up right away).
 - Is that basket of yummy fresh-baked rolls bothering you? Decide if you'd like to take one or not, then place them at the far end of the table, or ask that they be removed.
- 3) **If the food is not correct when it arrives, send it back (*Really, It's ok!*).**

Breakfast Tips

Did you know that eating Denny's Best Selling Grand Slam is like eating two Big Macs? Did you know that a vegetarian omelet (three eggs, cheese, buttered toast, and hash browns) racks up to 50 grams of fat? That's equal to a half of a stick of butter!

For breakfast, choose:

- Fresh fruit and/or juice
- Hot cereal such as oats, with fruit
- Cold cereal with skim milk
- Whole wheat or rye toast. Specify "dry" (Use jam, jelly, or honey)
- English muffins or bagels instead of croissants or biscuits
- Canadian bacon or ham (2 to 3 grams of fat) is a much leaner choice than sausage (32 grams of fat per four links); if you have to have bacon, limit it to two slices (5 grams of fat)
- Pancakes (no butter) with syrup or fruit
- Zon's favorite: Egg-beaters (or egg whites if they don't have Egg-beaters) vegetarian omelet, no cheese, dry whole-wheat toast, and fruit. If I'm exercising that day, I'll go ahead and get the hash browns (11 grams of fat) but only eat half (about 5 grams!).

Soup & Salad Bar

- Choose broth-based vegetable soups or bean soups (If watching sodium, skip the soup).
- Go for the "green" greens like romaine and spinach.
- Pile salads high with lots of vegetable toppings instead of just a few.
- Choose chick peas, three-bean salad, kidney beans, and navy beans.
- Choose low-fat or fat-free dressing, or scoop regular dressing onto a side plate for dipping your fork into.

ETHNIC DINING TIPS

Italian

- Choose pasta with tomato or marinara sauce instead of white creamy sauces.
- Look for broiled fish or chicken.
- Go for a large salad with dressing on the side and a side order of pasta marinara.
- Try Caesar salad with dressing and Parmesan *on the side*.
- Order lemon baked chicken (don't eat the skin).

Chinese

- Get brave and try a tofu dish. Chefs in Chinese restaurants know how to do tofu!
- Chinese restaurants also have many vegetable-only dishes.
- If choosing a chicken dish, specify chicken breast instead of dark meat.
- Ask for the chef to “Steam my chicken and vegetables, and do not add sesame oil.” (Often, chicken is deep fried in oil before adding to the stir-fry, then laced with sesame oil at the end.)
- Order plain steamed rice instead of fried rice (saves 13 grams of fat!).
- Skip the egg roll (Saves 15 grams of fat!). I ask for double the rice instead.
- Eat half the order today, save the rest for tomorrow. (The extra rice allows you to do this easily).
- Choose egg drop soup (4 grams of fat), instead of won ton (9 grams of fat) or hot and sour soup (12 grams of fat). Or if you need to cut back on sodium, skip the soups entirely.
- Ask that your meal be made without MSG.

Mexican

- Chips survival: Ask for a basket of baked corn tortillas. Many restaurants will do this, especially if you call ahead! Eat these with all the salsa you want. Otherwise, tie your hands behind your back after you've eaten 10 of the regular chips. Or just move them to the other side of the table.
- Consider ordering your entree without cheese. This will save you 20 or so grams of fat!
- Chicken Fajitas are usually a good bet.
- Ask for sour cream and guacamole on the side (use just a little) or leave them in the kitchen.