

dining out

tips and tricks for navigating menus and making healthy choices

AMERICAN FOOD

AVOID: Fried foods, anything breaded, sandwiches, wraps, and pre-mixed dressings.

ENJOY: Bunless or lettuce-wrapped burgers and salads with lemon or vinegar and olive oil.

CHINESE FOOD

AVOID: Unless you know the restaurant well enough to make special requests for no MSG and only sauces without sugar, it's best to avoid Chinese food. Many of the sauces contain hidden sweeteners.

INDIAN FOOD

AVOID: Skip the naan and rice. Ask about flour/gluten in sauces and spice rubs.

ENJOY: Meats and veggies that are grilled or roasted and not drowning in sauces. Tandoori meats are often marinated in yogurt, so they're okay on Levels 1 and 2, but not on Level 3.

ITALIAN FOOD & PIZZA

AVOID: Bread, pasta, and breaded meats. Ask about sauces and preparation of items (meatballs often contain breadcrumbs). There is simply no great way to enjoy a healthy version of pizza while dining out.

ENJOY: Broiled chicken, fish, shrimp, or other protein with red sauce and veggies or salad on the side. If you're craving pizza, make "meatza" at home (recipe on page 126), or make pizza with a cauliflower crust if you are on Level 1 or 2 (which typically include cheese) or an almond meal crust for any level.

JAPANESE FOOD

AVOID: Rice (white and brown) is typically flavored with vinegar, which is okay, but also sugar, which is not. Also avoid anything fried or tempura battered, imitation crab, and most sauces.

ENJOY: Sashimi or broiled fish; just be sure to ask about sauces used and avoid soy sauce.

MEXICAN FOOD

AVOID: Tortilla shells and chips (both corn and flour), beans, and rice (or eat limited portions per Level 1 & 2 guidelines). Vegetarians: Have some beans but go lightly on the rice.

ENJOY: Meat, salsa, and guacamole—often you can ask for these ingredients to be placed over a salad or with vegetables. Ask for raw celery or carrots to dip into guacamole. Ask for a side of vegetables to add to your entrée.

THAI FOOD

AVOID: Sauces that contain peanuts. Also avoid noodles and desserts.

ENJOY: A curry dish or other coconut milk-based dish without rice.

MORE TIPS & TRICKS

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Think ahead and don't arrive starving. Eat a small snack of some nuts or nut butter, or even a few bites of avocado or leftover meat before you head out the door.

Preview the restaurant's menu online before you go.

Check out reviews from other diners on a site like Yelp.com or TripAdvisor.com (especially when traveling).

Pass on the bread basket—it'll keep temptation away! Ask for sliced veggies or olives instead.

Either skip the appetizers or opt for a salad starter.

Entrées are easy. While finger food is often breaded, fried, or otherwise carb-loaded, entrées that are made of simpler ingredients can be easy to find.

Look for grilled, broiled, or baked options. These typically aren't breaded, so they'll be safer bets for your detox. But ask the server for details on how things are prepared; they're used to questions! Be polite, but get the answers you need.

Make substitutions. If a meal comes with French fries, bread, or pasta, simply ask that the kitchen either leave it off of the plate or substitute some vegetables instead.

AT PARTIES

Ask the host what they plan on serving so you know what to expect. Bring a dish or two that you know you can enjoy and that will satisfy your hunger. The host will be happy to have the contribution, and you'll be glad to know that you won't be hungry all night if they're serving only foods that you aren't currently eating. ●