
Eating Out And Losing Weight Protocol

The Re-Ignite Program

By Sam Guest

Before Dining Out

Be on the Planning Committee

There are some restaurants where it's nearly impossible to order well, others are much easier. Make sure you are part of the planning committee in choosing the place you go.

Look for the following on the menu, so you know you'll have some healthy options:

- Side salads

- Veggie-rich meals

- Small portion or a la carte versions of your favourites (think side of meatballs or a single enchilada)

Make a Plan Before You're Out the Door

After your duties on the planning committee are over, look at the menu and set a plan for what you're going to order. It's easier to make a healthier choice when you're

- a) not hungry,

- b) not tempted by what your friends or significant other might be ordering.

Make a plan, but be flexible. If something's not available or if you change your mind, it's OK — just be aware of your choices and why you're making them.

You don't always have to skip dessert when you're eating out on a diet, but you may want to balance it by getting rid of alcohol and appetisers.

When You're Dining Out

Pick Your Favourite 'One Extra'

Eating out gets tricky because in addition to your main, there's alcohol plus appetisers plus dessert. Aim to pick only one of those extras: drink, appetiser or dessert.

Skip the Starter

Try ordering sides instead of an entree. For example, when dining at a Mexican restaurant, order a double side of grilled veggies, a side of black beans and a side of guacamole. It'll leave you feeling full, satisfied and energised, and it'll be less expensive.

Swap Starters for Sides

Rather than ordering an appetiser and an entrée, plan to order a side of vegetables in addition to your entrée — then incorporate that veggie side directly into your meal, It

adds colour, volume, flavour and excellent nutrition, even if you started with a not-so-healthy entrée. Imagine simply stirring steamed spinach into a mac-n-cheese entrée.

Build a Meal Like a Pro

Before you look at the appetisers, scoot down the menu to the main dishes so you can determine what will go best with it, for example, if you're in the mood for fish or poultry, you may want an appetiser that doesn't have any protein (like a soup or side salad), since you'll be getting enough in your main dish.

Have It Your Way

Many people are nervous to ask for substitutions when ordering out, but it can be key to improving the nutrient quality and enjoyment of your meal. For example, if you're aiming to follow a more plant based diet and choose a vegan dish, it may be lacking in protein. Find vegan protein sources, such as lentils or beans, in other dishes on the menu and add them to yours.

Be Aware of Your Surroundings

Fast music and bright colours are social-engineering methods to make you eat more and faster. Knowing this, take a few deep breaths before your meal to be present and mindful as you enjoy your food.

After Dining Out

Take a Walk

Working out right after eating is a bad idea — as in, wait three to four hours — but taking a leisurely stroll can be helpful. A slow walk (about 2.5 miles per hour or less) can help with digestion, and if you overdid it when eating, it can help manage your blood sugar levels.

EXTRA HELP

Grab the guide on [How To Eat Pizza And Still Lose Weight in The Library](#) for even more useful hacks to supercharge eating out.