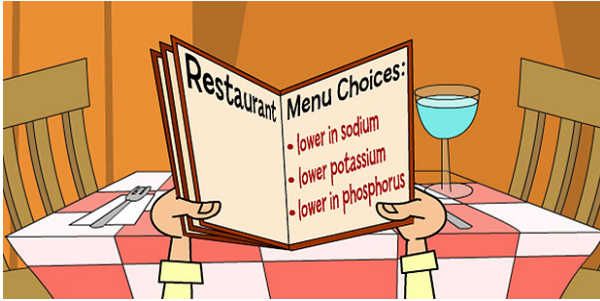


## Tips for Dining Out



Eating at a restaurant does not have to sabotage a healthy diet. Use smart-eating strategies: plan ahead, consider the menu and choose foods carefully to keep you on your plan.

### Preparation

- Have a plan. [Eat a light dinner](#) if you ate a big lunch that day. Or if you know ahead of time that you're going to a restaurant, cut back on calories during other meals that day.
- Knowing menu terms and cooking basics makes ordering easier, especially if you need to control calories, fat and other nutrients. [Look for foods that are steamed, broiled, baked or grilled](#), and limit fried and sautéed items or foods described as "crispy," "rich" or "au gratin."

### Choosing a Restaurant

- Think ahead. Consider meal options at different restaurants and look for places with a wide range of menu items.

### Ordering

- [Balance your meal](#) by including foods from all the different food

groups: meat, dairy, fruits, vegetables, and grains. Look for freshly made entrée salads that give you "balance in a bowl." For example, entrée salads with chicken, cheese or almonds provide protein along with fiber and vitamins. If you are counting calories, use a low-fat dressing or skip some of the extras, like croutons.

- For sandwich toppings, go with [low-fat options](#) like lettuce, tomato and onion; use condiments like ketchup, mustard or relish; and low-fat for fat-free dressings.
- Round out your meal by ordering healthy side dishes, such as a side salad with low-fat or fat-free dressing, baked potato or fruit. [Boost the nutritional value](#) of your baked potato by topping it with vegetables, salsa or chili.
- Substitute. Ask for a side salad with low-fat dressing to replace fries in a combination meal.

### Eating

- Eat slowly. [It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to get the message from your stomach that you are no longer hungry](#). Fast eaters often are overeaters, while slow eaters tend to eat less and are still satisfied.

[Restaurants may be intimidating to people trying to stick to a healthy diet, but with preparation and confidence, you can enjoy your restaurant meal without abandoning healthy eating.](#)

<http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=5671>