



The KISS guide to staying healthy while eating out

Going out to eat is one of the great pleasures in life. Whether you are sharing food with a friend or loved one, taking some alone time with a book, or simply giving yourself a break from cooking, there is joy in eating out. The tricky part is that many restaurants are feeding people what I call non-food junk. Food additives and preservatives, bulking agents, and hydrogenated oils are just some of the junk to be aware of. But have no fear! There are many ways to navigate the restaurant terrain and here are my top 10 favorite tips to **“keep it simple, sister”** in a restaurant.

Tip #1:

Do your research before you go (or before you sit down!). Take some time to look up the menu before you go out if you know where you are going. If you don't know, take a few minutes to look at the menu before you sit down, and ask questions. Is the restaurant OK with substitutions? Do they have gluten free or dairy free options? Also, as you are moving down the path of healthy eating, explore restaurants that you never thought of eating at and get a sense of what their menus have to offer.

Tip #2:

Don't be afraid to speak up! Servers don't mind, just be kind and help them understand your needs and ask questions about ingredients, oils, sweeteners, etc.

Tip #3:

Ask for simple cooking methods like steamed or grilled and avoid deep-fried anything. You don't know where that oil has been!

Tip #4:

Swap out veggies for starches. If you order something with a bun and French fries, nix the bun for some extra lettuce and substitute the fries with either a salad or a side of steamed veggies.

Tip #5:

If you do not see anything on the menu that appeals to you, look at the sides menu. Often if you can't find a meal that suits your needs and desires, you can order a side salad with an extra side of veggies and a side of grilled chicken or hummus. Add a little lemon and olive oil and voila! You have a nourishing healthy meal.

Tip #6:

Make sure to drink water! Ask for a slice of lemon or lime or two for an added healthy refreshing boost.

Tip #7:

Ask your server to kindly keep the bread basket away from your table.

Tip #8:

Eat before you drink alcohol - ideally a good combination of protein, a healthy fat and a healthy carb to ensure you don't end up smashed and famished. Or forego the alcohol altogether with a sparkling water spritzer instead.

Tip #9:

Avoid creamy dressings, dips and sauces or ask for them on the side.

Tip #10:

Eat a healthy snack before you go to a restaurant. Even keeping a stash of nuts and seeds in your purse to snack on before you go out can help to keep the potential unhealthy ingredients that may come from restaurants to a minimum.

Bonus Tip:

Practice Hari hachi bu. Hari hachi bu is a Japanese term that means eat until 80% full and is an aspect of mindful eating. The idea of Hari hachi bu involves identifying the feeling of satiety that should precede feeling full and learning to stop eating there. Hari hachi bu is associated with greater longevity.