

Healthy Choices on Every Menu

Now, I know you can't always prepare and eat your meals at home. You can, however, make a point to always head to a restaurant prepared so you won't blow your calorie allowance for the day on an impulsive menu selection. If you're going out for a bite to eat, use this as your guide and don't let your diet dampen your enjoyment of sharing a meal with friends or family. Whether you're craving Asian, Italian, or standard American fare, there's always something healthy on the menu if you take the time to look.

- **Mexican:** Choose chicken, beef, or shrimp fajitas with black beans or salad on the side instead of rice; carne asada (steak with onions and peppers); shrimp diablo (this is grilled with garlic butter — ask that the cook either go easy on it or just leave it off); grilled fish tacos (with corn tortillas rather than flour); taco and tostada salads with chicken, beef, or shrimp for protein (don't eat the taco-shell bowl). Order everything à la carte. Skip the rice and ask for black beans, not refried beans.
- **Chinese:** Look for dishes with meats that aren't breaded and deep-fried. Also, avoid noodles, and get brown rice on the side. Try to steer clear of sweet-and-sour sauce and other sugary items. Opt for beef and broccoli dishes, shrimp and snow peas, garlic chicken, Mongolian beef-steak, or dishes that have meat and a vegetable, and ask that they be steamed, with sauces served on the side. You can also ask that the chef go easy on the cooking oil.
- **Thai:** Choose any satay dishes (chicken, shrimp, or beef); any protein or vegetable stir-fry; or steamed fish, chicken, or beef lettuce rolls. Avoid fatty coconut milk curries, noodles, and rice.
- **American:** You can order hamburgers (without bread or on a whole-grain bun), turkey dogs, meat chili, vegetable soups, kosher turkey bacon, white-meat chicken, and egg whites. A green salad is also a great option, but never with bacon, cheese, or croutons; look for salads that are full of vegetables, and ask for the dressing to be served on the side.
- **Indian:** Choose chicken, lamb, beef, or shrimp tikka (grilled marinated meat skewers) or chicken or beef tandoori; any vegetable dish, such as bhagan bharta (whipped eggplant), aloo gobi (marinated steamed cauliflower), or vegetable jalfrezi (mixed vegetables). Avoid curries, rice, and naan bread.
- **Sushi:** Stick to sashimi. Order your favorite rolls as hand rolls with no rice. You can do this with almost any roll.
- **Italian:** Order any chicken or fish dish, beef carpaccio, or any salad (always with the dressing on the side). Avoid heavy, creamy, or sugary sauces, and don't get pasta.
- **French:** Choose any steak, chicken, or fish dish, or any salad (always with the dressing on the side). Avoid rich, creamy, or sugary sauces, and don't get potatoes.
- **Breakfast:** Order any egg dish to be made with egg whites, if possible. Go for low-fat cottage cheese, yogurt with berries, turkey bacon, or smoked salmon. Avoid waffles, pancakes, bagels, muffins, doughnuts, and other pastries.