

OVEREATERS SOLUTIONS

Own your mind, own your body

Dr. Eleni's 10 Tips for Eating Out Healthy

In the fast paced lifestyle that we love so much in NYC, eating out is the norm and cooking-in for many is a rarity. With so many restaurant choices in NYC it **IS** possible to eat out and take out in a healthy manner that need not lead to weight gain or guilt. Restaurants, bars and pubs are in many ways the heartbeat of NYC. They are where we go to socialize with friends, to entertain our clients and family, and to celebrate special occasions. Many people trying to lose weight will often try to avoid eating out because they view restaurants as an indulgence and a place where their diets will surely be sabotaged. This doesn't have to be the case! You don't have to avoid a dinner out with friends or dread a business dinner due to fear of overeating. Here are some quick tips that can help:

First and Foremost: **Adopt a new mindset about dining out.** Dining out does not have to mean an indulgence, does not have to mean your healthy eating habits will be sabotaged and does not have to mean a free-for-all! Thinking that it is an excuse to eat whatever you want and how much you want is what sabotages healthy eating! So for starters, adopting a healthier mindset means changing the way you think about eating out. A healthy mindset sounds like, "Even though I'm going out to eat, I still need to eat healthy, mindfully and responsibly. A restaurant is not a free pass to binge or to order spaghetti carbonara!!"

2: **Choose the right restaurant.** Pick a restaurant with a varied menu with lots of options. A restaurant that offers a la carte side dishes is a great selection, so you can choose your sides, rather than have someone else choose them for you.

3: **Have a small snack prior to going out to dinner.** An apple or a handful of almonds will ensure that you are not showing up at a restaurant starving and will help you to avoid overeating when the bread basket arrives.

4: Ah, the revered bread basket! Upon being seated, ask for a glass of water. Thirst is often misinterpreted as hunger. Ask the server to **hold the bread basket** if you are with friends who may also not want to fill up on bread. If you are with a large party and don't want to keep the bread away from everyone, ask the server for whole grain bread and substitute butter with olive oil.

5: **Order food that is simply prepared.** When reading the menu, look for dishes that are steamed or grilled. Stay away from foods that are fried, sautéed or described as crispy, smothered or breaded. Also, stay away from sauces that are described as creamy, white, pink, or a butter sauce.

6: **Portion control!** You have heard this before but let's go over the importance of this again. Most restaurant portions are enough for 2 people! Upon getting your meal, ask for an extra dish or a to-go container and cut your portion in half. Take the other half home or share the meal with your dinner mate. It is important to get half the meal off your plate so that you are not tempted to eat it. You are less likely to eat it once you have put it in a to-go container immediately.

7: **Ask for substitutions.** Instead of fries ask for veggies or a small salad. Ask for the dressing on the side and ask if the chef can use olive oil instead of butter when preparing your meal. You will be surprised how accommodating most restaurants can be. They want you to come back!

8: **Don't deprive yourself!** If you really want dessert then order it! But share it with your dinner mate and go easy on breakfast and lunch the following day; A simple fruit salad or egg whites for breakfast and a salad with dressing on the side for lunch will make up for dessert.

9: **Tell your friends about your healthy eating plan, don't be shy or embarrassed.** Many people don't want to draw attention to their desire to lose weight out of fear of judgment or failure. It is often liberating when we just let our friends know of our plan for healthy eating. You will be surprised at how supportive friends can be when you let them in on your plans and goals. Most people will agree that trying to maintain healthy eating habits without sacrificing lifestyle and socializing is both empowering and responsible.

10: Lastly, **walk home after dinner don't take a taxi.** Or walk to the train station, take the subway then walk home. Walking will help you digest your food, burn off some calories and improve blood sugar levels.

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