

Reasonable Restaurant Eating

Restaurant eating can be a guilt-free and gluttony-free experience. However, you must pay special attention to your hunger, fullness and satisfaction signals. Here's how to enjoy eating out without overdoing it!



Realize that you will get fuller faster when eating in a restaurant

This is because restaurant food, in general, is very high in calories (mostly from fat). Also most restaurant meals involve extra socializing which may mean that you don't pay as much attention to fullness signals.

Be aware that a few extra bites of restaurant food means quite a few extra calories

Eat slowly and take a break half-way through the meal to check on your fullness. Be sure to stop eating right at the comfortable fullness point. Order the take-home box at the half-way point in the meal.

Don't forget that alcohol adds extra calories and may make it harder to judge your fullness

Choose beer or wine, rather than mixed drinks if you desire an alcoholic beverage. They have less calories. Or you may order water instead of alcohol to reduce the calories and the cost of the meal! A diet soda or an unsweetened iced tea are no-calorie options as well.

Don't let the restaurant determine your portion

Eat only as much as your stomach needs. If you are full part way through the French fries box, for example, then stop eating. There is no reason to finish off the fries if you are full. This may mean that you will have to throw the rest away or take them home for later.

Take home leftovers

Enjoy them the next day. Ask for a "to-go" box at the beginning of the meal. Portion off a part of the meal right into the box. Set the box aside and enjoy your meal!

Before ordering, try to judge which part of the meal you will enjoy the most

Order only that part of the meal. Don't get an appetizer if you are really looking forward to the main course, for example.

Before you order an appetizer

Realize that you may be approaching fullness before you even eat the main course. You can always order one or two appetizers as a meal if they seem more appealing than the main entrees.

If you know ahead of time that you want to eat dessert

Either eat a very light meal or skip the meal altogether and go straight to the dessert!

Consider splitting a dessert if you can

If you feel too deprived to give up dessert, share it! Perhaps you only need a bite or two to feel satisfied.

List your ideas here:

If you have the desire for something sweet after the meal...

...bring a couple of chocolates or candies with you to the restaurant and have those instead of a dessert. Or, tell yourself you can have dessert later when you feel hungry for it. Most likely you won't even miss it later.