

Making the Most of Meals Away From Home



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Restaurants, fast food chains, gas stations, and grocery stores provide on-the-go meals and snacks. There are many reasons to eat out, and these meals can be tasty, fun, and easy. But, they can also be higher in calories and carbohydrates, and have fewer nutrients than the food you make at home. Below are some tips to keep in mind to make sure that you enjoy your food and support your health when you eat away from home.

5 Tips for Eating When Not at Home



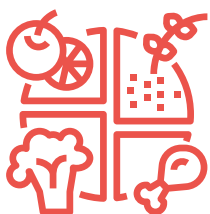
1. Go For Grilled

Choose grilled over fried to help lower the calories and fat in a meal. For example, having a grilled chicken sandwich at a restaurant instead of a fried chicken sandwich will reduce the total fat and calories in a meal.



2. Add In Color

Colorful fruits and veggies add nutrients to your food. Try a side salad, fruit cup, mixed vegetables, apple slices, or coleslaw. Asking to add veggie toppings to pizza, sandwiches, burritos, or any meal can be a great way to eat more veggies while still enjoying all the foods you love.



3. Be Mindful of Portions

Large meal sizes are often why eating out means higher calories per meal. When choosing your meal, pause to think about how hungry you are and think about how much your body is asking for at that moment. Sharing a dish with someone or saving half for a later meal is also a great way to help cut down on portion size while also saving money.



4. Check Out the Label

Reading the nutrition labels can help you learn about what is in the meals at your favorite restaurants. This gives YOU the power to choose what you would like to eat while still thinking about your taste, health, time, and budget. You can request nutrition info at many popular food chains or find it on their websites and menus. Always check the amount of carbs, fiber, and sugar per serving.



5. Think About Drinks

Focus on water, seltzers, or no sugar-added teas. High sugar drinks such as soda, sweet tea, energy drinks, flavored coffee, or milk drinks can quickly increase the sugar and calories in your meal.

Build a Balanced “On-the-Go” Meal

You may need to grab quick snacks on the go. The best snack options are those that pair together carbohydrates and either protein or fat.

Below are some easy on the go snack or mini-meal ideas. These are quick and can often be found at gas stations or quick-marts:

- Greek yogurt + unsalted nuts + banana
- Celery sticks + peanut butter + trail mix
- Beef jerky + orange + carrot sticks
- Hummus + pretzel pack + celery sticks
- Light butter popcorn + almonds + pear
- Apple + cheese stick + whole wheat crackers
- Hard boiled egg + grape cup + granola bar
- Cottage cheese + whole wheat crackers + grape cup



Fast Food Swaps

Fast food chains are often thought of as unhealthy, but they can provide us with a quick meal or snack when needed. Luckily, it is now easier to get a fast food meal that gives you both a boost of nutrition and convenience at the same time.

Check out these simple swaps to boost your health on-the-go:

- Swap fries → apple slices
- Swap large meal combos → small meal combos
- Swap fried chicken → grilled chicken
- Swap beef → lean protein such as chicken or beans
- Swap large sodas → small zero sugar sodas



More Tips on Making the Most of Fast Food Meals

1. Order from the kids' menu. The smaller sizes are often the perfect portion size for an adult.

2. Switch your sides. Many fast food restaurants now have a wider selection of healthy sides, like carrots, plain baked potatoes, sliced apples and fruit cups. Skip the fries and balance out your entrée with fruit or vegetables.

3. Skip the sauces. One tablespoon of mayo can have 100 calories, and BBQ sauces are high in sugar. Aim for ketchup or plain mustard.

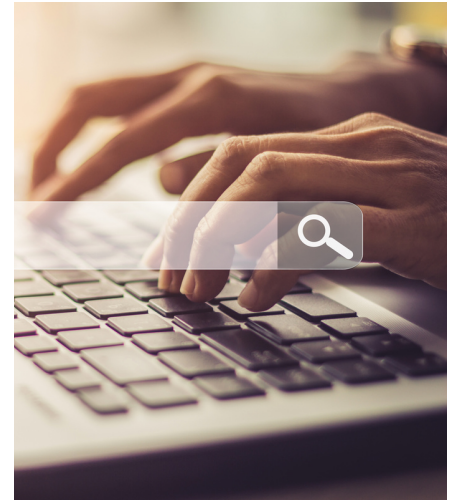
4. Special Order. For example, if the grilled chicken salad comes with a 300-calorie ranch dressing, ask if you can get the light balsamic instead. Start with half of the dressing and add as necessary to taste.

From Lesson to Action

1) What are some of your favorite meals when eating out? Try finding the nutrition labels for your favorite meals online. This will help you make informed choices when dining out.

Steps for Finding Nutritional Info

1. Google the restaurant's name (i.e. Chipotle)
2. Look for a Menu or Nutrition tab. This tab will usually contain a list with all of the nutrition facts for each item.
3. If there is no menu or nutrition tab, try searching Google for the restaurant's name + nutrition to see what you can find.
4. We do not recommend trusting nutrition information from just any website, so make sure you're on the restaurant's website.



2) What is one swap you could make while eating out to add more fruits and vegetables to your day?

3) What are 1-2 healthy snacks that you may be able to find at a quick-mart or gas station?

