

Restaurant rules for weight loss

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(HealthDay)—Is eating out your diet downfall? Getting together with friends is fun, but a tempting menu can quickly derail your weight loss efforts.

Try these restaurant rules to stay on the calorie track.

First, choose a restaurant that offers healthier fare. Japanese, Thai and other Asian cuisines are usually vegetable-based with little saturated fat in the other ingredients. Greek and Spanish restaurants serve foods from the healthy Mediterranean diet, so you'll likely be able to choose from fish, grilled [lean meats](#) and salads.

If your willpower fades the second you face a [menu](#), decide what to order before you set foot in the [restaurant](#). If its menu isn't online, call ahead and ask for recommendations by phone. Remember that restaurants want to accommodate you.

If you're trying a new cuisine and want to sample unique dishes, make it your goal to limit calories. Never go ravenous, or you'll be tempted to fill up on bread. Try ordering two small appetizers instead of an appetizer and an entree, and split just one dessert with everyone at the table—all you need is a taste to appreciate it.

If eating out is a spur-of-the-moment decision with no time for pre-planning, choose dishes that emphasize lean meat and fresh vegetables and that are steamed, broiled, baked or lightly sauteed. Avoid anything that's described as breaded, fried or smothered with gravy, butter, cream or cheese sauce—the calories and fat are too hard to control.

And if you do happen to overindulge, simply get back to all your good habits at the very next meal.

More information: The U.S. Department of Agriculture has [more tips for eating out](#) at all types of restaurants, from sit-down to fast food.

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