



# EATING OUT SURVIVAL GUIDE

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## HOW OFTEN ARE YOU EATING OUT?

A one-off meal out probably won't make any difference to your health in the grand scheme of things, so enjoy it. However, if it's one of many, consider carefully how it fits into your overall diet. This could mean having a lighter meal in the evening, like soup or a sandwich, if you had a big meal earlier in the day. Or you could choose the healthiest menu options to make the meal fit into your normal diet, rather than just going for your favourites.

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## CHECK WHAT'S ON THE MENU

One of the best ways to ensure you make healthy choices when eating out is to check the menu before you arrive, whether online or in person. It means you can choose your meal without others influencing you. Many larger restaurant chains offer nutritional information online.

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## HOW MANY COURSES?

The tendency when we eat out is to have more than we would at home. Sticking to just one course once you see what everyone else is having is hard. Decide before you begin if you are going to have a starter or a dessert, and which one you'll find easier to decline. Having a coffee or cup of tea while others have a pudding is a good way to round off a meal, or you could share a pudding with others.

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## ADAPT YOUR DISHES

Don't be afraid to ask the restaurant to adapt dishes. It's not usually a problem to replace chips with a jacket potato, salad or vegetables. You can also ask for no extra cheese, butter or oil, and to put sauces in a dish on the side.

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## PORTION CONTROL

It can be easy to eat more than you intended when eating out. If you don't want to feel too stuffed, consider a starter (perhaps with a side order of vegetables), instead of a main course, or ask for a smaller portion.



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## KEEP IT LEAN

Choose dishes, which are based on lean proteins like chicken or turkey. Avoid high fat cuts of meat like belly pork or rump steak and remove any visible fat like the fat around the edge of a chop. Watch out for battered and deep fried dishes - even if the contents are lean (like chicken, fish, tofu or vegetables) the coating means they will come with lots of extra fat and calories.

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## THE SIDES

Having a good helping of vegetables with your meal will add vitamins, minerals and fibre and help you towards your five a day, but beware vegetables that come with added butter, cheese sauce or salt. Ask the server for more information and see if there are any healthier alternatives.

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## BE DRINK AWARE

Keeping alcoholic drinks within the guidelines is important, particularly if you are going to be socialising more than usual. Try not to exceed the recommended 14 units a week. Don't forget the calories that drinks, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic can add. If you can, choose sugar-free drinks or water, and alternate these with any alcoholic drinks you are having.

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## ENTERTAIN AT HOME

We all enjoy eating out sometimes, but have you considered inviting family or friends round for a meal? That way you can control what's on the menu, and it's often cheaper too. Ask your guests to bring a dish if you don't want to be overwhelmed by cooking, although don't forget to let them know if you want them to bring a healthier option.

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## FANCY A NIBBLE?

Nibbles are always a very tempting option. It's fine to indulge in a shortbread biscuit, or a chocolate sweet, but sticking to a regular pattern of meals and snacks will help to make sure you aren't hungry between meals and help maintain your willpower.