



Navigating Restaurants



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Introduction



Just because you have changed your lifestyle doesn't mean you have to miss out on enjoying a tasty meal out or spending time with friends and family. Navigating Restaurants was created to help you navigate eating out so that finding a place to eat and staying healthy is always easy and fun.

Keep in mind that even though you will be able to put together an anti-inflammatory meal, it's not going to be 100%. It's likely they are using canola oil, or vegetable oil, and most likely nothing is organic or fresh. So, try to limit the amount of times per week you eat out.

Check Out the Menu Ahead of Time

Most restaurants have menus online or posted outside of their establishment. It's easier to eat out if you've done a bit of recon. This way, you will have an idea of what your choices are and you won't have to waste your time during dinner to "map out your strategy".

If you have no choice on where you go, it's still easy to put together an anti-inflammatory meal.

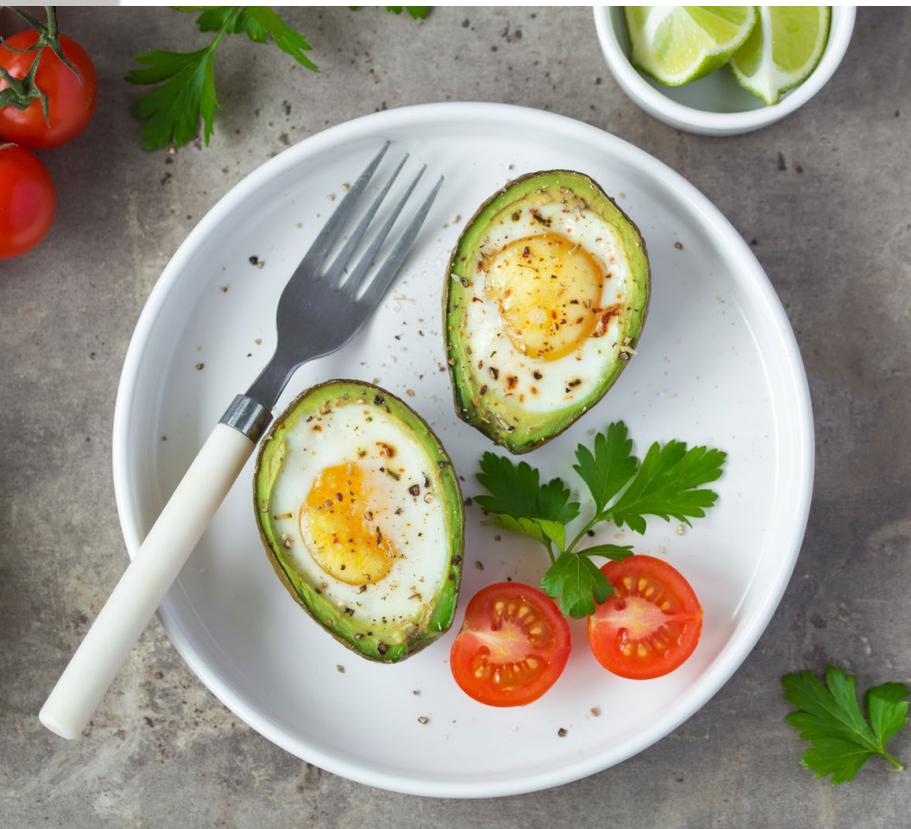
KEY WORDS TO LOOK FOR WHEN SCANNING A MENU:

salads, meat, entrées, vegetable sides, and how your meat is prepared.



For your meat look for:

- **Broiled:** Broiled meat is a great choice.
- **Steamed:** Steaming is just about the ideal way to cook vegetables.
- **Poached:** Fish and chicken poached in water or broth is flavorful and tender.
- **Roasted:** Roasted meats and vegetables are almost always a good choice.
- **Grilled:** Be sure to ask if the grilled meat is finished with a sauce or oil when it comes off the grill.
- **Sous vide:** Sous vide is popular in higher end restaurants. The meat or seafood is cooked in a hot water bath, then finished over or under a high heat source to brown the meat.
- **Smoked:** Like grilling, smoking is a good cooking method. Sugar is often included in the rubs used on meat, so verify with the server, but the amounts used are usually minimal and not worth worrying about.



Words on the menu to avoid:

- **Crispy or battered:** These most likely contained wheat and were fried in an Omega 6 oil.
- **Coated or Breaded:** The description says it all. Coated or Breaded means there is most definitely a grain involved.
- **Fried:** It's obvious most fried food is not going to be anti-inflammatory. Besides the Omega 6 oil it was probably fried in, heating oil to high temperatures can generate potentially carcinogenic compounds.
- **Sausage or Meatballs:** Many sausages are processed meat and meatballs often contain bread crumbs or flour.

Start the meal off right

When the server approaches to take drink orders, start off right. Avoid all sugary drinks and alcohol. An occasional glass of red wine is okay. Say no to the pre-meal freebies such as chips, peanuts, rolls, breadsticks, etc. It's easier to resist if the basket isn't sitting at the table.

Get Your Server on Board

Don't be that demanding customer. Instead, make friends with your server and get them on your side. It's easier to say, "I am allergic to grain and dairy, rather than I don't eat grains and dairy".

Substitute, substitute, substitute. Don't feel shy about being creative. Mix and match from the items on the menu to create new combinations. Some easy shortcuts are replacing the starches, such as rice and potatoes or fries, with more vegetables or salad. All it takes is your imagination and a pleasant request.

Ask questions!

What kind of oil is (enter menu item here) sautéed in?

Is the chicken (or any other meat) battered in flour?

Is there milk, butter, or cheese on that?

Don't forget to ask about oils. Unless it's stated, most restaurants use canola oil. Let your server know you are sensitive to Omega 6 oils and would appreciate your meal cooked in olive oil if possible.

Remember restaurants are in the business of serving food you enjoy, so don't be afraid to ask (politely) for changes. Your server can help you customize your order beyond the instructions found here in the restaurant guide. Remember to smile, be polite, and tip for the extra effort you are requesting.

Navigating different cuisines



American Restaurants, Diners & Cafes

American restaurants such as steak houses, diners, or burger joints are very easy to eat at because their menus include many meat and vegetable choices.

You can replace the common, potato-based sides (mashed potatoes, French fries, baked potatoes, etc.), with extra vegetables and a side salad. Stay away from restaurant dressings as they contain dairy, salt and other unhealthy ingredients. Instead, ask for some lemon slices, olive oil and Balsamic Vinegar or salsa for the dressing. This goes for your vegetables and meat too.

Make sure they aren't covered in a sweet, sugary, or dairy sauce.

Be wary of soups and stews. Ask lots of questions about soups and stews, including whether or not they contain soy, flour, grains, or dairy.

Breakfast/Pancake House

In the American diet, carbs have been the typical mainstay of breakfast. This does make it a little more limited when eating at a breakfast house. Think meat and vegetables. Omelets are usually a good choice. Make sure and specify that you want no cheese added and to hold the potatoes or hash browns. Substituting with fruit or additional grilled vegetables is a great alternative.

Chinese

Eating at a Chinese restaurant is tricky. Most of the foods are loaded with MSG, sugars, and salt. In addition, the meat is often of low quality. Here you need to avoid MSG, dark sauces, soy sauce, peanut sauces, and teriyaki sauce. Tell your server that you are allergic to MSG, dairy, and grain. Let them help steer you to the right dishes. The best choices are steamed vegetables and a roasted meat.

Italian

It may seem impossible to eat at an Italian restaurant with all the bread and pasta everywhere, but it's possible. Remember, think meat and vegetables. Instead of pasta have them place your meal over veggies such as spinach, eggplant, zucchini, broccoli, etc.

The real danger is not the pasta, it's the creamy sauces and the rolls that are brought to the table you need to avoid. Just like in a Mexican restaurant, tell the server as soon as you can to not bring any breadsticks or rolls to the table. Let your server know you are allergic to dairy and need to avoid any sauces that are creamy or white, as they typically have dairy in them. Instead, stick to tomato or wine based sauces with no added salt.

Indian

Grilled and roasted meats and vegetables are a great choice. Avoid curries that have a flour or dairy base.

Japanese Steakhouse/Sushi Bar

There is a lot to choose from here. You can often get raw fish and vegetables. When going for the specialty-made rolls, find choices that don't include rice. If you aren't sure what to order, let your server know you would like a no rice roll; they will let you know which ones you may choose from.

Stay clear of all deep-fried rolls and any extra sauces as they will contain either soy, dairy, or added salt. Instead of the soy sauce you can bring your coconut aminos from home to use as your dipping sauce.



Mediterranean/Middle Eastern

It's almost effortless to stay on track in these restaurants. They are usually big on healthy oils, and flavor, making it easy to order meat and vegetables. Just avoid the pita bread.

Mexican

Those chips are dangerous at Mexican restaurants, so make sure when you sit down to tell your server not to bring chips to the table. It's easier to avoid it all together rather than trying to abstain.

There are a lot of dishes you can order at Mexican restaurants sans the tortilla, beans, and rice. You can order all the meat or seafood and veggies. If the dish comes with rice and beans, you can substitute them for more veggies, a salad, or other toppings.

Make sure to ask server to hold the cheese and sour cream. Great toppings are Pico De Gallo or guacamole.

Pizza Parlor

You may find yourself at a pizza parlor because of a family gathering or party. Believe it or not, you can still find something to eat. Most pizza parlors offer a salad bar. Go for that, and be mindful of the dressing choices. If they don't offer oil and vinegar, your next choice would be the balsamic based dressing.



Thai

Stay away from stir-fried meals that often contain soy products. Instead, opt for curry dishes or dishes that are made from a coconut milk base. Choose extra vegetables instead of noodles or rice.

When ordering seafood, you'll definitely want to leave the sauce off, if it comes with any. Sauces for seafood are almost always creamy, dairy-based, and not recommended. Seafood also often comes in deep-fried form, so be sure you specify your desired cooking method (grilled, seared, baked, or sautéed).



In summary

When you are in your own kitchen you know exactly what you are eating. In restaurants, unhealthy ingredients such as sugars, soy, wheat, and canola oil may slip in. Even though you have done your best to avoid them. Since you can't be sure of every ingredient, remember to take your Omega 3's to help to balance out whatever damage you may have done in the Omega-6 department while eating out.

Dining out gets easier with practice and eventually can become a natural part of your healthy routine.