

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Historical Materials from University of
Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

Extension

1997

NF97-349 Tips for Eating Healthy When Dining Out

Janice Boyce

University of Nebraska at Kearney

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>



Part of the [Agriculture Commons](#), and the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#)

Boyce, Janice, "NF97-349 Tips for Eating Healthy When Dining Out" (1997). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 1912.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/1912>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Tips for Eating Healthy When Dining Out

by Janice Boyce, Extension Food Service Management Specialist

The National Restaurant Association reported that Americans spent 44 percent of their food dollars outside the home in 1996, compared to 25 percent in 1955. While more consumers are eating out, they also are requesting foods that are healthier.

How is the food service business responding to consumer demand for foods that are prepared in a healthier way? Both chefs and restaurant owners/managers are adding healthier food choices to their menus. In chef's competitions during the late 1990s, the chefs were judged not only on taste and appearance of their entries, but also on cleanliness and nutrient composition. In May 1997, FDA put regulations into effect for nutrition labeling of restaurant menus.

So can you, as a consumer, eat out and be healthy at the same time? Yes. By following the tips given here, consumers can dine on restaurant food and still be health conscious.

Tips for Dining Out

- Study the menu. Look for menu selections that may have descriptions such as "fresh." Other terms to look for include items that say "roasted," "grilled," "steamed," or "poached." These terms may mean that the menu items have been prepared without excess fat, or that they have been prepared with water, bouillon or broth.
- When ordering a salad, request that the dressing be served on the side. This allows you to decide how much dressing you want to add to your salad. The old standby of oil and vinegar is still a good choice for regular dressings. You also may inquire if low-fat or no-fat dressings are available, and order these.
- Order sauces and dips that may be added to the top of your entree in a side dish. Ask the person waiting on you to accommodate you with this request.
- It is wise to stick to reasonably plain dishes. If you are ordering the broiled fish, ask if it may be prepared without adding fat. This usually works if the fish is of the fattier variety, like salmon. A leaner fish, like halibut, may be brushed lightly with oil during preparation. Avoid tartar sauce on your fish. It has a high fat content. A better accompaniment for fish is fresh lemon or lemon juice, or a red sauce made from catsup and horseradish.
- When ordering menu items such as pasta, stick to tomato or marinara sauce. These are usually low fat.
- Ask your server. The person waiting on you should be a wealth of information about the menu selections and may be able to steer you in the right direction. Ask if there are any of the items that may be considered "lighter" or "lower-fat" than other menu selections. The server also should be able to tell you how an item is prepared; how much fat is used, or what other ingredients are added to the dish that may increase the fat content. When ordering vegetables, ask if they may be served without fat being added to them after they are cooked.
- Consider the appetizer selections. These items are generally a smaller portion and you may request that they be served as your entree item.
- Another technique is to request a carry-out container at the beginning of your meal and divide your meal in half. This gets the food out of your sight and allows you to have another meal for later. If you decide to use this tip, remember you should not leave the food out of refrigeration for more than a total of two hours from the time it is served to you. Ask the person waiting on you to refrigerate it for you until you are ready to leave the restaurant. Put the saved meal into the refrigerator immediately after arriving home.

- Dessert may be another area where consumers are tempted to splurge, but there are menu selections that can fit into a healthy lifestyle. Fruit sorbets are a great choice since they are made without fat and generally have a high proportion of fruit juice and pulp. Cakes made with egg whites, such as angel food cakes, are another fat-free alternative. Fruit is also a great choice. There are many dishes prepared with exotic and tradi-

tional varieties of fruit. Again, ask which dessert items are prepared without fat or are lower in fat.

- Some restaurants may have worked with a registered dietitian to create special menu items. Ask if the restaurant participates in one of these programs. A special symbol for these items may be on the menu item itself or listed on the bottom of the menu.

Here are a few examples of menu items that offer healthy choices. If you have any doubt as to preparation of the dish, ask!

Appetizers

Stuffed Poblano Chilespicy green chili with smoked turkey and roasted corn topped with a zesty pico de gallo.

Grilled Vegetable Pizza.....pungent pesto, yellow squash, zucchini, mozzarella, romano and blue cheese, serves 2-4.

Entree

Grilled Rosemary Chicken.....simply put, 8 oz. breast grilled and lightly seasoned.

Pasta

Risottoarborio rice simmered in vegetable broth and served with shiitake mushrooms, garlic, onions and tomatoes. Chicken, steak or shrimp can be

File under: FOODS AND NUTRITION

B-7, Meal Planning

Issued October 1997

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Kenneth R. Bolen, Director of Cooperative Extension, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educational programs abide with the non-discrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.