

Healthy Swaps for Eating Out: Make Mindful Choices



Navigate restaurant menus with confidence and make healthier choices without sacrificing flavor.

Cuisine	Typical Dish	Healthier Swap	Tips
Italian	Creamy pasta dishes (Alfredo, carbonara)	Tomato-based sauces with whole-wheat pasta or zucchini noodles	Ask for extra vegetables.
	Breaded and fried chicken or veal	Grilled chicken or fish	Choose a lean protein option.
	Thick-crust pizza with lots of cheese	Thin-crust pizza with plenty of vegetable toppings	Opt for a whole-wheat crust if available.
Chinese	Fried rice or noodles	Steamed brown rice or quinoa	Ask for extra vegetables and choose dishes with lean protein.

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	Sweet and sour dishes	Stir-fried dishes with light sauce on the side	Be mindful of added sugar and sodium in sauces.
	Deep-fried appetizers (egg rolls, spring rolls)	Steamed dumplings or vegetable spring rolls	Choose appetizers that are steamed or baked instead of fried
American	Burgers and fries	Grilled chicken or fish with a side salad or steamed vegetables	Opt for a whole-wheat bun or lettuce wrap for your burger.
	Fried chicken or fish	Baked or grilled chicken or fish	Choose lean protein options and avoid fried foods
	Mac and cheese	Side salad or a cup of soup	Look for lighter side options or share a larger dish with a friend.
Mexican	Fried tacos or burritos	Grilled fish or chicken tacos with corn tortillas	Choose corn tortillas over flour tortillas for a lower-carb option
	Nachos with cheese and sour cream	Fajitas with plenty of vegetables and beans	Load up on veggies and choose lean protein options.
	Fried chimichangas	Grilled or baked enchiladas with salsa and avocado	Opt for dishes that are baked or grilled instead of fried.

Additional Tips:

- **Ask for modifications:** Don't be afraid to ask your server to customize your order. Request sauces and dressings on the side, ask for extra vegetables, or inquire about healthier cooking methods.

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- **Share dishes:** Restaurant portions are often large. Consider sharing an entree with a friend or taking half of your meal home for later.
- **Focus on vegetables:** Make vegetables the star of your plate. Choose dishes that are rich in vegetables and limit high-fat or processed sides.
- **Mindful eating:** Eat slowly, savor each bite, and pay attention to your hunger and fullness cues.

Remember:

- **Healthy eating out is possible!** With a little planning and awareness, you can make nutritious choices that support your wellness goals.
- **Balance and moderation are key.** It's okay to indulge occasionally, but prioritize healthier options most of the time.
- **Enjoy the experience!** Dining out is a social activity. Focus on connecting with your loved ones and savoring the flavors of your meal.

Download this handy chart and keep it with you for quick reference when dining out!

We hope this guide empowers you to make informed and healthy choices when eating out. Bon appétit!