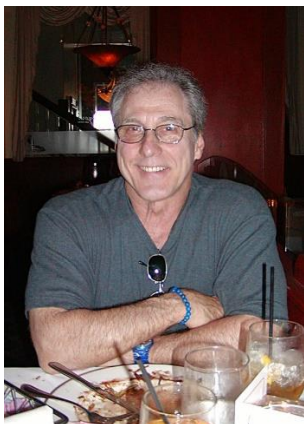


## HOW TO SURVIVE RESTAURANT EATING



Going out to eat can be quite enjoyable if you want to celebrate a special occasion or get together with friends to try a new restaurant. But it can be somewhat devastating to how we look and feel. By trial and error, we have worked out some guidelines for restaurant eating without having to "pay" physically, later, and we advise others to follow these suggestions.

It is advisable to have in mind exactly what you want to eat before you arrive at the restaurant. Even decide ahead of time how you want your food cooked and what size portions you will consume. Since you've been weighing your food at home, it will be easy for your eyes to judge the servings, going to a restaurant famished can be a disaster. If you're going out for breakfast, eat a piece of fresh fruit on the way. If it's lunch or dinner, nibble a few raw, crunchy vegetables before, since this can take the place of a first course.

Many restaurants bring you a basket of bread or chips when you first sit down. It's best to request that these be removed or be certain that they aren't near your side of the table. They can ruin your appetite and will most likely slow the digestion of the remainder of your meal. Next, the waiter or server will want to get you a drink (100-plus calories!). You have two choices. If you're having some alcohol at another meal that day or you don't desire to indulge at all you can request mineral water or plain water with a twist; if on the other hand you want a drink, ask that it be served 15 minutes before your meal. This will give it time to prime your appetite and stimulate your digestive juices. If it is breakfast, you're eating, you'll be offered juice—decline it. opt for a piece of fresh natural fruit instead, and if coffee is your choice, remember to tell the person waiting on you that all you want is one cup. Because both fruit and coffee are acid, it is best to sip your coffee with your meal or after it, not with the fruit.

Order only the food you want. Potatoes and buttered white toast are often served automatically with a breakfast order. Unless you know how the restaurant purchases and prepares their potatoes, order a baked potato or skip it entirely. Most restaurants will substitute tomatoes or cottage cheese for potatoes. Ask for unsalted butter (if available) on the side so you can control the amount you'll have. We try to get unsalted whipped butter because it goes much further (1 tablespoon regular butter = 100 cal., 1 tablespoon whipped butter = 65 cal.). Have all other items and/or sauce and dressings served on the side, substituted, or eliminated. Find out what ingredients they contain. Ask for oil and vinegar or lemon juice to substitute for premixed salad dressings, which are loaded with salt and sugar. Stay away from restaurant soups for the same reason. Order à la carte. Ask how your food will be prepared and request no salt and a cooking method which uses no fats or oils (poached, boiled, steamed, broiled, or grilled).

Stay away from buffets (even salad bars, unless you know the restaurant extremely well and are absolutely certain of their ingredients). These foods are usually loaded with either salt, sugar, and/or a chemical additive. Many restaurants use sulfur dioxide, sodium bisulfite, or sodium sulfite to keep cut potatoes, apples, bananas, and other fruits and vegetables fresh in appearance. These chemicals are also used in packaged produce such as mushrooms and pre-cut slaws and salad ingredients as well as shelled shrimp and shellfish. Some of the sensitivities you think you have to food may be due to the chemicals they are treated with and not the food at all.

When eating out we used to order a large vegetable salad, feeling it was one of the "safer" choices. Although we don't salt any of our foods, we began to notice that after eating these salads we were slightly swollen with water retention. This was

quite a mystery since greens are a natural diuretic and usually help remove water from the body. Then we found out about sodium sulfiting agents—the hidden salt.

Even when salad bars don't treat their fruits and vegetables with sulfites, they still stock a sizable number of fattening selections like carrot-raisin slaw, Cole slaw, potato salads, macaroni salad, raisins, nuts, and—usually at the end of the line—fruit salads, crackers, and heavy salad dressings, all of which are generally made with sugar, salt, and extra fats. In fact, some salad bars only offer one green vegetable—lettuce; everything else is a combination salad. Often, it's better to skip the salad bar and order a salad with only the ingredients you want.

If, despite all your efforts, your waiter loads your table and your plate with all the "extras" that you didn't want to be tempted by, simply over season with salt everything that you don't want to eat. You will then easily be able to resist it. Just because something comes with the meal, or you paid for it, doesn't mean you have to eat it. Would you rather waste a 40-cent serving of greasy potatoes or eventually spend 40 dollars for a new pair of jeans with a larger waist size?

If you can't find a main course to suit you, try ordering from the appetizer list. You could begin with a green salad, tossed with pepper, olive oil, and lemon, or with a selection of raw vegetables added to a green salad, and sprinkled with dried herbs. Next, you could have a baked potato, or a fresh vegetable of the day, followed by a shrimp or crab cocktail (no sauce), a serving of hard cheese, a hard-cooked egg, or cottage cheese. You could request that avocado and/or cheese be added to your salad or vegetable. Some restaurants offer a larger selection of appetizers than others, but salad, a vegetable, fresh shrimp cocktail (ask the restaurant if they cook and prepare their shrimp without sulfites—precooked shellfish usually contain sulfiting agents), cheese, and egg are generally found on most menus and are much more palatable and nutritious than the normal "dieter's special"—a hamburger patty, cottage cheese, and a mushy canned peach half in a syrupy juice.

In the final analysis you can get a far superior meal at home for less money and less hassle and with more nutrition than you can by eating out. Therefore, if you have a choice, eat at home, or bring something from home. However, there will be special times when you want to dine out and there are restaurants which prepare superb meals without the use of chemicals. You probably will indulge in foods that normally you wouldn't allow yourself, but let it happen only occasionally, perhaps once or twice a month. And choose your restaurant carefully. We have a favorite restaurant in our area of Southern California that serves extremely fresh food (raw dairy products, fresh vegetables, and grain-fed meats) prepared with home-grown herbs and all made from scratch—at each meal. Sunday brunch is our favorite. It is served outdoors under huge trees and walks along a creek lined with bushes of rosemary and mint. There is not one thing we could ask to be eliminated or changed. Even the breads are freshly milled from whole grains. Therefore, we plan ahead when we go to this restaurant. The Saturday evening before, we eat very lightly, and on Sunday we eat only two meals: brunch and later a light dinner. This way we can enjoy the entire meal and not have to feel guilty or have our appearance suffer later. Planning and following through with your food choices is essential to sensible eating.

If you're eating out at an ethnic restaurant, make careful choices. At an Italian restaurant choose either a vegetable meal consisting primarily of vegetables and pasta (meat sauce on pasta is too heavy), or a meat meal like chicken, fish, or veal (no breading) with a green salad or a light vegetable. Have all sauces and cheeses placed on the side. Go easy on them—both are salty. Try a vegetarian pizza without meat or cheese. Ask for no salt and a thin crust.

If you eat Chinese food stay away from the sauces (sweet-and sour, soy, etc.) and fried dishes and ask that the MSG (monosodium glutamate) be omitted. If it can't be, order something that doesn't contain any. MSG is used in a lot of restaurants and is found in a great many seasonings. It has been known to cause edema, headaches, eye problems, and other allergic reactions. It's best avoided.

Mexican and Spanish foods are rich sources of complex carbohydrates. It is common to be able to find nutritious meals here if you avoid the highly salted refried beans and the rice and request no salt.

In French restaurants you don't have to eat foods covered with rich, high-calorie sauces. There are many dishes cooked in wine or spirits which are wonderful, coq au vin for instance. It's all up to you and what you request. We've never been in a restaurant anywhere in the world where they were not anxious to please. If they could not comply with our wishes, they usually made helpful suggestions.

Needless to say, fast-food establishments are totally out of bounds. We'd just as soon go to a grocery store and get something fresh from the produce section, a can of tuna (unsalted and water packed), and a container of plain yogurt, before eating overcooked foods, loaded with additives, devoid of most nutrients, and prepared in rancid fats.

Traveling can put you in a situation where you're stuck with what is served. Like on an airplane, right? Wrong. You don't have to eat it if you've planned ahead. Wherever we travel we bring food along in an inexpensive thermos that can be thrown away. If we are going on a trip from California to Europe and it will be morning when we arrive, we carry fruit, hard-cooked eggs, and a couple slices of homemade bread. We finish our breakfast refreshed and nourished, while the other passengers, having had a meager sweet roll and reconstituted sugary orange juice, are feeling a severe blood sugar letdown from their caffeine-sugar jolt. When leaving

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from a city away from home we have a restaurant pack us a meal. We always arrive feeling good and never have to worry about being hungry or stuck with a meal that could be worse than hunger.

Not all restaurants are poor and not all airlines have unhealthy food, but you can get stuck if you don't plan ahead. Call the restaurant or the airline before you go. Inquire about what they have to offer and if they will be able to accommodate your requests. They are usually more than happy to make you a comfortable client—one who will use their services repeatedly.

From Zane Nutrition by Frank & Christine Zane Available in eBook form at [www.frankzane.com](http://www.frankzane.com)