



Queensland Government

Healthier. Happier.

7 ways to eat healthier when you're out



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Eating out is awesome. The food tastes great, there's lots of choice and it's so super easy. Whether it's breakfast, lunch or dinner, it's the recipe for a good time and a sit-back-with-a-full-stomach sigh. Deep down, we know there's a reason that eggs benedict is such a winner, or that creamy risotto tastes so ohmygodyouhavetotrythis amazing. Yes, when it comes to restaurant food, flavour generally comes waaaay before health. But if you're the type who wants to get your Health & Fitness Age down, the good news is you can have your cake and eat it too. Well, share it at least. All you need is a strategy.

1. Pre-eat

A healthy snack before you head for the front door stops you turning up to the restaurant starving, which is great because we all know what happens when you turn up to a restaurant starving. To put the brakes on over-ordering and/or over eating next time you head out to eat, visit our recipes page for some healthy snack ideas.

2. Go the water

This super useful eating out tip has nothing to do with eating, but it will certainly cut your kilojoules! Soft drinks, milkshakes and alcohol all belong to a category called 'energy dense drinks'. You can imagine why. Even smoothies and fresh juice, though loaded with fruit, can pack a huge number of kilojoules. So if you want to give yourself a fighting chance of leaving the cafe with your health halo intact, stick to water – absolutely no kilojoules whatsoever. Try sparkling for something different or brighten up your glass with these '5 ways to make water more colourful'.

3. Double entree

And so to the food. Large portion size can be a big problem in the home, so you can imagine what happens when the food tastes restaurant-good... and you've paid for it! So if you're the type who simply has to have a starter and a main, order two entrees instead. That way you can keep the kilojoules down even if you 'simply have to' scrape up every last morsel.

4. Protein

Most restaurant meals centre around a protein such as beef, chicken, pork or fish. Avoid coated, crumbed or deep fried options and choose grilled or steamed options instead. For something different, try a vegetarian option.

5. Vegetables

When eating out, vegetables are your best friend. They are packed with vitamins and minerals, high in fibre and low in kilojoules. Basically they will fill you up with goodness. Look for mains that come with salad or veggies, or order some on the side. Always ask if you can swap the chips for veggies or salad. To build up your healthy cooking skills, watch the Healthy Tips video series here.

6. Grilled/roasted/steamed

Whether it's your entree, main or sides there's a healthy pecking order to the way your meal is prepared. Look for food that is steamed, pan-fried, poached, baked, roasted or grilled. Deep fried is definitely best avoided. Dressings, sauces and gravies are often high in kilojoules and saturated fat – order them on the side so you have more control over how much you consume. When roasting vegetables you can use less oil by coating them in a plastic bag, demonstrated here.

7. Dessert

Let's face it, by this stage you're probably full. You should have stopped three mouthfuls ago. But... so... sweeeet. Well let's be realistic; if you just have to go the dessert, you have two tricks up your sleeve. Firstly, order something with fresh fruit.

It's still sweet, but the natural sugars are paired with high fibre flesh and you're getting some great vitamins and minerals. Secondly, share your dessert with someone, since a lot of the pleasure associated with dessert is actually in the first mouthful.

8. Special extra bonus last tip - Go slow

If you're still reading, you're obviously pretty keen for a little help in the healthy-eating-out department. Well this is one super easy strategy you can try with your very next meal; simply slow down your eating. It can take your stomach up to twenty minutes to tell your

brain it's full. Meanwhile, your tastebuds are peppering your grey matter for more, more, MORE! So take your time, listen to your body and make it a fair contest. Try it at home too.

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