

Ordering lunch from a menu



When eating in a restaurant or cafeteria, think about the food choices you will look for before you open the menu. Read through the menu to find the most nutritious items that appeal to your tastes.

If you are dining in a restaurant that you have been to before, you may be surprised at the healthy/tasty choices that have been added!

Remember your five basic food groups and look for options that:

- Use whole wheat (or whole grain) bread.
- Have steamed, grilled (skinless and boneless) or broiled meats instead of those that are fried, sautéed, or prepared in sauce.
- Include side dishes that are full of vegetables that are not fried or prepared with butter.
- Include lots of vegetables as sandwich toppings.
- Use mustard instead of mayonnaise.
- Offer salads with either grilled steak, chicken or seafood on top.
- Offer lean meats or beans with steamed vegetables.
- Offer good beverage choices including water, fat-free or low-fat milk, unsweetened tea, or other drinks without added sugars.

- Provide low-fat/low-calorie salad dressing on the side and use only as much as you need for taste.
- Add little or no butter to your food.
- Include fruits and/or low-fat yogurt as your dessert.
- Prepare foods using low-fat cooking methods. Look for terms like:
 - steamed
 - in its own juice (au jus)
 - garden fresh
 - broiled
 - baked
 - roasted
 - poached
 - lightly sautéed or stir-fried.

Ask for what you want! Most restaurants will honor your requests. A number of chefs are very mindful of their customers' desire for tasty and nutritious lunches. If it is challenging for you to navigate through the menu and find choices that you are looking for, ask your server to ask the chef to recommend something for you. You usually can also make special requests, such as "I would like my lunch prepared without any butter, oil or sauces."

- Ask your server to tell you how foods are prepared or if he/she can suggest substitutions on the menu.
- To reduce portion sizes, order appetizers as your main meal or share an entrée.

Most importantly, enjoy eating healthier options at your favorite restaurant!

Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services and the United States Department of Agriculture - www.mypyramid.gov.

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