

Dining Out with a Dietitian

Volume 1

by

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“Be a Better Eater, Not a Perfect Eater”



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Panda Express

IHOP (International House of

Pancakes)

Boston Market

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Or, your favorite Italian restaurant.

Ask for plain breadsticks.

Choose menu items that are “Griglia” (grilled).

Switch to antipasto with vegetables instead of meat and cheese.

Add extra vegetables to your entree or pasta dish.

Order an appetizer as your entree.

Review the menu:
www.olivegarden.com/menus



Or, your favorite seafood restaurant.

It's all in the preparation. Go with choices that are broiled, grilled or steamed. These will have a lot less fat than most of the menu items that are “fried to a golden brown” or “sautéed to perfection.”

Be sassy, not saucy. All of those extra sauces and spreads can add up to lots of extra calories. Ditch buttery, creamy, breaded and battered and go for fresh, simple items. Choose cocktail sauce on shrimp instead of butter. If you need a little sauce or dressing, be sure to ask for it on the side!

Smaller portions are a plus! If you really have a hankering for your favorite, but not so healthy seafood treat, see if you can order from the kids' or lunch menu. A smaller portion will always be better than the oversized dinner dish!

Review the menu:
www.redlobster.com/menus



Or, your favorite burger restaurant.

Be a better burger eater, not a perfect burger eater!

Build a better burger. Load up on veggies and skip those extras like cheese, onion rings, extra beef patties, bacon and the like that many places offer. Go with a simple, old-fashioned plain burger and top with lettuce, tomato, onion, dijon mustard and even an avocado for a healthy punch!

Where's the beef? Don't be fooled into thinking a veggie or turkey burger is always going to be a healthier option. They may often have the same or more calories and fat than regular ones. If you want a burger, go for it, but in a smarter way. Choose sirloin or lean ground beef when possible, make it a small patty and savor each bite.

Be side savvy. Make your burger the



main event and go for a salad or steamed veggies on the side. Burgers don't always have to go with fries and a shake!

Review the menu:
www.rubytuesday.com/menu



Or, your favorite soup and salad buffet restaurant.

Be a better salad eater!

When it comes to dressing, slide it to the side. Then you have control over how much you put on the contents. Dip your fork in dressing first or pour dressing through the lines of your fork to help with portion control!

Unload the extras! Sugary pecans, dried fruit, croutons, lots of cheese and high-fat meats like bacon and fried chicken only add extra calories, fat and sugar that you or the salad don't need.

Make it pack a nutritional punch! Load up on high fiber, "good for you" toppings like beans and cottage cheese.

Review the menu:
www.souplantation.com/nutritionguide

Menus at Souplantation/Sweet Tomatoes vary by location.



Or, your favorite Chinese/Asian-inspired restaurant.

Did you know that Chinese food is the number one ethnic cuisine in the United States? A study by the Center for Science in the Public Interest found that the typical Chinese food menu is loaded with sodium and calories. Our appetite for Chinese was made a lot healthier with the assistance of Panda Express Restaurant's Wok Smart program, which features a variety of healthy options that contain less than

250 calories per serving and lots of veggies. Look for this logo on your visit to make smart nutritional choices.



Keep your heart in mind when dining at your favorite Chinese/Asian restaurant. Sodium in your diet could mean extra fluid and work for your heart and kidneys and possibly lead to high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.

It's hard to limit sodium when you're eating out, but before you go, search the menu of your favorite restaurant online for nutritional information.

The more you go for fresh and steamed ingredients, such as mixed veggies and steamed white rice, as the basis of your meal the better you'll do.

Know your base. If you're building a Panda bowl, go with steamed rice for a sodium free start. Fried Rice has 900 milligrams (mg) of sodium and Chow Mein noodles have 1060 mg!

Mixed veggies are a must. While it doesn't count as low sodium, Panda's Mixed Veggie Entrée weighs in at 260 mg.

Watch out for Sodium sabotage. The Chinese restaurant tabletop is crawling with sodium saboteurs: one tablespoon of soy sauce has about 1000 mg of sodium and 1 teaspoon of salt has 2300 mg, which is the total amount a healthy adult should have in an entire day.

Review the menu:
www.pandaexpress.com



Or, your favorite breakfast restaurant.

If you're at IHOP, chances are you have a craving for pancakes. That's okay once in awhile, but don't go overboard.

Step One: Stick with good old-fashioned pancakes (IHOP's original buttermilks) instead of some of the over-the-top varieties like the New York Cheesecake. Also, check out IHOP's Simple & Fit menu choices, which feature a variety of items that are under 600 calories.

Step Two: Make it a short stack! If you can choose the smaller portion (3 instead of 5 cakes) you'll save 280 calories, 6 grams of fat and 46 grams of carbohydrate.

Step Three: Watch the toppings! I'm not one to always encourage sugar-free items, but in the case of syrup, the sugar-free variety is an okay choice. You can save 95 calories and 21 grams of carbohydrate per serving! And, unlike other "sugar-free" foods that have fat and sugar alcohols added in, most sugar free syrups rely on non-nutritive sweeteners like splenda to add sweetness.

Step Four: Find some balance! If you really want to increase the nutritional value of your meal, have a scrambled egg or glass of skim milk and fresh fruit with your short stack. You'll have added protein, essential fatty acids and lots of vitamins and minerals. Plus you'll stay satisfied longer!

Review the menu:
www.ihop.com

Diva Tip: Check out IHOP's Simple & Fit menu program which offers a variety of items that are under 600 calories.





Or, your favorite
American fast casual
restaurant.

If you're headed to Boston Market, here's some advice for "Pickin' Your Chicken!" And there's no better time to introduce the "**Always, Sometimes, Never**" approach to being a better eater!

Always go for a skinless bird. You'll eliminate lots of extra saturated fat and calories that you don't need.

Sometimes choose white meat rather than dark meat. All of us have our favorite pieces. If your favorite is the thigh or drumstick, sometimes challenge yourself to go for healthier white meat options like the breast. At Boston Market, swapping a *3-piece dark meal* out for a *quarter white rotisserie chicken* saves you 320 calories and 33 grams of fat (10 of which is saturated). Now that's worth it! After your taste buds get used to the swap you might just find a strong preference for white meat!

Never ruin a perfectly good meal with sloppy sides. You know the ones: creamed spinach, macaroni and cheese, sweet potato casserole and the like. No matter where you choose to dine, adding on high fat, high sugar, high carb, high calorie sides is never a great idea. At Boston Market, stick with lighter fare like fresh steamed vegetables or garlic dill new potatoes to have a nutritious and filling accompaniment to your bird.

Review the menu:
www.bostonmarket.com

Diva Tip: Check out Boston Market's
list of meals under 550 calories:

<http://ow.ly/4GJ8u>



Or, your favorite
signature dessert
restaurant.

Dining out at The Cheesecake Factory presented a unique challenge. The restaurant does not publish nutritional information. Imagine my distress! That was a big red flag for this RD! I finally uncovered the down and dirty on desserts at The Cheesecake Factory and my biggest piece of advice is to **ALWAYS share your plate with your date**. Portions are very large and some desserts can run you up to 1,600 calories! That's just a little less than most of us need ALL DAY to maintain a healthy body weight. If it's cheesecake you're after, here are a few tips:

Keep it Simple!

Choosing the original cheesecake vs. a fully-loaded version like *Adam's Peanut Butter Cup Fudge Ripple* can save you over 600 calories, which is more than a meal's worth of energy!

Get Your Just Desserts!

Consider The Cheesecake Factory a "Just Dessert" destination. If you eat a meal at home you will inevitably eat healthier and can better afford to share dessert with a date later.

Consider Your Low-Carb Options!

I'm not always a fan of *low-carb* or *sugar-free* options as they may often have higher amounts of unhealthy ingredients such as saturated fat. In the case of The Cheesecake Factory's low-carb cheesecake, it's actually not a bad choice. It's sweetened with *Splenda*, has 37 grams of carb, 570 calories and no more fat; much better than the regular. Remember that this is still about equal to a meal so you may still want to share!

Review the menu:
www.thecheesecakefactory.com



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