

Eating out is easy

You don't need to stay in every night, slaving over a hot stove. But when it comes to eating out, you will need to be choosy. The best choices are Japanese, Malaysian or Thai. The reason? These countries are the leanest, healthiest people, and much of that is down to the way they eat. But this doesn't mean you can't eat French, Italian, Mexican or Indian. You just need to know what to order.

Fill yourself up with the good stuff

Have a starter and a main course, or just a main course, but not a dessert. Avoid any breads, prawn crackers or the like. In fact, it is best to ask the waiter to take these things away, thus removing the temptation. Instead, ask them to bring some olives. Try and stick to just one glass of good quality wine and remember to drink plenty of water.

Watch out for hidden sugar!

When you are choosing items from the menu, watch out for the hidden sugar and high GL carbs in sauces, pickles and dips. For example, all Thai restaurants do very tasty fishcakes. These are better than things like spring rolls, because they have more protein, but other types of fishcake may have a high potato content so be careful. Also avoid sweet chilli sauce, which accompany many Thai dishes.

Avoid fried food

Choose food that hasn't been deep fried, so go for non-fried egg noodles or a small portion of plain or coconut rice. Wild rice is also a good option if available. Share portions between 2 or even 3 people.

Japanese restaurants are great

All offer wonderful fish dishes, from Teryaki salmon to sashimi. Sushi isn't as good as it includes a lot of sweet white rice.

Always order vegetable dishes

Make sure you order plenty of vegetables and salad with your meal and, if you haven't had enough, order more!

Remember you can order 'off menu'

For instance, if you like the sound of the fish or chicken, but not the cream sauce, ask for it without, or swap it for another method of cooking. Don't be afraid of asking for exactly what you want.

You are in charge of what goes in your mouth, not the waiter or your companions

By the time you get to the end of the main course you should feel satisfied. Most puddings need to be avoided as they will almost certainly be high in sugar. Fresh strawberries make an ideal end to any meal, but if they are not available, a small portion of vanilla ice cream is OK once in a while. If you'd like an after dinner drink, choose peppermint tea which is great for the digestion.

When dining at an Oriental or Indian restaurant, choose:

Sashimi (Japanese raw fish dish)
Fish / chicken Teryaki
Tom Yum soup
Thai coconut based curries
Indian tikkas (but not masalas)
Fish or chicken satay
Indian bhunas or baltis ask for less oil
Tofu based dishes
Omelettes
Vegetable dishes such as chana masala or dhal (Indian) or stir fried veg

When dining at a French or Italian restaurant, you could try dishes like:

Chicken breast marinated in rosemary and garlic
King prawns in a chilli, garlic and tomato sauce
Avocado, rocket and tomato salad
If you really want pasta, go for a starter size of something like fettuccine with chicken, olive oil, garlic and parsley sauce plus a large salad
Antipasti

AVOID

Fried food / sweet and sour dishes; rice, (unless brown, then share); noodles, potato dishes, bread, naans, chapattis and prawn crackers.

TOP TIP

Try choosing from the specials menus, which often include fresh dishes that you may not have tried before. Expand your choices rather than restrict them!