

Eating on the Road

Whether it's business lunches or quick stops at fast food restaurants with the kids, knowing how to make the best decisions to forgo sabotaging the diet is important. This is also crucial for athletes who are regularly traveling and need to be fueled with "high octane" foods. Use these handy rules to help make the best decisions at various restaurants.

General Tips:

1. Order off the menu and focus in on these 4 words when ordering:

- Steamed
- Broiled
- Baked
- Grilled

2. Never go to the restaurant hungry

- Eat a piece of fruit
- Try a yogurt
- Eat a granola bar
- Have some cottage cheese and fruit

3. Ask for what you want; as a paying customer, restaurants will cater to your needs (within reason).

- Do not cook foods in butter
- Limit the amount of oil used in cooking
- Replace refined carbohydrate, high fat foods (fries, potato salad, etc) with an extra order of steamed vegetables

4. Call ahead to find out what foods are offered so you can plan ahead

- Figure out calories and fat grams of foods you may eat
- Know what foods fit the bill for health options

5. Avoid pre-dinner cocktails and bar snacks

Fast Food Restaurant Tips

Fast food restaurants permeate nearly every corner of the road; from Italian to Chinese, burgers to subs, there is no limit on what you can find. Here are some general tips when trying to make the best decisions if faced with a "fast food dilemma."

Chinese Food

- Order steamed options (or ask for your favorite item steamed).
- Most Chinese restaurants now offer brown rice too, rather than the more traditional white rice.
- Avoid the fried noodles they often put on the table before the meal.

"Hamburger" Restaurant (McDonalds, Burger King, Wendy's, In and Out, etc)

- Most now offer grilled chicken salads. Choose this vs. a triple artery clogging bacon cheeseburger.
- If craving a hamburger, order a plain burger or cheeseburger; leave the hefty burgers for the next person in line.
- Try a grilled chicken sandwich sans mayonnaise or "special" sauce.
- Leave the fries behind.

Italian Food (Olive Garden, Macaroni Grill, etc.)

- Split your meal with someone; portions here are at least double what they need to be.
- Try grilled or broiled fish.
- Avoid creamy sauces on pasta dishes; instead opt for marinara, which is much lower in fat and calories.
- Limit consumption of bread on the table that's commonly doused with olive oil or covered in butter and opt for a healthy tossed salad, with olive and balsamic vinegar on the side.

Steak Restaurants (Outback Steakhouse, Ruby Tuesday, etc)

- Avoid the "prime" cuts of beef (e.g., prime rib) and opt for the loin or the round (sirloin, top round, eye round, etc).
- Ideally order grilled or broiled seafood

Sub Shops (Subway, Quiznos, Blimpie, etc)

- Order the grilled chicken or turkey breast options.
- If possible, choose the whole grain breads.
- Leave off the bacon, cheese sauce, and mayonnaise; instead try mustard, vinegar.