

## Joy of Traveling

Whether for business or pleasure, one of the joys of traveling is enjoying the food. Unfortunately, eating out for four days straight can put some pressure on your waistband. Even if you enter the trip with the thought that you are not going to overdo it, that thought is often thrown out the window with each passing day. Though 'trip' and 'healthy eating' don't commonly go together it is possible to enjoy yourself AND stick to your plan. Going on a trip doesn't have to mean blowing your diet. Have the belief that dining out can be healthy and enjoyable at the same time. First, let's look at what obstacles get in the way of healthy eating on a trip and then let's see what you can do about it.

It is easy to get distracted during the day when traveling. Coffee or sweets often serve as an on-the-go breakfast. You may be sight-seeing or tied up in meetings all day, and by the time you reach the restaurant your blood sugar has hit rock bottom. You are so famished that you order comfort food and while you are waiting you eat the fried appetizer and the entire bread basket. When the waiter comes back to inquire about dessert, you quip, 'I really shouldn't', but that chocolate cake is calling you, and so the excuse 'I am on vacation' kicks in.

### Here are three easy-to-follow strategies for navigating your trip:

**One. Eat breakfast.** By taking a moment in the morning to choose a healthier, leaner breakfast you will be less likely to overeat in the evening. It is extremely important to include some protein with breakfast. A stack of pancakes or cereal will fill you up momentarily, but your hunger will return quickly unless you include protein. Healthier choices include eggs and fruit, oatmeal with nuts, whole grain toast with nut butter, yogurt and fruit or an omelet. If you would like to take this a step further, pack 1 Cup of high fiber cereal in a baggie with 12 raw almonds for a breakfast-on-the go that you can eat like trail mix. This option is light and easy to pack with you in the morning..

**Two. Pack healthy snacks.** This is perhaps **THE** best strategy for maintaining some semblance of control in your restaurant choices. By including a snack midmorning and midafternoon you will be less hungry when you reach the restaurant and more apt to make healthier choices.

A healthy snack has the following three elements:

1. 75% carbohydrate: 25% protein.
2. Has 200-300 calories.
3. Is convenient to carry and eat.

Energy bars are a great option for travel. Just be sure that the bar contains > 3 grams of fiber and >3 grams of protein and falls between 200 and 300 calories (my favorite is Raw Organic bars at Whole Foods). Dried fruit and raw nuts are another great option and an even more natural 'energy bar' on-the-go. Five dried apricots and fifteen raw almonds meet all three healthy snack elements listed above and will easily fit into a bag or briefcase.

**Three. Choose healthier restaurant options.** When you do reach the restaurant, choose menu options with the following low-fat cooking terms: grilled, poached, roasted, steamed, broiled, stewed, braised or simmered.

**Tips for choosing a restaurant:**

1. Select the restaurant carefully – avoid restaurants that serve exclusively fried foods.
2. Call ahead to find out what is on the menu – most restaurants have their menus listed online.
3. Avoid “All You Can Eat” places.
4. Exercise portion control – steer clear of menu descriptions such as jumbo, grande, supreme, king-size, feast or combo.
5. Make an attitude adjustment – eating out doesn't have to mean blowing the diet. Have the belief that dining out can be healthy and enjoyable at the same time.

**Tips for dining buffet style** (for times when it's unavoidable):

1. Do not sit too close to the buffet table.
2. Look over the entire selection before filling the plate.
3. Start with healthy, low-fat foods.
4. Fill at least half of the plate with vegetables.
5. Take a moment to assess hunger and fullness levels before going back for more.
6. Take time to relax, breathe between bites, and enjoy the food and the company.



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