

Eating Out

WHAT you are eating:

- **Salt:** This can be high in any meal including salad (because of salt added to many dressings). Restaurant and convenience foods average 1/4-1/2 teaspoon salt without even tasting salty, requiring an extra 1/2 liter or quart of water in the 6-12 hours after the meal to avoid dehydration from fluid loss as your kidneys clear the salt. Foods particularly high in salt are liquids/sauces e.g. soy sauce, curry, gravy, chili, soups, and pourable condiments. Ordering extra vegetables to make a meal healthier usually adds more salt and oil to the meal because that is how vegetables are cooked; steamed vegetables are the only way to really avoid this. Asking for low sodium is worth considering since chefs to no measure how much salt they throw on foods as they cook. Bottom line is focus on **salad, steamed vegetables, avoid soup, and avoid more than a drizzle of sauces, ask for low sodium if necessary.**
- **Calories:** Carbs, fats and salt are added liberally to meals to enhance our enjoyment of them. Carbs are delivered to the table as chips or bread before we even order, and even healthy meals are cooked with 2-3 Tbsp oil. Three small slices of bread are 300 Cal, and 2-3 Tbsp oil is 300 Cal, achieving you your total Calorie target for dinner without even having really eaten any real food yet. Salad with moderate dressing and steamed vegetables cuts out the most avoidable fats. Fats in the main dish is harder for chefs to adjust, forcing you to look for grilled foods, but these still have salt and can be more oxidized (blackening). Bottom line is to **eat carb only with vegetables, using salad or steamed vegetables, and avoid obviously fatty meals e.g. deep-fried.**
- **Alcohol:** 70-140 Cal per serving depending on whether you are considering a shot of concentrated alcohol, or a glass or wine or beer (these also having sugar calories). Three glasses of wine with a moderate sweetness would add 400 Cal to your dinner, together with the bread basket and the cooking oil/fat in the meal adding to 1000 Cal. This means 4 gourmet dinners in a week can make you 1 lb fatter even if the food itself is very healthy. Bottom line is to **order alcohol in the specified amount that you want to consume and then stop (no refills).**
- **What to do to cut the unhelpful calories:** order alcohol in specific amounts e.g. by the glass, do not eat carbs until the salad is there to slow its digestion, eat the amount of carb that you need for your current activity levels (for most people 1/2 cup if a day off, 1 cup if a training day) and avoid heavy sauces or fatty dishes
- **Street food:** Ask for meat off the top i.e. not scooped from the bottom of a container loaded with grease, and look for what vegetable is available e.g. iceberg lettuce or salsa so you can ask for extra. Cut out (throw away) anything more than 100-200 Cal of starch (1-2 slices bread or 1/2-1 cup rice potato quinoa etc) depending on whether there is a salad in the meal to slow its digestion and how physically active you are that day. Bottom line is **look for how to reduce grease you are given, cut out some of the carb yourself, and ask for extra lettuce/veggie.**

Summary of food groups in typical gourmet and fast-food meals

- **Protein:** This is always present in meals unless you are just ordering salad (in which case look for it)
- **Carb:** This is almost always in excess, starting with the bread/chip basket that comes to the table, or in the burrito with rice, or the fries and hamburger bun
- **Vegetables:** Usually served cooked in oil and salt, so order steamed vegetables and/or salad
- **Unsaturated fat:** You are not in control of the fat quality added to foods, so get your omega-3/6/9 from meals and snacks you are preparing on your own, not while you are out or while you are traveling.

WHEN you are eating:

- Take a slice of bread or a dinner roll with you to eat right after your next exercise session
- Keep a small milk or yogurt on ice in your room, as well as a piece of fruit, to have a small protein / carb snack upon waking if your breakfast is not going to be within one hour of waking, particularly if you are exercising first thing in the morning before breakfast.

WATER:

- Drink an **equal amount of water before any other fluid** i.e. no matter what you order to drink, always water along with it and consume the water first or intermittently as you go (do not wait to drink the water afterwards).
- **16 oz water in the 2-3 hours after dinner** to facilitate digestion and another 8 oz to help process extra sodium