

# DINING OUT GUIDE





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## Dining out

When you're on the **Medifast 5 & 1 Plan™**, you have clear guidelines on what, when, and how much to eat. But what about when you're dining out?

You can stay on plan with healthy **Lean & Green™ Meals**—or healthy options for the Transition and Maintenance phases—pretty much wherever you go. All it takes is a little planning and creativity. Most restaurants have choices that are compatible with the program, or can be, with a bit of modification.

The most important thing to remember is that it's okay to ask your server questions about “customizing” your order. Most places are more than happy to accommodate special requests and may offer healthier substitutions for free, or for a small additional charge.

# Here are some tips:

## BEFORE YOU GO...

- **Review plan-friendly options** so you know what to look for on the menu.
- Do your homework. Check out the restaurant's menu online or in person, or call ahead and **plan your order in advance**.

## CHOOSING WHAT TO ORDER

When deciding how to have your food prepared, keep in mind that certain cooking methods can add unnecessary calories and fat to your food. To help ensure that your meal is lower in calories and fat, have your food prepared using one of these recommended methods.

- While on the 5 & 1 Plan™, **stick to the recommended lean protein and vegetable choices for your Lean & Green™ Meal**.
- Get your food “naked.” This means with sauces, dressings, or toppings absent or on the side.
- When eating beef, choose filet, loin (sirloin), or round cuts, and always trim any visible fat from the meat.
- Stick with broth-based soups. Cream soups (not including Medifast Creamy Soups) tend to be higher in fat and calories.
- Marinara, olive oil, or tomato-based sauces are your healthiest sauce choices.

- “Low-carb” does not necessarily mean “low-calorie” or “low-fat.” Be sure to read over the menu carefully to determine whether a “low-carb” item really is the best dietary choice.
- When in Maintenance, choose items made with whole grains such as brown rice and whole-wheat bread and pasta.

### CHOOSE foods prepared this way\*

- Steamed
- Poached
- Boiled
- Baked
- Broiled
- Grilled
- Roasted
- Charbroiled
- Garden fresh

### AVOID foods prepared this way

- Fried, French-fried, deep-fried, batter-fried, pan-fried, crispy
- Buttered or buttery
- Creamed, creamy, cream sauce
- Au gratin, in cheese sauce
- Marinated in oil or butter
- Scampi-style, breaded
- In its own gravy
- Scalloped, escalloped
- Pastry, rich, á la mode
- Peanut sauce, coconut milk

\* Note: Items prepared by these methods are not necessarily low in fat. For instance, grilled items are usually brushed with oil before grilling, and poached items may have butter added to the broth or inside the parchment pocket. Baked items may have fats such as oil or cheese added, and marinara sauces often start with a base of oil. Also, if the cut of meat, fish, or poultry is high in fat, the food will likely still be high in calories even when you choose one of these methods. However, compared to items prepared by the methods in the “avoid” column, items in the “choose” column are likely to be lower in fat.

## WHILE YOU'RE EATING...

- Keep portion sizes in check.
- If you get a supersize portion, ask for a “to-go” container when the meal is delivered to your table, and immediately put half of the meal inside for tomorrow.
- Share entrées, appetizers, and desserts. Half the dish means half the calories.
- Put your utensils down in between bites to help slow down your eating.
- Focus on companionship and conversation rather than the food.
- Have your plate cleared as soon as you finish eating a healthy portion.

The remaining sections of the Dining Out Guide focus on guidelines for specific types of restaurants to help you make nutritious (and delicious) food choices when dining out on the Medifast Program.



# Chinese Food

Steamed and stir-fried lean protein and vegetables are healthy as can be, but those sauces are another story. Staying healthy at Chinese restaurants can be a “wok in the park” when you follow these guidelines:

- Choose dishes rich in vegetables and ask for extra vegetables (especially in dishes like beef broccoli, chicken with mushrooms, or green beans with chicken).
- Always ask for sauce on the side. It’s the sauces that are typically very high in carbohydrates and sodium.
- Request that dishes be prepared without nuts or seeds.
- Ask about the content and preparation of items you may be unsure of, including:
  - Chinese or mixed vegetables
  - Soups
  - Specialty sauces (egg white, garlic, etc.)

- Ask if items are prepared with a coating of sugar, corn starch, or flour, and request “plain” steamed or stir-fried meat and vegetables.
- Use low-sodium soy sauce.
- Eat with chopsticks to reduce the amount of sauce you consume and help slow down your eating.
- Avoid items described as crispy, golden brown, or sweet-and-sour, since these are usually deep-fried.
- In Maintenance, opt for steamed rice rather than fried, or ask to substitute brown rice or, best yet, a side of extra vegetables.

### When you're on the 5 & 1 Plan (weight-loss phase):

- “Diet” or “healthy” dishes: These are generally the safest choices when dining at Chinese restaurants; these dishes typically come steamed and may be prepared without added oil, cornstarch, sugar, MSG, or salt. Be sure to ask about specific content and preparation techniques.
- Choose these dishes:
  - Chicken with mixed vegetables
  - Shrimp with mixed vegetables
  - Mixed vegetables
  - Plain broccoli
  - Vegetables, such as broccoli, green beans, mushrooms, with lean protein, such as chicken, shrimp, scallops, beef, or tofu
- Other **Lean & Green™ Meal** compatible foods:
  - Vegetable and lean meat shish kabobs
  - Moo Goo Gai Pan: Stir-fried chicken and (generally) mushrooms

- Szechuan prawns, shrimp, chicken, beef, or lean pork
- Curry shrimp, squid, beef, etc.
- Sha Cha dishes: Sha Cha sauce or paste is sometimes called “Chinese barbeque sauce” and is generally made from soybean oil, garlic, chilis, brill fish, and dried shrimp. It has a savory, sometimes spicy, flavor and is good with beef or chicken
- Shrimp with lobster sauce
- Grilled chicken, fish, or (lean) beef with steamed vegetables

### When you're in the weight-maintenance phase:

Select any of the above items (continuing to watch portion sizes and sodium content, as they can both be high when it comes to Chinese food) and try the following suggestions:

- Choose broth-based soups: egg drop, wonton, or hot & sour.
- Choose a spring roll instead of an egg roll. (These still pack a significant amount of calories, but are a healthier alternative to an egg roll when craving something fried.)
- Order steamed vegetable dumplings rather than fried or pork dumplings.
- Share meals: Order fewer meals than people at the table, selecting at least one vegetarian option, such as:
  - Steamed green beans, broccoli, or mixed vegetables
  - “Buddha’s Delight” (steamed or stir-fried mixed vegetables)
  - Ma Po (Hunan) tofu
  - Mu Shu chicken, beef, pork, or tofu



# Fast Food

**F**ast food is everywhere; it's cheap and convenient. But most of it is also high in fat, sugar, and calories. Follow these simple guidelines to grab a quick bite without sacrificing your healthy weight.

- Be aware that not all healthy-sounding salads and entrees are really healthy in terms of calories, grams of fat, and protein. Check. Ask.
- Avoid all fried food since these tend to be loaded with saturated (“bad”) fat.
- Avoid drinking soft drinks or juices sweetened with high fructose corn syrup (even though the free refills are tempting). They're loaded with empty calories and tons of sugar.

- Avoid “super sizing” or “value sizing” your meal. It’s not a bargain when it endangers your health goals by being two to three times more than you should be eating.
- Order kid’s meals, which are smaller.
- Don’t order combo meals. Although they may be convenient, they are adding extra calories to your diet, so stick with single items.

### When you’re on the 5 & 1 Plan (weight-loss phase):

- For hamburgers or chicken sandwiches, eat the meat without the bun.
- Stick with grilled chicken, not breaded or fried (no chicken tenders or chicken nuggets).
- Ask for all condiments, dressings, and sauces on the side.

## Here are some popular fast-food restaurant menu items that fit the Lean & Green™ Meal guidelines

(subject to change if the restaurants alter their menu items – always check with the restaurant for up-to-date nutrition information):

### McDonald’s®

- Premium Caesar Salad with Grilled Chicken (without dressing or croutons)
- Premium Bacon Ranch Salad with Grilled Chicken (without dressing)

### Chick-Fil-A®

- Chargrilled Chicken Garden Salad (without dressing)  
+ 1 Chargrilled Chicken Sandwich filet (no bun, no pickles)

## When you're in the weight-maintenance phase:

- Avoid cheese or bacon. If you're craving these extras, ask for a small bit on the side.
- If you're craving something sweet, skip the ice cream or cookies and opt for a side of fruit instead.
- Skip mayonnaise or "special sauces" that are packed with calories, fat, and or sugar. Ketchup, mustard, pickles, and onions are lower in fat and calories.
- Make an open-faced sandwich by removing the top burger bun or sandwich roll, so you're getting less refined white flour.

### Burger King®

- TENDERGRILL™ Garden Salad with grilled chicken (without dressing)

### Wendy's®

- Chicken Caesar Salad with Grilled Chicken Breast (without dressing) + 1 Ultimate Chicken Grill filet (no bun)



## Greek Food

**G**reek cuisine is loaded with fresh vegetables, fish, chicken, and olive oil, which means there are plenty of healthy and nutrient-filled food choices. Here's how to enjoy the benefits while avoiding excess fats and calories.

- Limit the nuts, and feta cheese to avoid extra sodium and fat.
- Stick with lean cuts of meat, lamb, and fish in your dishes.
- Keep in mind that a little olive oil goes a long way, so drizzle just enough to moisten your food.

## When you're on the 5 & 1 Plan (weight-loss phase):

- Olive oil is a healthy, monounsaturated (“good”) fat, but don’t exceed your healthy fat serving(s) for the day. Ask for your meal to be prepared with little or no oil, or ask for it on the side.
- Avoid traditional béchamel sauces that are rich with milk or cream and butter.
- Avoid hummus (a popular Greek dip made from chickpeas), which is high in carbohydrates.
- For plan-friendly Greek-style choices, try:
  - **Greek salad:** Skip the feta cheese and ask for the olives and dressing on the side. 5 medium olives are one healthy fat.
  - **Greek frittata (omelet):** Skip the cheese and potatoes, and get your olives and seasonings on the side.
  - **Kebab:** Enjoy a lean meat kebab with vegetables. Ask for it without onion. Replace the rice or pasta with a small salad.

## When you're in the weight-maintenance phase:

- Squeeze some lemon juice onto your veggies, meat, and fish instead of using traditional cream sauces.
- Opt for fresh fruit as your dessert.
- If you are splurging on a higher-fat entrée, get a low-fat side dish, such as a salad, to go with it.
- If possible ask for low-fat Greek yogurt as a replacement for the traditional Greek yogurt, which is high in fat.



# Indian Food

Indian cuisine is full of fresh vegetables and aromatic spices. Here's how to enjoy the unique flavors of the subcontinent while staying on track with the Medifast Program.

- Avoid foods containing ghee, which is clarified butter.
- Ask for your dish without nuts, since many Indian dishes include them.
- Ask for sauces on the side.

- Avoid foods with malai, which means cream, and makhani, which is made with butter.
- Avoid fried entrées and dishes with “crispy” or “golden” in the name.
- Avoid soups or dishes made with coconut, which is high in fat.

### When you're on the 5 & 1 Plan (weight-loss phase):

- Try the following **Lean & Green™ Meal** compatible entrees:
  - Sabzi, sag, or bharta: generic terms for cooked vegetables
  - Chicken tikka: pieces of boneless, skinless chicken marinated with spices
  - Kabab: skewered meat or vegetables
  - Kheema: a minced meat dish
- Ask for your vegetables and meat to be cooked with little to no oil.

### When you're in the weight-maintenance phase:

Entrées are typically accompanied with a piece of flatbread and a large serving of rice. Skip the rice and ask for roti as your flatbread option. Roti is generally made from whole-wheat flour rather than white flour.



## Italian Food

Although delicious and popular, Italian food, with its bread, rich sauces, pasta, and cheeses (never mind the wine), can challenge your creativity when you're eating healthy—but it's not impossible.

## Try these tips:

- To avoid any temptations, ask your server not to bring bread to the table. Most Italian breads are low in nutritional value, high in carbohydrates, and calorie dense.
- Stay away from casseroles, pastas (especially cheese-filled), and fat filled, cream-based sauces.
- Avoid dishes prepared with nuts or seeds to reduce calories and fat.
- Avoid adding table salt to your meal, as the cooking water and sauces are usually heavily salted.
- Avoid Italian desserts and pastries are rich and jam-packed with fat and calories.\*
- Avoid the croutons and cheese on salad.

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- Choose dishes rich in vegetables.
  - Choose meat or seafood that is baked, broiled, or grilled, and stay away from choices that are breaded, crispy, or cooked in any type of sauce.
  - Choose sauce on the side. Sauces, especially Marsala, Alfredo, pesto, marinara, Bolognese, and vodka sauce, tend to add a lot of extra calories, carbohydrates, fat, and sodium.
  - Choose an appetizer portion or side portion as an entrée, along with a salad.
  - Choose a dish to share with a friend, or ask for a “to-go” box before you begin eating so you can portion your meal appropriately.
  - Choose dressing on the side when ordering a salad.

\*If you're in the maintenance phase and your sweet tooth takes over, stick with Italian ices, biscotti, or cappuccino made with skim milk, which are lower in calories and fat.

**REMINDER:** Higher carbohydrate items, like starchy vegetables (including potatoes), beans, pasta, rice, and bread, are not recommended choices while in the weight-loss phase of the Medifast Program.

### When you're on the 5 & 1 Plan (weight-loss phase):

- Ask your server for chicken, shrimp, scallops, or fish, and no pasta.
- Enjoy peppers, portabella mushrooms, spinach, tomatoes, asparagus, and broccoli.
- Request meats with no coating and sauce on the side.
- Try a salad topped with grilled fish, chicken, scallops, or other lean protein, and without croutons or shredded cheese.

### When you're in the weight-maintenance phase:

- Order your pasta or pizza dishes with whole-wheat pasta or whole wheat crust if available.
- Choose low-fat cheese and toppings for your pasta or pizza.
- Say no to any extra cheese options.
- Opt for extra spices or herbs for added flavor.
- Fill up on broth-based soups such as minestrone or Italian wedding soup.



# Mexican Food

Although every restaurant is different, many Mexican restaurants in the U.S. focus on Tex-Mex style foods prepared with lard, cheese, and sour cream, or fried in oil. You can enjoy a fiesta of delicious, healthy tastes by following these guidelines:

- To resist any snacking temptations, ask your server not to bring tortilla chips to your table.
- Order dishes that are full of lean protein and vegetables.
- Mexican restaurant food portions can be huge. Share a meal with a friend or stop eating once you've had a healthy amount of food and save the rest in a "to-go" box for tomorrow.

**REMINDER:** Higher carbohydrate items, like starchy vegetables (including corn), beans, rice, tortillas, and chips are not recommended in the weight-loss phase of the Medifast Program.

## When you're on the 5 & 1 Plan (weight-loss phase):

- Some examples of Mexican restaurant foods that are **Lean & Green™ Meal** compatible:
  - Taco salad: Order it without the cheese, sour cream, guacamole, or fried tortilla bowl, and with dressing on the side
  - Chicken or veggie fajitas, eaten without tortillas, cheese, sour cream, or guacamole
  - Any grilled chicken, beef, or fish without tortilla shells, cheese, sour cream, or guacamole
- Many dishes come with rice and beans—ask for more vegetables instead.
- Always ask for your order to be prepared without the use of added butter or lard.

## When you're in the weight-maintenance phase:

- Order your dish without sour cream and cheese (or ask for it on the side) to reduce fat and calories.
- Flavor your meal with pico de gallo, fresh salsa, or jalapeños for a spicy kick.
- Avoid refried beans, as these are typically made with lard and too much sodium. Instead, opt for plain red beans, black beans, borracho beans, or frijoles á la charra.
- Ask for light seasoning to cut down on sodium.
- Choose corn tortillas instead of flour ones, which can be full of saturated fats.
- Use guacamole in moderation. Even though guacamole (avocado) is full of good fats, it is also loaded with calories.
- Avoid quesadillas, which are fried and loaded with cheese, calories, and fat.



# Enjoy

Eating in restaurants on occasion is part of most people's family and social life. You don't have to swear off dining out when you're getting healthy with Medifast. Follow these tips, ask questions, plan ahead, and get creative. Before you know it, you'll find that delicious, plan-friendly restaurant meals are easy to order and enjoy.



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