**Day 33**

**Title: How to Eat Out and Eat Healthy**

In these busy times, eating out is an unavoidable and often pleasant part of life. But eating out doesn’t have to equal a derailed diet. It’s all about choices. With proper preparation you can push beyond those temptations. Although there are healthy options available, when you eat out consider it a splurge. For every meal eaten away from home, the average adult takes in an additional 134 calories per day. If you eat out daily, this can add up to extra body weight overtime.

Eating out can be especially challenging if you’re vegetarian. But it’s easier than ever to dine out and maintain a vegetarian diet or otherwise healthy diet. Chefs and restaurants have taken notice and have started to add more vegetarian options to the menu and not just pasta with tomato sauce. You’ll find hearty bean dishes and an endless stream of customizable options like burrito or grain bowls, salads, and even vegetarian sandwiches. Beware of fried options, creamy sauces and excess cheese which can pack on the calories even if you’re going with the vegetarian option.

Here’s our guide to eating well when you’re out:

* Sleuth it out before you go out. Be the leader and select a restaurant that will give you plenty of options to stick with your diet.
* Order first. There’s research to show that women especially tend to mirror each other when out to eat. Ordering first may set the tone for the table to order healthier options. Choose a restaurant and look for places that have healthy options on the menu so you’ll have a better starting point. Check for red flag words like creamy, crispy, fried, breaded, and smothered. Opt instead for grilled, steamed, or broiled choices which are generally healthier cooking methods.
* Ask for what you want. Replace unhealthy sides like French fries for grilled or roasted vegetables. Request creamy sauces and salad dressings on the side – you’ll tend to eat less that way. Though salad dressing can be healthy, restaurants tend to give us two to three times what we need. Those calories add up. Got a hankering for pizza? Ask the chef to go light on the cheese and heavy on the veggies.
* Portion control**.** On average, Americans need about 2,000 calories a day, and knowing how to judge a portion size can help us stick to that target. If you're ordering pasta, a good rule of thumb is to eat a portion that’s about the size of your fist. With meat, try not to eat more than would fit in the palm of your hand.
* Pick your appetizers wisely**.** Order a salad or broth-based soup as your first course. Research shows that people who eat a broth-based soup or a veggie salad before their meal tend to eat fewer calories for the entire meal. Plus the appetizer course is the perfect time to get a head start on your vegetable quota for the meal.
* Take it slow.When we eat too fast, we often eat too much. It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to realize your stomach is full. Slow down. Enjoy the people you’re with. Try putting your fork down between bites. If you’re out for Japanese food try eating with chopsticks – shown to help reduce calorie intake when used. It might take a little practice, but it may make for a more leisurely meal.
* Rethink your drink. From the pre-dinner glass of wine to the house lemonade, it’s easy to ignore beverage calories during a meal. A glass of wine is about 150 calories, while mixed drinks can be well over 300 calories a pop. Drink water with your meals. Water helps fill you up, leaving less room for excess food and alcohol.
* Box it up. A restaurant serving can usually feed two or more. At the beginning of the meal, ask the server for a to-go box. Put half of the meal away to take it home with you. If food is in front of us, we tend to eat it, even when we're full.
* Go ethnic. Step outside the typical cuisine. Indian, Ethiopian, and Mediterranean cuisines are vegetarian friendly. When out for Mexican food – look for the tofu option or order the beans, with plenty of peppers and onions for a satisfying meal.