The Restaurant Diet Sabotage

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When you’re on the right track with a food plan, and everything seems to be under control (and, more importantly you feel *in* control), few things can throw things off like going out for a meal.

The bread basket is staring you in the face, then there are the drinks, the fact that the people you’re out with are probably not on the same plan you’re on, and, of course, the tons of hidden calories and ingredients in restaurant food that you can’t always control.

What you can take charge of though, is your plan of action and, with a few strategic moves, your fitness goals can co-exist with a few meals out here and there.

1. MAKE SOME WIGGLE ROOM

If you know where you’re planning on eating, then you can also figure out *what* you’re planning on eating. If you know the restaurant, think about whether you have a favourite dish or something you absolutely can’t do without. If you don’t know the restaurant, take the time to look up the menu and see if there’s something really enticing on there.

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Once you know what you *are* planning on having, then work backwards in your day and see where you can create some “wiggle room.” For example, maybe you can snack less, or eliminate the avocado from your lunch salad. If you cut out one or two things you aren’t dying to have during the course of the day, then you can make room for something you really want when you go out.

2. ORDER THE ESSENTIALS FIRST

Whether or not there’s something exciting you’re looking forward to enjoying, skip the appetizers, and start by ordering yourself a good-sized portion of vegetables, or salad.

This strategy works in a few ways: first, you make sure you’re getting a good, balanced foundation to your meal, second, you bypass the extra calories of pre-meal appetizers, and, finally, when it’s time for the main course, you won’t be ravenous, so you can more consciously enjoy what’s worth enjoying.

3. SAUCE ON THE SIDE

On the topic of vegetables and salads, not all “sides of greens” are created equal. This couldn’t be more true than in a restaurant environment. If you order a side of spinach, there is likely to be butter or oil in there. Salads? Usually doused in dressing.

The simplest way around this is to always find something you can order steamed or without sauces or dressings, and request the sauce on the side. That way you can take the call on how much or how little you want to add on, instead of wasting your time on veggies that aren’t even that healthy after all.

4. YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL, BUT NOT ALL AT ONCE

Be choosy about which “extras” you’re going to indulge in. By “extras,” I mean bread baskets, drinks, desserts, and sides- pretty much anything that doesn’t qualify as your pre-meal veggies or your main course.

Pick just one extra, and stick to enjoying that one instead of having them all.

5. REMEMBER YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS!

One of the hardest parts of eating in a social setting while you’re on a specific plan is the fact that the people you’re eating with are unlikely to have the same goals and objectives you do.

Bear that in mind as you make your own choices. Constantly remind yourself that it’s not a punishment to make different choices than others but rather that you have different objectives that you’ve worked hard to reach- take pride in all that hard work and the choices you're making to support it!

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