

# LOW CARB DINING GUIDE

JENSPRIMALHEALTH



**35 TIPS FOR EATING LOW  
CARB IN RESTAURANTS**

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## Eating Low Carb While Dining Out

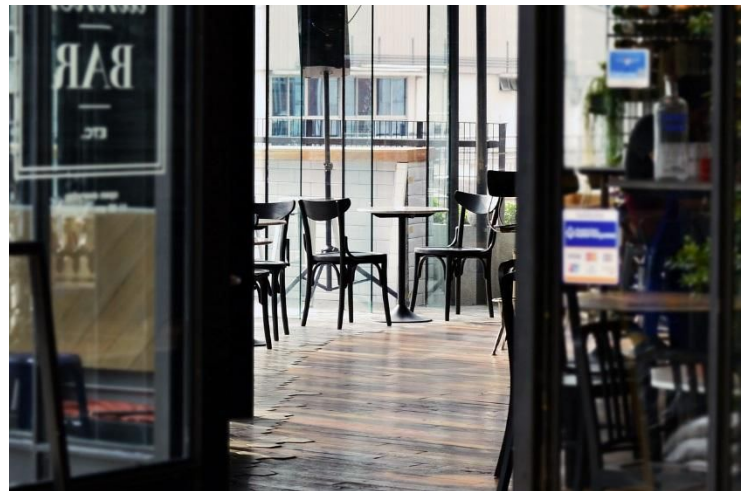
Despite popular opinion, eating out while living a low carb lifestyle doesn't have to be painful and you don't have to feel guilty when enjoying your meals. It is entirely possible to enjoy delicious, amazing food while you are eating out and still lose weight.

Whether you travel a lot or enjoy eating out infrequently, it's easy to be caught off-guard, which can lead to carb overload. By planning ahead and making thoughtful choices, you can find low-carb options at any restaurant.

## 35 Tips To Eat Out On A Low Carb Diet

### Know The Rules

The main rules of low carb eating are no starches and no sugars; this means the possibilities are really unlimited when eating out. The trick is knowing where to look but I promise that even in the most sketchy restaurant you can still stick to your goals.



### Carry A Carb Counter

It is very important to know the carb counts of various foods, especially when you are on a strict low carb diet. In the beginning make sure you have a carb counter, these come in mini books or apps for your smartphones. My Fitness Pal is a free download that has many restaurant dishes already in the database. It also includes a barcode scanner. Cronometer is my favorite for measuring nutrient density; it gives the best nutrient output so that you can see where your nutritional gaps may be.

## **Avoid High Pressure Zones**

Your all-time favorite food is Italian and you love your pasta dishes, or maybe you cannot imagine eating a Chinese feast without a few egg rolls, when you first start out on a low carb plan, it may be better to avoid these high-pressure zones at least until you are settled into the lifestyle. So choose other restaurants and give yourself a break.



## **Check Your Motivation**

Before you even head out to eat, it's a good idea to reaffirm your goals to stay motivated and to avoid temptation. Focus on the reasons WHY you're eating this way. An easy rule to remember is **GPS** - grains, potatoes and sugars. Don't put these on your plate.

## **Don't Starve Yourself**

Be mindful if you go to a restaurant when you're famished. By eating when you're desperately hungry you increase the possibility of going off-plan. If you're new to keto this will be more of an issue because you haven't become fat adapted yet. When you remind your body how to use body fat for fuel hunger will become a gentle reminder instead of an all consuming desire to eat.

## **Peruse The Menu**

Due to the high popularity of low carb diets, many restaurants are now adding calorie count, heart healthy and other labels to their menu items and this includes low



carb. Do the research and find those in your area that do this, and always check the menu for those tags no matter where you eat.

## **Be Prepared**

Before you even leave the house give yourself a head start by previewing the restaurant or cafes' menu online. By familiarizing yourself with the menu, you can mentally note which dishes are healthy and avoid making an uninformed, unhealthy, and impulsive decision. I also like to look at the ingredients if they are available. Some popular chains have 8 different types of sugar added to a chicken breast. Make sure you know what you're getting.

## **Dine With Your Supporters**

People can really be unpredictable, sometimes there are those who just don't understand what you are doing, and why you are doing it, and sometimes they just don't like themselves and project that on you by being critical of your weight loss efforts.

This type of criticism and negativity is not only annoying and unwelcome it can easily detract you from sticking with your plan, make you feel embarrassed and ashamed, and at worst may prevent you from meeting your long-term goals.

So, if uncle Bob or your friend Sally is knocking your lettuce wrapped burger or burrito bowl, stop going out with them and choose supportive dining partners instead.



## **Don't Hide From Healthy Fats**

Attempting to cut out any food from your diet without replacing it is a shortcut to failure and it is no difference with carbs. By replacing carbs with healthy fat, you are not only keeping your appetite at bay but also providing your body with energy so you can stick with your low-carb diet. This means you can put a dab of real butter on your steak, ask that they cook your eggs in real butter, and ask for olive oil and vinegar on your salads.

Most restaurants cook with vegetable oil (corn, soy, and canola are popular) and these oils can hinder your weight loss efforts by interfering with fat metabolism. They are also highly oxidized and contribute to inflammation and damage your DNA. Even if you don't have weight loss goals these are best avoided. Ask for your food to be cooked in butter, steamed, poached, roasted, or grilled.

## **Ditch The Buns And Bread**

Bread is a carbohydrate and offers very little nutritional benefit. Any sandwich can be lettuce wrapped, and this includes burgers, chicken and steak sandwiches. You can also just eat the insides with a knife and fork without the bread. If the restaurant is clueless about lettuce wrapping, then just ask for no bread and a few large leaves of lettuce and make it yourself.



## **French Fries Alternatives**

Your restaurant may offer baked carrot sticks, so find out. If not, you can get yourself a lettuce wrapped burger, and then ask for a couple of slices of extra crispy bacon on the side, with the crunch of the bacon, you will never miss the fries. Sometimes I'll get a lettuce wrapped burger



with a side salad or a side of vegetables. Even in the most sketchy restaurant you can usually find a burger and a side salad.

## **You CAN Win Friends With Salad**

We know from fruit juice that just because something is natural doesn't mean it's healthy and you should be mindful of your salad ingredients for this reason.



Always ask what is included in the salad, and avoid beans, corn, or other starches.

Don't order those that come in a shell, and ask that croutons and tortilla strips

be removed. Any included meat should be grilled and never breaded or fried.

Real bacon bits are fine, as is cheese on your salad. Ask for dressing on the side so you can control your intake, especially with creamy dressings that include some carbs. I like these portable packets of olive oil and balsamic vinegar: [Mini Olivia](#). I have been able to find them locally at Cost Plus World Market.

## **Choose Low Carb Sides**

If your entrée includes high carb sides such as pasta, rice, or fries, ask if you can substitute it for low carb options such as, vegetables like broccoli, asparagus or a salad. Restaurants will almost always be happy to accommodate you. I have ordered non-starchy vegetables for years because I have a nightshade (potato) sensitivity. No matter what, ask that they not put any starches on your plate to avoid temptation.

## **Pizza**

Everyone loves pizza, but most of the bad carbs are in the crust. Skip the crust. Many places will bake pizza toppings with sauce and cheese. A word of caution, many restaurants add sugar to their red sauces. Either check the ingredients online or ask your server which sauce has the least amount of sugar. If you're not sure skip the sauce and add fresh tomatoes to the toppings you're having baked.

## **Control Your Appetite And You Control Temptation**

If you're feeling ravenous before heading to a restaurant, you can give yourself an edge to avoid the temptation of all the high carb menu items by snacking on something healthy before you head out. This will help you avoid making unhealthy choices. Choose something that's healthy and filling but that won't completely ruin your appetite like a few nuts or avocado slices. A sign of being fat adapted is that hunger will switch from being ravenous to a gentle reminder that maybe you should eat.

## **Don't Desert Your Dessert**

Craving something sweet to finish off your meal? Don't ruin all your hard work by ordering some flour, sugar, and fat filled disaster.

Instead, if your dinner-mate has ordered dessert, take one bite of theirs or even better, order some fresh berries, like raspberries and a dollop of fresh cream for a very low carb dessert option, it's really all you need to get rid of that sweet-tooth craving. Plus, berries are loaded with antioxidants.



## **Choose Drinks With Care**

Soft drinks and alcohol are heavy in carbs, so choose low carb alternatives such as tea, sugar free coffee, water, and sparkling water. If you must drink alcohol then some low carb options are dry wine, and pure spirits (straight or with club soda). A point of caution is that the body will burn alcohol first so any carbs you have with alcohol will likely be stored as fat. You also have to die with a smile; it's a balance.

## **Choose Only Grilled Meats**

Avoid anything fried and choose only grilled chicken, fish and steak. Grilled meats will allow you to avoid a load of vegetable oils you'd get from a sauteed or deep fried dish. If you're worried about cancer and grilled meat make sure you have dark greens with your dinner to counter the grilled meat.



## **Stick With Old-Fashioned Favorites**

There really is no substitute for real food. Often the best option is a simple meat and non-starchy vegetables combination, especially if the restaurant offers organic and grass-fed meats. Try to find restaurants that serve meat and vegetables grown and raised naturally. Animals living in their native habitat and produce grown locally and in season, i.e. as they did back in the olden days, is the best quality you can get.

## **Don't Be Afraid To Experiment**

Often people don't realize how limited their cuisine is until they travel overseas. Various other cultures offer a variety of low-carb, healthy snacks, and meal options like dried anchovies and kelp chips and food prepared in coconut oil.

## **Water Water Everywhere**

Water has some great benefits besides being obviously calorie free. Drinking 2 glasses upon waking washes out your renal system and hydrates your alimentary canal. Drinking 8 glasses a day can help prevent constipation but don't force water. Let your thirst be your guide when it comes to drinking water during the day.



## **A Variation On Pasta Dishes**

When it comes to pasta, you'd be hard pressed to find a more carbohydrate rich food, which is why many people can't pass it up. When you eat pasta by itself, you also realize how tasteless it really is without any sauce. People don't love pasta, they love pasta sauce.

Get all the flavor of your favorite Italian meal by pouring that sauce on your meat and veggies instead. This works with marinara and Alfredo, which tastes great over chicken and broccoli without the pasta. Many Italian restaurants have steak on the menu; pair it with a side of vegetables and sauce and you definitely won't leave feeling hungry.

## **More Fun With Pasta**

Check the menu for a spiral cut zucchini pasta, many restaurants have joined the spiral vegetable revolution allowing you to enjoy your favorite pasta dishes the low carb way.

## **Sushi**

If Sushi is one of your favorite go-to meals, you can still enjoy it, but without the rice. Get your cut rolls without rice, and order hand rolls without rice instead; another good option is to add cucumber to those rolls instead.

Sashimi platters are good choices or you can simply order from the many sushi salads that include fresh fish over a bed of greens; spicy tuna salad is a great choice.



## **Get Saucy**

Sauces can be a real mixed bag. Tomato sauce for example contains mostly carbs while Béarnaise is mostly fat. If you're unsure then just ask your waiter about the ingredients and avoid the sauce if it contains flour or sugar. Another option is to ask for the sauce on the side so you can control how much is added to your meal.

## **Oil Be Back**

You may not have noticed it but sometimes restaurants will drizzle your meal with cheaper vegetable oils instead of using olive oil. This is a less healthy choice and vegetable oil is also full of omega 6 fats. You can get around this by taking a small concealable bottle of olive oil with you.

## **Breaking The Fast**

To eat healthy breakfast, eggs are really your best friend and the variety of dishes created with them are limitless.

Foods to avoid in your breakfast order are oatmeal, hash browns, waffles, pancakes, and toast.



You can have steak and eggs, omelets with filled with cheese, veggies, and meats, and the classic bacon or sausage and egg dish is always great. If you tolerate dairy hollandaise sauce is also a great addition to your breakfast plate.

## **The Mexican Fiesta**

Mexican dishes are typically a high carb disaster, but there are low carb variations. Burrito fillings can be eaten without a tortilla, just ask for the insides bowl style and use your fork, be sure to ask for no beans, or rice.

Tacos can be wrapped in a leaf of lettuce instead of a tortilla.

You can enjoy that salsa with sliced cucumbers or other sliced vegetables instead of the high carb chips.

One of the most healthy low carb options in an authentic Mexican joint is the shrimp cocktail or ceviche. Guacamole (sans the chips) is your healthy fat.

## **The Appetizer Buffet**

You can create yourself a low carb mini buffet by ordering a dinner salad and a couple of low carb appetizers, like stuffed mushrooms, shrimp cocktail or ahi tartare.

## **Eliminate The Bread Basket**

As soon as you sit down, ask the server to not bring any bread to the table. This helps avoid temptation.

## **A Better Coffee Treat**

Your favorite coffeehouse Frappuccino and blends are loaded with sugar. Instead, get a regular coffee and add half and half or heavy whipping cream. Some places carry Bulltproof Coffee or a version of a fat coffee blended with butter and MCT oil. I like my fat coffee with a sprinkle of cinnamon on top.



## **Soup Ideas**

Soup can be very low carb, but choose those without rice, noodles, corn or potatoes. Cream soups can be good, such as Cream of Broccoli.

Don't be shy about asking the server for a complete list of ingredients.

## **Chili Issues**

Chili is great except for the beans; sometimes you can get lucky and find a spot that serves really good chili without any beans.

## **Be Assertive**

Never shy away from asking for variations and preparation of your food the way you want it. However, realize the difference between trying to create a special dish for yourself and simply

asking a few things to be removed. Also be aware of how crowded the restaurant is. I try to make fewer requests on a busy Saturday night versus a Tuesday afternoon.

Restaurants who love and appreciate their customers will comply with anything they possibly can, and you should never let shyness or a lack of assertiveness keep you from enjoying dining the low carb way!



### **Stay On Track**

Monitor your success with eating out as you progress, if more often than not you stray from your low carb plan when at restaurants, then just avoid them for a while or limit going out to eat.

In the end, the most important thing is that you properly acclimate to your new way of eating, and if restaurants interfere with this, wait a few weeks until you are able to easily resist temptation.

You can still enjoy socializing with friends and family by inviting them over to your home instead of going out, where you can control the menu. If you don't make a big deal out of the menu or point out how it's different most people won't notice.

**Stay well and best wishes for your ongoing success!**