Whether by choice or profession, you will at some point find yourself at a restaurant, scouring the menu for the healthiest choices. Restaurant menus can be confusing territory – but these tips will make your healthy dining experience fun, satisfying, and stress-free.

**ahead of time**

- Search for terms like "organic breakfast," “local restaurant," or “grass-fed burger" on Google or Yelp.
- When dining with a group, take charge and suggest a restaurant that meets your specifications.
- Smaller, local restaurants are generally more accommodating to substitutions or customization than larger chains.
- Research the menu beforehand and plan your order so you won't be tempted by other less healthy dishes when you arrive.
- Pack your own small bottle of dressing or coconut aminos. Don’t make a big deal out of it and most servers won’t say a thing.

**when seated**

- Upon being seated, ask that the server not bring bread to the table, and please not to offer you dessert.
- Don’t hesitate to ask about food sourcing, hidden ingredients (like cheese on a salad), or preparation methods.
- Be specific about any allergies, sensitivities, or preferences, especially if you experience health consequences when exposed.

**ordering**

- Be firm but nice about your requests. Say things like, “Would it be possible...?" or “I’d love it if...”
- Get creative! Order sandwiches without bread, pasta toppings on a bed of fresh spinach, or double vegetables as your side.
- If you’ve got grass-fed, pastured, wild-caught, or organic meat options, choose those above conventionally raised meat.
- If ordering conventionally-raised meat, choose leaner cuts instead of burgers, ribs, or a fatty steak - and/or trim all visible fat.
- Ask for vegetables to be steamed or sautéed with olive oil, instead of cooked or fried in vegetable oil.
- Omelets are often infused with milk or pancake batter (!) to make them fluffier. Request shelled eggs, or order them poached.
- Request individual bottles of olive oil and vinegar and some fresh lemon to use as dressing on salad, vegetables, or meat.

**check, please**

- When you have a good experience, thank the server and the chef - and tip well, especially if the restaurant is one you visit often.
- Don’t sweat the small stuff if you did your best to make smart choices. Dining out should be fun, not stressful!
- Practice makes perfect - and soon enough you’ll be an expert Good Food menu-reader in any restaurant setting.