

Nutrition is on the Menu

Although I resolved a couple of months ago to get organized and start cooking for my family, that resolution has not yet come to fruition. This is a very busy time of year for us and I feel as though we are eating out more than ever. Frankly, I'm getting tired of eating restaurant food—I actually miss my own cooking! Our run on restaurant eating will not be letting up for another month or two, though, so in the meantime I thought it would be helpful to review for myself and my readers how to order the most healthful, calorie-conscious meals when dining out or ordering in.

✓ Menu Minefields

Ordering well from menus is not as straightforward as you would imagine. There are many hidden ingredients and surprisingly unhealthy cooking methods that can sabotage your health-conscious efforts. Restaurant food tends to be higher in calories than home-cooked food because more fat is used in preparing it and because portion sizes are larger.

Even if you're a dietitian, it's still difficult to navigate restaurant menus and figure out what's in your food. A dietitian friend of mine once told me that she went to a new restaurant several years ago and asked the server what items on the menu were vegetarian. He recommended the black beans. Well, they were the best black beans she had ever tasted and she started frequenting the restaurant at least once a month. After several months went by, she finally asked to speak to the chef to ask him to give a heart-healthy cooking demonstration to her clients. When she gushed over the black beans, he told her that they weren't vegetarian at all; they contained prime rib au jus, schmaltz (chicken fat) and brownie frosting made with lard!



To be perfectly honest, you're not going to find a lot of restaurants that make your health their first priority. Their job is to make your food taste good, and the easiest (and most cost-effective) way to do this is to cook with lots of fat and salt. While the monounsaturated fat from extra virgin olive oil is good for you, most dining establishments don't use olive oil in their cooking. Most restaurants do have olive oil, though, and you can try to request that it be used to cook your food. Restaurants also want to give you value for your dollar, so portion sizes tend to range from large to gargantuan. Research shows that when larger portions of food are presented to people, they tend to eat more than if smaller portions are presented. You can deal with this by ordering appetizers as your entrée, sharing, or packing half of your entrée to go before you start eating. But it's not just how much you eat that counts, it's also what you eat.

✓ Learn the Buzzwords

If you cook, you're probably fairly good at recognizing items that tend to be higher in fat and calories. If you're culinarily challenged, however, you might not know that a "cutlet" or "Milanese" preparation of meat or chicken is breaded and then fried in oil or butter. You might also not be aware that the cutlet would actually be a better choice than something cooked "parmigiana" style, since that item would be breaded and fried like a cutlet, then smothered in tomato sauce and cheese and baked.

The following page has a glossary of cooking terms that tend to indicate that a food is high in fat and calories. You don't need to avoid them at all costs, but try to eat these items less frequently or in smaller quantities than lighter choices.

You may notice that a lot of the *Caveat Eater* glossary entries involve sauces, and for good reason: Sauces can add a lot of calories to perfectly healthful foods. Keep in mind that plainer, less saucy foods will be lower in calories than those with added sauces.

Page three has a glossary of cooking terms that indicate that a food is probably prepared in a healthful manner.

✓ Have it Your Way

Tell your server that you're trying to eat healthfully. Sometimes menus aren't very descriptive, so feel free to ask about how items are prepared. Find out which fresh steamed, raw or roasted vegetables can be substituted for high-calorie accompaniments, like fries or mashed potatoes. Don't forget that you can request that ingredients (like cheese) be withheld, sauce be served on the side and other healthful ingredients (like tomatoes) be added. Also, ask for fish



Gelson's registered dietitian, Jessica Siegel, has a Masters in Public Health. However, she is not a doctor and her nutritional recommendations are not tailored to specific health problems. Consult your physician before beginning any nutritional program. To contact Jessica, please call her at 1-800-GELSONS.

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available in the service deli. Pair my salads with Carving Cart Turkey, Spicy Grilled Salmon, Grilled Thai Tofu or some No Salt Rotisserie Chicken for a light and simple meal. Our salad bar also offers excellent selections and convenience for those looking for a fast and healthy veggie-based meal. I recommend that you try to eat a large salad for either lunch or dinner in order to meet your vegetable requirements of at least five servings a day. Making yours at a salad bar is one of the best ways to ensure that you get a nice variety of produce while limiting high-calorie ingredients like cheese and croutons. Make your own olive oil and vinegar dressing or, if you use a creamy dressing, dilute it with some vinegar.

I know that eating out frequently is often unavoidable and it is tough to balance healthfulness with pleasure, especially when you are paying a lot for your food.

I heartily believe in enjoying your food, but every meal should not be a special treat. Now that you have the tools to navigate restaurant menus, you should be able to build healthy meals anywhere you eat. Sometimes, however, you just want to enjoy your food the way it comes, and you should—just remember that if you're working on maintaining your weight, then stick with my "80/20 rule": Aim to eat healthfully 80% of the time and then eat anything you like the remaining 20% of the time (about four meals a week if you eat three meals a day). If you are working on losing weight, then the ratio should be more like 90/10 (about two meals a week). I hope to start cooking again soon, but until then I will do my best to order the most healthful options most of the time, and I hope that you will, too.

and chicken to be grilled or broiled plain. Toppings such as fresh salsa, marinara or other tomato sauce, barbecue sauce, vinaigrette, mustard, and chutney are usually low in calories and fat but still add flavor. Request them on the side with your grilled or broiled proteins. Remember: don't be afraid to ask for what you want—you're the customer.

✓ Damage Control

Think about how you eat at home when you do have a home-cooked meal. Does the meal usually include bread, wine or other caloric beverages and dessert? I hope it doesn't and, if you're eating out frequently, you should not include them in your meal either. Think of a restaurant as an extension of your kitchen and try to eat more like you would at home. Aim to make at least half of your plate vegetables, a quarter of your plate protein and the remaining quarter whole grains or starchy vegetables. It is pretty unusual at restaurants to find whole grains, such as brown rice, wild rice, quinoa or whole wheat pasta, so you will probably end up with starchy vegetables like corn, peas, winter squash, sweet potatoes, or regular potatoes instead. If none of these are options, either, order some extra non-starchy veggies.

✓ Other Options

If you don't have a lot of time to cook, or don't feel like eating out, Gelson's has some healthful options for you, too. My Recipes from Jessica's Kitchen salads, which use fresh plant-based ingredients to create tasty, nutritious fare, are

Caveat Eater: Watch out for these terms!

Term	Description
Alfredo	A sauce made with butter, parmesan cheese and cream
Au Gratin	In cheese sauce
Batter-Fried	Dipped in bread or starchy batter and then fried
Béarnaise	A sauce made with egg yolks, butter and wine
Breaded	Food is dipped in bread crumbs before cooking, egg is usually used to help the breading stick to the food, then the food is usually fried after it is breaded
Beurre Blanc	A sauce made with butter and wine
Buttered or Buttery	Butter is added (usually liberally)
Creamed or Creamy	Cream is added (usually liberally)
Crispy	Describes the texture of the food, usually obtained by frying
Deep-Fried	Food is submerged in a large quantity of hot oil or other fat
Double Crust	Twice the amount of crust
En Croute	Means in a crust, usually a flaky, buttery Phyllo or croissant-type crust
Escalloped or Scalloped	Cooked with cream or milk and usually cheese
French-Fried	Food is sliced into strips, and then deep fried
Hollandaise	A sauce made with egg yolks and butter
Light Cream Sauce	Still creamy, made with light cream instead of heavy cream or cream sauce is diluted with tomato sauce or other sauce
Oil Marinated	A food is left to sit in seasoned oil for a set amount of time before cooking or serving (as in the case of olives and artichoke hearts)
Pan Fried or Sautéed	Fried in a pan using oil or butter in moderate quantities
Pastry	A sweet or savory dough made with flour and lots of butter
Pesto	A sauce made with olive oil, pine nuts and cheese (healthful but high in calories)
Rich	Means a lot of fat is used



Green Light Glossary: Terms for food that you can order regularly

Term	Description
Baked	Cooked in an oven using dry heat
Barbecued or Grilled	Food is basted in a seasoned sauce and cooked over an open flame
Braised	Cooked in liquid over low heat for a long time
Broiled	Cooked in an oven directly under a heat source
Chutney	Condiment made with fruit, vinegar and spices, sometimes spicy
Lightly Sautéed	Cooked quickly with a small amount of fat in a pan over direct heat
Marinara	An Italian sauce made with tomatoes, onions and spices
Poached	Food is gently cooked in a liquid or a sauce other than fat
Roasted	Cooked uncovered in an oven to produce a browned exterior and moist interior
Salsa	A flavorful sauce made with fresh vegetables and herbs, cooked or raw, with varying degrees of spiciness
Steamed	Cooked quickly in a covered pot just above boiling water
Stir-Fried	Cooked quickly in a very hot pan with a minimum amount of fat
Vinaigrette	A sauce or salad dressing made with oil, vinegar and spices

Homemade Dinner Menu Ideas

Two months ago in *Nutrition Notes* I wrote "Menu Planning Strategies" and planned a week's worth of dinners for you. This month, I hope you are doing better than I am with cooking at home. If you are, I have planned some dinners using recipes that emphasize the bounty of produce that is coming into season right now. *Bon appétit!*

Day	First Course	Protein	Vegetable 1	Vegetable 2	Starch	Dessert
Monday	Fresh melon	Black Cod alla Bruschetta*	(in the fish)	Spicy Garlic Broccoli*	Gelson's Finest Rustic Bread	1/2 ounce dark chocolate
Tuesday	Fresh Guacamole* with baked blue corn tortilla chips	Chicken with Cherry Black Bean Salsa*	(in the chicken)	Roasted Rainbow Carrots*	(in the chips)	1/2 Julie's Organic Ice Cream Sandwich
Wednesday	Harvest Lentil Soup	Penne with Asparagus and Ricotta*	(in the pasta)	Naked Summer Squash Sauté*	(in the pasta)	Fresh strawberries
Thursday	Imagine Organic Corn and Lemongrass Soup heated with 1 cup corn kernels	Thai Beef Salad*	(in the salad)	(in the salad)	(in the soup)	Creamy Baked Berries*
Friday	Papaya halves with lemon wedges	Zesty Spinach Wraps*	Heirloom Tomato Greek Salad*	(in the wraps)	(in the wraps)	1 Dove Miniatures Dark Chocolate Ice Cream Bar
Saturday	Go out to dinner					
Sunday	Family dinner at Mom's house					

*Recipes available at www.gelsons.com

Naked Food of the Month: Summer Squash

Next up in my “Naked Food of the Month” series is summer squash. These relatives of melons and cucumbers require very little preparation in order to taste great—in other words, they are delicious naked. Squash, like corn and beans, is a food that is native to North America and has helped to nourish us for over 5,000 years.

Summer squash are high in the antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin. These two types of carotenoids help protect our eyes from cataracts and age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in older adults. Additionally, zeaxanthin is believed to reduce the risk of certain types of cancers, including lung and breast cancers. Since carotenoids are fat soluble, meaning that they are carried in fat, you will absorb them best if you combine or cook them with some fat, such as sautéing them in some olive oil or steaming them and topping them with a little Reggiano Parmesan cheese. Although summer squash can be eaten raw, lightly cooking it does help release the lutein and zeaxanthin.

One cup of cooked summer squash has just 30 calories and three grams of fiber. It also contains several times more vitamin A from carotenoids than raw summer squash. Zucchini and other summer squash are also good sources of vitamin B12 and excellent sources of vitamin C, with the “patty pan” variety having about twice as much as the others.

Read My New Blog!

I want to help you raise healthy eaters, so I have started a blog called “Healthy Families” on our website, www.gelsons.com. I document my experiences and thoughts about feeding my one-year old daughter and hopefully impart some worthwhile nutritional wisdom to my readers. Please check it weekly and join me on this very important parenting journey.



Although most summer squash is available year round at Gelson's, its peak season is June through October. Italian squash (zucchini) is the most popular and very versatile, but we also carry golden zucchini, patty pan (scalloped), yellow crookneck, baby and chayote squash (rhymes with coyote).

When selecting squash, go for the smaller specimens, since they will tend to have better texture and flavor than larger ones. They should be firm and heavy for their size with no soft spots or pits. Choose those with bright and evenly colored skin. When you bring your squash home, store them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper for up to a week. To prepare squash, wash just before using and trim the ends. Try to eat the skin of the squash, since most of the nutrients are concentrated there. There is no need to remove the seeds, except if you are cooking chayote squash (remove the skin of larger chayote). Steam, grill, sauté, microwave or bake squash for the shortest time possible. Cooking times vary by squash size and cooking method, but they should be tender and retain their bright color when they are done. Squash pairs very well with other varieties of summer squash, tomatoes, onions, bell peppers, garlic, eggplant, fish, meat, lemon, cheese and several herbs and spices. Try seasoning squash with any combination

of basil, cilantro, dill, mint, marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage and tarragon. This month, try my recipes for Naked Summer Squash Sauté and Roasted Italian Squash.

Jessica's Store Tours* Shopping for a Healthier Weight

Monday, June 21
Northridge 12:00pm
Tarzana 4:00pm

Tuesday, June 22
North Hollywood 12:00pm

Thursday, June 24
Century City 11:00am

Friday, June 25
West Hollywood 12:00pm

Monday, June 28
Irvine 12:00pm

Tuesday, June 29
Pasadena 12:00pm
Silver Lake/Los Feliz 4:00pm

*Please sign up at the front desk at the store you would like to tour.