

Real People Eat Out



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www.RealPeopleDontDiet.com

“Stop dieting. Start eating!”

Other sites by Cate Brizzell:
www.home-budget-help.com
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Real People Eat Out!

Eating out is something Real People like to do, some more often than others.

Usually, it's an excuse to "cheat" on your diet. After all, who wants to pay good money to eat a limp piece of chicken or unsatisfying salad?

So for those of us who used to diet, we go along for a while, eating and drinking "sparingly" (see the www.m-w.com definition of "diet") and losing weight--the hard way.

Then we go out to eat. And we cheat. And bam! Diet's over.

The cycle begins anew...guilt...a new resolution...perhaps a new diet...until the next time a special occasion pops up or we decide to go out to dinner.

I want to show you how to stop the dieting and cheating and cycle of guilt. I want to show you how you can enjoy yourself at any restaurant in town, without overdoing it, and without gaining weight.

In fact, I believe I can show you how to lose weight while you dine out!

If you're using the Real People Formula and making one or more lower-carb choices at every meal, then you can literally eat out as much as you want. Most likely, you can order anything you like off the menu—not just the "light" items.

All you have to do is apply the Real People Formula to your restaurant meal: make one or more lower-carb choices, and watch your portion sizes.

Here are some strategies I use when I eat out:

Prepare for dinner out by eating a low-carb breakfast and lunch. This one is easy. Got a dinner date? Have eggs and fruit for breakfast with maybe one slice of wheat toast, and a salad for lunch. Make sure you have some protein-heavy snacks in between (because eating no-carb meals will leave you crazy with hunger just an hour or two after eating). Try sharp cheddar cheese with some red pepper strips, pepperoni and cheese, peanut butter and apple slices, Fritos (of course) or hard-boiled eggs. Drink plenty of water, too. By the time dinner rolls around, you'll have plenty in your "carb" bank—no need to feel guilty about a tasty pasta dish or mashed potatoes (or dessert)!

Prioritize the foods you want to enjoy most. Always have a plan before you get to the restaurant. Are you eating at the Cheesecake Factory? Then you **must** have a slice of cheesecake for dessert. That means you'll have to cut carbs on beverages, appetizers or the entrée.

Is this place famous for its cheesy mashed potatoes? Then skip dessert this time around and eat potatoes instead.

Delicious milkshakes? A steak and salad or burger and coleslaw is a perfect companion for a tall, thick one.

Is a high-carb appetizer is your favorite?. No problem! Grilled chicken with cheese and veggies gives you plenty of room for those carbs. Have an ice water, iced tea or seltzer and you can have even more fries.

If you eat or drink whatever it is you want the most, you'll feel satisfied when your meal is over, and you'll hardly notice the trade-offs you had to make to enjoy the carbs you planned on eating.

Remember, when you **used** to eat out, you'd have the fries AND the mashed potatoes AND the milkshake AND the cheesecake. So by simply dropping one

or more of these items, you've taken in fewer carbs than usual...and you'll lose weight!

Skip alcoholic beverages. Not only are they pricey, they're high in useless carbs. If you must drink, opt for a lower-carb beer or a lower-carb cocktail. An easy way to avoid being tempted is to offer to be the designated driver. That may get you a free seltzer (with lemon!).

If cocktails are an integral part of your dining routine, try having them every other time you eat out. Personally, I enjoy food much more than drink, so giving up a glass of wine or beer is easy for me.

Be real with yourself and adopt a plan that allows you to be content when you leave the restaurant.

Look for low-carb appetizers. My favorite is chicken wings. How can you go wrong with those? You can also enjoy the celery and carrots that come with the wings!

Try these:

Salsa and tortilla chips

Spinach or queso cheese dips (use veggies or tortilla chips instead of bread or crackers)

Potato skins

Shrimp (not deep-fried)

Lightly breaded mushrooms or chicken fingers

Next up: salad. If a salad comes with your meal, take advantage of it. Make sure you get a low-carb salad dressing. I already know from purchasing salad dressings in the grocery store that ranch, Caesar and Italian are great options.

French and Thousand Island dressings are much higher in sugar, so I avoid those.

If the salad comes with croutons, I may enjoy one. That's it. If there's a salad bar, I skip the croutons altogether and load up on sunflower seeds or almonds. Mmmm...crunch. Yes, the seeds have carbs, but they're healthy, complex carbs, and the nuts have essential oils that are very, very good for you.

Eating a delicious, crunchy salad will fill your belly and add lots of nutrition to your meal.

No bread, please. We usually tell the waitress we don't want hot rolls or bread as soon as we sit down. If we're with the kids, we allow them to eat a slice, but put it on their side of the table so we don't have to be tempted!

One roll or slice of bread means I really can't have that dessert I want...so if I look at it that way, it's really not worth it. I much prefer dessert over bread!

Even if we eat Italian, we skip the bread. I'd rather enjoy the pasta!

Remember, it's a trade-off. You're going to have to eat fewer carbs than you used to when you dined at an Italian restaurant.

Load up on meats, cheese and veggies. Entrees are so easy to enjoy in lower-carb versions!

Some restaurants have "low-carb" entrees you can choose from. TGIFriday's has a delicious chicken and cheese entrée. I get it with peppers and onions, and it's really, really good!

You can't go wrong with chicken, steak or fish. Throw in some steamed vegetables and a bit of complex carbohydrates (such as potatoes) and you're on the right track. If you prefer rice, try to opt for brown instead of white. If white is the only option, eat half the portion you used to.

Even if you desire pasta, you can make sure there's plenty of meat and veggies in your dish. I like pasta alfredo, but rather than the heavy version with just the cream sauce and noodles, now I opt for a primavera dish that comes with lots of vegetables, less sauce and half the pasta.

Portion size doesn't matter...as long as it's no-carb. When it comes to meat or veggies, eat as much as you like! It's the starches and higher-carb items you have to enjoy in moderation.

If I order sides of vegetables, I transfer them right to my main plate, so the dish looks full and my brain tells my belly "Wow...you're eating **more** than enough tonight!".

If necessary, split portions with your dinner companions. I'll divide up my mashed potatoes and feed some to the kids, or split the pasta side with Chris. If I can't see it, I can't eat it!

One of the benefits to eating your entrees this way is that you'll finish your meal without feeling overstuffed. You know, that really heavy, awful feeling you have as you're leaving the restaurant. It's been a long, long time since I've felt that way, and I don't miss it one bit! Usually, I'm still savoring my dessert...

Soft drinks definitely count. Believe it or not, your beverage choice may be the biggest factor in dropping carbs when you dine out. One 10 oz. can of Coke has over 40 grams of carbs! Wow!

Other drinks high in carbs (and sugars) include fruit punch, lemonade, and chocolate milk.

Switch to water, seltzer or unsweetened iced tea, and you've just dropped 40 grams of carbs.

Eliminate the warm bread and you've probably dropped another 20-40 grams of carbs. That's 60-80 carbs lost in just one meal! There's no doubt you will lose weight if you continue to eliminate carbs every time you eat out.

Will it really be that hard to switch from soda to water and tell the waitress not to bring rolls? Will you miss them all that much, especially if you have an appetizer, salad and main dish (with pasta) that you really like?

Dessert time! Now it gets really fun. If you've eliminated carbs from other courses, then you can enjoy desserts—guilt-free!

I love a peanut-butter-cup sundae or cheesecake for dessert. It tastes so much better when you know your entire meal still counts for fewer carbs than you used to eat. There's something about eating a sundae when you know you're still going to lose weight (because math is math).

If you have the option to choose a low-sugar or no-sugar dessert, then by all means, try it. I once opted for a sundae with vanilla ice cream made with Splenda. It was delicious. I didn't notice one bit of difference—and I ate as much as I wanted. Sure, I don't usually prefer chemical sweeteners, but once in a while isn't going to hurt anything.

Fast food works, too. Restaurants are one thing; fast food is another.

When it comes to fast food, I need to get real. Why? Because everyone eats fast food! When you're running errands, when you're on the road, when you can't do dinner and the kids' activities on the same night, fast food is an easy and convenient alternative.

So instead of fighting it by saying you won't do fast food anymore, work with it! You already know fast food isn't all that good for you. I don't have to tell you that. But every chain now has healthy (or healthier) options that you can use to get that great fast-food taste without all the carbs and fat.

If you're at a burger joint, skip the soda and have an iced tea or water. Try to eat off the dollar menu—you'll get slightly smaller burgers and fries, but trust me, you won't notice.

Eat half the fries and throw away—or give away—the rest. Better yet, don't order the fries. Order a second burger. Or chicken (as lightly breaded as possible).

If there's a potato or salad option as a side, and you'll be content with that, then by all means, go for it. I also like Wendy's chili as a side.

Try grilled chicken sandwiches loaded with lettuce, tomatoes, cheese and bacon. Yeah, cheese and bacon may not be the healthiest food items you could choose, but they're tasty, filling and no-carb. (Consider the cheese and bacon a reward for giving up soda and/or fries). Throw in a whole-grain bun and no mayo, and you've got a tasty, filling lower-carb meal that's much lower in carbs than the double-burger you used to choose. I like to eat McDonald's grilled chicken sandwiches with no sauce whatsoever. The chicken is juicy and spicy, and the tomato juicy. I don't need gooey mayo or drippy sauces to make it moist.

If you like chicken nuggets or tenders, take heart! Most are very low in carbs. However, you do need to watch out for chicken strips. Most are coated with quite

a bit of breading, and are high in fat thanks to being deep-fried. McDonald's chicken nuggets are fairly low in carbs. I often order them as a side with a burger, instead of fries.

When eating Mexican, beans are just fine. Yes, they have carbs, but they're complex carbs and high in fiber. Remember, if you eat a lot of fiber, the food will be eliminated before it has a chance to convert to fat. It's the highly processed carbs that create a lot of your extra weight.

Opt for Mexican dishes that are thin on tortillas and high on meat, cheese and vegetables.

Fried chicken may not be good for your arteries, but if you're eating out and you pair it with some veggie sides or coleslaw, you could do worse. If you enjoy the taste just as much, opt for the baked, grilled or roast chicken instead. Baked beans are another decent option—the less brown sugar, the better. Skip the biscuits, or eat half instead of a whole one.

If you're visiting a deli, try soup and salad or soup and half a sandwich. Consider trading the potato or macaroni salad for a Mediterranean salad or coleslaw.

When choosing soups look for broth-based with vegetables or beans (or both), unless you really prefer cheesy or creamy versions. Just remember you need to make trade-offs!

When ordering sandwiches, go easy on the condiments (except mustard) and heavy on the meat and veggies. You can't go wrong with whole-grain or rye breads. White or Italian rolls are loaded with carbs and processed sugars.

Subs are a fine choice, but you may want to try to cut carbs by eliminating or changing sides. Instead of chips, have soup. Eliminate carbs by changing portions, too. Instead of a foot-long, try a six-inch. Avoid soda and get water or iced tea instead. Try the whole-grain sub roll...you might really like it. You could even try the veggie sub—it's my favorite now! I get it with oil and lots of black pepper on a wheat roll. Yum, yum. I can't bear to think of eating a footlong now, which used to be routine for me.

Pizza is tough. How can you avoid carbs there? Usually, I opt for a thin crust. I'll cut a large New York-style slice into two thin slices. That way, I trick myself into believing I'm really having **two** pieces of pizza! A salad, crunchy carrots or chicken wings are better than reaching for that second or third piece. I always serve my kids baby carrots with a bit of ranch dressing along with their pizza. We make our pizza at home. It tastes better, and we save money. Plus we can load our pizzas up with meat and veggies. Right now our favorites are red peppers, onions, mushrooms (Cate only) and pepperoni.

As you can see, you don't have to eliminate fast food to lose weight! Just review what your typical fast food meal used to look like. Then reduce carbs in one or more parts of that meal...and you'll be losing weight!

CONCLUSION

Today more than ever, Real People eat out on a regular basis.

Use the Real People Formula and you can still enjoy your favorite restaurants...guilt-free!

Once you've controlled your carb intake a few times and you realize you really don't have to "go without", it'll become a habit. You will never step away from the table overstuffed again. In fact, you'll probably have a delicious doggie bag to take with you, and your lunch for tomorrow is already taken care of!

You won't fall asleep during the movie or have to let a few notches out of your belt.

You'll be satisfied with tasty dishes and treats you enjoy, while still feeling energetic and slim.

And guess what that leads to? More dinner dates!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cate Brizzell and her husband Chris developed the “Real People Don’t Diet” weight-loss strategy in June of 2006. By the time her e-book of the same name was published in January of 2007 the couple had lost nearly 60 pounds combined.

A freelance author and stay-at-home mom, Cate manages website design and content for local corporate clients. She founded and maintains several websites of her own, including

www.home-budget-help.com and www.moms-make-money-online.com, as well as www.RealPeopleDontDiet.com.



Cate lives with her husband and three children in upstate New York where she enjoys homeschooling, Jane Austen novels, scrapbooking, golf and traveling to tropical destinations whenever possible!