

15

EATING OUTSIDE THE HOME

By J. Morris Hicks

Since most people consume half or more of their calories outside the home these days, it's very important that you learn how to eat "4Leaf style" while in restaurants, in social situations, in the workplace and while traveling.

Healthy Eating in Restaurants. You may be able to continue eating at your current favorite restaurants and just replace some of your usual entrées with other, more healthful, options on the menu. To be able to serve a healthy meal, however, a restaurant has to have fresh grains, vegetables, fruits and legumes in their kitchen.

Many restaurants, especially chain establishments, rely on meat, dairy and frozen foods for the majority of the meals they serve. The chef may have very little ability or willingness to adapt the menu. Not even Houdini could order a 4Leaf meal in one of those places! If one of those types of restaurants is a current favorite, you may need to find some new favorites that allow you to practice what we call "creative ordering."

Eight Simple Steps to 4Leaf Ordering

1. Look for any entrées that fit your new eating style. Some examples: teriyaki vegetables with brown rice, curried vegetables with chickpeas, or grilled eggplant on whole wheat pita bread. It is possible that there will be NO entrées that will work for you as is, but don't worry!

2. Check the menu entrées again, this time looking for a possible meal that would be great minus the meat and/or cheese. I call this the **“Tiger Shrimp, Hold the Shrimp”** technique. Years ago, I noticed an attractive dish on my yacht club menu called “Tiger Shrimp,” served with whole grains, seaweed and a medley of garden-fresh vegetables. So, I simply told the waiter:

“I'll have the Tiger Shrimp, hold the shrimp, double up on the grains, vegetables and seaweed--AND kindly ask the chef to adjust the price accordingly.”

The above anecdote illustrates how easy it can be to order 4Leaf meals in restaurants and save money at the same time. Listed at \$22 on the menu, they charged me \$12 every time.

As another example, I occasionally ask if the chef can substitute avocado for the bacon in the BLT. It now becomes an ALT. I make sure it is on whole wheat bread and that no mayonnaise is used. Not a great 4Leaf meal, but sometimes that's the best you can do in many casual dining establishments—like the snack bar at a large public park.

3. Look for healthy side dishes on the menu. Note: anything fried is *not* a healthy *side* since most of the calories will come from the oil! In addition to what you find in the “sides” portion of the menu, look at what veggies, grains,

4LEAF GUIDE TO VIBRANT HEALTH

potatoes and legumes accompany the various entrées. All of these are available in the kitchen and can be combined to make a fabulous meal.

4. Ask that your food be prepared with minimal or no oil.
5. Remember that the “token” vegetarian entrée is likely loaded with oil, white flour and cheese, derives very few calories from whole plants and is rarely close to being a 2Leaf or 3Leaf meal.
6. If you decide to order pasta, request that it be whole grain and that at least 2/3 of the dish is veggies. Also, verify that the sauce does not contain dairy or excessive oil, and consider asking for it to be served on the side. That way you won’t eat as much of it.
7. If you are having bread with your meal, make sure that it is whole grain and that you don’t use butter or olive oil.
8. Remember that a meal of vegetables (or fruit) without a grain, legume or potato will likely not have enough calories to keep you going for more than a few hours. Make sure you create a meal with “staying power.”

After a little practice, this *creative ordering* can be a lot of fun.

And, regardless of what special meal you create, don’t forget this magic, money-saving phrase: “Kindly ask the chef to adjust the price accordingly.” Not only will you be enjoying healthy and delicious meals that you create yourself, you’ll likely save money every time you dine. More on this in Chapter 17.

Healthy Eating in Social Situations

So what about parties and eating at friends’ homes? This

can be more difficult but not impossible. Unless you know that there is going to be plenty of healthy food available, I strongly advise that you eat a healthy snack before you go.

If it's a cocktail party, simply dig into the carrots, broccoli, celery and hummus and avoid the cheese, shrimp and deviled eggs. Alternatively, you can always just enjoy a cocktail sans the solid food.

If it's a sit-down dinner, let your hosts know in advance that you are on a restricted diet. Politely stating that you don't want to inconvenience them in any way or have them adapt their menu for your needs helps to make this situation less awkward.

Depending on how well you know the host, you can offer to bring something to share that you know you can eat. Otherwise, eat enough before you go so that you are not very hungry.

Healthy Eating on the Road

While traveling, pack easy-to-eat items like apples, grapes, bananas, cherries or clementines. It is incredibly difficult to get a healthy meal at most rest stop fast food restaurants. At airports or shopping malls, look for the Mexican or Asian places. There you can usually get at least a 3Leaf meal, perhaps with a little more oil and salt than you would like. Sometimes, Subway might be your best bet—where you can get a veggie sandwich on whole wheat.

Another healthy option is the food buffet at many grocery chains like Whole Foods Market, Wegmans and many others. They always have a vast array of whole, plant-based foods that can either be eaten onsite or purchased to go. This method usually accounts for at least one of my meals each week.

Healthy Eating at the Workplace

Some combination of the following two ideas should work out for you:

1. Bring your own 4Leaf breakfast and/or lunch to work. Making it yourself is the best way to ensure you will have a healthy meal available. Want to eat your oatmeal at work? Place your oats in a container with raisins and almond milk or water. Then, cut up your fruit and put in another container. Mix them together when you are ready to eat. This works great whether eaten at your desk or in the cafeteria. You can warm it in the microwave at work or you can eat it cold like I do.

2. Check out your workplace cafeteria, where you hopefully can find some 4Leaf options for breakfast and/or lunch. You can use some of the above restaurant ordering techniques when telling the staff how you would like for them to make your sandwich.

When all else fails

We know that eating 4Leaf outside the home can sometimes be difficult and that occasionally you will simply not be able to find any suitable food at all. The good news is that, after you have been eating a near optimal diet for awhile, it will not be that painful to experience a little true hunger and just skip a meal from time to time. Just drink a little water and look forward to your next 4Leaf meal a few hours later.

Now, let's take a break and check up on how Tom Miller is doing.