

Tracking Macros While Dining Out: The 3 Best Approaches

<https://www.iifym.com/healthy-diet/tracking-macros-while-dining-out-the-3-best-approaches/>

Dining Out, If It Fits Your Macros Style

You've just been invited out to dinner with your friends on a Friday night and immediately feel some excitement at the thought. Soon after, however, anxiety sets in. What about your macros? You do after all have fat loss goals!

The great part [about IIFYM](#) and the if it fits *your macros* approach is that pretty much anything goes provided you hit your fat loss macros. If you want pizza, you can have it. Want some pasta? That's fine too. While obviously, you should be focusing on nutritious choices as often as possible to promote health as well, the beautiful idea about [Flexible Dieting](#) is that you can eat what you crave and desire when you want it.

You have already calculated your macros at the IIFYM [Macro Calculator](#), (if not, click here: IIFYM [Macro Calculator](#)) now you just need to ensure that it 'fits' into your daily allotment of carbs, protein, and fat.

And that's where some people struggle as they go about this plan. At home, you have complete control over your food. You can weigh and measure everything, so it makes tracking your macros a breeze.

Less Control, More Room For Error

Unfortunately, at a restaurant, you have less control. This can pose a bit of a problem at times. Knowing how to go about a restaurant meal out while sticking to your *IIFYM Macros* can help. There are a few different levels of commitment to consider here. Which method you use will all depend on just how precise you want to be. Some people who are preparing for contests, for instance, will want the highest level of dedication because there's not enough room for error. Those who are using IIFYM simply to look and feel great may be able to use a lower level of commitment because, for them, exact precision every single day is just not required to reach their goals. So first assess yourself, then assess the levels of commitment and choose the one that's relevant for you.



The Ultra Committed IIFYM Approach

The first approach is for the ultra-committed. This is for those who are preparing for a contest, looking to get to the most cut state possible, or for those who simply need to feel in control at all times.

Some people – usually the ‘Type A’ personalities can’t stand if they are not giving 110% effort every single time.

For them, the ultra-committed approach is the only way. Even though they may not theoretically have any reason for going to this level, it’s simply what they prefer.

And that’s *fine!*

This program is all about doing what makes you happy, so identify that and run with it.

Want an IIFYM Blueprint for only \$47? Click here to get started with your [Macro Blueprint](#) So what is the ultra-committed approach all about?

It’s about using the exact same principles that you’d use at home, in a restaurant while dining out.

What you’re going to need to do is first look at the menu. What types of foods are available?

With any luck, you’ll be able to find some basic dishes. Grilled chicken, grilled steak, or fish that’s been just lightly seared are all fantastic options. If you can find a protein on its own like this, usually you’ll be able to also order some basic steamed vegetables and a side of rice to go with it. Or, perhaps you want a simple baked potato without any butter, cheese, or sour cream added.

“Request that the chef prepare your food without the addition of any butter, oil, or other sauces and bring your food scale along with you to the restaurant.”

Order the basic individual meal components that you’d have at home: a protein source, a healthy fat source, and a vegetable (and possibly a complex carb if you are having a higher carb meal).

Now when your food arrives, bring out your scale, weigh it and track those macros.

A few words on this approach.

First, you’ll want to be dining with friends/individuals who understand and support your goals (or at least be willing to take a few looks if they don’t). Whipping out a food scale in a restaurant setting may cause some comments, so you want to be sure that you can handle and/or are comfortable with this.

Second, even though you may *ask* your server for the chef not to use butter or oil, be sure to inspect the food a bit when it comes to your plate. While many restaurants will obey entirely, some may still attempt to liven the food up a little by adding certain elements.

Or, if the food was cooked with other foods drenched in butter, for instance, some of that may have rubbed off onto yours.

This isn’t the complete end of the world (and normally would not require you to send your food back), but it does mean that you should be a little more conservative with your macro tracking.

Build a little extra room in for fat and calories in case something was added. When you are seeking fat loss, it’s better to err on the side of caution and come up a little shorter than you thought than be on the other side and go over.



The Simplest Choices

Yet, if you want to be truly sure, the best item to order is a salad. Since a salad isn't cooked in any way (except for the protein source that comes with the salad), you have less to worry about. When you request dressing on the side, there is no reason there should be any dressing on your salad (and if there is, do not feel guilty about sending it back!). Then the only issue may be a slight amount of oil on your chicken if any, which is much less for you to worry about. Alternatively, for the protein source, if you are keeping everything clean while dining out, then sushi or cocktail shrimp if they offer it will be your best option. As no cooking is involved in either of these, again, you can ensure that it's a fully clean option before it hits your plate. A generous high-calorie meal may just do the trick to give you a tiny boost to your metabolic rate so once you do go back to tracking your macros, you start burning up body fat that much faster.

If you use this level of commitment, there's not much need for anxiety about dining out as you are essentially doing the exact same technics you'd otherwise be doing.

One more note – if you are days away from walking onstage at a contest, the choice is simple: *don't go out at all*. At this point, there isn't any room for error, so your best bet is to simply pass on dining out this time and look forward to treating yourself to a feast once the contest is over.

The Committed Approach

Next, you have the committed approach. This is for those who want to stay committed, want to ensure they see optimal results, but who want to refrain from bringing their food scales with them to the restaurant.

At this level of commitment, you need to do some background work. How many calories are in the dish you want to order? What are the macros?

Often now, restaurants will post this information on their website, so ahead of time, browse the menu online. What looks great and can fit in with your macros?

Figure out what you want to eat ahead of time and plan for those macros in your day. This is a rather simple way to make dining out work for you

Just keep in mind that at times, the published nutrition stats and what you actually get may be slightly different, so again, build in some wiggle room. If you're serious about fat loss, it's better to be slightly *under* the estimate than go over.

No Need To Stress

If the nutritional stats are not published online, you might ask your server for them when you are at the restaurant. If that's still not available, then you'll simply need to focus on ordering individual food items (again, the grilled chicken breast, the baked potato, the side of steamed vegetables, etc.) and estimate from there.

Ordering these types of items will make estimation smoother than if you were to order say lasagna or a slice of pizza.

Keep in mind that even at this stage, you may still wish to focus on making modifications to your meal.

For instance, if you are ordering a grilled chicken Caesar salad, there's nothing wrong with asking for light dressing or having it on the side.

Then just estimate your stats accordingly. While this will alter the published stats that you may have seen online, if it's in the name of making the meal a better macro fit for your diet and you won't feel that restricted by doing so, it's a sound adjustment to make.

The basic healthy eating rules and guidelines for restaurant modifications can still apply (unless of course you are going for a cheat meal and *want* to eat something you've really been craving).



The Relaxed Approach

Finally, the last method we have is the relaxed approach. If you're someone who just wants to go out and have a great time without worrying about nutritional stats or checking the menu online, that's fine too.

If this is you, then simply cut yourself some slack. Know that if you are 'on' plan 90% of the time and 10% of the time you are indulging in foods that you crave without worrying about the nutritional stats, you can still see great results with the If It Fits Your Macros Approach.

It's all about balance. Some people simply need those few times where they can cut loose and do what they want. For them, it helps them stick to the plan the rest of the time.

If you're too relaxed with your diet due to its restrictive nature, have one of our coaches build your [Macro Blueprint](#)

If you know that's you, dining out and eating whatever you want may actually do you more good than harm.

Secondly, if you are going to do this and go in eating whatever it is that you want, try your best to do it on a refeed day. If you've been low-calorie dieting for quite some time, there's a real chance that your metabolic rate may be slightly sluggish.

A generous high-calorie meal may just do the trick to give you a tiny boost to your metabolic rate so once you do go back to tracking your macros, you start burning up body fat that much faster.

A well-timed refeed can be a great part of any clever diet plan and truly help you move along to the maximum level of success.

How To Best Utilize Tracking Macros While Eating Out

If you aren't in need of a refeed (let's say you did one a few days ago) but still want to go out and enjoy yourself, then you might consider instead, putting this meal immediately following your hardest workout of the week.

Try and hit the gym for an intense legs workout for instance before you go in with this mindset. This will at least help you shuttle the incoming calories and carbs to the muscle cells, prompting you to build some lean muscle mass rather than converting it to body fat stores.

So there you have the main levels of commitment to know about when it comes to dining out *If It Fits Your Macros* style. This fat loss method is one of the easiest ones to make work while dining out, so the excellent news is that you're already ahead of the game compared to many of the other diet protocols out there.

With more and more restaurants also catering to those who are eating healthy and being willing to accommodate to modification requests, there should be no issue with forming a healthy meal for yourself using these guidelines.

Then it's all about you determining just how committed you want to be in sticking with the plan. Remember there is no right or wrong method here, but rather, what works best for you.

Originally posted 2019-01-28 03:28:26.

An advertisement banner with a black background. On the left, a close-up photo shows a person's midsection being measured with a yellow tape measure. To the right of the photo, there is a red rectangular box containing the text "MACROS CAN BE CONFUSING." in white, bold, uppercase letters. Below this, the text "LET OUR COACHES DO IT FOR YOU!" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters, with "COACHES" highlighted in yellow. On the far right of the banner, there is a red rounded rectangular button with the text "Click Here" in white.

via IIFYM <https://www.iifym.com>

June 25, 2019 at 07:14PM