

eat smart while dining out

You don't have to ditch your social life to keep to your diet.

By ALISA CHOPARD



BUFFET DINNER

Your mum-in-law has been gushing about her favourite buffet brunch spread – how can you pull a no-show?

- **DON'T SKIP LUNCH**

When you are “saving space” for dinner, you end up eating much more than you usually would.

- **DON'T GO FOR SECOND HELPINGS**

Take only five to six items on each trip through the buffet line, and don't go back for seconds. Also, remember to eat slowly – take at least five

to 10 minutes per plate. This gives the stomach enough time to register that it is full – approximately 20 minutes after your first bite.

- **LOAD UP ON WATER IN BETWEEN SERVINGS**
This fills you up quickly.

- **AVOID GRAVY AND SALAD DRESSINGS**

These usually hide a substantial amount of calories. If you must, opt for lighter versions like balsamic vinaigrette.

DRINKS

There'll be lots of toasting... as well as empty calories in the form of sugary cocktails.

- **STICK TO LOW-CALORIE “SAFE” DRINKS**

These include red wine (82 calories per standard glass), white wine (79 calories), champagne (98 calories per standard flute), whiskey soda (70 calories for one shot of whiskey with soda water) and diet jack (70 calories for one shot of bourbon with diet coke).

- **AVOID BEER**

It contains approximately 150 calories per bottle. Other no-nos: Long Island Iced Tea and margaritas – 190 and 315 calories respectively.

- **DO NOT HAVE MORE THAN TWO “SAFE” DRINKS A DAY**

Your body metabolises alcohol into acetate, which is burned before any other “fuel” from food. This causes other “fuels” like fat and sugar to be stored by your body.



It's the little things

Sometimes, all it takes is a simple lifestyle adjustment to help you kick-start a healthy regime.

- Have two servings of fruit a day – this fills you up and substitutes that midday snack. Stick to antioxidant- and fibre-rich fruit like apples, bananas and blueberries.

- When eating at a hawker centre, get something with a clear soup (such as fish soup without milk or wonton soup) as these dishes usually contain fewer calories.

- Get enough sleep and eat breakfast. Your body responds to a lack of sleep by slowing down its metabolic rate, while skipping breakfast makes you hungrier during lunch, making you more likely to overeat.

MOVIE DATE

When you're not paying attention to what you're eating, it's easy to go overboard and plough through one too many bags of chips.

• AVOID THE SNACK COUNTER

Bring your own snacks like dried fruit, nuts and multigrain chips. Wash it down with plain water.

• OPT FOR SALTY POPCORN

Pick salty popcorn over the sweet option as it contains fewer calories. Just remember to drink lots of water after.

HOUSE PARTIES

It's hard to avoid house parties – especially those hosted by family members or close friends – without looking like a grinch.

• LOAD UP ON PLAIN MEATS

Meats such as roast chicken, turkey, beef or fish sans the sauce (this is key!) fills you up and keeps you full for longer. Avoid potatoes, rice and noodles.

• AVOID ANYTHING DEEP-FRIED

Go for food that's steamed, boiled or sautéed. Also,

stay away from soups that have a layer of oil on the surface.

• NO FESTIVE GOODIES

Festive snacks like bak kwa (300 calories per slice) are a no-no. When visiting various homes, try to limit yourself to a portion of one slice at each stop. **F&F**

EXPERT: Jaclyn Reutens, clinical dietitian at Aptima Nutrition & Sports Consultants