The Holiday Social Survival Guide:

Stay on Track While Enjoying the Festivities

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Pre-Meal Strategies: Setting Yourself Up for Success

Here are some simple pre-meal tips to crush your goals

1 Protein Power-Up:

Have a high-protein snack 10-30 minutes before you head out (like a Greek yogurt, a protein shake, or a boiled egg).

This helps keep hunger in check and prevents overeating at the restaurant.

2 Save Calories Throughout the Day or Week:

You can "bank" calories earlier in the day by eating lighter, lower-calorie meals (stick to protein and low carb).

You can also spread out your calorie budget across the week by eating lighter leading up to the event (reduce calories by 100-200 per day for example).

3 Movement as Your Ally

Add Extra Activity: Consider squeezing in a little extra movement on the day of your meal out. Go for a walk or do a short bodyweight circuit before you head out.

Post-Meal Walk: A gentle 10-15 minute walk after your meal can aid digestion and prevent that sluggish feeling. Bonus: it also helps regulate your blood sugar levels!

Calorie Mastery: Estimating Like a Pro

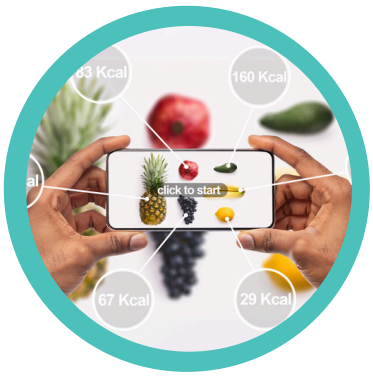
Estimating calories at a restaurant can feel tricky, but here are some clear methods to simplify it:

1 Use Your Hand as a Guide:

A portion of protein is roughly the size of your palm (25-30g protein), carbs like rice or pasta are about a cupped hand (roughly 1/2 to 1 cup), and fats (like butter or oil) are around the size of your thumb (about 10g of fat). This is useful if your meal can be easily broken down into individual components (e.g steak and vegetables).

2 Quick Add Method:

MyFitnessPal has a 'Quick Add' option where you can just pop in a rough estimate of calories without entering every single ingredient. For a quick estimate, add 500-700 calories for a main course and 200-300 calories for sides. If you're having dessert, add another 300-600 calories. This gives you a ballpark figure that'll help keep you in control without needing to be overly precise. Remember to track alcohol on top.



3 Similar Options or AI Scanner:

You can search for 'similar' meals in the calorie tracking database and use those (this is better for chain restaurants however). OR, try the new AI feature which uses advanced image recognition technology to estimate the calories and macronutrients in food - perfect for simplifying calorie tracking while eating out or at home!

4 Look Up Restaurant Menus in Advance:

If the restaurant lists calorie information online, take a few minutes to check it out before you go. This can help you pre-plan your order and make adjustments to your day to fit your meal within your goals.

Make Compromises, Not Sacrifices

The goal is to enjoy your meal, not feel deprived. But you can make smart choices that still allow you to indulge:

1

Entrée vs. Dessert & Skipping the Starch:

If you know you want dessert, skip the entree or bread to save on calories. Another option is to share the dessert or entree with a friend and/or for extra veggies instead to fill you up without the extra calories.

2

Alcohol Choices:

Yes, you can drink alcohol and still hit your goals but you'll likely have to make some compromises. Consider swapping sugary cocktails and wine for a clear spirit with soda water (e.g., vodka or gin with soda and lime) to reduce calorie intake. Set a limit before you go to ensure your drink choice fits within your calorie goal and opt for water in between to stay hydrated and prevent extra calories from sneaking in.

3

Hit your Protein Target

Protein is your secret weapon! By making sure you're hitting most or all of your protein target for the day, you'll feel fuller and less likely to overeat. Choose protein focused options from the menu too (i.e fish and veggies is likely better than pasta).

4

Indulge with Intention

When it comes to indulgences, choose wisely and own your decision. If it's not a "hell yea"—meaning, if you don't truly want it and know it will bring you joy—then it's probably a "no." The law of diminishing returns also applies here: after a few bites, the novelty of that treat or dessert often fades, and you're left continuing to eat without the same satisfaction. So, instead of mindlessly finishing something just because it's there, ask yourself if it's worth it.

5

Strategic Choices = Consistency

Remember, results come from consistency over time, not one meal. You don't need to eat "perfectly clean" to stay on track, especially if you focus on portion control and making balanced choices: A. Choose lean proteins (grilled chicken, fish, steak) and add veggies. B. Ask for small tweaks like dressing on the side or steamed veggies instead of fries. C. Don't feel pressured to finish everything—take leftovers home!

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