

Guide to Eating Out at the Upper East Side

Chinese Food

This is probably the most popular take-out option during a busy or lazy night. It seems like every block has a Chinese restaurant. Most Chinese dishes contain veggies and lean protein - which sound healthy. However, the large portions and the sauces are full of oil and sugar. The good news is that it's possible to order healthy Chinese food!

General Tips:

1. "Diet" section or steamed dishes are the best choices by far. Pick a protein (fish, shellfish, poultry, meat, tofu) and your choice of vegetables. Even if steamed dishes are not on the menu, ask for it to be prepared this way. Many restaurants will do it for you.
2. If you think steamed Chinese food is too boring, ask for your favorite (non-crispy) dish to be prepared with LESS oil. Some places, not all, will do this for you.
3. Order one dish steamed and one the regular way. Mix the 2 together and you should get at least 3 meals for the week.
4. Still want your favorite dish (or the restaurant can't make with less oil)? Share it with a friend. Eating a smaller portion still lets you enjoy what you want to eat just in a smaller amount.
5. Avoid apps or entrees that are "crispy". This means it's been double fried - first in the deep fryer than stir-fried! A typical dish of BBQ Spare Ribs (appetizer size) contains 600 calories! An order of Eggplant in Garlic Sauce contains 1000 calories! Eggplant is like a sponge, so it easily absorbs any oil or sauce it's cooked in. A typical order of stir-fried greens contains 900 calories. A typical order of General Tso's Chicken contains 1,300 calories! A typical order of Lemon Chicken contains 1,400 calories. A typical dish of Sweet & Sour Pork contains 1,300 calories. A typical order of House Fried Rice contains 1,500 calories.
6. Substitute brown rice for white rice. While it has the same number of calories and carbs, brown rice is less processed so it's healthier. And steer clear of fried rice that's laden with sodium and fat.
7. Eat with chop sticks as they help to slow down your rate of eating.

What to order and what to limit:

Appetizers:

Best

- Steamed dumplings (vegetable or seafood) (1 dumpling ~ 35 calories)
- Hot and sour soup (1 cup = 90 calories)
- Egg drop soup (1 cup = 66 calories)

Limit

- Egg rolls (1 egg roll ~ 200 calories)
- Fried dumplings
- Crab rangoon
- Wonton strips (the ones that come with the soup) (1 cup ~ 140 calories)

Entrees:

Best

- Steamed protein (chicken, scallops, shrimp or tofu) with vegetable and sauce on the side (approximately 325 calories)
- Stir-fry dish (not fried) with chicken, scallops, shrimp or tofu) with vegetables - cooked with less oil
- Brown rice (1 cup ~ 216 calories)

Limit

- “Crispy” stir-fry dishes
- Lo Mein, sesame noodles and other oily noodle entrees (1 cup of lo-mein ~ 310 calories)
- Fried rice

Local Restaurants:

Cafe Evergreen (1367 1st Avenue, New York, NY 10021)

Recommended Choices (Note: Evergreen has a separate gluten-free menu)

Appetizer:

- Steamed dumplings including: shrimp and scallop dumplings, vegetable dumplings, cilantro shrimp dumpling, etc.
- Shredded duck rolls
- Bean curd vegetable soup

Entree:

- “Light Specials” which are steamed entrees - either totally steamed with sauce on the side or with a light sauce with no oil, cornstarch

For example:

- Steamed whole seabass with ginger and scallion
- Steamed chicken with black beans (ask to add a vegetable to it)
- Moo Shu chicken - ask for minimal oil - with one pancake (~ 100 calories/pancake or 1/2 cup rice) 2 T. hoisin sauce
- Beef with broccoli - ask for minimal oil
- Prawn with garden vegetable - ask for minimal oil

Shanghai (1388 2nd Ave #1, New York, NY 10021)

Recommended choices:

Appetizer:

- Steamed vegetable, pork, or chicken dumplings
- Edamame
- Hot & Sour Soup
- Egg drop soup

Entree:

- Vegetable or shrimp chop suey ask for brown rice and ask for sauce on the side
- Roast pork with different vegetables (broccoli, mixed veggies, fresh mushroom, snow peas, string beans, bean sprouts)

Note: This restaurant has a “Healthy Diet” section - they do take requests if you want the sauce on the side. All the selections in this menu are steamed and come either with a protein + vegetables or just steamed vegetables. Ask for brown rice instead of white.

Thai Food:

Another popular take-out staple, Thai food is known for aromatic and spicy dishes. From Pad Thai to curry, Thai dishes are colorful, composed, and of course, delicious! Healthy options are abundant but watch out for dishes high in calories and fat.

General Tips:

1. Thai is known for tasty noodle dishes (i.e. Pad Thai). If you're craving this, split an order with a few friends.
2. Avoid the crispy noodles on the table.
3. Limit entrees on curries made with coconut milk. Better bets are steamed or grilled fish with sauce on the side, or in a light sauce (i.e. chicken in basil sauce).
4. Split an entree with a friend and eat large amounts of vegetables.
5. Limit fried options. Opt for grilled or roasted options.
6. Tofu may sound like a healthy choice but be mindful of how it is prepared. Tofu is like a sponge, it absorbs any oil or sauce it is cooked or mixed with.
7. When ordering curry, opt for seafood or chicken.
8. Thai iced tea is full of sugar (small = 280 calories, large = 410 calories).

What to order and what to limit:

Appetizers:

Best

- Tom yum soup (1 cup = 121 calories)
- Summer rolls
- Chicken satay with peanut sauce (1 stick = 210 calories)
- Papaya salad

Limit

- Spring rolls (1 vegetarian spring roll = 70 calories)

Entrees:

Best

- Steamed whole fish in broth (steamed fish with garlic, chilies, mint and placed on top of steamed vegetables)
- Grilled fish and chicken sauce on the side
- Chicken with basil sauce
- Vegetable curry add tofu as protein (Thai spiced tofu curry = 348 calories)
- Fish and vegetable
- Brown rice option

Limit

- Thai Fried Rice (1 serving Thai Fried Rice with Chicken = 250 calories)
- Fried tofu (1 oz of fried tofu = 77 calories)
- Drunken Noodles with chicken (1,120 calories)
- Vegetable Red Curry with white rice (870 calories)
- Chicken Pad Thai (1,480 calories)
- Coconut shrimp soup
- Pork Panang

Local Restaurants:

Up Thai (1411 2nd Ave, New York, NY 10021)

Recommended choices:

Appetizers:

- Chive dumplings
- Steamed dumplings
- Chicken satay
- Thai steamed mussels
- Tom Juad (soup containing napa cabbage, tofu, glass noodles, and scallions in a clear broth)
- Tom Yum (soup containing king mushrooms, tomatoes, scallions, and cilantro in a lemongrass broth)
- Yum Woo Sen (Glass Noodle Salad) (GF)
- Larb Gai (Spicy Thai Chicken Salad)
- Thai Salad (V/GF)
- Green Market Salad (V)

Entrees:

- Poh Tak (Thai-style bouillabaisse) (GF)
- Salmon, sea scallop, shrimp, squid and mussels, in spicy Thai herb broth.
- Salmon Tamarind (grilled fillet of salmon, bok choy, asparagus, zucchini topped with fried shallots)
- Pla Neung (steamed fillet of Red Snapper, shiitake mushrooms, pickled mustard greens, cilantro and preserved plum in lemon-ginger broth, served with jasmine white rice)
- Moo Takai (grilled marinated pork chop served with steamed seasonal vegetables, sticky rice and mango-chutney sauce. Get sauce on the side)
- Gai Yang (grilled marinated and de-boned half chicken, steamed vegetables and coconut sticky rice, served with sweet chili sauce. Sauce on side)
- Green Curry
- Red Curry
- Panang Curry (100 g ~ 472 calories*) (1 cup = 350 calories*)
*It depends on the establishment and how it is prepared.

The Nuaa (1122 1st Avenue, New York, NY 10065)

Appetizers:

- Green papaya salad
- Spicy and sour lemongrass soup (contains coconut milk)

Entrees:

- Kaffir lime infused cornish game hen
- Pan seared duck breast green curry
- Crab curry noodle

Japanese Food:

Japanese can be one of the healthiest cuisines ... if you love fish (especially raw fish!) There is no bread on the table and the deserts tend to not be so tempting. However, the calorie, fat and carbs can add up if you aren't careful with what you are ordering. Don't overdo it with the add-in's to rolls (crunch, sauce, jumbo special rolls, etc). Although this cuisine has plenty of fish options, watch out for fried or carbohydrate heavy items.

General tips:

1. Best bet is to order a combo of sushi and sashimi.
2. Limit rolls with special sauce or crunch as these pack in sneaky calories and fat.
3. If watching your carbs, try a roll wrapped in cucumber, rice or soy paper and omit the rice. Or ask for your roll make with minimal rice.
4. Pick brown rice when possible.
5. Eat slow and enjoy the beautiful presentation. The chop sticks help you slow down the rate of eating.
6. Enjoy a sake ... but be careful as the calories add up fast! 6 oz sake = 234 calories

What to order and what to limit:

Appetizers:

Best

- Seaweed salad (70 - 130 calories)
- Edamame (2 cups ~ 150 calories)
- Miso soup (small portion) 50 calories

Limit

- Fried dumplings
- Udon noodles

Entrees:

Best

- Sashimi
- Brown rice instead of white rice in sushi

Type of Fish	Sushi (calories* based on 1 oz piece)	Sashimi (calories* based on 1 oz piece)
Yellowtail	60	40
Eel	85	65
Sweet Shrimp	50	30
Scallop	45	25
Salmon, farmed	70	50
Salmon, wild	60	40
Sea bass	45	25
Octopus	45	25
Sea urchin	55	35
Tuna, yellowfin	50	30
Tuna, bluefin	60	40

* Calories obtained from Martha McKittrick

Roll Type	Calories*
Tuna avocado	260
Spicy Tuna	290
Shrimp Tempura	510
California	255
Spicy salmon	330
Yellowtail scallion	190
Spicy crunchy tuna	360
Salmon avocado	300
Eel avocado	375
Spicy tuna roll wrapped in cucumber	175
Tuna	190

Limit

- Sushi with plenty of fillings (fried or anything spicy since these contain mayonnaise)
- Tempura
- Hibachi
- Use low-sodium soy sauce if you have to use soy sauce
- Spicy sauce (adds 50-70 calories to a depending on how much sauce they add)
- Adding “crunch” to a roll will add about 60 calories
- Salmon (55 calories/oz) and eel (65 calories/oz) are very fatty fish
- 1/2 cup of rice contains 120 calories

Local Restaurants

Yuka (1557 2nd Ave, New York, NY 10028)

Recommended choices:

Appetizers

- Edamame
- Shrimp Shumai
- Hijiki (cooked seaweed)
- Oshitashi (boiled spinach. Ask for sauce on the side)
- Saki Shiyaki (grilled salmon)
- Sashimi appetizer

- Miso soup (seafood soup is also available)
- Seaweed salad

Entrees

- Sashimi
- Sushi (brown rice in sushi)

Sasabune (401 E 73rd St, New York, NY 10021)

Appetizers

No appetizers available

Entrees

- Sashimi
- Sushi (brown rice substitute is not indicated on the menu)

Indian Food:

Indian food is complex and full of flavor. For many people, Indian food can be intimidating since the dishes tend to be spicy. All the spices in Indian dishes have many health benefits. However, some dishes contain heavy amounts of cream, butter, and carbohydrates so portion control is important.

General Tips:

1. Skip deep fried appetizers.
2. Tandoori dishes mean they are cooked in a clay oven, so these are lower in fat.
3. If you need to have bread, ask for a small portion of roti bread.
4. Opt for dishes containing lentils and chickpeas since they are low in fat and high in fiber.
5. “Paneer”, “ghee”, or “malai” dishes are high in fat.
6. Although most Indian dishes go well with rice, watch your portions! 1 cup of basmati rice contains 200 calories.
7. Best protein options: chicken, shrimp, or lamb
8. Don’t be afraid to ask your waiter questions especially if you are not familiar with Indian cuisine.

What to order and what to limit:

Appetizers:

Best

- Raita (yogurt side dish)
- Chicken tikka
- Chutney
- Roti bread (but limit your portion)

Limit

- Samosas (1 regular sized with potatoes and peas = 308 calories)
- Other deep-fried appetizers

Entrees:

Best

- Kebabs
- Tandoori chicken, fish, or vegetable (it's marinated in yogurt and other spices and baked so it's better)
- Channa Masala (chickpeas! High in protein)
- Dal
- Baingan Bharta (mashed eggplant)

Limit

- Check portions for dishes containing ghee (clarified butter)
- Be mindful of the rice (portion control)
- Chicken tikka masala (too much cream)
- Anything with coconut milk (eat in moderation)

Local Restaurants

Tandoor Oven (175 E 83rd St, New York, NY 10028)

Appetizers

- Mulligatawny soup
- Raita (homemade curd with diced cucumbers, w/ herbs and spices)
- Mixed green salad
- Fresh shrimp with sauce on the side
- Sheek kebab (minced lamb, with onions and herbs, broiled in a clay oven)

Entrees

- Chicken tandoori (this is served with Basmati rice - ask if rice can be served on the side or if brown rice is available)
- Chicken tikka (boneless chicken marinated in yogurt and mild spices)
- Chicken makhani (tandoori chicken, sautéed in sauce)
- Fish tandoori (there are other seafood and shellfish available)
- Chana masala (chickpeas cooked with chopped onions)

Note: *This restaurant has many vegetable dishes. For dishes containing cream, consume smaller portion sizes.

Moti Mahal Delux (1149 1st Avenue, New York, NY 10065)

Appetizers

- Palak patta chaat (crispy spinach leaves, yogurt, and tamarind chutney)
- Roti bread
- Dahi palak kebab (tempered spinach and hung yogurt piccatas)
- Subz ki seekh (grilled mixed vegetables and nut skewer)

Entrees

- Murgh reshmi seekh (grilled five-spiced minced chicken)
- Khushk murgh tikka (grilled garlic flavored chicken kebab)
- Murgh tandoori (tandoori grilled chicken)
- Kadi patta jheenga (grilled prawn in curry leaves)

Mexican Food:

One of the most popular meal options in the city! Mexican cuisine has many great options but there are high-calorie options that one should watch out for. Tacos or burritos may seem like unhealthy options, but substitutions and additions can be made (ex. substitute grilled chicken for ground beef). Don't limit yourself to guacamole! There are many Mexican dishes to enjoy!

General Tips:

1. Either ask for no tortilla chips on the table or limit your intake to 10 or so (140 calories).
2. While guacamole is very healthy, the calories add up quickly. If you have a hard time with portion control, use salsa instead.
3. Opt for grilled meats and vegetables.
4. When getting tacos, ask if you can get it on lettuce cups. 1 small tortilla = 23 calories
5. Salads may seem like a healthy option, but Mexican restaurants tend to add toppings like (crunchy tortilla strips etc.)

What to order and what to limit:

Appetizers:

Best

- Guacamole (veggies instead of chips) (1/4 cup = 90 calories)
- Tortilla soup
- Ceviche (1 cup = 173 calories)

Limit

- Nachos (6-8 pieces of chips with nacho cheese = 346 calories) (10 pieces of restaurant style tortilla chips = 140 calories)
- Deep-fried options

Entrees:

Best

- Tacos (grilled chicken, veggies, or fish) - if you can, get it with lettuce instead of tortillas
- Vegetarian burritos
- Substitute brown rice over white
- Fajitas are a great option since you can control how much to eat. Eat the filling and limit to one large or 2 small tortillas
- Black beans

Limit

- If ordering a salad look for one in a bed of lettuce instead of getting one on a deep-fried tortilla.
- Ask for sour cream, cheese, on the side
- Refried beans

Local Restaurants:

Maz Mezcal (316 East 86th St, New York, NY 10028)

Appetizers

- Guacamole
- Ceviche de camaron
- Sopa frijole negro (black bean soup)

Entrees

- Nan's Pollo Bailando (grilled chicken strips served with broccoli, green beans, and prickly pear)
- Camarones en salsa verde (shrimp in a sauce of green cherry tomatoes, white wine, onions, green peppers, & olives)
- Tacos sinaloa (contains grilled shrimp)
- Fajitas (chicken, shrimp, or vegetables)

Toloache (166 E 82nd St, New York, NY 10028)

Appetizers

- Guacamole (Tradicional, Frutas, Rojo)
- Ceviche (they have a tasting of 3 different ceviche's)
- Ensalada de jicama

Entrees

- Paella de quinoa (watch portion size)
- Tumbada (paella)
- JM Langosta (tacos with lobster salsa, and avocado)

Bareburger:

General Tips:

1. When building your own burger, load up it up with vegetables like alfalfa, baby spinach, green leaf lettuce, avocado, and tomatoes.
2. Try one of the bison burger options. They tend to be leaner with fewer calories and fat!
3. For extra protein, get the sunny side up egg instead of bacon.
4. For salads, burgers, or sandwiches, ask for the dressing/sauce on the side.

What to order and what to limit:

Best:

Salads

- Kale Caesar (ask for dressing on the side)
- Cali Fresh (dressing on the side)
- **Best add ons: Grilled lemon chicken (210 calories), Quinoa, chia & green pea patty (170 calories)

Burgers

- Best bun options are the Sprout Bun (200 calories) or the Collard Green Wrap (11 calories) or you can get it with no bun

Non-customizable burgers:

- Farmstead Burger (380 calories) (sweet potato, kale & wild rice patty, hummus, tomatoes, baby kale, avocado basil kale dressing, collard green wrap)
- Guadalupe (650 calories) (black bean, roasted corn & poblano patty, guacamole, pickled red onions, tomatoes, alfalfa, sprout bun)
- Thai Chia (500 calories) (quinoa, chia & green pea patty, vegan American cheese, caramelized onions, wild mushrooms, baby spinach, 7 spice Thai ketchup, sprout bun)

Sides

- Napa Slaw
- Baby green salad

Beverages

- Unsweetened iced tea (10 calories)

Limit:

- Sweet Fries (620 calories) -- these sweet fries have more calories than the French Fries (560 calories) **If you want fries, maybe split with someone or eat ¼ of it.
- Shakes and Vegan Shakes (some of the Vegan shakes have more calories than the regular shakes)
- Chicken sandwiches and high-calorie burgers (eat half or split with someone)

Pio Pio:

(multiple locations in NYC) (UES location 1746 1st Avenue, New York, NY 10128)

This is a great option when you're looking for an easy dinner ... with leftovers for your salad the next day. People rave about the Pio Pio sauce

General Tips:

1. Most combo's come with 2 or more sides. Preferred sides are listed below.
2. If you'd like to order rice, eat half a portion and consume more vegetables.
3. All chicken dishes come with sauce and an option to order extra sauce. Get the sauce on the side.

What to order and what to limit:

Best:

- Mozzarella Pio (Slices of mozzarella and tomatoes served with mesclun & homemade balsamic dressing)
- Ceviche
- Ensalada de avocado
- Best sides are avocado and red beans
- Juanita's Chicken (ask for sauce on the side? Not sure if that's possible)

Limit:

- Tostones, maduros, fried yucca, french fries, saffron/white rice

Sources:

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