

NUTRITION GUIDE

The Eating Out Guide

How to stay on track at work dos, family meals and kids' parties

Nutrition plans fall apart most often in social situations, not at home. This guide covers how to navigate eating out, work events and family occasions without derailing your progress or feeling deprived.

8 Practical
Strategies

How To Apply It

Common Mistakes

Do's & Don'ts

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WHY SOCIAL EATING DERAILS MOST DIETS

It's rarely the meal out itself that causes problems, it's the all-or-nothing thinking that follows it. One indulgent meal genuinely doesn't undo a week of consistency but treating it as a failure often triggers giving up entirely.

THE NUMBERS

● THE 80/20 APPROACH

If 80% of your week is on plan, one meal out won't meaningfully affect your progress.

● PORTION AWARENESS

Restaurant portions are often 1.5-2x a typical home serving, eating slowly helps you recognise fullness.

● WEEKLY PLANNING

If you know a big meal out is coming, lighter meals earlier that day can help balance things out.

THE FOUNDATION RULE

Never skip meals all day to 'save up' calories for a big dinner out, this consistently backfires into overeating once you get there.

8 PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR EATING OUT

Protein-Forward Choices

STRATEGY

Every meal

Steak, chicken, fish dishes give you a solid protein base wherever you're eating.

Sauces On The Side

STRATEGY

Ask always

An easy way to cut a significant number of hidden calories without changing your order much.

Alternate Alcohol With Water

STRATEGY

Social events

Reduces total alcohol intake without feeling restrictive or drawing attention.

Small Snack Beforehand

STRATEGY

Before events

Turning up starving leads to overeating, a small protein snack prevents this.

Share Starters/Desserts

STRATEGY

Family meals

Lets you enjoy the experience without needing a full portion of every course.

Check The Menu In Advance

STRATEGY

Where possible

Deciding your order before you're hungry and influenced by the table leads to better choices.

Prioritise One Indulgence

STRATEGY

Per meal

Choose starter OR dessert, not necessarily both, enjoy it without overdoing the whole meal.

Walk After Eating

STRATEGY

When possible

Aids digestion and adds a small amount of extra activity to offset a bigger meal.

HOW TO APPLY THIS AT DIFFERENT OCCASIONS

Different social situations call for slightly different approaches, here's how to handle the most common ones.

Work Dos & Client Dinners

Check the menu in advance, if possible, prioritise protein, and don't feel pressured to match everyone else's drink count.

Family Meals & Kids' Parties

These are rarely about the food itself, relax, enjoy the occasion, and simply be mindful rather than restrictive.

Big Occasions (birthdays, holidays)

Genuinely enjoy them. One day doesn't meaningfully affect your progress, the guilt spiral afterward causes more damage than the meal.

SIMPLE RESTAURANT ORDER TEMPLATE

Protein-based main dish

Sauce or dressing on the side

One indulgence, starter or dessert, not both

COMMON MISTAKES THAT DERAIL PROGRESS

These are the patterns that turn one meal out into a week-long spiral, avoid them and eating out becomes a non-issue.

1

Starving yourself beforehand

Skipping meals to 'save calories' consistently backfires into overeating once you arrive.

2

All-or-nothing thinking

Believing one meal ruins everything often triggers giving up entirely for the rest of the week.

3

Guilt-driven overcorrection

Extreme restriction the next day is unnecessary and often leads to a binge-restrict cycle.

4

Matching others' drink or portion count

Social pressure leads to overeating and drinking more than you'd naturally choose.

5

Treating every week as containing a 'big event'

If eating out happens most days, the 80/20 rule stops applying, frequency matters.

REASONABLE WEEKLY BALANCE

Days On Plan	Meals Out
5-6 days	1-2 meals out is easily absorbed
3-4 days	Progress will likely slow
1-2 days	Meals out are now the majority of intake

DO

- ✓ Enjoy the occasion. One meal genuinely doesn't undo a week of consistent effort.
- ✓ Choose your priorities for the meal in advance, starter or dessert, not necessarily both.
- ✓ Stay reasonably active around bigger social occasions rather than treating the whole day as a write-off.

DON'T

- ✗ Don't skip meals all day to 'save up' calories for a big dinner, this often backfires into overeating.
- ✗ Don't treat one indulgent meal as an excuse to write off the rest of the week too.
- ✗ Don't feel guilty for enjoying a meal out, guilt around food is often more damaging than the meal itself.

THE BOTTOM LINE

All-or-nothing thinking causes more damage to progress than any single meal ever could. Enjoy social occasions properly, then simply return to your normal pattern the next meal.

WANT THE FULL SYSTEM, NOT JUST ONE PIECE?

This guide is one piece of the puzzle. The Fit Dad Challenge brings training, nutrition and mindset together into one 6-week programme built around a dad's actual life.

[Join the Fit Dad Challenge — £99](#)