

The “No Excuse Guide” to Dining out

THE
“NO EXCUSE”
GUIDE TO DINING OUT

IMOC
FITNESS

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The “No Excuse Guide” to Dining out

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Introduction:

How to Use This Handbook:

This handbook serves as a valuable resource for individuals seeking healthier dining options at popular fast-food and casual dining restaurant chains in Orange County, California. To make the most of this handbook, follow these steps:

Choose Your Restaurant: Refer to the table of contents to find the restaurant you plan to visit.

Review High-Protein Choices: Once you've located the restaurant, you'll find a list of high-protein menu items from that establishment. These menu items are not only delicious but also rich in protein, making them healthier options.

Check Calorie and Protein Content: Each menu item is accompanied by information on total calories and total protein content. This information will help you make informed choices based on your dietary preferences and nutritional needs.

The Importance of Making Healthy Dining Choices:

Making healthier dining choices is essential for various reasons.

Nutrition: A balanced diet is crucial for overall health and well-being. Consuming adequate protein supports muscle growth and repair, helps control hunger, and provides essential nutrients.

Weight Management: Choosing high-protein options can aid in weight management by promoting feelings of fullness and reducing the consumption of empty calories.

Disease Prevention: A diet rich in nutrients can lower the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

Energy Levels: Proper nutrition provides sustained energy, helping you stay active and alert throughout the day.

Overall Well-Being: Making healthier dining choices contributes to a higher quality of life, improved mood, and increased vitality.

Muscle Building: Muscle mass is the organ of longevity. Muscle also increases metabolism.

By using this handbook to select high-protein menu items at popular restaurants, you can enjoy delicious meals while supporting your health and well-being.

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If Your Restaurant Isn't on This List: Finding High-Protein Meals and Making Smart Choices

While this handbook provides a comprehensive list of high-protein menu options from popular fast-food and casual dining chains in Orange County, California, it's possible that you might find yourself dining at a restaurant not covered here. In such cases, you can still make smart choices to find a high-protein meal and enjoy a nutritious dining experience. Here's what you can do:

1. Assess the Menu:

Look for Lean Proteins: Check the menu for dishes featuring lean protein sources such as chicken breast, turkey, fish, tofu, or lean cuts of beef or pork. These options tend to be higher in protein and lower in unhealthy fats.

Choose Grilled or Baked: Opt for dishes that are grilled, baked, or roasted rather than fried. This helps reduce the calorie and fat content while preserving the protein.

Skip the Extras: Be mindful of calorie-laden extras like creamy sauces, buttery toppings, and excessive cheese. Request these to be served on the side or omitted altogether.

2. Customize Your Order:

Ask for Extra Protein: If you can't find a high-protein option on the menu, consider adding extra protein to an existing dish. For example, you can request an extra chicken breast or a side of grilled shrimp.

Substitute Sides: Instead of high-calorie sides like fries or chips, opt for healthier alternatives such as steamed vegetables, a side salad with lean protein, or brown rice

Dressing on the Side: When ordering salads, ask for the dressing on the side. This allows you to control the amount you use, preventing your salad from becoming overly calorie-dense.

3. Control Portions:

Share or Half Portions: Some restaurant portions are quite large. Consider sharing a meal with a friend or asking for a half portion to control your calorie intake.

Take Home Leftovers: If your meal is more substantial than you expected, don't hesitate to ask for a to-go container. Enjoy the rest of your meal as a tasty leftover.

4. Stay Hydrated:

Drink Water: Stay hydrated by drinking water throughout your meal. Sometimes thirst is mistaken for hunger, and water can help you gauge your true appetite.

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5. Mindful Eating:

Eat Slowly: Take your time to savor each bite. Eating slowly allows your body to register fullness, preventing overeating.

Listen to Your Body: Pay attention to your body's hunger and fullness cues. Stop eating when you feel satisfied, even if there's food left on your plate.

6. Avoid Excess Sugary Beverages:

Choose Wisely: When selecting beverages, avoid sugary sodas and high-calorie drinks. Opt for water, unsweetened iced tea, or other low-calorie options.

7. Special Dietary Needs:

Allergies or Restrictions: If you have specific dietary needs or restrictions, don't hesitate to inform the server. Most restaurants can accommodate dietary requests.

8. Use Nutrition Apps:

Smartphone Apps: Consider using nutrition apps or websites that provide information on the nutritional content of restaurant meals. These tools can help you make informed choices.

Remember that dining out is an opportunity to enjoy a meal while socializing or celebrating. While it's important to make healthy choices, occasional indulgence is perfectly fine. The key is to strike a balance between enjoying your meal and making choices that align with your nutritional goals.

By following these guidelines and using your judgment, you can find or create a high-protein meal at almost any restaurant, ensuring that your dining experience remains both enjoyable and health-conscious.

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1. McDonald's:

High-Protein Choices:

Grilled Chicken Sandwich (with a side salad instead of fries)

Total Calories: Approximately 390 calories

Total Protein: About 37 grams of protein

Side Salad with Grilled Chicken (with vinaigrette dressing)

Total Calories: Approximately 340 calories

Total Protein: About 31 grams of protein

Egg McMuffin (without Canadian bacon)

Total Calories: Approximately 250 calories

Total Protein: About 12 grams of protein

2. Burger King:

High-Protein Choices:

Grilled Chicken Sandwich (with a side salad instead of fries)

Total Calories: Approximately 390 calories

Total Protein: About 36 grams of protein

Tendergrill Chicken Garden Salad (with vinaigrette dressing)

Total Calories: Approximately 340 calories

Total Protein: About 33 grams of protein

Whopper Jr. (without mayo)

Total Calories: Approximately 260 calories

Total Protein: About 14 grams of protein

3. Panda Express:

High-Protein Choices:

Grilled Teriyaki Chicken

Total Calories: Approximately 300 calories

Total Protein: About 36 grams of protein

4. KFC:

High-Protein Choices:

Grilled Chicken Breast (without skin)

Total Calories: Approximately 210 calories

Total Protein: About 39 grams of protein

Kentucky Grilled Chicken Drumstick (without skin)

Total Calories: Approximately 70 calories

Total Protein: About 13 grams of protein

5. Subway:

High-Protein Choices:

6-inch Chicken Breast Sub on 9-grain wheat bread with veggies (no cheese)

Total Calories: Approximately 320-360 calories (varies with toppings)

Total Protein: About 23-27 grams of protein (varies with toppings)

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6. Jack in the Box:

High-Protein Choices:

Grilled Chicken Salad (with grilled chicken strips and no dressing)

Total Calories: Approximately 270 calories

Total Protein: About 30 grams of protein

Sourdough Grilled Chicken Club (no mayo)

Total Calories: Approximately 380 calories

Total Protein: About 33 grams of protein

Ultimate Cheeseburger (no bun, extra patty)

Total Calories: Approximately 440 calories

Total Protein: About 36 grams of protein

7. Wendy's:

High-Protein Choices:

Grilled Chicken Sandwich (no bun)

Total Calories: Approximately 160 calories

Total Protein: About 36 grams of protein

Caesar Side Salad with Grilled Chicken (no dressing)

Total Calories: Approximately 320 calories

Total Protein: About 35 grams of protein

Double Stack (no bun)

Total Calories: Approximately 210 calories

Total Protein: About 17 grams of protein

8. Taco Bell:

High-Protein Choices:

Power Menu Bowl with Steak (no rice, extra beans)

Total Calories: Approximately 270-290 calories (varies with customization)

Total Protein: About 24-27 grams of protein (varies with customization)

Grilled Chicken Soft Taco

Total Calories: Approximately 170 calories

Total Protein: About 12 grams of protein

Black Bean Crunchwrap Supreme

Total Calories: Approximately 390 calories

Total Protein: About 10 grams of protein

9. Del Taco:

High-Protein Choices:

Grilled Chicken Taco

Total Calories: Approximately 150 calories

Total Protein: About 12 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken Street Taco

Total Calories: Approximately 160 calories

Total Protein: About 13 grams of protein

Epic Grilled Chicken Avocado Burrito

Total Calories: Approximately 550 calories

Total Protein: About 33 grams of protein

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10. Carl's Jr.:

High-Protein Choices:

Charbroiled Chicken Club Salad (no dressing)

Total Calories: Approximately 240 calories

Total Protein: About 37 grams of protein

Low Carb Charbroiled Chicken Club (no mayo, no bun)

Total Calories: Approximately 220 calories

Total Protein: About 32 grams of protein

Charbroiled Double Western Bacon Cheeseburger (no bun)

Total Calories: Approximately 330 calories

Total Protein: About 26 grams of protein

11. Popeyes:

High-Protein Choices:

Blackened Chicken Tenders (3-piece)

Total Calories: Approximately 170 calories

Total Protein: About 20 grams of protein

Bayou Buffalo Sauce Chicken Sandwich (no bun)

Total Calories: Approximately 170 calories

Total Protein: About 21 grams of protein

Green Beans (regular size)

Total Calories: Approximately 70 calories

Total Protein: About 2 grams of protein

12. El Pollo Loco:

High-Protein Choices:

Double Chicken Avocado Salad (no dressing)

Total Calories: Approximately 330 calories

Total Protein: About 38 grams of protein

Double Chicken Avocado Burrito (no rice, no beans)

Total Calories: Approximately 320 calories

Total Protein: About 37 grams of protein

Flame-Grilled Chicken Leg

Total Calories: Approximately 150 calories

Total Protein: About 20 grams of protein

13. Sonic Drive-In:

High-Protein Choices:

Grilled Chicken Wrap (no sauce)

Total Calories: Approximately 280 calories

Total Protein: About 25 grams of protein

Classic Grilled Chicken Sandwich (no mayo)

Total Calories: Approximately 290 calories

Total Protein: About 27 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken Salad (no dressing)

Total Calories: Approximately 140 calories

Total Protein: About 18 grams of protein

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14. Shake Shack:

High-Protein Choices:

Chick'n Bites (6-piece)

Total Calories: Approximately 300 calories

Total Protein: About 21 grams of protein

ShackBurger (no bun)

Total Calories: Approximately 320 calories

Total Protein: About 25 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken Shack (no bun)

Total Calories: Approximately 240 calories

Total Protein: About 32 grams of protein

15. Jersey Mike's Subs:

High-Protein Choices:

#13 Original Italian Sub in a Tub (no bread)

Total Calories: Approximately 320 calories

Total Protein: About 17 grams of protein

#7 Turkey Breast and Provolone Sub in a Tub (no bread)

Total Calories: Approximately 230 calories

Total Protein: About 19 grams of protein

#6 Roast Beef and Provolone Sub in a Tub (no bread)

Total Calories: Approximately 220 calories

Total Protein: About 20 grams of protein

16. Blaze Pizza:

High-Protein Choices:

Build Your Own Pizza with Chicken, Red Sauce, and Veggies

Total Calories: Approximately 400-500 calories (varies with toppings)

Total Protein: About 20-30 grams of protein (varies with toppings)

Build Your Own Salad with Chicken and Vinaigrette Dressing

Total Calories: Approximately 250-350 calories (varies with toppings)

Total Protein: About 20-25 grams of protein (varies with toppings)

Keto Pizza (with chicken, mozzarella, bacon, and red sauce)

Total Calories: Approximately 360 calories

Total Protein: About 27 grams of protein

17. Five Guys:

High-Protein Choices:

Bacon Cheeseburger (no bun)

Total Calories: Approximately 570 calories

Total Protein: About 35 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken Sandwich (no bun)

Total Calories: Approximately 270 calories

Total Protein: About 35 grams of protein

Little Cheeseburger (no bun)

Total Calories: Approximately 300 calories

Total Protein: About 18 grams of protein

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18. Red Robin:

High-Protein Choices:

Gourmet Burger with Turkey Patty (no bun)

Total Calories: Approximately 190 calories

Total Protein: About 20 grams of protein

Ensenada Chicken Platter (no fries)

Total Calories: Approximately 480 calories

Total Protein: About 55 grams of protein

Grilled Turkey Burger (no bun)

Total Calories: Approximately 200 calories

Total Protein: About 24 grams of protein

19. Denny's:

High-Protein Choices:

Fit Fare Tilapia Ranchero (with steamed broccoli and salad)

Total Calories: Approximately 350 calories

Total Protein: About 38 grams of protein

Fit Slam (egg whites, turkey bacon, fruit)

Total Calories: Approximately 330 calories

Total Protein: About 30 grams of protein

Build Your Own Omelette (with egg whites, chicken, spinach, and tomatoes)

Total Calories: Approximately 250 calories

Total Protein: About 30 grams of protein

20. Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza:

High-Protein Choices:

Build Your Own Pizza with Chicken, Red Sauce, and Veggies

Total Calories: Approximately 400-500 calories (varies with toppings)

Total Protein: About 20-30 grams of protein (varies with toppings)

Build Your Own Salad with Chicken and Vinaigrette Dressing

Total Calories: Approximately 250-350 calories (varies with toppings)

Total Protein: About 20-25 grams of protein (varies with toppings)

Keto Pizza (with chicken, mozzarella, bacon, and red sauce)

Total Calories: Approximately 360 calories

Total Protein: About 27 grams of protein

21. Olive Garden:

High-Protein Choices:

Herb-Grilled Salmon

Total Calories: Approximately 460 calories

Total Protein: About 49 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken Alfredo (with a side of broccoli)

Total Calories: Approximately 580 calories

Total Protein: About 48 grams of protein

Chicken Margherita

Total Calories: Approximately 590 calories

Total Protein: About 48 grams of protein

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22. The Cheesecake Factory:

High-Protein Choices:

Skinnylicious Grilled Chicken Salad

Total Calories: Approximately 590 calories

Total Protein: About 54 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken Tacos

Total Calories: Approximately 850 calories

Total Protein: About 54 grams of protein

Moroccan Chicken

Total Calories: Approximately 850 calories

Total Protein: About 47 grams of protein

23. BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse:

High-Protein Choices:

Seared Ahi Salad

Total Calories: Approximately 470 calories

Total Protein: About 40 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken Quinoa Bowl

Total Calories: Approximately 720 calories

Total Protein: About 43 grams of protein

Moroccan Spiced Salmon

Total Calories: Approximately 520 calories

Total Protein: About 38 grams of protein

24. California Pizza Kitchen:

High-Protein Choices:

Quinoa + Arugula Salad (with added grilled chicken)

Total Calories: Approximately 550 calories

Total Protein: About 30 grams of protein

California Veggie Pizza (with whole wheat dough and added grilled chicken)

Total Calories: Approximately 680 calories

Total Protein: About 35 grams of protein

Moroccan-Spiced Chicken

Total Calories: Approximately 810 calories

Total Protein: About 48 grams of protein

25. Red Lobster:

High-Protein Choices:

Bar Harbor Lobster Bake

Total Calories: Approximately 600 calories

Total Protein: About 63 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken with Portobello Wine Sauce (with a side of broccoli)

Total Calories: Approximately 370 calories

Total Protein: About 41 grams of protein

Wood-Grilled Shrimp Skewers

Total Calories: Approximately 230 calories

Total Protein: About 23 grams of protein

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26. Outback Steakhouse:

High-Protein Choices:

Victoria's Filet Mignon (6 oz, with a side of steamed broccoli)

Total Calories: Approximately 400 calories

Total Protein: About 35 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken on the Barbie (with a side of mixed vegetables)

Total Calories: Approximately 370 calories

Total Protein: About 49 grams of protein

Simply Grilled Tilapia (with a side of fresh seasonal mixed veggies)

Total Calories: Approximately 220 calories

Total Protein: About 47 grams of protein

27. Yard House:

High-Protein Choices:

Ahi Sashimi (appetizer)

Total Calories: Approximately 270 calories

Total Protein: About 26 grams of protein

Grilled Korean BBQ Beef (street tacos)

Total Calories: Approximately 490 calories

Total Protein: About 32 grams of protein

Seared Ahi Salad (small)

Total Calories: Approximately 360 calories

Total Protein: About 30 grams of protein

28. The Capital Grille:

High-Protein Choices:

Dry-Aged Sirloin Steak (10 oz, with a side of grilled asparagus)

Total Calories: Approximately 480 calories

Total Protein: About 41 grams of protein

Seared Citrus Glazed Salmon

Total Calories: Approximately 450 calories

Total Protein: About 41 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken Breast (with a side of fresh green beans)

Total Calories: Approximately 470 calories

Total Protein: About 46 grams of protein

29. P.F. Chang's:

High-Protein Choices:

Chang's Spicy Chicken (with steamed broccoli)

Total Calories: Approximately 600 calories

Total Protein: About 45 grams of protein

Mongolian Beef (with steamed brown rice)

Total Calories: Approximately 500 calories

Total Protein: About 31 grams of protein

Shrimp with Lobster Sauce (with steamed white rice)

Total Calories: Approximately 320 calories

Total Protein: About 18 grams of protein

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30. Yard House:

High-Protein Choices:

Ahi Sashimi (appetizer)

Total Calories: Approximately 270 calories

Total Protein: About 26 grams of protein

Grilled Korean BBQ Beef (street tacos)

Total Calories: Approximately 490 calories

Total Protein: About 32 grams of protein

Seared Ahi Salad (small)

Total Calories: Approximately 360 calories

Total Protein: About 30 grams of protein

31. Maggiano's Little Italy:

High-Protein Choices:

Grilled Salmon (with garlic mashed potatoes and asparagus)

Total Calories: Approximately 570 calories

Total Protein: About 34 grams of protein

Chicken Parmesan (with spaghetti pomodoro)

Total Calories: Approximately 880 calories

Total Protein: About 64 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken Caprese Salad

Total Calories: Approximately 520 calories

Total Protein: About 45 grams of protein

32. TGI Fridays

High-Protein Choices:

Dragon-Glaze Salmon (with garlic green beans and jasmine rice)

Total Calories: Approximately 600 calories

Total Protein: About 32 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken Caesar Salad (no croutons)

Total Calories: Approximately 420 calories

Total Protein: About 44 grams of protein

6 oz Sirloin Steak (with steamed broccoli)

Total Calories: Approximately 340 calories

Total Protein: About 37 grams of protein

33. Texas Roadhouse:

High-Protein Choices:

Dallas Filet (6 oz, with a side of sautéed mushrooms)

Total Calories: Approximately 350 calories

Total Protein: About 45 grams of protein

Grilled BBQ Chicken (with a side of grilled veggies)

Total Calories: Approximately 390 calories

Total Protein: About 39 grams of protein

Grilled Shrimp (with a side of seasoned rice)

Total Calories: Approximately 210 calories

Total Protein: About 21 grams of protein

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34. Ruth's Chris Steak House:

High-Protein Choices:

Filet (8 oz, with a side of broccoli)

Total Calories: Approximately 420 calories

Total Protein: About 39 grams of protein

Sizzling Lobster Tail (with a side of asparagus)

Total Calories: Approximately 320 calories

Total Protein: About 37 grams of protein

Stuffed Chicken Breast (with garlic mashed potatoes)

Total Calories: Approximately 520 calories

Total Protein: About 35 grams of protein

35. The Melting Pot:

High-Protein Choices:

Teriyaki-Marinated Sirloin (with vegetables and dipping sauces)

Total Calories: Approximately 420 calories

Total Protein: About 39 grams of protein

Pacific White Shrimp (with vegetables and dipping sauces)

Total Calories: Approximately 400 calories

Total Protein: About 28 grams of protein

Filet Mignon (with vegetables and dipping sauces)

Total Calories: Approximately 480 calories

Total Protein: About 36 grams of protein

36. Mimi's Cafe:

High-Protein Choices:

Grilled Atlantic Salmon (with mashed potatoes and green beans)

Total Calories: Approximately 650 calories

Total Protein: About 43 grams of protein

Chicken Tillamook Cheddar Mac (with Caesar salad)

Total Calories: Approximately 760 calories

Total Protein: About 36 grams of protein

Roasted Turkey Dinner (with garlic mashed potatoes and cornbread stuffing)

Total Calories: Approximately 850 calories

Total Protein: About 52 grams of protein

37. The Yard:

High-Protein Choices:

14 oz Ribeye Steak (with a side of grilled asparagus)

Total Calories: Approximately 800 calories

Total Protein: About 66 grams of protein

Grilled Salmon (with a side of roasted Brussels sprouts)

Total Calories: Approximately 590 calories

Total Protein: About 40 grams of protein

BBQ Pulled Pork Sandwich (with coleslaw)

Total Calories: Approximately 640 calories

Total Protein: About 32 grams of protein

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38. Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill:

High-Protein Choices:

Tri-Tip Sirloin (with a side of coleslaw)

Total Calories: Approximately 650 calories

Total Protein: About 48 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken Breast (with a side of fresh broccoli)

Total Calories: Approximately 420 calories

Total Protein: About 51 grams of protein

Shrimp Skewers (with a side of garlic mashed potatoes)

Total Calories: Approximately 720 calories

Total Protein: About 29 grams of protein

39. Claim Jumper:

High-Protein Choices:

Cedar Plank Salmon (with a side of steamed vegetables)

Total Calories: Approximately 690 calories

Total Protein: About 47 grams of protein

Grilled Chicken Caesar Salad

Total Calories: Approximately 780 calories

Total Protein: About 53 grams of protein

Country Fried Steak (with a side of mashed potatoes and gravy)

Total Calories: Approximately 980 calories

Total Protein: About 32 grams of protein

40. El Torito:

High-Protein Choices:

Grilled Chicken Fajitas (with a side of black beans and guacamole)

Total Calories: Approximately 540 calories

Total Protein: About 44 grams of protein

Shrimp Mojo de Ajo (with a side of sautéed vegetables)

Total Calories: Approximately 360 calories

Total Protein: About 30 grams of protein

Carne Asada (with a side of Spanish rice and refried beans)

Total Calories: Approximately 550 calories

Total Protein: About 45 grams of protein