



Choose carefully at Chinese restaurants

I used to love going out for Chinese food, but I stopped eating it years ago when I heard how unhealthy it was. Are there healthy options?

Absolutely. By limiting portions and making careful selections, you can eat a healthful meal practically anywhere.

But you're right to be cautious. You probably saw the headlines from a 1993 report from the Center for Science in the Public Interest about just how much fat, calories and sodium can be in Chinese food. The group revisited the topic in 2007 and found themselves issuing the same warnings: If you order the wrong thing, you can easily get a full day's worth of fat and calories and two days' worth of sodium in one Chinese food dish.

Still, registered dietitians with Ohio State University Extension, as well as the American Dietetic Association and the American Heart Association, offer tips on making healthy choices at Chinese food restaurants:

- Do some homework before you go. If you plan to go to a chain restaurant, check the Internet to see if its nutrition information is online. Some restaurants participate in the "Healthy Dining Program" (<http://www.healthydiningfinder.com>) developed by the National Restaurant Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to help consumers choose healthier menu items when eating out.

- If you can't find it beforehand, ask the restaurant if nutrition information

is available on-site. Most sit-down restaurants still don't offer that information, but the more customers ask, the more likely they'll offer it in the future.

- When considering appetizers, choose soup instead of fried wontons or egg rolls. Wonton or hot-and-sour soup are better choices than egg drop soup. If you have a craving for dumplings, choose steamed instead of fried.

- Ask for steamed rice instead of fried — you'll save three to four teaspoons of oil with that decision alone. Better yet: Ask the restaurant if it offers brown rice. Brown rice is a whole grain and offers more nutrients and fiber than white rice or refined noodles.

- Ask for sauce on the side, and choose sweet and sour sauce, plum or duck sauce instead of lobster, oyster, bean or soy sauce.

- Request that the cook use less oil when preparing stir-fry and other dishes and to leave out soy sauce, MSG and salt.

- Avoid dishes with fried meats. Choose an entree with lots of vegetables.

- Ask for a take-home container to arrive with the meal. Put half of your main dish in the container before you eat anything.

- Polish off your meal by enjoying the fortune cookie, which has just 15 calories, and a cup of tea.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

**For the week of
August 10, 2008**

By Martha Filipic

(614) 292-9833

filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu

Editor:

This column was reviewed by Julie Shertzer, registered dietitian and program specialist for Ohio State University Extension in the Department of Human Nutrition, in the College of Education and Human Ecology.

To receive Chow Line by e-mail, send a message to filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu or sign up at <http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~news/subscribe.php>.

**Section of Communications
and Technology
News and Media Relations**
2021 Coffey Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1044
(614) 292-2011

208 Research Services
Building
1680 Madison Ave.
Wooster, OH 44691-4096
(330) 263-3780

Ohio State University Extension embraces human diversity and is committed to ensuring that all research and related educational programs are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or veteran status. This statement is in accordance with United States Civil Rights Laws and the USDA. Keith L. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension
TDD No. 800-589-8292 (Ohio only) or 614-292-1868