



Chinese restaurant guide

Adapting your menu



**WELWYN
HATFIELD**

Eat Out Eat Well

Chinese restaurant guide

The aim of the Eat Out Eat Well award is to increase accessibility to tasty food prepared in a healthier way using good food hygiene practices and served in a healthier environment. Healthy catering is not about removing lots of existing dishes from the menu and replacing them all with healthier alternatives. Although you may decide to introduce some totally new dishes and/or increase the range of healthier options, the main emphasis is on making small changes to existing dishes. This may mean changing some of the ingredients used, the proportions of ingredients or how the food is prepared / cooked. Healthy catering is also about

promoting healthier options so customers are more aware of the choices available to them.

This information sheet is designed to provide specific advice tailored to restaurants and takeaways serving Chinese and similar cuisines. This may include Peking, Cantonese and Szechuan cuisine.

It should be used alongside the Eat Out Eat Well Award booklet 'A Guide for Caterers', which is a detailed guide including information on how to qualify for and achieve the Eat Out Eat Well award.

Guidelines

Fruit and vegetables

A balanced diet should contain lots of fruit and vegetables, so have plenty of menu options containing fruits and vegetables. You could include peppers, onion, pineapple, broccoli, Chinese greens/Pak Choi, straw mushrooms, bamboo shoots, water chestnuts, baby corn, bean sprouts.

Add extra fruit and vegetables into dishes such as soups, starters, main dishes, rice and noodles.

Have non fried vegetable main and side dishes options on the menu. Encourage customers to buy a side order of vegetables, or have a 'special' vegetable dish of the week.

Steam vegetables or stir-fry in a minimal amount of unsaturated oil (e.g. rapeseed oil, corn oil, sunflower oil).

Try offering a salad starter or main dish e.g. mixed seafood salad. Serve without added dressing. Low fat* dressings (e.g. those based on vinegar, lemon juice or lime juice) can be offered separately. If mayonnaise is offered, offer a reduced fat** version.

If using canned vegetables (including pulses), choose those that are canned without added sugar and salt. Use canned fruit in pure 100% fruit juice, not syrup.

Rice, noodles and potatoes

Meals should be based around starchy foods such as rice and noodles.

Offer steamed/ boiled rice and noodles as an alternative to fried. When boiling avoid adding salt to the cooking water.

Offer noodle dishes such as Chow Mein with boiled noodles instead of fried noodles.

To make boiled rice more varied, add fruit or vegetables e.g. Chinese/straw mushrooms, peas, pineapple.

Try offering brown rice, or half brown and half white rice mixed together.

If dumplings are on the menu, steam rather than fry.

If chips are served use oven chips or choose thick cut chips or potatoes wedges instead of thin cut chips – they absorb less oil when cooking.

If frying potatoes, pre-blanch in steamers beforehand as this reduces the amount of oil absorbed when frying. Ensure frying temperatures are correct, (check the recipe/ packet of fryer instructions), as this will also reduce the amount of oil absorbed. Use unsaturated oils such as rapeseed, corn or sunflower or oil, drain the oil off the chips and do not pre-salt. Customers may wish to add their own salt, and salt may be made available, but don't provide salt on customer tables.

Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins

Where suitable, add extra beans or pulses into a dish e.g. black bean sauce.

Tofu and nuts provide good sources of protein in vegetarian dishes. Include nuts, such as cashew nuts, in some vegetarian dishes.

Ensure that there are non-fried vegetarian options available.

Include a variety of white fish (e.g. seabass, monkfish), oily fish (e.g. salmon) and shellfish (e.g. prawns/shrimps, mussels, scallops) in your menu. Steam, poach, grill, oven bake or stir-fry in minimal amount of unsaturated oil.

If omelettes are served, include some finely chopped vegetables in the omelette mix e.g. peppers, mushrooms. If milk is added, use lower fat milks (e.g. semi skimmed milk, 1% milk and skimmed milk). Fry in a non-stick pan with a small amount of unsaturated oil (e.g. rapeseed oil, corn oil, sunflower oil).

Use lean meat where possible and cut visible fat off meat such as pork and lamb.

Where possible, remove the skin from poultry such as chicken and duck.

Grill, oven bake or stir-fry meat and poultry in a minimal amount of unsaturated oil (e.g. rapeseed oil, corn oil, sunflower oil).

When roasting meat or poultry, use a roasting rack to drain away excess fat.

Pork ribs/spare ribs are generally high in fat. If served, grill/char-grill or roast on a rack to allow fat to drain away before adding the sauce.

Skim off fat/oil floating on the top of curries and meat soups. This rises to the surface of the dish when left to stand.

Appetisers, starters and soups

Include healthier options on the menu such as:

- Hot & sour/clear soups
- 'Fresh' non fried spring rolls
- Lettuce wraps with vegetable/ chicken fillings
- Steamed dumplings
- Grilled or steamed king prawns/mussels/

scallops

- Grilled chicken/beef on skewers

Reduce the choice of less healthy options on the menu such as:

- Crispy seaweed
- Deep fried dim sum/wonton
- Deep fried spring rolls
- Prawn toast
- Fried dumplings
- Deep fried chicken wings
- Prawn crackers
- Fried chicken/beef on skewers

Reducing fat

Limit the amount of deep fried appetisers offered and grill or steam starters where possible.

If frying use an unsaturated oil that is suitable for deep frying (e.g. rapeseed oil, corn oil, sunflower oil). Be sure to achieve the correct oil temperature (check the recipe/packet or fryer instructions) before immersing the food as this will reduce the amount of fat absorbed during cooking.

Prawn crackers are high in fat. When cooking use a suitable unsaturated oil (e.g. rapeseed oil, corn oil, sunflower oil) and drain thoroughly before serving. Allow customers to request/order prawn crackers, rather than providing them free or complimentary with meals. If prawn crackers are provided free with a meal, reduce the portion size served.

Main meals

Include healthier options on the menu such as:

- Chop suey
- Vegetable stir-fries
- Stir-fried beef strips/chicken strips
- Curries made with semi skimmed milk, low fat* yoghurt or low fat* fromage frais. instead of creamed coconut
- Steamed/boiled fish/shellfish

- Boiled rice/noodles
- Steamed dumplings
- Stir-fried bean curd (tofu)
- Vegetable dishes (e.g. broccoli, pak choi, straw mushrooms, baby corn)

Reduce the choice of less healthy options on the menu such as:

- Battered and deep fried products (e.g. sweet and sour pork/chicken / prawn balls)
- Deep fried crispy beef
- Curries based on creamed coconut
- Fried fish and shellfish
- Dishes with a high salt/sugar sauce (e.g. plum, hoi sin, black bean, sweet & sour, oyster, fish sauce, soy sauce)
- Honey coated dishes (e.g. honey lemon chicken, honey roast pork)
- Salted dishes (e.g. salted chilli chicken/ribs/ beef)
- Fried rice, fried/crispy noodles
- Deep fried dumplings/deep fried tofu

Reducing fat

Offer dishes that are steamed, poached, boiled or stir-fried in a minimal amount of unsaturated oil (e.g. rapeseed oil, corn oil, sunflower oil).

Do not double/re-fry food as this increases fat absorption further.

Battered and deep fried dishes contain lots of fat. Offer a limited number of these dishes and use an unsaturated oil that is suitable for deep frying (e.g. rapeseed oil, corn oil, and sunflower oil). Use optimum frying temperatures (look at the recipe/packet or fryer instructions), as a reduced temperature can lead to increased fat absorption.

If you offer curries with creamed coconut, replace this with a little reduced fat coconut milk as this contains a bit less saturated fat or preferably replace the creamed coconut with semi skimmed milk, low fat* yoghurt or low fat* fromage frais.

Reducing salt and sugar

Offer less dishes with high levels of added salt or sugar (e.g. salted chilli chicken, honey lemon chicken). Try to reduce the amount of salt or sugar/honey used in these dishes. Try reducing the salt and sugar content of dishes gradually over time, this will allow for taste adaptation in customers used to higher levels of salt and sugar in their food.

Do not add salt to vegetables, rice, noodles or chips. Do not add salt to cooking water.

Avoid adding Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) to food as it contains large amounts of sodium.

When buying readymade (bought) sauces, look for those that do not contain MSG (also labelled as 'E621' on food packaging).

Use other ways to enhance the flavour of the food (e.g. garlic, herbs, spices, chilli, black pepper, lemon/lime), instead of adding salt or MSG.

Sauces and stocks

Some sauces contain high levels of salt and / or sugar (e.g. soy sauce, hoi sin, plum, black bean, sweet & sour, oyster sauce, fish sauce). Readymade (bought) sauces can contain particularly high levels. Look for those that meet the salt targets for salt content (see the 'Eat Out Eat Well A Guide for Caterers'). Stocks should contain no more than 0.6g salt per 100mls (when made up with water). Where possible make sauces and stocks in-house and reduce the amount of salt or sugar added.

Barbecue (BBQ) sauce can be high in sugar and salt. If barbecue dishes are on the menu (e.g. barbecue chicken or ribs), try to coat the food lightly, rather than covering the food in lots of sauce.

Desserts

Include healthier options on the menu such as:

- Fresh fruit
- Steamed banana
- Canned fruits in 100% pure fruit juice
- Fruit salads (made with 100% pure unsweetened fruit juice, not syrup)
- Fruit sorbet (reduce the sugar added to sweeten this)

Reduce the choice of less healthy options on the menu such as:

- Deep fried fritters (e.g. banana/pineapple) in syrup
- Canned fruits in syrup
- Ice-cream

Reducing fat and sugar

Desserts and puddings are often high in sugar and fat. Avoid deep fried desserts and try to limit the amount of added sugar.

Include fruit based desserts, such as fruit salad, that include a range of fruit (e.g. lychees, mandarins, and star fruit). Use canned fruit in 100% pure unsweetened fruit juice, rather than syrup.

Offer fruit sorbet (reduce the sugar added to sweeten this/ choose those lower in added sugar/ reduced sugar varieties**) as an alternative to ice cream. Try offering lower fat/ reduced fat ** ice cream.

Ensure a portion of fruit (fresh fruit or fruit salad/ tinned fruits made/canned with 100% pure unsweetened fruit juice) is cheaper than the other desserts.

Drinks – cold/chilled

Provide tap water freely

Offer a range of low calorie (includes sugar free) and no added sugar soft drinks. Low calorie drinks are drinks containing not more

than 20kcal (80kj) per 100mls. No added sugar drinks are drinks that have not had sugar added to them as an ingredient (includes pure 100% unsweetened fruit juice and smoothies in a 150mls serving size).

Offer pure 100% unsweetened fruit juice and smoothies in a 150ml serving size. Fruit juice and water mixes can also be included for example a 200ml serving size, with 150mls of 100% pure fruit juice and added water.

If sugar sweetened drinks are sold, (consider hot and cold drinks) the serving size should not exceed 330mls.

Drinks – hot

Use semi skimmed milk/ 1% milk as standard for all hot drinks. Offer skimmed milk as a choice.

Do not pre- sweeten drinks

Provide low calorie sweeteners for customers to add as an alternative to sugar.

Be aware that speciality coffees that are made with sugar and topped with cream can contain high levels of fat and sugar, If served, don't promote these options on the menu/ verbally when customers are ordering after dinner drinks. Traditional Chinese/Jasmine tea could be promoted as a healthy option.

Children's meals and smaller portions

Have smaller portions available (at a reduced price) for children and people with a smaller appetite. This can help people to regulate their intake, prevent over-eating / food being wasted. Make sure there are smaller portions of the healthier options available.

If there is a dedicated children's menu, make sure it contains the healthier menu options,

vegetables and fruit and only water, lower fat milks (e.g. semi skimmed and skimmed milk) and low calorie and no added sugar soft drinks.

Healthier options for children's menus could include:

- Stir-fried beef strips/chicken strips
- Curries made with semi skimmed milk, low fat* yoghurt or low fat* fromage fraise instead of creamed coconut and a high vegetable content
- Chicken chop suey
- Steamed/ boiled rice/noodles

Display, pricing and marketing

Include some of the healthier options in your set menus.

At buffets/self-service counters include healthier options and make sure there are plenty of starchy foods available (e.g. steamed/boiled rice, steamed/boiled noodles) and vegetable dishes. Promote the healthier options by having information cards next to the dish that state what it contains (e.g. 'Chicken Chop Suey – contains tender chicken pieces and a variety of crisp vegetables') See note.

Try promoting the healthier dishes as 'specials' or 'dish of the day', but do not increase the price as this may put customers off.

Make sure staff are aware of the healthier options and promote them to customers.

Consider using some price promotions for the healthier options (e.g. offer a portion of Chinese greens half price with every order, or free with every order over £15).

Note: If providing information about the food available, make sure any claims are correct and not misleading (e.g. be cautious about making claims such as 'low fat' if the dish has not been assessed for nutrient content as this

claim is defined by law and must meet the criteria to be legal).

Food allergies

A small number of people suffer from allergies to food. In the UK, peanuts, tree nuts, sesame seeds, milk, eggs, fish and shellfish are among the foods that can most commonly cause severe allergic reactions. For some people minute quantities of allergenic ingredients can have rapid and fatal effects.

Food businesses must comply with the European Union 'Food Information for Consumers Regulation' introduced in December 2014. All food businesses need to provide information about 14 named allergenic ingredients used in food sold or provided by them.

Please refer to the Eat Out Eat Well Award 'A Guide for Caterers' and <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide/allergen-resources> for further allergen information.

Definitions:

*Low fat- where the total fat content is 3g or less per 100g of food product.

**Reduced fat- the food product contains at least 30% less fat than the standard product.



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