

# Order This...Not That



When you're on a diet, or just living a low carb lifestyle, you can't expect to cook every meal and never go out to eat. That's not fair. You have to be able to go out and not sabotage your progress. The trick is in what you order. I checked out the menus at three popular restaurants and have outlined some advice on what choices to make. Don't worry, you can still eat well and not gain weight.

## **Olive Garden**

When you are working to keep your carbohydrate intake under 20% of your daily total, you want to keep your choices as low carb as you can. Keep your mitts off those breadsticks. They taste great, but they are awful for you. Eat a nice, big salad. Then choose a low carb entrée:

Garlic Rosemary Chicken = 29 g  
Baked Tilapia with Shrimp = 12 g  
Herb Grilled Salmon = 8 g  
Stuffed Chicken Marsala = 33 g

*(The chicken marsala is about as high up as I'd go. No more carbs than that in one meal for me. The marsala wine is where most of the carbs are coming from in this one. This would be a*

*splurge, so I'd make sure my breakfast and lunch were really low carb.)*

Now look at some of the BAD choices:

Eggplant Parmesan = 113 g

Five Cheese Ziti = 103 g

Fettuccini Alfredo = 92 g

Most people would take a look at Eggplant Parmesan and think, "It's vegetables. It must be a safe choice." Nope.

Until you become adept at estimating the number of carbs in a meal you can check things out online. Because of the pressure to serve "healthy" meals, all of these places have their menus online. Google the restaurant with the words "nutritional information" and you'll find it. Oddly and ironically, they think it's all about counting calories. It's the carbohydrate counting that you should focus on to make good choices.

Next, let's check in on **Outback Steakhouse**.

It's easy to eat low carb in a steakhouse. Many of the entrees will work. At these places it's the sides and appetizers that will kill the deal. Outback offers many low carb entrée choices. Here are a few:

$\frac{1}{2}$  lb of Snow Crab = 2 g

12 oz Grilled Sirloin with Grilled Shrimp = 16 g

$\frac{1}{2}$  order of Baby Back Ribs = 19 g

Braised Short Ribs = 15 g

Plain Grilled Chicken on the Barbie = 0 g

A Beef Filet and Grilled Shrimp = 6 g

It's hearty eating, and all of them are very reasonable choices if you want to maintain your weight. But look at what happens when you order what you think might be innocent sides and

appetizers.

4 Coconut Shrimp Appetizer = 29 g

A Bloomin Onion = 20 g

Baked Potato with Everything = 50 g

So if you are ordering the Baked Potato with everything be sure you are sharing it with a table full of people and keep your portion small. The sour cream, butter and cheese on the potato aren't the problem. It's the potato! If they are serving a French Onion soup, order that for your appetizer and then get the grilled asparagus or another veggie to go with that steak.

Everybody Loves **TGI Friday's**...right? So let's see what they offer.

In the appetizer category, order the Siracha Buffalo Wings at 3 grams of carbs. Don't order the Thai Peanut Wings. Those have 85 grams of carbs. Thinking Pretzel with Beer Cheese sauce? Think again. That's a whopping 61 gram of carbs. The Bacon Stuffed Jalapenos are a better choice at 14 grams of carbs.

Want a salad for lunch? I know people who think if lettuce is involved it has to be good for you, no matter what else is in the mix. Think again. The Friday's Pecan Crusted Chicken Salad has 38 grams of carbs. On the other hand, the Grilled Chicken Cobb Salad has a mere 9 grams of carbs.

The featured entrees these days are made with Jack Daniels. It's not the booze that's high carb but all the sugar they use in the sauce. The Jack Daniel's Rack of Ribs comes in at a whopping **175 grams of carbs!** That's twice as many carbs as most men can eat in an entire day and have any hope of maintaining their weight. Bourbon Barrel Mahi Mahi, even with the liquor added comes in at just 4 grams of carbs. What a difference!

So there you have it. Do a little homework before you head to the restaurant and you'll know how to make good choices. The longer you live a low carb lifestyle the easier this gets. Promise.

If only restaurants would offer low carb dessert options! Since most don't, I'm offering you a dessert today. Enjoy it when you get home from the restaurant.

Enjoy!

Cheers,