



**DIABETES GUIDE TO**

# Enjoying Foods of the World

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**eat right.** Academy of Nutrition  
and Dietetics

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# About the Authors

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# Introduction

Having diabetes doesn't prevent you from living a rich, healthy life, and it also doesn't mean you won't be able to enjoy the authentic ethnic foods you've grown up with or that you're interested in trying. If you eat wisely and well, you can still enjoy all the flavors of the world, despite your diabetes. That's exactly why the *Diabetes Guide to Enjoying Foods of the World* was created—to show you how!

Every cuisine has its own native foods and preparation methods that can enhance its healthy aspects. Of course, every cuisine also features some foods and preparation methods that could derail a healthy diet. For each of the many different cuisines covered in the *Diabetes Guide to Enjoying Foods of the World*, you'll find the headings Healthy Pleasures and Dishes Reserved for Special Occasions (or Smaller Portions) that clearly identify healthy dishes (and dishes reserved for special occasions) for those on a healthy diet. The Healthy Pleasures options fit well in any sensible diet, and the Dishes Reserved for Special Occasions have higher levels of solid fats, sugars, starches, or sodium. At the end of each chapter, you'll find calorie and carbohydrate (“carbs”) data for common foods from the cuisine to help you make and follow a meal plan.

Regardless of the meal planning strategy you follow and whether you are eating at home or away from home, the basic principles of healthy eating are the same:

- Limit foods that are high in sugar.
- Eat smaller portions spread out over the day.

- Be careful about when and how many carbohydrates you eat.
- Eat a variety of whole-grain foods, fruits, and vegetables every day.
- Eat less fat.
- Limit your intake of alcohol.
- Use less salt.

## **Diabetes Nutrition Guidelines**

The Diabetes Nutrition Guidelines from the American Diabetes Association (ADA) state that the principles of a healthy diet are the same for people with diabetes as they are for everyone else. The ADA recommends that adults diagnosed with diabetes should consume a healthy diet focused on nutrient-dense foods, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nonfat or low-fat milk and milk products, lean meats and poultry, fish and seafood, eggs, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds. They also recommend that these foods should be prepared without added solid fats, sugars, starches, and sodium.

The guidelines emphasize that there is no “one-size-fits-all” or “right” way for a person with diabetes to eat. Instead, the ADA recommend that people with diabetes follow a sensible diet based on their individual preferences, cultures, religious beliefs, traditions, and diabetes management goals.

It’s certainly true there is no single perfect diabetes diet, but there are meal planning tools and strategies that can help you choose foods wisely and thus help you manage your diabetes. Carbohydrate counting, the plate method of meal planning, and portion control are three of those strategies. Read about each of the strategies below, and then apply them to your favorite dishes from around the world.

## Carbohydrate Counting

Carbohydrate counting, one of the most commonly used methods of diabetes meal planning today, gives you lots of flexibility in your food choices and helps you understand how different foods affect your blood glucose—also called blood sugar—level.

The more carbohydrate-containing foods you eat during a meal or snack, the more glucose will enter your bloodstream. Thus, keeping close track of how many carbohydrates you consume is the best way to determine just the right amount of carbohydrates needed to keep your blood glucose levels in your target range.

A list of carbohydrate goals per meal or snack is sometimes referred to as a *carbohydrate budget*. It's reasonable for most adults to consume 45 to 60 grams of carbohydrates at each meal and 15 to 30 grams at each snack. To determine the amount of carbohydrates that are right for you, track how many grams of carbohydrates you consume at any given meal or snack, and then check your blood glucose levels 2 hours later. If this method is not successful for you, consult a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) to help you determine the right amount of carbohydrates for your diet.

## Plate Method of Meal Planning

The plate method of meal planning is an easy way to control your portions and carbohydrate intake. It requires no calculating, weighing, or measuring. The method is very simple: When you serve yourself a meal, make sure half of your plate is full of nonstarchy vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, or asparagus. A quarter of your plate should be dedicated to starchy foods, like potatoes, pasta, bread, corn, or kidney beans, and the last quarter should be reserved for fish, poultry, meat, or a plant-based protein.



This method works particularly well when eating in restaurants and away from home. Covering half of your plate with nonstarchy vegetables will automatically reduce your carbohydrate count.

## Sizing Up Portions

Many people are confused when it comes to portions and servings, and they often use the terms interchangeably. Yet portions and servings are two completely different measurements.

A *portion* is the amount of food you choose to eat; a *serving* is a unit of measure used to describe the recommended amount of food from each food group. The following chart will help you size your portions to maintain better control of your blood glucose levels.

## Introduction

### A Serving of ...

### Looks Like ...

#### Grain/Starch Products

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1 cup cereal flakes	A small adult fist
1 pancake or 1 slice of bread	A stack of DVDs
½ cup cooked rice, pasta, potatoes, or beans	½ baseball
1 slice of cornbread	A small bar of soap

#### Vegetables and Fruits

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1 cup salad greens	A small adult fist
½ cup cooked vegetables	½ baseball
1 baked potato	A small adult fist
1 medium fruit	A baseball
¼ cup raisins	A large egg

#### Dairy and Cheese

---

1½ oz cheese	Four stacked dice
½ cup ice cream	A small fist

#### Meat and Alternatives

---

3 oz meat, fish (thick cut), or poultry	A deck of cards
3 oz grilled or baked fish fillet	A checkbook
2 Tbsp peanut butter	A ping-pong ball

#### Fats

---

1 tsp margarine or butter-like spread	The tip of your thumb
--	-----------------------



A black wok filled with a colorful stir-fry of chicken, vegetables, and rice. The dish includes sliced chicken, green bell peppers, yellow bell peppers, red bell peppers, and green peas. The wok is set on a bamboo mat.

ENJOYING THE FOODS OF

# Chinese Cuisine

When people think of Chinese food, they often picture take-out cartons filled with sesame chicken, fried rice, egg rolls, and fortune cookies. But these foods are only a small part of the whole picture, as authentic Chinese cuisine is comprised of a variety of flavors and textures. For people with diabetes, China's diverse culinary profile means that it offers no shortage of healthy options. An abundance of vegetables, soy products, and fruits make many Chinese dishes quite healthy.

## Strategies for Healthy Eating

**Choose lean proteins.** Choose dishes that use tofu, also known as soybean curd, in lieu of meat, as tofu is low in saturated fat and high in protein. Roasted pork, chicken, and fish are also great lean sources of animal protein. When dining out, make sure to order meats that are roasted, steamed, or stir fried with small amounts of oil. Steer clear of any meats described as fried, batter fried, or crispy.

**Focus on vegetables.** Always choose mixed dishes that list vegetables in their descriptions, such as steamed chicken with broccoli or roasted pork with mixed vegetables, or try a vegetarian dish. Make sure to ask the server to add extra vegetables to your order, or order steamed vegetables on the side. Avoid vegetables that have been dipped in batter and fried because these preparations will increase the calorie and carbohydrate count.

**Eat rice and noodles in moderation.** Portion control is a must when it comes to rice—whether it's white or brown—and noodles. These are high-carbohydrate foods, and overconsumption of them can affect blood glucose levels. Diabetes experts recommended that half of your plate should be filled with nonstarchy vegetables, like Chinese broccoli, bean sprouts, or bok choy, and rice or noodles should be no more than a quarter of your plate. Fill the remaining quarter with a lean protein choice.

**Be aware of added sodium and sugar.** When preparing Chinese cuisine at home, limit the amount of sauce you use, and choose low-sodium types of soy and other sauces. To control the amount of sodium and sugar in your meal when dining out, be sure to specify that no monosodium glutamate (better known as MSG) is used, and be sure to request sauce on the side so you can control the amount you consume. Many Chinese restaurants provide low-sodium soy sauce as an option. Sugar and cornstarch are often added to Chinese sauces and marinades, such as *hoisin*, plum, and duck sauce.

**Eat sweets in moderation.** Opt for fresh fruit or a small serving of vanilla ice cream; each provides about 15 grams of carbohydrates. Steer clear of fried bananas due to the batter involved, as it increases the amount of carbohydrates. A better choice is a fortune cookie.

## Healthy Pleasures

**Chicken *chow mein*** Chicken stir fried with a mixture of vegetables, like carrots, water chestnuts, mushrooms, and noodles



**TIP** *Save on carbohydrates by asking for more vegetables and fewer noodles.*

**Hot and sour soup** A spicy soup made with red peppers and vinegar

***Lo mein*** Parboiled Chinese egg noodles topped with a mixture of stir-fried vegetables, such as onions, snow peas, julienned carrots, and sliced button mushrooms; served plain or topped with marinated pork, shrimp, beef, or chicken



**TIP** *Top with chicken or shrimp and ask for extra vegetables. Limit the noodle portion to a quarter of your plate.*

**Steamed dumplings** Small dumplings typically filled with onion and bamboo shoots and chicken, pork, or shrimp



**TIP** *Steamed dumplings make a great low-carbohydrate appetizer*

## Dishes Reserved for Special Occasions (or Smaller Portions)

**Egg roll** Deep-fried *wonton* wrapper stuffed with cabbage, carrots, bean sprouts, and other vegetables, as well as pork, shrimp, or chicken; high in fat and has more carbohydrates than the average slice of bread

**Fried rice** Steamed white rice stir fried in soy sauce and sesame oil with onions, peas, diced carrots, fried eggs, baby corn, and sometimes meat (chicken, beef, or pork); high in fat, carbohydrates, and sodium

***Moo shu* pork** Sliced or shredded pork marinated in *hoisin* sauce and stir fried in sesame or peanut oil; low in carbohydrates but high in fat and sodium

**Pot sticker** Small steamed and fried dough pastries filled with meat (pork, chicken, or beef), cabbage, scallions, and ginger; high in fat, carbohydrates, and sodium

**Sesame chicken** battered, deep-fried, and glazed boneless chicken breast or thigh cooked in a sweet sauce and served with steamed broccoli or another vegetable; very high in fat, carbohydrates, and sodium

**Sweet and sour chicken** Small cubes of white-meat chicken battered, deep-fried, and coated with a sweet and sour sauce; high in fat and carbohydrates

## Chinese Cuisine Nutrition Facts

Food	Serving Size	Calories	Carbs (grams)
<b>Chicken <i>chow mein</i>, no noodles</b>	1 cup	185	9
<b>Duck sauce</b>	1 Tbsp	81	20
<b>Egg roll (beef or pork)</b>	1 roll (2-3 oz)	177	18
<b>Fortune cookie</b>	1 cookie	30	7
<b>Fried rice (vegetable)</b>	1 cup	238	45
<b><i>Hoisin</i> sauce</b>	1 Tbsp	35	7
<b>Hot and sour soup</b>	1 cup	91	10
<b><i>Lo mein</i> (vegetable)</b>	1 cup	165	27
<b><i>Moo shu</i> pork</b>	1 cup	228	6
<b>Plum sauce</b>	1 Tbsp	35	8
<b>Pot stickers (pork and vegetable)</b>	3 pieces (3 oz)	118	12
<b>Sesame chicken</b>	1 cup	738	68
<b>Steamed dumplings filled with meat, poultry, or seafood</b>	4 medium dumplings (5 oz)	167	16
<b>Sweet and sour chicken</b>	3 pieces (2 oz)	138	13