Hey there, thanks for spending some time with me today. Yes, I’m a Cali girl now and I’d say that because I go back and I visit my relatives in Michigan all the time. I’m just going to tell you, you’re right, it is much easier to eat healthy in certain areas of the country.

But the tips in this episode are all about dining out. No matter where you live. And I promise, they will help you stay on track and stay have a social life.

I’m going to share with you some of my best tips and some suggestions, even some habits that will help you stay committed to your healthy lifestyle, unless you plan on being a social recluse or a hermit.

We all have these situations where we’re going to be asked out to dinner or someone’s going to invite us over to their home for a party or a sit down dinner. And it’s very difficult sometimes not to feel like you’re being “the picky eater” or that people are going to insinuate that you don’t like their cooking or that there’s something wrong with the other people eating simply because you are committed to a healthy or perhaps even just a different diet.

I really don’t believe that there’s one diet that fits everybody. I’m referring to the way that you eat. I’m not talking about being on a short term diet. I’m talking about the way that we’ve designed our nutrition to best support our health, our strength, our energy, and our vitality.

ABC News recently reported on a study which indicated, eating out is nearly three times as high in calorie and fat as dining in. So every time we go out to eat out especially if it’s at a full service chain restaurant, you can expect that you are eating anywhere between 2-3 times your normal number of calories that you would for that particular meal.

Isn’t that crazy? In fact, this study showed that the average meal, that the average full service chain restaurant, if you’re consuming that kind of a meal, that on average you’re consuming over 2000 calories per meal.

For a lot of people, that’s the maximum number of calories you should consume for an entire day. Not everybody. But for some reason, that’s their full calorie allotment for the entire day.

So how do we manage going out to dinner without saying, “Oh please, just bring me a toothpick and a glass of water. I’ll be fine.”

You want to be able to enjoy yourself and I’m not saying that you should expect to have a completely low calorie, low fat entrée every time you go out to dinner.

I do believe in moderation. I do believe that part of being healthy is just letting go and enjoying yourself sometimes but not letting go to the point that you’re consuming in one meal all of the calories for 2-3 days, rather, enjoy yourself.

I’m suggesting that there are ways for all of us to get much closer to our normal way of eating even when we dine out so that we can enjoy other people’s company, so that we don’t feel anxiety or the need to constantly decline each and every social opportunity simply because we don’t know how to have control when we go out to restaurant or when we’re invited to someone else’s home to eat.

I’m here to tell you there’s lots of ways to do that without being isolated and feeling like the picky eater.

Here’s the first one:

Decide in advance where you’re going to dinner.

The best way to do this is to be the person who does the inviting. Are you that friend? Are you the friend who is just, “Hey, let’s go out to dinner this week.” And if so, if you’re doing the inviting, I would suggest that you also pick the restaurant. Now the worst restaurants that you can go to are those full service chain restaurants and you know the ones I’m talking about. Friday’s, some of the meals at Cheesecake Factory, Applebee’s, all of those restaurants certainly have healthy entrees and options. They all do. But the big full service chain restaurants are the ones where you’re also going to find the most calorie laden, high fat entrees as well.

It’s just easier to eat healthy at a restaurant that’s not one of those full service chain restaurants.

Did you know that those restaurants, most of the entrees are like, quadruple the number of calories and fat that you would be consuming just by going through one of the drive-thru restaurants you can think of that most people associate as being “Oh, no that’s so bad for you.”

But a lot of these chain restaurants, their food is way worse when it comes to being unhealthy.

That’s the first thing. Just pick up the restaurant that you want to go to and then go online. You don’t even need to go to your desktop computer. Just go to Yelp and yelp the name of the restaurant. Better yet, if you’re not using the Yelp app which is one of my favorite apps, like when one of my friends is in the car, I’m like, “Oh hey, why don’t you Yelp healthy lunch, wherever it is we are.” And they’re like, “Yelp? I’ve never heard of them.” I’m like, what? Because it’s so awesome. You can just type in whatever it is that you are looking for; organic food, or organic dining or vegan dining or healthy dining. You can find so many great options and you can read several of the reviews.

You can also, in most cases, click on the link that takes you directly to their menu. How cool is that?

A lot of places now are doing such a great job of providing the calorie count on most of their entrees.

Next, never leave the house starving.

No matter how quick you believe the service is going to be at the restaurant, if you’re starving, if you’re just absolutely famished when you sit down at the table and the waiter walks by with that basket of bread, and says, “Would you care for bread?” It’s really hard to say “No thanks,” if your stomach is rumbling because you’re so hungry.

So I always encourage people, have something to eat before you go out to dinner even if it’s just a full glass of water or a piece of fruit. Something that is filling, a little satisfying so that when you sit down before your entrée ever hits the table, you’re not famished.

It can be up to 20 or 30 minutes later, sometimes even 40 minutes later by the time your food is in front of you. So you make sure you eat something before you leave.

Avoid anything on the menu that says “CRISPY”. In most cases, if it’s crispy or if it’s covered in cream sauce, or smothered, those kind of words are red flags.

Now, if there doesn’t seem to be an entree on the menu that sounds appetizing or that you are able to modify to meet your health needs, another alternative you might consider is doing a broth based soup. Now when you ask for the soups of the day, make sure that it is a broth based soup like minestrone or Wanton, or even some tortilla soups can be broth based. If it’s a cream based, go ahead and pass or consider ordering a salad for dinner even if they don’t have a salad that’s a normal entrée size.

Sometimes what I’ll do is just ask if they can just put to the dinner salads together and “could you add some extra vegetables and bring the dressing on the side?”

Always ask the waiter what their low cal dressing is and if they don’t have a low cal dressing then ask them to bring you a small plate of lemons or vinegar and you can just put a little touch of vinegar and oil on your salad.

But most salads, if they have delicious vegetables, it usually doesn’t need that much dressing anyways. Dinner out with friends is really about your company more than it is the food that’s on your plate. Make a decision before your entrée even hits the table, what percentage of it you’re going to eat.

I have found – I don’t know if you’ve found this to be true, but the swankier the restaurant, the smaller the portions and sometimes the healthier the meals. It just seems to me like the bigger ticket, the dinner entrées are, the portions get smaller and smaller.

So sometimes that’s a good thing. Just decide before you even take your first bite. I will be done when I eat a quarter of my entrée and all of my grains. And if you make that decision before you start eating, you’ll be aware when you’re done.

So decide in advance and you can even – sometimes I’ll leave in just like portion it off, like, I’ll draw a little line to the entrée so I know, “Okay, when I get to this part, I will ask the waiter to box it up and bring it home.

This next tip is all about helping you with your selections on the entrée. Once you’ve scanned through the menu which again I suggest you do before you even sit down, but let’s just you’ve been invited out to dinner with the restaurant where you’ve never seen the menu before. So first, scan the menu.

Always look for the lowest cal items first. And then see how it’s prepared. Be wary of terms such as buttery, or breaded, fried, pan fried or creamy or smothered, scalloped, ala mode, those are words that are red flags.

That’s not to say you can’t order that entrée. You might be able to order that entrée but instead you would want to ask if there’s the option to prepare it either grilled or steamed, broiled, poached, even stir fried or roasted. And it doesn’t hurt to ask.

I do this every single time we go to the restaurant. My husband rolls his eyes and I really don’t care. I’ll say, “Can you ask the chef if they can make that without butter or without any extra oil?”

And sometimes they can, and sometimes they can’t.

If they can’t do that, then I look for a healthier alternative. Now, if I know I’m going to a restaurant where it’s just absolutely impossible to modify the menu, in many cases, I’ll either eat before we go or I’ll eat a very small portion.

A very simple way to reduce the amount of calories and fats that we eat while we’re dining out is to take a look at the things that come on the side.

So many of our main entrees include mashed potatoes or something that’s less than healthy but it’s a great place for you to substitute steamed vegetables or stewed vegetables or even broiled vegetables or to do something other than what’s automatically on the menu. Almost everything can be modified for you.

Be sure to ask if any of the extras like the gravy or the sauce or the condiments that normally come on this entrée, asked if they can be placed on the side.

Once your meal arrives, remember to eat the lowest calories first. So that means I want you to start with your vegetables and I want you to eat the things that you know are the healthiest. Then eat slowly. Take your time. Drink water between each of your bites. Put your fork down and then just listen to your company. You take a couple more sips of water but actually use this as an opportunity to be a better listener.

Concentrate on the conversation. Once your food is almost half gone, then I want you to stop and ask yourself, “Am I still really hungry?”

Now if you’re still really hungry, well then, sure, by all means. I don’t want you to go home starving. But in most cases, it’s just a habit, like we’re eating out, we feel like we have to clean our plate. And if you just feel, if you can just get yourself to the point where you’re like, “Okay, I’m satisfied right now. I’m not starving.” Then just push your plate away.

And here’s a really great tip, put your napkin over your plate. That’s what I do. It kind of signifies to the table that I’m done. It signifies to the waiter that I’m done and they’ll usually swoop in and take your plate away.

Now I only do that if it’s something that I don’t like leftovers. It’s just me. I can’t fish, like the next day. It just grosses me out.

So if I’m having tuna or some healthy fish entrée then I put my napkin over my plate once I feel satisfied. And last but not least, wash the cocktails.

When we’re drinking especially alcohol, it reduces our ability to make good choices. If you’ve had a cocktail or two and then the waiter comes by with his beautiful tray of desserts, it’s really easy to throw caution to the wind and make decisions that the next day we are like, “Gosh, I didn’t need that chocolate cake, did I?”

Even if everybody at the table splitting it and they’re splitting a couple of desserts, you still have had half of a dessert. And it’s not just the cocktails that diminish our ability to make great decisions but they also are high in calorie, they are high in sugar, and they’re just empty calories we don’t need.

For that matter, just about anything that you’re drinking while you’re dining out should be calorie free. So just drink water. It’s the best thing for you.

When they come to the table and they’re like, “Would you like tap water or sparkling water?”

And you kind of feel like, “Oh boy, is this waiter going to think less of me if I just order tap water?”

But yes, I’ll just have the dumb old tap water please.

There’s nothing better for you than water. Just drink water when you go out to dinner. It’s the easiest way for you to cut calories, to feel full and to make sure you’re enjoying your company as opposed to extra calories.

Well lifers I hope that you’ve enjoyed this fast fit tip. These are shorter episodes. They’re easy to digest. Great when you are short on time.

And oh, by the way, I would love for you to go to cjsevenday.com

All you have to do is enter your email address and I will immediately send you this really crazy cool, amazing gift.

It is seven days to really help you adopt a new way of eating. A whole new lifestyle. It’s seven days that will teach you how to eat clean and train mean.

Yes, there’s exercises involved. Yes it will teach you how to eat lean.

Now, this is something that I give away to people for free. It will blow your mind. It’s a diabook that you can look at right from your cellphone. I’ll give you the links so you can download it and have it on your desktop. Print it out if you’d like.

You can also look at it right from your phone. I also give you all the secret links to find my secret playlist on YouTube so you can train lean at home with almost zero equipment.

So I hope you’ll take me up on that offer and I hope that you give me some feedback on what you think about that seven day kickstarter really does help you adopt a whole new healthy lifestyle.

Well my friends, until next time. I just want you to know I flippin adore you.

PS. Don’t forget to subscribe.