



## How to feel **LESS GUILTY** about eating out and having higher calorie foods

Cakes, chocolates, lollies, biscuits and decadent desserts have been created by humans to appeal to our desire for ideal texture and flavour. They can even change the balance of brain chemicals to make us feel better. So why should we feel guilty for enjoying these things?



To avoid guilt, get the portion size right. For weight loss, a snack ideally contains about 100 calories (equivalent to a Freddo Frog) and for weight maintenance, 200 calories (equivalent to a giant Freddo).

Pretend you are a food critic and analyse every mouthful.

With each bite, consider whether you need more or whether you would feel okay if your plate was empty.

When eating out, think about the choice of outlet and look for the availability of vegetables or salad. If the meals available are really just made of meat and bread, potato or other starchy foods, then keep looking.

Stick to one or two courses depending on your energy needs, and watch out for calorie-containing drinks. If you choose to drink wine, keep a glass of water handy and whenever you reach for a drink to quench your thirst or wash down food, drink some water. Enjoy every sip of the wine.

Skipping the bread can be wise and be aware of oily sauces. Expect everything will have added fat, so go for smaller serves than usual. Order extra vegetables or salad if you are still hungry.

Focus on the atmosphere, the company, and the quality of the food and less on the quantity consumed.

Try to avoid buffets – they are a trap for even the most wary. If you must dine at a buffet follow these tips:

- Eat at the same time as your partner. It's not an enjoyable meal if you gobble down food while your partner is in the queue for more.
- If you're going to splash out on dessert, cast your eyes over the full range and choose only your favourite one. They are usually very small serves.
- Remember if you come back to the same buffet, chances are it will be exactly the same, so you don't need to get your share now – it will always be there.
- Get over the 'value for money' argument. Consider the costs in health and efforts to lose weight.
- When you choose to eat higher calorie foods, make them last. Part of satisfaction comes from the

length of time you are exposed to those ideal tastes, textures and aromas. You can use these conscious-eating strategies to satisfy your mind as well as your stomach:

- **Presentation** – before you start eating, notice how your food looks and pay full attention to the quantity you see, as this will help you anticipate when the meal has ended.
- **Variety** – do you see a variety of colours, textures and types of foods on your plate?
- **Aroma** – smell the food. What do you notice? Does it smell fresh and appetising? Can you smell all the components of the meal, or only some?

As you eat the food, notice the **texture** – is it smooth? Grainy? Tough? Tender?

Also think about the temperature – is it ideal for that food? Could it be warmer or cooler?

Savour the **flavours** – what ingredients can you taste? Imagine if you didn't see what you put in your mouth. Do you think you could identify it from the taste and texture?

**Slow** yourself right down and **enjoy** the meal.

Everyone can indulge in occasional tasty treats and eat out regularly as part of a healthy lifestyle. The key is knowing your correct portion sizes and making wise choices based on your gender, age and weight goals.

*By Amanda Clark, Advanced Accredited Practising Dietitian and Author of Portion Perfection: A visual weight control plan available at [www.greatideas.net](http://www.greatideas.net).*

## For more information

The Portion Perfection book is supported by optional plates and bowls Amanda Clark developed as useful tools for controlling portion sizes. Amanda won the Dietitians Association of Australia's 'National Innovation Award' in 2006 and has spent the past 15 years reviewing other nutrition authors' work for listing of the best on her online bookshop at [www.greatideas.net.au](http://www.greatideas.net.au)

**L**arge doses of tasty treats are like a trip to Hawaii. You don't go every weekend because it has its costs. But no one tells us we can't go – we make that decision for ourselves so we don't feel deprived. To keep ourselves going, we have little breaks away often.

You can develop the same attitude towards eating higher calorie foods and dining out, using these simple strategies: