

Healthy Options Award



Indian restaurants

Adapting your menu

Healthy Options Catering Award

Adapting your menu

Indian Restaurants / Takeaways

Healthy catering is not about removing lots of existing dishes from the menu and replacing them with healthier alternatives. Although you may decide to introduce some totally new dishes, the main emphasis is on making small changes to existing dishes. This may be changing some of the ingredients used, the proportions of each component or how the food is prepared / cooked. Healthy catering is also about promoting the healthier options so customers are more aware of the choices available.

This information sheet is designed to be used alongside the Food Standards Agency (FSA) document, 'A guide to Healthy Eating', which gives general details about how to provide healthy options for your customers. The FSA document also gives information on how to qualify for the Healthy Options Award and how to promote healthier foods to customers.

This information sheet gives more specific ideas that are tailored to **Indian style restaurants and takeaways**. (This guide is intended for use in Indian, Pakistani, Bengali and Bangladeshi restaurants).

Appetisers / Starters / Soups

- Include some healthier appetisers and starters on the menu.
- Limit the amount of deep fried appetisers offered and use a monounsaturated / polyunsaturated oil that is suitable for deep frying (e.g. rapeseed/canola, corn). Use optimum frying temperatures (look at the recipe/package or fryer instructions, but usually between 180-190°C), as a reduced temperature can lead to increased fat absorption.
- Grill, barbeque, bake (cook in tandoor oven) or steam starters where possible.
- Deep fried poppadoms are high in fat. Grill or bake where possible. If deep frying, use a monounsaturated / polyunsaturated oil and drain thoroughly before serving. Allow customers to order poppadoms if they would like them, rather than provide them for free / complimentary with meals.
- When making *Raita/Raitha*, use reduced fat yoghurt and add extra cucumber / onion / tomato.

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Appetisers / Starters / Soups cont.

Less healthy options – high in fat / sugar / salt	Healthier options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coconut soups • Deep fried bhajis • Deep fried pakoras • Deep fried samosas • Deep fried poppadoms • Puri (prawn / chicken) • Fried King Prawn Butterfly • Fried Garlic Mushrooms / Prawns • <i>Fried</i> sheek / shami kebabs • Deep fried chicken wings • Fried lamb chops • Prawn cocktail with high fat dressing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soups (without cream or coconut cream) – Dal Soup, Mulligatawny • Baked / grilled poppadoms (with a little vegetable oil brushed on) • <i>Grilled / Steamed</i> King Prawns • Sheek / Shami kebab with <i>lean</i> mince, baked in tandoor oven, or grilled/BBQ • Seafood or Fish (e.g. haddock) kebabs, grilled or BBQ • Lamb chops (with visible fat cut off and <i>BBQ or grilled</i>) • Tandoor chicken (marinated in low fat yoghurt and cooked in tandoor oven) • Chicken tikka (marinated low fat yoghurt and cooked in tandoor oven or grilled/BBQ) • Mixed salads (dressing served separately), or Deshi salad with citrus dressing • Prawn cocktail with plenty of salad and reduced fat dressing (served separately where possible)

Rice, bread and potatoes

A balanced meal should be based around starchy foods, which in an Indian style restaurant would mainly be rice, bread and potatoes.

Rice -

- Offer boiled / steamed rice as an alternative to fried (pilau).
- To make boiled rice more appealing, offer variations with added fruit or vegetables e.g. mushrooms, peas, pineapple.
- When frying ingredients for a *biryani*, use a minimal amount of monounsaturated / polyunsaturated oil instead of ghee / butter. Include plenty of vegetables in the recipe. If served with a separate curry, use a tomato based sauce rather than a coconut / cream based sauce.
- Try offering brown rice, or half brown and half white rice mixed together.
- Adjust the proportions of a meal in line with the Balance of Good Health by offering more rice / bread and less curry.

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Bread –

- The healthier breads are those which are cooked in the oven (tandoor) or on a griddle pan, without the addition of oil or butter / ghee.
- Where possible, use wholemeal / wholewheat flour (in chapatti, roti, paratha and puri)

Less healthy options – higher in fat	Healthier options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puri / Poori (deep fried) • Poratha / Paratha • Bhatura • Naan / Nan – particularly keema (minced meat) and paneer (cheese) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapatti (without ghee) • Roti (without ghee)

- If Naan is made with milk +/- or yoghurt, use lower fat versions. Use monounsaturated / polyunsaturated oil instead of ghee / butter. Also, try not to brush the cooked naan with butter / ghee, use olive oil if necessary. Also offer versions with added fruits (Peshwari) or vegetables (Kulcha), as long as the filling is not fried with added oil.
- When pan-frying Paratha bread, use a small amount of monounsaturated / polyunsaturated oil instead of ghee / butter.

Potatoes -

- When cooking potatoes, steam or boil in a minimal amount of water, rather than fry.
- Potato can be used to bulk up main course curry dishes.
- When combining potato with other ingredients, such as Saag Aloo or Bombay Potato, try not to add in oil or butter / ghee.
- If chips are on the menu, use *thick, straight cut* chips as these absorb less fat than thin chips / fries. Only put salt on chips if requested by customer.

Main course dishes

Fruit, vegetables and salads

- A balanced diet should contain lots of fruit and vegetables, so have plenty of options on the menu.
- There are a range of different fruits and vegetables that are used in Indian style cooking:

- tomato	- onion	- spinach	- okra
- aubergine	- green beans	- cauliflower	- lentils (pulse)
- chickpeas (pulse)	- pumpkin	- peas	- fenugreek
- banana	- lychees	- pineapple	- raisins / sultanas
- papaya	- mango		
- Add extra fruit and vegetables into soups, starters, main dishes, side dishes, rice dishes and breads (where possible).
- Have non-fried vegetable main and side dishes on the menu. Encourage customers to buy a side dish of vegetables, or have a 'special' vegetable dish of the week.
- Where possible, steam vegetables or stir-fry in a minimal amount of oil.
- Where possible, add extra pulses into a dish e.g. lentils and chickpeas.

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- Offer a salad starter, side dish or main dish e.g. mixed salad, deshi salad (citrus dressing), chicken tikka salad. Serve without dressing, or offer a reduced fat dressing in a separate container (e.g. based on vinegar or lime juice).
- Offer fruit as a dessert and have fruit juice available as a drink (see 'Desserts' and 'Drinks' sections).

Milk and other Dairy products

- The dairy products used mainly in Indian cooking are yoghurt, paneer, cream, butter, ghee, condensed / evaporated milk and Malai. However, due to the high fat content of cream, butter, ghee, condensed milk and Malai, these would be classed in the Balance of Good Health as 'foods containing fat'. See the 'Reducing Fat, Sugar and Salt' section below.
- When using yoghurt in sauces, marinades or Lassi, use a low fat version.
- Reduce the amount of cream used and try to replace with low fat yoghurt / fromage frais.
- Try replacing condensed milk in desserts (e.g. Kheer) with semi-skimmed milk.
- Paneer cheese is high in fat. If paneer is made in-house, try using semi-skimmed milk and reduce the amount of salt added.

Meat, fish and alternatives

Red Meat –

- Use lean meat where possible and cut visible fat off meat, such as lamb / beef.
- Use *lean* minced lamb (keema) where possible.
- Oven bake (in tandoor), grill / BBQ or stir-fry in a minimal amount of monounsaturated / polyunsaturated oil.
- When roasting / oven baking meat, use a roasting rack to drain excess fat away.
- Drain off fat / oil floating on the top of curries and meat soups.

Poultry and Eggs –

- Where possible, remove the skin from poultry, such as chicken.
- Oven bake (in tandoor), grill / BBQ or stir-fry in a minimal amount of monounsaturated / polyunsaturated oil.
- When roasting / oven baking poultry, use a roasting rack to drain excess fat away.
- If omelettes are included in the menu, try to include some vegetables. If milk is added, use semi skimmed milk instead of whole milk or cream. Fry in a non-stick pan with a minimal amount of monounsaturated / polyunsaturated oil.

Fish –

- Try to include a variety of white fish, oily fish and shellfish in your menu. Examples in Indian cooking include:

White fish – Haddock

Oily fish – Salmon, Trout

Shellfish – Prawns

- Offer unbattered and non-fried fish and seafood – Steam, poach, grill, oven bake (tandoor) or stir-fry in minimal amount of monounsaturated / polyunsaturated oil.

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Meat alternatives –

- Offer a range of vegetarian main dishes, such as vegetable curry / biryani and dishes with lentils and chickpeas (pulses are a non-meat source of protein).
- Nuts are a non-meat source of protein. Include nuts, such as cashew nuts and almonds, in some vegetarian dishes.
- Try using firm tofu in dishes. It has a similar texture to paneer, but is much lower in fat.

Reducing Fat, Salt and Sugar

Tips on how to reduce fat, salt and sugar can be found in most sections of this guide. Further tips and general reminders for adapting recipes and cooking methods are as follows:

- Offer dishes that are oven baked (tandoor), grilled/ BBQ, steamed, boiled or stir-fried in minimal oil.
- Ghee and butter are high in saturated fat. Replace with monounsaturated / polyunsaturated oils e.g. rapeseed oil, olive oil, sunflower oil, corn.
- Use *less* oil in cooking.
- Do not double / re-fry food as it increases fat absorption further.
- Battered and deep fried dishes contain lots of fat. Only offer a limited number of these dishes and use a monounsaturated / polyunsaturated oil that is suitable for deep frying (e.g. rapeseed/canola, corn). Use optimum frying temperatures (look at the recipe/package or fryer instructions, but usually between 180-190°C), as a reduced temperature can lead to increased fat absorption.
- If creamed coconut is used in curries, replace with reduced fat coconut milk.
- Try to replace cream and Malai with semi skimmed milk, yoghurt or fromage frais.
- Try to replace condensed / evaporated milk with semi-skimmed milk, 'light' evaporated milk', yoghurt or fromage frais.
- Try to reduce the amount of salt added to foods. Do not add salt to sauces, vegetables, rice, potatoes or chips.
- Use other ways to enhance the flavour of the food, such as garlic, ginger, herbs (coriander, mint, bay) and spices (garam masala, cumin, cardamon, paprika, cinnamon, chilli, saffron), instead of salt.
- Limit the amount of sugar used in dishes. Try to use fruits to sweeten, instead of sugar. Also see sections, '*Sauces and stocks*', '*Desserts*' and '*Drinks*'.
- *Sauces, stocks and pickles*
 - Some sauces contain high levels of fat, salt and/or sugar. Ready-made / bought-in sauces, stocks and pickles can have particularly high levels.
 - Try to make sauces and stocks in-house and reduce the amount of oil / fat, salt and sugar added.
 - If sauces are made by adding extra ingredients and herbs / spices to a basic 'curry gravy', it is important that this base recipe is not high in fat, sugar or salt. Use monounsaturated / polyunsaturated oil instead of ghee, reduce the amount of oil used and do not add salt.
 - Sauces containing yoghurt, cream +/- or coconut cream will be higher in fat than tomato based sauces.
 - When making sweet and sour sauces (e.g. Pathia / Patea), try to sweeten with fruits rather than sugar.

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- Limit the amount of sauce added to a dish and, where possible, offer the sauce separately so the customer can use as little or as much as they like.
- *Food colourings* such as orange (Tartrazine E102), yellow (Sunset Yellow E110) and red (Ponceau 4R) are artificial dyes, which may cause a reaction in some people. Try to avoid colourings and use turmeric, paprika or tomato puree instead.

Examples of less healthy main course / side dishes and the healthier alternatives:

Less healthy options – high in fat / sugar / salt	Healthier options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sauces containing yoghurt, cream +/- or coconut cream: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Korma - Kashmir - Madras (if coconut cream used) - Makhani / Butter Chicken - Malaya - Masala - Moglai / Moghul - Pasanda - Tikka Masala • Battered and deep fried products • Curries based on creamed coconut • <i>Fried</i> fish and shellfish • Meat, fish or chicken prepared in Malai • Fried paneer • Fried (Pilau) rice • Rice cooked in coconut milk • <i>Thin cut</i> chips/fries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sauces prepared without ghee / butter and only small amounts of oil, including:</i> • Dry sauces and those based on tomato: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balti - Bhuna - Dupiaza - Jalfrezi - Some Korai dishes (tomato based) - Madras (tomato based) - Methi - Pathia / Patea (sweetened with fruit) - Rogan Josh - Vindaloo • Sauces based on lentils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daal / Dhal - Dhansak • Spinach based dishes – Prawn / Chicken Saag, Saag Aloo • Tandoori Chicken • Chicken Tikka (not masala) • <i>Plain</i> boiled / steamed basmati rice • <i>Steamed / boiled / grilled / oven baked</i> fish / shellfish • <i>Chunky, thick cut</i> chips • Non-fried vegetable dishes (e.g. chickpeas, aubergine, spinach, okra, cauliflower)

- *Desserts*
 - Desserts and puddings are often high in sugar and fat.
 - Avoid deep fried desserts and limit the use of condensed / evaporated milk (try using yoghurt or fromage frais, or use 'light' evaporated milk if necessary).
 - Try making *Kheer* with semi-skimmed milk and reduce the amount of sugar added.
 - Try to include fruit based desserts, such as fruit salad, that include a range of fruit (e.g. lychees, mango, pineapple).
 - Use canned fruit in fruit juice, rather than syrup.
 - Offer sorbet as an alternative to Kulfi / ice-cream.

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Examples of less healthy desserts and the healthier alternatives:

Less healthy options – high in fat / sugar / salt	Healthier options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep fried fritters (e.g. banana / pineapple) in syrup • Canned fruits <i>in syrup</i> • Kulfi / Ice-cream • Gulab Jamun / Rasmalai • Kheer / Firni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh Fruit salad (with fruit juice, not syrup) • Canned fruits (e.g. lychees) <i>in fruit juice</i> • Sorbet

- *Drinks – cold / chilled*
 - When making sweet *Lassi*, try using low fat yoghurt (or semi-skimmed milk) and sweeten with fruit rather than sugar.
 - If *Lassi* with salt is available on the menu, reduce the amount of salt added and use spices (e.g. cumin) instead.
 - Soft ‘fizzy’ drinks are often high in sugar, so always have healthier options available.
 - Have *unsweetened* fruit juice available. Look out for those labelled “Fruit juice drinks” as they usually contain added sugar, so should be avoided where possible.
 - Have bottled mineral water (still / sparkling) and artificially sweetened ‘diet’ soft drinks available.
 - Provide a jug of water at each table.

- *Drinks – Hot*
 - Milk and sugar are often added to hot drinks, so healthier options should be available. Offer semi skimmed or skimmed milk and have artificial sweeteners available as an alternative to sugar.
 - Speciality coffees that are topped with cream can contain high levels of fat and sugar.
 - Offer spiced teas and herbal teas (e.g. mint tea).

Children’s / smaller meals

- Have smaller portions available (at a reduced price) for children and people with a smaller appetite. This can help prevent people over-eating and 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 healthier options and not just options with chips. Examples could include:
 - Boiled rice mixed with peas / sweetcorn / sultanas
 - Chicken and vegetable curry with a *mildly spicy* tomato sauce
 - Chicken tikka ‘dippas’ – slices / chunks of *mildly spicy* chicken tikka, with a pot of reduced fat yoghurt dip / mild tomato curry dip.
 - Mini chapattis / Mini plain naan

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Display, pricing and marketing

- Include some of the healthier options in the set menus.
- Buffets / self service counters – Include healthier options and make sure there are plenty of starchy foods available (e.g. boiled / steamed rice, chapattis, plain naan), along with vegetable dishes. Promote the healthier options by having information cards next to the dish that state what it contains (e.g. 'Chicken Dhansak – A mildly spicy curry with tender chicken pieces, lentils and pineapple')*.
- Try promoting the healthier dishes as 'specials' or 'dish of the day', but do not increase the price as this may put customers off.
- Try highlighting the healthier options on your menu, using a logo next to the healthier dishes.
- 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 Chana Saag (chickpeas and spinach) half price with every order, or free with every order over £10).
- *N.B. 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', 'fresh' or 'traditional').

FOOD ALLERGIES AND INTOLERANCES

Note: A small number of people suffer from allergies to food. In the UK, peanuts, milk, eggs and fish are the foods that commonly cause severe allergic reactions, along with tree nuts, sesame seeds and shellfish. For such people, minute quantities of the nut or other food can have rapid and fatal effects.

Refer to the FSA document, 'A guide to healthy eating' for further sources of information.