

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #96: Eating Out vs. Eating at Home

Hello! How are you? So, as I'm recording this episode, a couple weeks before it will be released, here in Massachusetts because of the 'rona, and in other states and countries too of course, we're still not able to dine in at restaurants. So I considered waiting to do an episode on this topic, which is eating out vs eating at home, but the more I thought about it, it's still relevant. I mean, first of all, some places have opened up, even if just partially, and I don't know what it will look like when this episode is released. Plus, this episode is not going anywhere so this can be listened to far into the future when the 'rona is a distant memory.

That all being said, what I'm going to talk about is also associated with eating at other people's homes or even getting take out and bringing it home, not just going out to eat at restaurants or eating out on vacation.

I remember in my younger days I would use going out to eat as an opportunity to eat all kinds of crap. It kind of grosses me out to think about now.

In high school, I vividly remember going out to eat with my friends and getting the appetizer sampler as my meal. So, much, fried stuff. Delicious I'm sure, but ugh.

To me, that was more fun than getting a healthy meal. I was out, I wanted to have fun, and that sampler was the funnest.

I also worked in restaurants for many years so I heard the thoughts people would say out loud to make their decisions about what they were going to order.

They didn't want to order something they could make at home, or they wanted to be bad, or it was a celebration, or everyone else was getting it, things like that.

All these kinds of thoughts were what led them to ordering something way less healthy than they would have made for themselves at home.

It's so interesting to see people make healthy meals when eating at home but then it all goes down the crapper when they go out to eat.

Why is that? Why is there such a difference for some people when they're eating anywhere but home? Or even if they order take out and eat it at home?

I think this is an important topic because I hear from a lot of you that you have this fear of going out to eat sometimes.

To you, eating out and you not cooking your own meal means something to you.

You have ideas about what it means to eat at a restaurant, or at someone else's home, or on a holiday, or on vacation, or when you order take out.

For some reason, you think it has to be different.

You associate going out to eat with eating unhealthy foods, too many calories, or too much food.

But here's the thing. Why does eating in different circumstances have to result in any of those things?

The only reason why it does end up being different is because of how you're thinking about eating there.

You're thinking you have to try all the things.

You're thinking it has to be different than what you would cook at home.

You're thinking that a celebration means eating all the foods that are overly indulgent, heavy, fried, and not what you would eat in your regular day to day healthy eating.

You're thinking it won't be as fun if you don't eat the appetizer and the dessert.

You're thinking you want what everyone else is having even though you went in telling yourself you'd get something healthy and so you start to feel anxious when you hear what everyone else is getting.

You're thinking you're confused about what to order.

You're thinking you'll feel uncomfortable if you order differently than everyone else.

You're thinking, before you even go, that it's going to be a disaster and throw you way off track.

Overall, you're thinking that this circumstance is an exception for whatever reason you can come up

with.

I'm pretty sure I've used all the ones I said at one point or another, and there's so many more I didn't list.

For me, it all came down to what I thought created the best experience for me.

To me, eating unhealthy stuff was more fun than getting a simple, healthy meal. So was eating all the options that were ordered. I thought it would be much more fun if I ate a variety of foods in that sitting. Not just my meal, but bread and butter, an appetizer, and a dessert. I thought that is how you celebrate and have a good time.

Also, I thought eating the same way as everyone else, even though it wasn't what I truly, deep-down wanted, would bring more connection and comfort.

I think it's so interesting to see the thoughts people have about meals they're not cooking themselves. Sometimes, there's fear or worry that comes up.

I used to get kind of freaked out if I didn't know how many calories were in a dish or exactly what ingredients were in it. When restaurants started sharing calorie info I was extremely delighted and relieved.

I always needed to know. I needed to be as precise as I could with my calories because I had the belief that there was a certain number that would allow me to successfully lose weight.

One of the greatest things I did for myself was first, to stop calorie counting, and I'm not saying you should stop. I've talked about this on here before. If you enjoy doing it, then do it. For me, it was so freeing to let go of that.

The other thing, was getting to a place in my mind where I could believe that this one meal wouldn't ruin anything. It was just one meal and even though it wasn't what I would have chosen for myself, I'd eat it, enjoy it, fuel myself, and get back to my choices at the next meal.

You don't have to freak out about other people preparing your food. It doesn't have to be such a big deal.

If you're eating until you're full, you'll be fine. You won't be fine if you decide this meal ruined your day and now you're just going to keep it going and binge.

One meal doesn't have to completely derail you and it won't if you don't let it.

Yes you may have more control over exactly what you're eating at home, but if you're able to listen to your fullness and keep calm while you're eating, you can at least control how much you eat.

You're not going to be able to know everything about everything in your life, and that includes all the food you eat. If you can let go of your need to know everything and your belief that you need to control everything to be successful, then you'll be able to enjoy the moments where you're not in control of what you eat so much more.

Most of the time, options your future self would be happy with are available to you but if they're not, you can still choose to be relaxed while eating what's there.

Even if you binged before that meal or the days leading up to it, you can still tell yourself that it's just one meal and that this doesn't have to be a continuation. Change can start now.

In most restaurants, there are healthy options, but you might not choose to order one because of one of the reasons I mentioned a minute ago or if you give up on yourself.

But going out to eat whether it be local or when you're on vacation, doesn't have to be extravagant with all the trimmings.

Take some time to really think about why you think it does.

Going all out isn't necessarily always better than simple.

What if simple could be just as good, or better?

I know, it's a crazy idea but it can be. I know this because I do it all the time.

I'm the girl who eats the healthier choice when everyone else isn't.

I'm the one who says no to an appetizer.

I'm the one who orders something I could make myself.

I'm also someone who can have a really fun time doing all these things.

Now, just a quick side note, do I do those things all the time? No. Sometimes I will join in and eat some of the appetizer or dessert and sometimes I will get something I would never make myself and sometimes I will get the fried thing. Honestly, it doesn't happen all that often, but it does happen.

But what's important is that I know I don't have to do any of it to enjoy myself.

None of it will enhance my experience because the only thing that can enhance my experience is me.

You may think the food makes the experience better, but I'm going to challenge you on that.

Food in itself doesn't cause feelings. We know this is true because you've probably eaten a food at one time and felt joyful while eating it and ate the same food at another time and didn't feel as joyful. If it were the food causing the joyfulness you would feel the same amount of joy every single time you eat it.

Also, if you're not paying attention to a food while you're eating it, you won't get the same enjoyment out of it that you would if you fully focused on it and savored it.

It's your thoughts about the food that causes your enjoyment of it. The taste may cause some action up in your pleasure centers in your brain but your thoughts about the food are what mostly give you that joy you experience.

So the food doesn't make your experience better, it's your thoughts about the food that does. You could think joyful thoughts about healthier foods too. That's what I do. I love on that food.

Now, let's also consider this. Does eating a ton of food that is super heavy and eating until you're completely stuffed make for a good experience? You may say no, you may say yes, that may be your idea of a good time, but when you're walking out of there after doing that, do you like how you feel then? Or when you get home, do you like how you feel?

Personally, if I'm going out to have a good time, I want to feel good about it before, during, and after. I want to leave feeling good about what I did and about the experience I had. To me, it kinda feels like I ruined it a little bit if I leave feeling too full and a bit drained because of all the food I ate.

Then on top of that, it's probably going to be a damper on the rest of my night and possibly negatively affect my sleep and how I feel the next day.

So I don't think all that food really makes the dining experience better. I mean, in that moment when you're eating it, sure, it's an extremely pleasurable experience, but it's fleeting.

Is that fleeting moment of pleasure worth it to you if it results in you feeling lethargic and uncomfortable afterward?

Going out to eat, eating at someone else's home, and ordering take out don't have to be any different than eating food you've cooked at home yourself.

They're still just meals you're eating and you always have the choice of eating foods that are aligned with your goals or ones that aren't.

You can make up excuses to eat ones that aren't or you can stay true to yourself and make choices you won't regret.

Why do you have to order something you wouldn't make at home? Maybe you'll learn a little something from how they prepare it that you can then experiment with for yourself.

Why do you have to eat the same foods as everyone else and eat everything that's offered or brought to the table? Maybe you can still enjoy yourself without doing that.

You can feel connected without eating all the same food as the other people. Connection is caused by how you think about the people you're with, not by doing the same things they do. We can feel connected to people who live 1000s of miles away. I do it all the time with my friends across the country in California and we're doing very different things. I do it with people I'm sharing meals with even if I'm eating a delicious salad and they're eating a double cheeseburger with fries. I don't care what they're eating, I'm just happy to be there with them and I feel connected through my thoughts, not because of the food I'm choosing to consume.

And if you're eating alone, you can feel connected with yourself without ordering the most extravagant things on the menu. You don't build a better relationship with yourself by ordering certain foods. That's not how relationships are built. They're built through thoughts, what you think about yourself, what you think about other people.

If you know what you really want and you own your choice, you can feel comfortable with your decisions. There's no FOMO if you don't believe you're missing out on something. If you do eat something just because everyone else is, then you really will miss out. You'll miss out on doing what you truly want to do and you'll miss out on getting closer to your goal. You'll miss out on feel proud of yourself and being in integrity with yourself and building trust in yourself.

To me, that's the fun. I have so much fun eating what I want that's aligned with my goals. It feels good. And when I'm fully owning my choice and honoring myself, that's when I can let go of all the food chatter and really enjoy the company I'm with. It's fun to just make a decision and be done. It's fun to have nothing to worry about so I can just be present, enjoy the people, enjoy the atmosphere, and enjoy the delicious food I chose without any chance of regret or guilt.

When you make the choice to go out to eat or order out or eat at a friend or family member's house, think about the reasons why you've made that choice to eat there or to order food at all. Is it so you can sabotage yourself? Or is it because you didn't feel like cooking, or wanted to be with the people, or wanted to be in a different atmosphere?

No matter where you are, it's just another meal you're eating. It doesn't have to be any different and you can feel just as calm and in control when you're eating other people's food as you do when it's your own because those feelings come from you and how you choose to think about your situation.

You still get to choose what foods and how much food goes into your mouth. Make choices your future self would be happy with.

Have a great week, bye bye.