

Plant Based Eating on the Go

IV: Navigating Restaurants

No matter how much you pack along or stock up on at your destination, it is likely you will be faced with eating out at some point on your travels. If you are with colleagues or meeting clients it's a given and important that you have a plan in action before you open that menu.

Granted, some cities such as D.C., Philadelphia, or Boston are a snap- Trust me it is possible to also keep it *clean and green* in the likes of Helena, Montana and Timisoara, Romania with just a bit more effort.

Let's face the fact, however, that there are going to be times when you have a choice in the destination for a meal and times when it will be completely out of your hands. The goal is to just do your best so I'd like to help you with some simple tips whatever the circumstance.

Lunch

Lunch time on the road is getting easier with the growth of high-end salad chains that not only accommodate dietary choices but clearly advocate for those who must or choose to omit particular foods.

Hands down my all time favorite is Sweet Green, however there are other options as reviewed here by Business Insider. Not feeling so salad-y? Nearly all of the salad chains feature daily soups as well.

And, if there is one in the neighborhood, Whole Foods is also a great alternative with plenty of lunchtime options from smoothies to build your own salads to stir fry bars.



Dinner (if it's your choice)

Unless your companions are game to try the local vegan/vegetarian restaurant, look for establishments that are highly rated and heavy on plant items.

Consider the many farm to table restaurants that are available in nearly every city. While not vegetarian, they can certainly offer you a wonderful selection of sides.

I favor Thai or Indian restaurants as most have easily adopted gluten free and vegan options and yet still include a wide array of other choices for colleagues.

Look for menus online that call out vegan and gluten free options as this is always a great sign.

Phone ahead and ask what they can do for you. Today many chef's will offer an off-menu vegan plate. If not, they will have options. Trust me- You aren't likely the first plant-based eater they have served.



Dinner (making the best of it)

So, your local client has the reservations made and your job is to show up and enjoy the hospitality, right? When that's it, you could be dining at anything from a steak house to a wine bar. And guess what- You can still do this!

These are the times when the rubber meets the road and it comes down to your owning the desire to walk a different path with the way you feed yourself. Although there may honestly be times a large salad is your only choice, that's why you have back up snacks in your hotel room. Be pleasant, not pouty, and enjoy the company you are with and the best that that

establishment can offer you. The truth is the more you can be clear and honest with yourself, the easier it will be to have your desires met. Here are some ideas to make not the best scenario still work:

Grab a salad or smoothie ahead of dinner so you don't hit the restaurant famished.

Consider putting together a set of veggie sides if you are at a steak house.

If it's a small plates establishment there are sure to be a few options to meet your needs or that can be modified.

Or, if you are my husband you will ask the wait staff for the largest vegan salad the kitchen can produce. And he has had some beauties!



Wherever You Go

Be upfront with the wait staff as to your dietary needs and really be ok with sending something back that comes out laden with cheese from the kitchen when you specifically asked for

dairy free. This is can be a real test for many. However, if your colleague or dining partner had ordered chicken and received a steak he or she would send it back. Get comfortable with taking care of yourself and your needs.

I have so enjoyed sharing this series with you these past weeks. I do hope that my suggestions on how to prep ahead, avoid airport non-food, and stock up your hotel room have provided you with just the tools you need to stay plant based on your next journey. Safe travels and stay well!