

Frugal Foodies: How to Save on Dining Out



By Andrea Woroch

Enough with the home-cooked meals. It's time to get out of the house and let someone else prepare your food for a change.

In response to tight budgets, frugal advisers have recommended for some time now that we stay at home to save money. But such deprivation grows old fast, so maybe it's time to consider these six tips to help you spread your dining wings without crash landing your budget:

1. FourSquare Deals: Members check-in to various locations on their mobile phones using this service, but did you know you can also receive offers for freebies and discounts simply by

letting FourSquare know where you are? Check out a recent segment on FOX & Friends for a “how to” on using the app for restaurant savings.

Related Link: [Dieting Like a Celebrity Is Easier than You Think](#)

2. Track Daily Deals: Restaurants are one of the most common frequenters of daily deal offerings, so it pays to keep an eye out for vouchers that can greatly reduce the cost of dining at a new or favored eatery. Just make sure you read the small print and are aware of expiration dates and exclusions. For example, most restaurant vouchers don't include drinks.

3. Get Happy: Eating early isn't just for our elders. Happy hour and early bird deals have become more common as restaurants try to fill in slow-traffic times. For example, Applebee's Neighborhood Grill offers full-size appetizers for under \$5 before 6 p.m., plus \$3 drink specials.

4. Split It Up: American restaurants usually overload our plates – unless they're into nuvo cuisine – so there's often enough food for two in a single order. You can cut your costs down to around \$20 by simply sharing an appetizer, entree and dessert with a friend or date.

5. Gift Yourself: We tend to think of gift cards in terms of what we can offer others, but they're actually very useful for individual purchases. Sites like GiftCardGranny.com let you purchase gift cards for several restaurants at a discounted rate, yielding immediate savings of up to 50 percent.

Related Link: [Sponsored Post: Comfort Food for Singles](#)

6. MatchPin: If you live in one of nine major cities, you might download the free MatchPin app. Membership brings you offers, rewards, contests and announcements from a variety of local restaurants.

Andrea Woroch is a consumer and money-saving expert for Kinoli Inc.