



## EATING OUT *in style*

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While you're celebrating your curves with the latest fall fashion line-up, why not enjoy some fine dining as well?

I can hear you saying to yourself, "Enjoy eating out? That's impossible!"

Yes, I actually put the word "enjoy" in the same sentence as "eating out" and it was deliberate. And yes, it is most definitely possible. As a therapist specializing in helping women learn to love 'the skin they're in', I have helped many women learn to love dining out; even when it used to be a source of deep angst in the past.

Many plus sized women struggle with eating in social situations because they fear being judged about what and how much they eat. They often tell me that others assume they are overeaters or live off of junk food because they are large. We know that this is simply not true.

To avoid this attention from others, many of us hide out and eat at home before attending a social gathering or else decline dinner invitations entirely. Part of body confidence and self-acceptance is showing up to 'break bread' with other people and to literally 'take a seat at the table.' In short: Putting your glam on, owning your unique beauty and style, and going to the latest foodie hotspot with your friends. The size of your body shouldn't be a deterrent from enjoying eating out in style.

For me, being fashionable and celebrating our own unique style includes sharing food and the pleasures of eating with the special people in our lives. After all, food is a connection point between people- it's something we all have in common and it's more fun eating with others. Pairing fashion with enjoyable dining experiences can help us let go of negative associations we have from the past and propel us into a life rich with good food, as well as the pleasure of good company.

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Tips to Eating Out In Style:

### 1 Top of mind

Keep in mind that many people struggle with social situations for multiple reasons and have to practise positive self-talk before going to a dinner party. Remind yourself of this before you go to meet others for a shared meal.

### 2 Don't assume

Don't assume you know what others are thinking: For example, before assuming that a dinner guest is thinking about your size, ask yourself what is more realistic. If you could read their thoughts, you'd most likely find them considering whether you are judging them about their outfit or whether they have spinach in their teeth (or something else!).

### 3 Remember

Remember why you're doing this in the first place: Getting dressed up and going out with others is FUN! Re-frame it as an opportunity to flaunt your latest fashion find, connect with others, enjoy some yummy new foods, and make new friends. The next step? Saying YES to the next invite you get to a meal out with friends and enjoying it!