



By Diana Kelly for SingleEdition.com

As the New Year starts, you may be trying to improve more than your dating life. Many of us make resolu

We talked to registered dietician and recipes editor at [WeightWatchers.com](http://WeightWatchers.com), Leslie Fink, about how you can stick to your diet on a date without calling attention to yourself. Here are a few popular situations you might find yourself in and how to make the best of the experience with the least damage to the scale.

### **You're meeting at the bar for a drink.**

Beware of those frozen fruity drinks—they're loaded with sugar and calories. Better bets are drinks that are straight alcohol mixed with diet soda, like flavored vodka with club soda or rum and diet cola.

“Champagne with a splash of juice is great for a special celebration,” suggests Fink.

Light beer and wine are good choices as well, just plan ahead for no more than two alcoholic beverages and make sure you're not drinking on an empty stomach.

### **Your date's taking you to his favorite Southern restaurant.**

You're looking forward to getting to know your date better over a few comfort-food dishes, but you're afraid the fat and calories might ruin your healthy-eating plan. Before you choose to order the stereotypical salad, try these better-for-you foods swaps.

Fink recommends ordering barbecued chicken over fried and removing the skin. Choose rice or

a baked potato--ask for butter on the side--over the creamy, fat-laden macaroni and cheese dish or casseroles. Stay away from cream-based or fried vegetable side dishes, ask for steamed veggies instead.

### **Your date wants a sweet ending to the meal.**

Not that kind of sweet ending -- we're talking dessert!

"Any food can be part of a balanced diet," says Fink. "Plan ahead for dessert if you really want it. Consider skipping the bread basket for some cheesecake instead."

Fresh berries are a low-calorie option available at many restaurants. Some places have cookie plates for dessert so you can have just one or two small cookies. Try biscotti and espresso if you're at an Italian restaurant.

"Think about built-in portion control," suggests Fink. "If you're at one of those hip cupcake spots, get a small cupcake rather than a slice of seven-layer cake. Or split something with your date."

If you're really don't want anything but the date is going well, just say so. It's okay to say, "I can't eat anything else but I could really go for a low-fat cappuccino or a cup of tea."

### **You've got a date at the movies tonight and the concession stands are a danger zone.**

If you love having popcorn or candy while you're at theater, you don't have to give that pastime up because you're trying to squeeze your booty into smaller jeans. Order a small popcorn and diet soda or diet iced tea. Ask the server not to add extra butter. Some theaters now have bulk candy bins. You can get whatever amount you want which is much better than those jumbo boxes of candy. Craving salty? Fink recommends the soft pretzel bites over nachos.

### **You're watching movies at home.**

You know your date will be hungry and there's no reason to make him or her suffer because you're dieting. Healthy snacks can be delicious, fun, and appetizing when planned ahead and presented nicely. Fink's go-to favorites while entertaining include crudité and low-fat onion dip or hummus, guacamole and whole grain chips, 94% fat-free microwave popcorn, pretzels, whole grain crackers with thinly sliced cheese and grapes, mini whole wheat pita pizzas, and chicken skewers. Fink likes to use brightly colored napkins and arrange food decoratively on platters to make the healthy spread feel more special.

### **Go on a food-free date!**

You can always suggest alternative activities. Some of our favorites that also burn calories are: going to dance clubs (skip the cocktails!), walking tours in your city, ice skating, hiking nearby trails, and touring local museums. Ask your friends for interesting places where they take dates or do research on the Internet for more local ideas.