

Tip Sheet for Hungry Women on the Road

1. Eat locally. Never ask anyone if there's an excellent restaurant in town. You'll get sent to a tourist trap or the most expensive place around. Ask the locals where they like to eat on their own time and money.
2. Eat seasonally. Know where you are and what's in season. If it's summer and you are in the Pacific Northwest, look for fresh berries. If it's winter, you want fresh Dungeness crab. Early summer in Tucson is green corn tamale time. Cajun crawfish are at their biggest and sweetest in the spring. And what's nicer than autumn apple pie?
3. Do your research. If you are an out-of-towner entertaining a local client, make it your business to find an especially interesting eatery. Or offer the client a short list of local places you would like to try and solicit their opinion about which is best. In other words, don't totally rely on others to choose the place. Bring something to the table.
4. Meet for breakfast. Business needn't be transacted over lunch. If it's going to be a short meeting, have it first thing in the day over coffee. It is a good way to focus more on matters at hand than on what's to eat.
5. Eat dessert elsewhere. If you are meeting for dinner and want to spend extra time with a business associate without bar-hopping, consider taking a stroll or short drive after dinner for ice cream, cake or cookies.
6. When you don't want to feel alone by dining solo, ask your hotel staff if there's a restaurant nearby with a communal table or seats around an open kitchen. This is becoming a trend, especially in kitchens run by show-off chefs.
7. Go to the market. If you have some time off from a busy schedule, one of the great pleasures of visiting somewhere other than home is browsing through a local farmers' market or produce emporium. It's like a mall food court, but down-to-earth and interesting!
8. Consider the coffee house. More and more places that focus on coffee also offer sandwiches and light meals: great for quick, between-meeting eats or for casual business meetings.
9. Whenever possible, make a reservation in advance. If you're alone, ask for a table with a nice view of the room. This helps avoid the fate of many single diners getting sent to Siberia.
10. See if you can get a chef's tasting menu, even if the printed menu doesn't list one. That's fun for dining companions and, if you are alone, it offers genuine entertainment other than reading a magazine or book. Chances are the chef will come out from the kitchen and see how you like it.