

# Mindful eating



Eating is one of the few activities that connects us, or can connect us, to all our senses

What is mindful eating?

Mindfulness means focusing on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting your feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations"; the tenets of mindfulness also apply to mindful eating

Mindful eating doesn't mean you have to eat only fruit, vegetables, whole grains, seeds, nuts, and vegetable oils; you can also apply mindful eating to a cheeseburger and chips – especially if both are homemade!!

However, mindful eating does mean being fully attentive to your food; when you buy it, when you prepare it, when you serve it, and, maybe most importantly, when you eat it.

Some tips from the book "Savor: Mindful Eating, Mindful Life" co-authored by the Buddhist spiritual leader Thich Nhat Hanh

Begin with your shopping list. Consider the health value of every item you add to your list and stick to it to avoid impulse buying when you're shopping. Fill most of your caddy in the fresh-food section and avoid the processed foods—and the crisps and "bonbons" at the check-out counter.

Come to the table with an appetite although not when ravenously hungry; if you skip meals, you may be so eager to

get anything in your stomach that your first priority is filling the void instead of enjoying your food.

Appreciate your food. Pause for a minute or two before you begin eating to contemplate everything and everyone it took to bring the meal to your table. Silently express your gratitude for the opportunity to enjoy delicious food and the companions you're enjoying it with.

Bring all your senses to the meal. When you're cooking, serving, and eating your food, be attentive to colour, texture, aroma, and even the sounds different foods make as you prepare them. As you chew your food, try identifying all the ingredients, especially seasonings.

Take small bites. It's easier to taste food completely when your mouth isn't full. Put down your knife & fork between bites.

Chew thoroughly to fully taste the essence of the food (you may have to chew each mouthful 20 to 40 times, depending on the food). You will be surprised by all the flavours that are released – you will also digest your food more easily.

Eat slowly. If you follow the advice above, you won't bolt your food down; devote at least five minutes to mindful eating before you chat with your tablemates.