



Dining Out Smart

✔ EFFECTIVE HEALTHY TIPS

✔ POPULAR CUISINES DOS & DON'TS

✔ SERVING SIZE TRICKS

✔ WALLET CHEAT SHEET



RAMI ABOUMAHADI

TTC12.COM



ALWAYS CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN / REGISTERED DIETITIAN PRIOR TO STARTING THIS OR ANY NEW EXERCISE OR NUTRITION PROGRAM.

CONSUMING RAW OR UNDERCOOKED MEATS, POULTRY, SEAFOOD, SHELLFISH OR EGGS MAY INCREASE YOUR RISK OF FOODBORNE ILLNESS, ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE CERTAIN MEDICAL CONDITIONS.

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TTC Dining Out Smart

By Rami S. Aboumahadi

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A QUICK BLURB FROM YOUR TRAINER

Thank you for using “Dining Out Smart”. Eating out is fun, exciting, and a great social aspect of life. Unfortunately, it can also come with a steep price in terms of calories, excess sodium, weight gain, and of course expense. With that, I have always recommended that you treat eating out like having a sweet indulgence; once or twice a week at most.

In this guide, I have listed my most effective tips for making dining out a healthier endeavor. From early preparations before going out to table recommendations, popular cooking terms and simplifying serving sizes to navigating the culinary terms of some of the most popular ethnic cuisines out there, this guide will help you to make better choices and stay on track.

Don't forget to check out the *Dining Out Smart* Cheat Sheet ([page 28](#)) for quick access to a list of cooking terms and serving size reminders in a handy wallet size card.

Once again, thank you for using this guide. Enjoy your meal!

Happy Healthy Transformation!

Your Trainer,



Rami S. Aboumahadi

Founder of the Total Transformation Challenge

“

We all eat, and it would be a sad waste of opportunity to eat badly.

- Anna Thomas

”

20% of all
American meals
are eaten in the
car¹

At least 1 in 4
people eat some
type of fast food
every day²

10 billion donuts
are consumed in
the US every
year³

Americans spend
10% of their
disposable
income on fast
food every year⁴

McDonald's is
Brazil's
LARGEST
employer⁵

There are more
than 300,000 fast
food restaurants
in the U.S. alone⁶



EATING OUT

By the Numbers...

Sources: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#)

BEFORE YOU GO

WELCOME!

MENU





BEFORE YOU GO

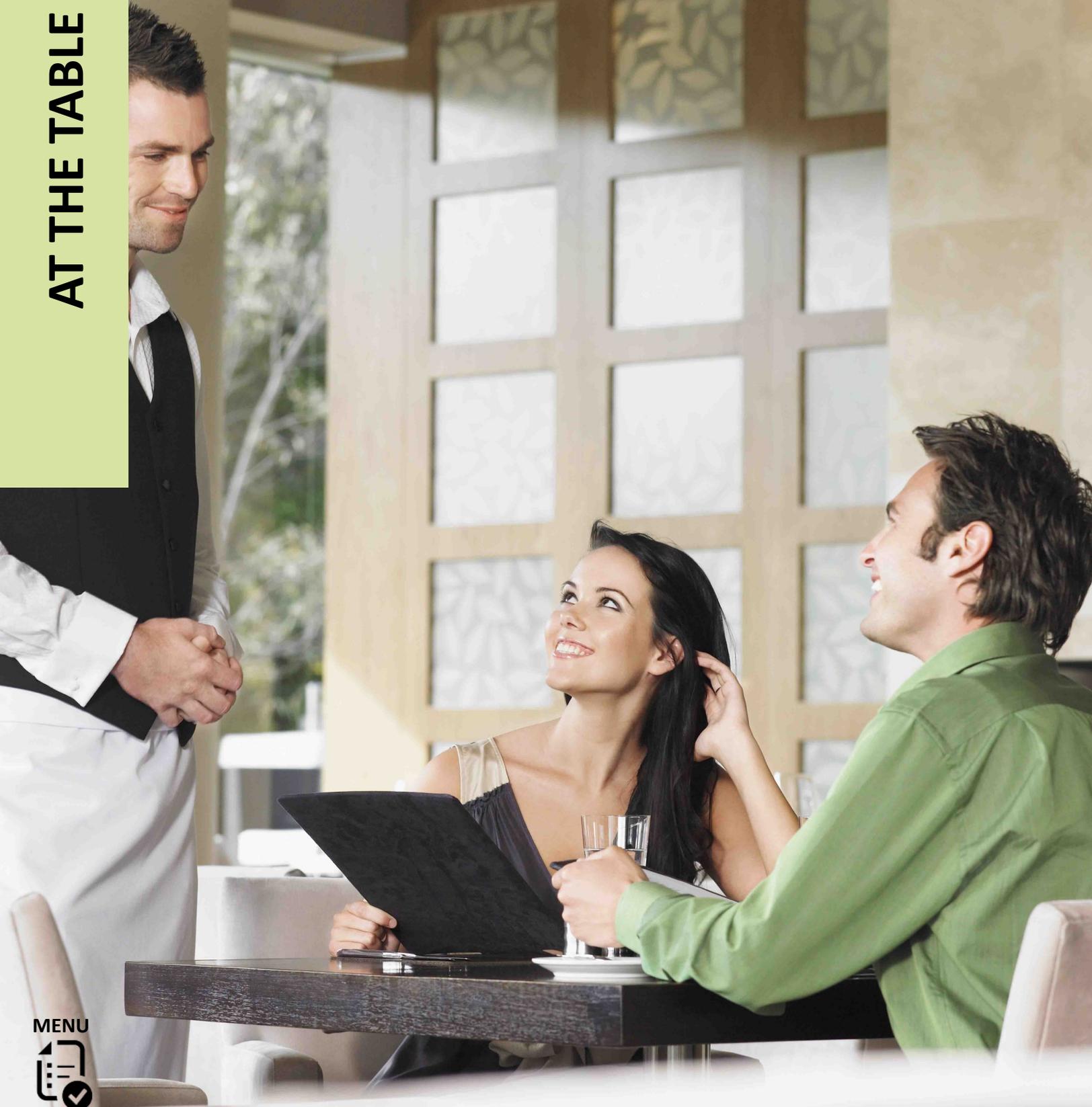
- Call the restaurant before you go and check the menu. Some restaurants have their menus online. Check the website for nutritional facts if available.
- Try to make your reservation before you go. This will cut down on your wait time and your hunger.
-  [Opentable.com](https://www.opentable.com) is a website where you can make reservations online and look up the restaurant's menu before you go.
- If possible avoid All-You-Can-Eat restaurants.
- Always make breakfast and lunch your biggest meals of the day, not dinner.
- Never starve yourself in anticipation of the restaurant's big meal.
- Wear something fitted. You will be less likely to overstuff yourself.



MENU



AT THE TABLE



MENU





AT THE TABLE

- Ask how is your food prepared and what ingredients are used (Read *Cooking Terminology* for a glossary of cooking terms - [page 11](#)) 
- If available, check out the restaurant's light, low fat, or healthy menu.
- Ask your Server for half a portion and take the other half home. You can also split your portion and share it with a friend.
- Skip the bread basket and always start with salad. Ask for dressing on the side.
- Stay away from creamy salad dressings (Caesar, Ranch, Blue Cheese, French, Creamy Italian) and opt for olive oil and lemon juice, vinegar or vinaigrette.
- To control portion size, choose an appetizer for your main dish.
- Substitute fatty sides, like French fries, with fresh vegetables.
- Avoid sugary drinks like soda, juices, or alcoholic drinks.
- Eat slowly and drink plenty of water.
- At buffets, look over all items on the buffet before loading up on the first plate.
- Skip the dessert.

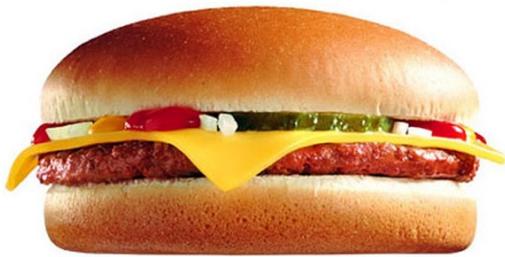




Get familiar with these common cooking terms and what they entail in terms of how much fat and sodium expected during the preparation process. If you must have one of the dishes that is high in sodium or fat, then consider splitting the portion in half and eat the rest later.

MENU





Instead of measuring cups, tablespoons and ounces, try comparing serving sizes to common household items that will make it a lot easier to remember, visualize, and help you make better portion-control choices.



SIMPLIFIED SERVING SIZES



Protein: Deck of Cards



Vegetables: One Softball



Fruit: One Tennis Ball



Legumes: One Hockey Puck



Bread & Pasta: One Hockey Puck



Cereal: Two Golf Balls



Rice: One Golf Ball



Cheese: Four Dice



Milk: One Baseball



Oil: One Die



Nuts: Half a Baseball

Simplified Serving Size

The suggested illustrations represent ONE serving size

CHEAT SHEET: Get a wallet-size Dining Out Smart Cheat Sheet with the above serving size reference and other helpful dining tips on [page 28](#)



REMEMBER THIS:
YOU HAVE NO CONTROL OVER HOW MUCH SODIUM IS IN YOUR FOOD WHEN YOU ARE DINING OUT!

According to the 2015 CDC Dietary Guidelines, the recommended daily sodium intake should be less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) per day. [\(source.\)](#)

A simple lunch of a turkey sandwich and a cup of soup can easily top 2,200 mg of sodium!

Aside from health risks of consuming too much sodium (increased blood pressure), excess sodium can cause the body to retain fluid. This, in turn, will make you feel bloated and much heavier (although your meal was light in calories).

MENU





Making the Right Choices with Ethnic Dining



Chinese



- Learn how to use chopsticks. You will eat slower and much less
 - Opt for Spring Roll instead of Egg Roll
 - Go for fresh seafood or steamed chicken with vegetables
 - Go for Jum (poached) or Kow (roasted)
 - Try Chop Suey with brown rice
 - Go for steamed dumplings
 - Kung Pao can be low on calories and fat but high in sodium
- Avoid dishes with the word Lemon, Orange, or Sweet & Sour (Lemon Chicken), usually deep-fried or loaded with high fat & salty sauces
 - Avoid dishes with the word “House” in it; more ingredients and more calories
 - Go easy on Miso soup. It can easily triple your daily recommended intake of sodium
 - Skip Chow Fun , Chow Mein (Stir-fried) or Shu (barbequed)
 - Avoid fried dumplings

MENU



Mexican



- Ask for Salsa
- Ask for fresh guacamole
- Skip the chips and opt for soft corn tortilla
- Try a Ceviche, a seafood appetizer that is made with lemon juice and rich in Omega-3 healthy fatty acids
- Go for the Grilled Fajitas
- Ask for brown rice, if possible, and use a smaller bowl
- Opt for Chicken Taco
- Opt for healthy taco toppings like chopped tomatoes, fresh onions, jalapenos, or reduced-fat reduced-sodium cheese



- Avoid queso, cheese dip, and sour cream
- Avoid Chimichangas and Chalupas
- Avoid refried beans
- Avoid Nachos, loaded with saturated fat and sodium
- Skip the cheese on rice
- Be careful with Enchiladas. Request less sauce
- Avoid ground beef taco (too much saturated fat and sodium)
- Avoid sour cream

Italian



- Fill up on Minestrone soup
- Opt for grilled or lightly sautéed
- Choose healthy sauces like Piccata (Lemon), Primavera (Plain Spring Vegetables - no butter or creamy sauce)
- Choose Sun-Dried tomatoes or crushed tomatoes
- For dessert, opt for sugar-free Italian ices or biscotti



- Skip Garlic Bread
- Don't soak your bread in Olive Oil
- Hold the croutons and grated cheese on salad
- Avoid fried food
- Go easy on marinara, meat, or clam sauce. They are loaded with sodium

MENU



Japanese



- Snack on Edamame
- Try Sashimi, thin slices of fresh fish
- Try seaweed salad, a healthy low-calorie option
- Try sushi, small rolls of vinegar-flavored rice with raw fish and fresh vegetables
- Ask for low-sodium soy sauce
- Try Negimaki, fresh scallions wrapped in thinly sliced broiled beef strips
- Ask for your sautéed dinner to be cooked with less oil



- Go easy on Miso soup and Udon noodles. They can easily triple your daily recommended intake of sodium
- Skip sushi rolls with heavy sauces like mayo or cream cheese
- Skip Tempura and karaage, a deep fried batter
- MERCURY WARNING: be cautious about tuna options because of the higher mercury contents
- Skip Gyoza, fried vegetable dumplings
- Avoid Sukiyaki, a slow cooked traditional Japanese dish that packs lots of calories from fat plus high sodium content. Try Shabu-shabu instead, which is cooked in water



Greek



- Go for Greek Salad
- Go for roasted lamb or Souvlaki (grilled meat and an excellent source of healthy protein)
- If you choose gyro, then avoid heavy condiments. One gyro can set you back nearly 800 calories with bread and mayo
- Try Gigandes, light baked beans
- Try Briam, mixed roasted vegetables
- Go for Hummus and Pita instead of Spanakopita
- Go easy on Feta cheese
- Avoid sauces like garlic or tzatziki
- Be careful with Dolmades (stuffed grape leaves). Depending on what's inside them, calories can be anywhere from 40 to nearly 100 calories per piece!
- Avoid Fried Calamari
- Avoid Sagnaki (fried cheese)
- Stay away from Pastitsio and Mousaka, (both are casserole dishes with heavy cream)
- Go light on Avgolemono, a lemony chicken orzo soup
- Go easy on baklava. Share it

MENU



French



- Go for Haricote Verts (French green beans) instead of Frites (French fries)
- Try Nicoise Salad, fresh vegetables and protein
- Opt for dishes served “Provençal”: A classic healthy French seasoning with herbs and vegetables
- Go for grilled fish, but watch out for Beurre blanc
- Try Moules, mussels in a light garlic sauce
- If you must have dessert, go for Sorbert
- Avoid French Onion or the Seafood Bisque soup (loaded with salt)
- If must, share a Quiche, a pastry filled with cream and cheese. One serving can easily top 600 calories
- Be careful with dishes with the following words: Mousse, Hollandaise, Meuniere, Beurre Blanc, Bearnaise, Bechamel, Pate. Usually very high in fat and sodium
- Avoid Tarts for desert



Thai



- Try Mango sauce on the side
 - Go for a small vegetable soup, but be careful, most restaurant soups are notorious for being very high in sodium
 - Start with Papaya salad, crisp grated fruit salad in chile-lime light dressing
 - Try Summer Roll (steamed)
 - Try seafood kebabs which usually are grilled
 - Go for Satay, lean grilled meat on a stick, but go light on sauce
 - Try Pad Thai, a traditional Thai stir-fry noodle dish that is light
 - Try Cashew Chicken, a healthy choice of protein and healthy fats. Just watch your portion
- Skip Shrimp chips
 - Skip creamy soups
 - Skip Spring Rolls (deep-fried)
 - Avoid dishes with coconut milk (very high in saturated fat)
 - Go easy on Peanut dip or sauce (very high in saturated fat and sodium)
 - Avoid Thai fried rice
 - Stay away from Lamb (very high in saturated fat)
 - Skip anything with PLA, usually deep-fried and loaded with calories from fat

MENU



German



- Try healthy omelets like Bauernfrühstück, a combination of eggs, tomatoes and potatoes
- Try Rote Linsensuppe, a light vegetarian red lentil soup. Just remember all restaurant soups are usually high in sodium
- Mohrrübensuppe is also another soup that includes meat
- For salad, try Gurkensalat , a light cucumber salad, or kalter kartoffelsalat, a cold potato salad with hard-boiled eggs
- Try Trout fillets a traditional healthy German dish



- Avoid Sweet omelets, usually loaded with sugar
- Stay clear of dishes ending with Wurste or Furter (mostly processed meat high in saturated fat and sodium)
- Skip the Schnitzel, a deep-fried traditional German meat dish. If must have it, then split it
- Pass on the Spatzle, a low-fiber, high-carb dish that is loaded with butter
- Skip the Strudel, a flaky dessert that can set you back 500 calories

Indian



- Try Raita sauce with fresh cucumbers, a yogurt based light sauce
- Try Roti bread (made from whole wheat)
- Opt for brown basmati rice if possible
- Try Dal or Chole. Both dishes are made from legumes, high in fiber, and low in fat
- Opt for dishes prepared Tikki, Tandoori, or Kebab style
- Avoid Samosa, a potato filled pastry that can easily top 300 calories per serving
- Skip Naan bread (white processed flour)
- Skip Pakora, deep-fried vegetables and batter
- Be mindful of sauces like Korma or Vindaloo, a creamy heavy sauce
- Avoid Butter Chicken, a dish made with yogurt and butter and very high in calories from fat
- Stay away from dishes like Paneer, Ghee, Malai, or Masala. These usually are dishes made with cheese, cream, or butter and very high in fat

MENU



Middle Eastern



- Start with Hummus or Babaganoush, light dips with chickpeas, eggplants, and tahini (sesame) sauce
- Try Tabouleh, a healthy salad of fresh parsley, tomatoes and bulgur
- Go for Shish Kebab, chunks of healthy grilled skewers of meat
- Try shawarma, sliced chunks of rotisserie chicken or beef, but avoid heavy mayo-based condiments
- Try Tagine, a vegetarian stew-like dish



- Go light on Falafel, deep-fried balls of ground chickpeas
- Be mindful of Foul Meddamas, a hearty fava bean dish that usually is loaded with oil. It's a healthier dish if prepared with less oil
- Watch out for Dolma. (like the Greek Dolmades: stuffed grape leaves). Depending on what's inside them, calories can be anywhere from 40 to nearly 100 calories per piece!
- Stay away from Mansaf, a heavy concoction of rice, nuts, meat, and creamy sauce





American



- Stick with tomatoes, lettuce, onions, and pickles on your burger
- Drink water
- Opt for baked potato instead of fries
- Choose salad with grilled chicken or salmon
- Opt for low fat / low calorie dressings or olive oil and vinaigrette



- Skip mayo, cheese, bacon on your burger
- Skip Soda. Even diet soda can lead you to overeat
- Skip the fries
- Skip the sour cream on baked potato
- Never “Super” size
- Avoid creamy dressings
- Don’t add salt. Fast food is notorious for being high on sodium

MENU



DINING OUT SMART CHEAT SHEET

SERVING SIZES

PROTEIN	One Deck of Cards	
VEGETABLES	One Softball	
FRUIT	One Tennis Ball	
LEGUMES	One Hockey Puck	
BREAD / PASTA	One Hockey Puck	
CEREAL	Two Golf Balls	
RICE	One Golf Ball	
CHEESE	Four Dice	
MILK	One Baseball	
OIL	One Die	
NUTS	Half a Baseball	

COOKING TERMS

High in Fat	High in Sodium	
Battered	Soy sauce*	Broiled
Buttered	Teriyaki sauce*	Baked
Fried	Cocktail sauce*	Grilled
Crispy	BBQ sauce*	Roasted
Breaded	Cheese Sauce	Poached
Scalloped	In Broth*	Steamed
Creamy	Smoked	Sautéed
Glazed	Pickled	Seared
Gravy		Blackened
Cheesy / Au Gratin		

* Request substitution for low-sodium

! Restaurant soups are extremely high in sodium. If must have it, then go for a small cup!

- If needed, start with salad, dressing on the side.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Ask for takeout container and pack half your meal away.



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INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cut along the dotted line
 - Fold Cheat Sheet in half
 - If possible, laminate and keep in your wallet / purse
- for a quick helpful reference when dining out









Rami Aboumahadi is the founder of the Total Transformation Challenge program, a 12-week fitness program that can help everyone see real results in as little as 12 weeks. Currently, the program has helped more than 3,000 clients lose nearly 15,000 lbs! He has been a trainer for over 15 years. Originally from New York, he now lives in Lake Worth, Florida. In his spare time, he enjoys scuba diving the colorful reefs of South Florida and playing with his 3 kids. He is married to his college sweetheart.



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