

Restaurants today are LOUD.

And people are not happy about it.

A 2018 Zagat survey found that noise is the #1 complaint of diners.¹

24%

noise

23%

service

15%

crowds

12%

high prices

10%

parking

The combination of a noisy environment and multiple speakers can make it hard for individuals—especially those with hearing loss—to lock onto, hear, and actively participate in conversation while dining out with family and friends.



According to a recent survey commissioned by Oticon of popular restaurants in 10 major U.S. cities, the average sound level during the Saturday dinner rush is 79.17 decibels (dB)—the equivalent of a diesel train chugging along at 45 mph. At times, sound levels spiked as high as 133.40 dB. That's louder than standing next to a blaring ambulance siren.

If you already experience hearing loss, the mere thought of sitting through a meal at these noise levels may be enough for you to stay home.



But there are things you can do to overcome this “restaurant dilemma” and enjoy a meal out with family and friends.

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TIPS FOR DINING OUT WITH HEARING LOSS



Do your research. Many restaurant critics and review sites now include noise levels in their ratings, and there are even apps for diners to record and share noise levels. Consult these resources ahead of time and choose a restaurant with a more manageable sound environment.



Go early. Restaurants tend to get busier (and noisier) after 7 p.m. If you want to enjoy a quiet meal, make an earlier reservation.



Request a booth or quiet table. Booths typically have high backs, which help to block out noise, and the cushions absorb sound. Tables along the restaurant perimeter also tend to be quieter since the walls limit the direction sounds are coming from.



Distance yourself from the music source. If music is being played over an audio system, or there's a live band, request a table away from the speakers or music source.



Take the best seat at the table. Choose a seat in a well-lit space so you can better read lips and pick up on visual cues. Sit next to a loved one who can fill you in on parts of the conversation you might miss.



Wear your hearing aids. This is an obvious strategy, but one of the best. Advanced hearing aids like Oticon Opn™ rapidly process sounds, distinguish between speech and background noise, and enable wearers to identify where different sounds are coming from. Opn delivers a more natural, open sound experience that enables wearers to better navigate conversations in crowded, noisy restaurants.

Source:

1 https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hearing_loss/what_noises_cause_hearing_loss.html

Oticon is a global hearing device manufacturer with more than 110 years of experience providing advanced solutions to individuals with hearing loss. For more information, visit www.oticon.com.

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