Many of the traditional Asian foods are very healthy. Dahl, pulses, meat and vegetable curries served with rice or chapatti are high in fibre and can be low in fat.

However, the way that the dishes are prepared is very important. This can mean the difference between a healthier and a not so healthy diet.
Using less oil

- Invest in a good quality non-stick frying pan.
- Use this pan to start off your thurka.
- Try to use very little oil to fry off the onions, garlic, spices and ginger or drain off excess oil before adding the remaining ingredients.
- Try to include dhal (lentils) as often as possible, and whenever you do have meat, remove any visible fat.
- Try to brown off the meat in a non-stick pan, drain off excess fat and then add the thurka. Also try and skim off the layer of oil that settles on top of the curry.
Adapting traditional recipes

Most recipes can be altered to make them healthier in some way.

Remember the golden rules:

- Eat more fruit and vegetables
- Eat more bread, rice, chapatti, pasta, cereals and potatoes
- Eat less fat
- Eat less sugar
- Eat less salt
For dishes that you would usually deep fry

- Try to grill instead or use a non-stick pan.
- Poppadums can be grilled instead of fried or try the microwave.
- Paneer can be stir-fried in a little oil instead of deep-fried.
- An alternative to pakoras can be made by dropping spoonfuls of the pakora mixture into a lightly greased non-stick frying pan. Cook on each side until browned. They will form small, thinner, pakoras than usual but they taste just as good.
Think about how much oil you are using

- Try to measure the oil with a karishi or spoon.
- You shouldn’t need more than $\frac{1}{2}$ karishi or three teaspoons of oil for a curry for four people.
Using less sugar in cooking

- For desserts try using sweetener instead of sugar to sweeten them. This works well with kheer, burfi and yoghurt. You can also add fruit, fresh or dried, for extra flavour and sweetness.

- Try not to heat artificial sweetener, as it will affect the taste. Add to your dish after cooking, when the food has cooled slightly.
Watch out for other sources of fat

- Use skimmed or semi-skimmed milk in hot drinks, e.g. tea, and in making yoghurt and milky puddings, e.g. kheer. If you find the taste a bit light add a tablespoon of dried skimmed milk powder to every pint of milk.

- Avoid adding bundhi to yoghurt. Try grated carrot or cucumber and spices to taste.

- Use low fat yoghurt in place of cream.

- When cooking with low fat yoghurt add a little corn flour to the yoghurt before cooking so it doesn’t separate.

- Avoid adding butter, margarine or ghee to your chapatti and look at the difference in fat:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fat (g)</th>
<th>Kcals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 chapattis + butter (5g)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 chapattis no butter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>222</td>
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