



WELLNESS CENTER
KELLY GIBBONS, RD

ARUP EATING OUT GUIDE

2022

EDITION





THE PURPOSE

Eating away from home is a part of many celebrations, cultures, and lifestyles. While this has a purpose, eating out too much can negatively affect health due to quality of food and portion sizes here in SLC.

This guide is designed to help educate for healthier options at common restaurants and to help guide choices for balanced meals.

THE OBJECTIVE

The first section of this guide can help give general tips for habits that may support health better and what to look for when eating out.

The second section goes through common chain restaurants and better menu choices. A few popular SLC restaurants are also included.

HEALTHY HABITS

How mindful are you when you are eating?

TAKE TIME TO EAT

With busy schedules it is easy to eat too quickly, be distracted while eating, forget to eat, and not plan well for food intake. Part of a healthy lifestyle is taking time to plan, prep, and eat food to manage your diet.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TAKE TIME TO EAT?

Taking time to eat can help you:

- Enjoy your food
- Focus on your food choices and portions
- Make better food choices
- Enjoy being with others
- Help with hunger and fullness cues
- Prevent overeating at meals
- Maintain better energy
- Manage weight and long term health

HOW DO YOU TAKE TIME TO EAT?

- Set aside distractions including your phone or the TV
- Take your meal away from your desk
- Enjoy conversation with people around you
- Slow down by using a timer
- Set your utensils down between bites
- Chew each bite thoroughly
- Pay attention to textures and flavors
- Think ahead about your meals
- Establish meal times and routines
- Include your family and friends in meal planning
- Be mindful of your drink
- Stop before you are too full instead of clearing your plate



HEALTHY HABITS

How mindful are you when you are eating?

TAKE TIME TO EAT WHEN EATING OUT

Getting takeout or going to a restaurant can be a fun, celebratory, or relaxing experience. Even though eating at home can be a better option for health, there are still ways to practice habits that help you eat well.

TIPS FOR EATING OUT

Eat slowly and enjoy the flavor

Choose options that balance your plate with multiple food groups

Split meals, portions are usually large at restaurants

Skip the appetizer and savor your main meal instead

Choose water instead of soda or another drink

Plan on no dessert if you have a rich or filling meal

Eat meals that sound good to you

Don't buy combo meals just to save money, that's marketing to get you to buy more



HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

Healthy eating can help you have good energy, meet your nutrition needs, and promote quality of life.

WHAT INFLUENCES FOOD CHOICES?

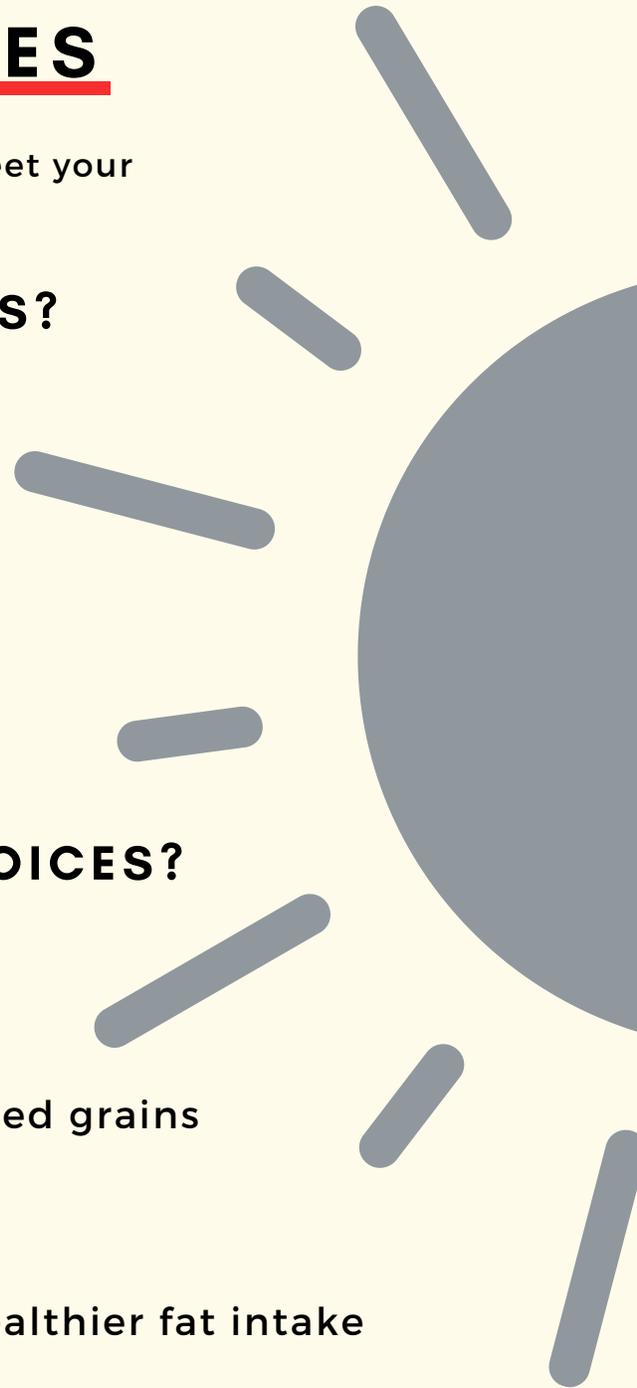
Taste
Convenience
Culture
Budget
Environment
Lifestyle
Age
Marketing

HOW DO YOU MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES?

Read nutrition labels
Pick water as your drink
Plan vegetables for lunch and dinner
Regularly choose whole grains over processed grains
Include fruit in your diet
Choose lower fat proteins
Include beans and lentils in your meals
Select nuts, seeds, avocados, and oils for healthier fat intake
Limit desserts and treats

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN MAKING FOOD CHOICES

Am I actually hungry right now?
Is this food I like?
Am I listening to my body's needs?
Does this food have any nutrients?
Is this the best option to eat right now?
Am I stressed or bored instead?
Am I restricting too much in hope of weight loss?
Is this food satisfying to me?
How is my energy level overall?



HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

Healthy eating can help you have good energy, meet your nutrition needs, and promote quality of life.

HOW DO YOU MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES WHEN EATING OUT ?

Be aware of fried foods, have fried food occasionally. When food is fried, it adds more fat content, making your food more energy than you probably need. Choose other options instead like grilled or baked options.

A lot of flavor comes from fat, salt, and sugar sources. This is a good thing to make food tasty, but sauces have added fat and sugar. Cheese, butter, cream, and dairy is mostly likely going to be rich. Ask for dressings and sauce on the side if you want to control how much you eat. Something like tomato or broth sauce will be a better option over alfredo or cream based options for fat content.

Focus on balancing your plate. Choosing a meal based on one food group isn't going to be filling or healthy since we need a variety of nutrients. Instead of pasta, pizza, fatty meats like hamburger, and fried foods, try to find ways to get lean protein, vegetables, and some carbs in your meal.

Look for healthier options. Try to get vegetables and fruit in your meal. If possible, get whole grains, or whole food options like brown rice or whole wheat bread. Try lean meat options like chicken breast, seafood, turkey, and plant based options like beans, lentils, or tofu.

Desserts are a part of life. Some restaurants have small portions of dessert which can fit into your meal. Be aware all desserts are going to be much more added sugar, fat, and sodium than if you made it at home. Make sure you aren't too full if you order dessert.

Most restaurants have calorie information, but you might need to look online or find nutrition information in another place to see how much portions have with sodium, fat, or carbohydrate content.



THE FIGURES

Keep in mind, nutrition facts are based on 2000 calorie needs a day. You may need more or less than that. This means when looking at grams or percentages, those will be higher or lower depending on your individual needs. Does that make it hard to know what your needs are? Yes.

In order to understand how many carbs, protein, and fats you need a day, you would need to do math based on your weight, age, and physical activity. This may not be realistic for you to calculate every meal. Instead, it helps to focus on what you know for nutrition generally when making decisions about food.

Focus on balancing your plate. Choosing a meal based on one food group isn't going to be filling or healthy since we need a variety of nutrients. Instead of pasta, pizza, fatty meats like hamburger, and fried foods, try to find ways to get lean protein, vegetables, fiber foods, whole foods, and some whole grain or fruit carbs in your meal.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS VARY

Everyone eats different foods and different amounts of food everyday. The average person can still make healthier choices on what they eat and how much they eat using simple tips from this guide. If you have medical concerns such as food allergies, diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney disease, heart disease, or eat a specific diet for physical activity, or are vegan or plant based, you may have different recommendations to follow.



CANADA FOOD GUIDE

This guide is only a guide. It's a representation of getting whole foods with the best nutrient and fiber content. This can be a great plate model for when trying to balance your meals.

Have plenty of
vegetables and fruits

Eat protein foods

Make water
your drink
of choice



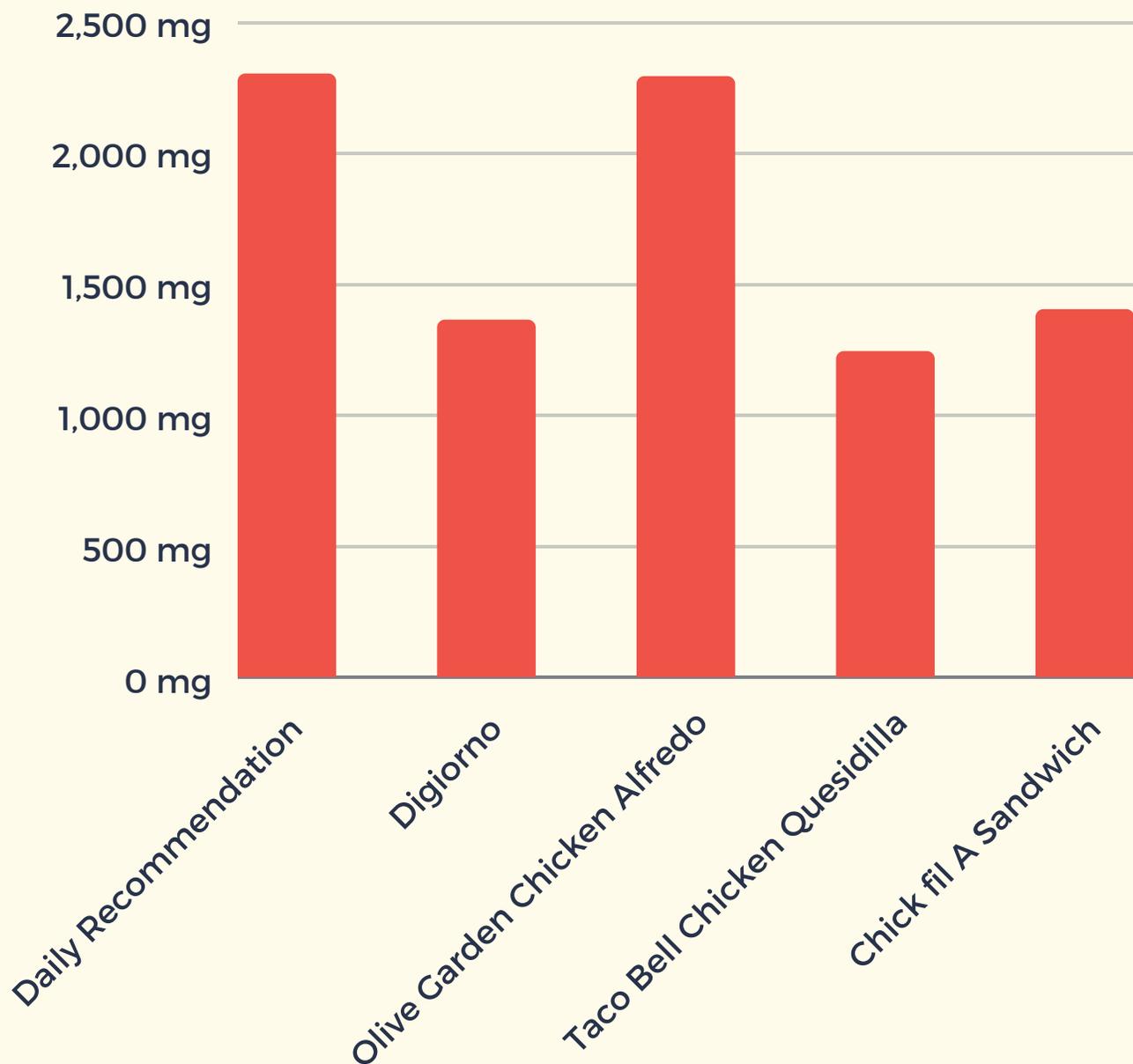
Choose
whole grain
foods

Remember, your goal with meals is to get nutrients: protein, carbs with fiber, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water depending on your individual needs.

SODIUM INTAKE

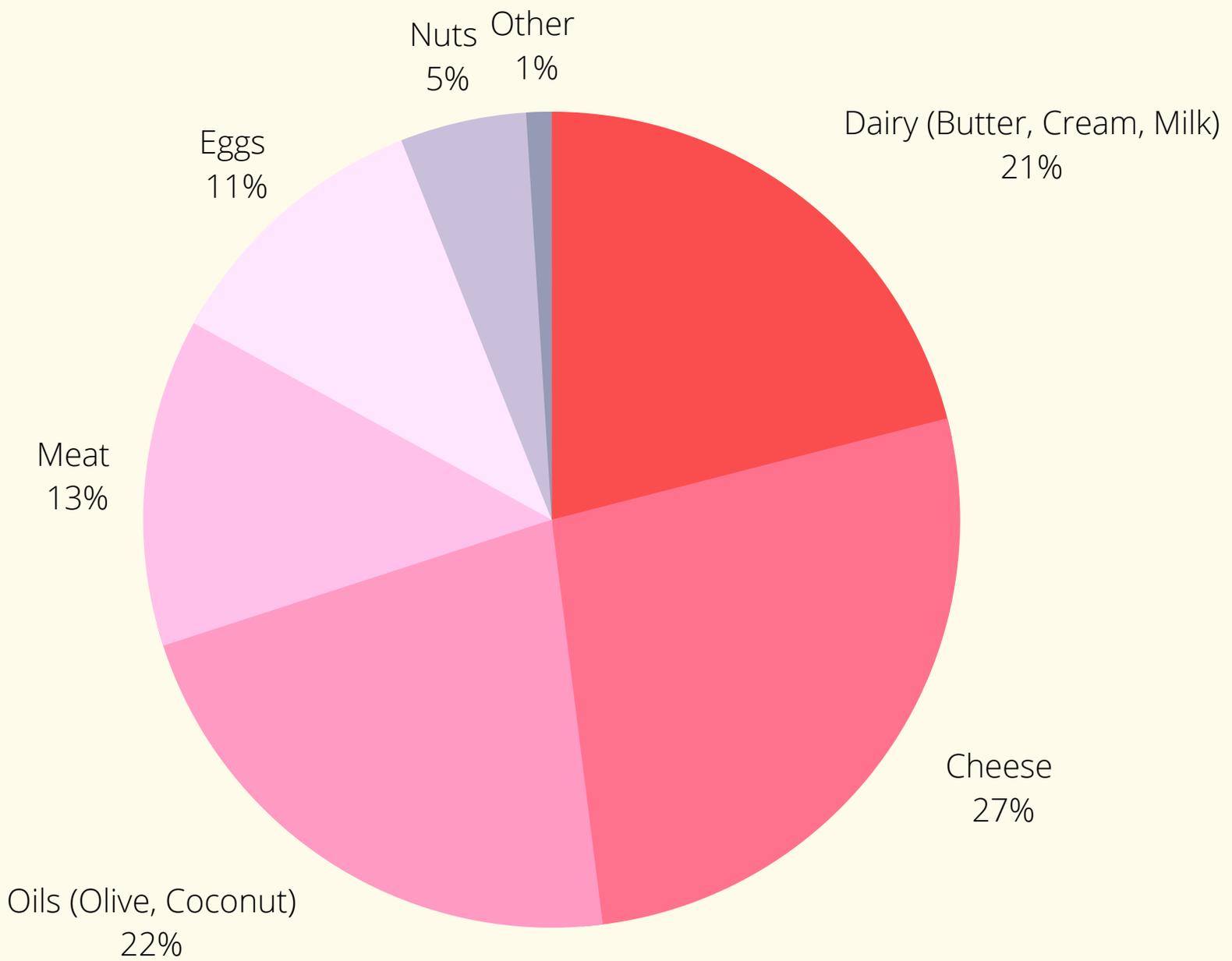
You will have a hard time eating out and finding menu items that do not go over the sodium limit. If you have blood pressure, you may need to track your sodium intake. Most menu items are going to be close to or over the recommended sodium intake.

A personal size Digiorno pepperoni pizza has 1360 mg of sodium. This is close to 60% of your daily recommendation or 2300 mg a day.



FAT CONTENT

Fat recommendations are 20-35% of your diet. Types of fat do matter. Saturated fat is mostly found in meat and dairy products. Monounsaturated, polyunsaturated, and omega 3s are mostly found in plants and seafood. There's many ways fat can be in your diet so be aware.



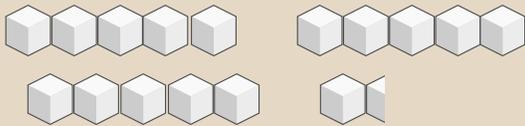
ADDED SUGAR

Carbohydrates are all the natural sugar and sugar from ingredients added together. Added sugars include the sweeteners added to make a product taste the way it does.

A 20 fl oz coke has 65 grams of carbs and 65 grams of added sugars meaning all the carbs are from sugar in the soda.



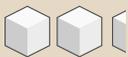
That's 16 and 1/4 teaspoons.



Oreos have 25 grams of carbs which includes 14 grams of added sugar. A serving size is 3 cookies.



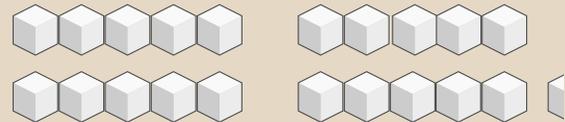
Chow mein at Panda Express has 80 grams of carbs per serving from the noodles and ingredients. They only have sugars on their label which is 9 grams of added sugars.



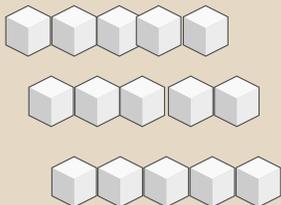
A large Wendy's frosty has 99 grams carbohydrates which includes 81 grams of added sugars.



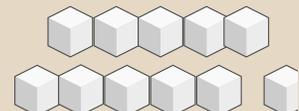
That's 20 1/4 teaspoons.



A grande java chip frappuccino has 65 grams carbs and 60 grams of sugars.



Corner Bakery's spinach sweet crisp salad has 67 carbs, 43 of which are sugars.



LIST OF RESTAURANTS

This is not a full list of all restaurants. If you do not see a restaurant you visit frequently, look at a similar type of restaurant to get an idea what menu items might be best. There are plenty of guidelines to help you find a meal that might support your health goals!

Chains

Applebee's
Arby's
Beans and Brews
Buffalo Wild Wings
Café rio
Café zao
Café zupas
Chick fil A
Chili's
Chipotle
Corner Bakery
Culver's
Dominos Pizza
Einstein Bagels
Five Guys
Great Harvest
Jamba Juice
KFC
Kneaders
McDonalds
Mobettah's
Olive Garden
Panda Express
Red Lobster
Starbucks
Subway
Taco Bell
Taco Time
Texas Roadhouse
The cheesecake factory
Wendy's

SLC

Cubby's
Hire's big H
Knickerbockers
Mod Pizza
Red Iguana
Ruth's Diner
Spitz
Sugarhouse BBQ
The Pie



CHAIN RESTAURANTS

WHY ARE SOME MENU ITEMS EXCLUDED?

Calorie content is not the only thing that matters when looking at nutrition facts.

Many restaurants have a high amount of salt added for flavor, most sodium content will be too high, sometimes even over 100% of the daily recommendation which is 2300 mg a day. Blood pressure or other health concerns will have a more limited intake as well.

Many delicious foods are cooked with butter, cream, and other saturated fats. The USDA recommends less than 10% of your calorie intake comes from saturated fat, with a recommendation of 20-35% of your diet coming from fat sources. Depending on your needs, that may not be much. Fast food meals typically have 50-100 grams of fat which may be more than your daily recommendation.

Carbohydrates are a necessary part of any diet, but added sugars add up quickly. Many sauces and dressings have much more sugar added than needed. Carbohydrate sides like baked potatoes, rice, brown rice, fruit, or a corn might be a great addition to your meal as a whole food. Pasta, breadsticks, fries, onion rings, or chips and sauce may not add enough nutrient benefit for the high calorie cost.

The foods listed in this section are healthier options compared to what food is being offered at the restaurant, it does not mean it is the healthiest choices for your diet overall.



FDA REQUIREMENTS

Most restaurants have calorie information, but you might need to look online or find nutrition information in another place to see how much portions have with sodium, fat, or carbohydrate content.

The FDA requires that restaurants with 20 or more locations have to publish nutrition facts with only the following based on 2000 calories:

total calories, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, sugars, fiber and protein.

This can give you a basic idea of what you are eating, but beware that not everyone needs a 2000 calorie diet and you want to look at portions as well as nutrition information if possible.



APPLEBEE'S

Limited whole grain and lean protein options. Most meals are high calorie, high fat, and high sodium. There are some great choices for sides.

APPETIZERS

- Caesar salad
- House salad
- Chicken tortilla soup

MEALS

- Grilled Chicken Breast Meal
- Cajun Salmon Meal
- Chicken breast patty substitute
- Kids chicken taco

SIDES

- Garlic mashed potatoes
- Garlicky green beans
- Baked Potato
- Steamed broccoli
- Sliced strawberries with yogurt
- Brewed tea
- Brewed coffee
- Bubly sparkling water

EXTRA TIPS

There are limited vegan or vegetarian options so keep in mind, going to this restaurant means little choices for plant foods.

WHY

Even with the variety in dressings, an appetizer salad is still a great way to get some vegetables in. The main course salads have higher sodium and fat content than other entrees so are not the best choices.

Surprisingly, the other soups have high sodium content, but the chicken tortilla soup still has 40% of the recommended sodium intake for a day. The soups are similar in fat content all added from meat and dairy.

There are a lot of fried options served with fries or rice. The chicken fajita roll up might seem like a good option, but it has almost double the sodium recommendation, and over a 100 grams of carbohydrates.

ARBY'S

Limited menu for healthy options. Meats mostly focus on roast beef and fried chicken, mostly fries as sides. No whole grains and limited vegetables. Meals here are going to be high in sodium and simple carbohydrates.

MEALS

Chicken club wrap

Roast turkey gyro

Creamy Mediterranean chicken wrap

Roast chicken salad entrée

SIDES

Side salad

EXTRA TIPS

There are limited healthier options. Salad choices are probably not going to be the best salads as far as quality. It will be challenging to have a balanced meal here, even better choices are still high in sodium and fat.

Instead of Arby's it might help to go to a local sandwich shop or find a better quality meal at a different place.

WHY

Most sandwiches or meat choices are red meat or fried. Turkey and chicken are leaner options here.

The sides are mac n cheese, and fried foods, not bad to have on occasion, but not helpful when trying to make a healthier meal.

Even the lower calorie menu items are made of up of simpler carbohydrates which don't add nutrients or fiber, and the meat choices are higher saturated and trans fats.

BEANS AND BREWS

Most of the drinks start at 300-400 calories due to added cream and sugar. While this isn't a bad thing once in a while, this could add up quickly for breakfast every day or making non healthy choices the rest of the day.

MEALS

Avocado toast

Oatmeal

DRINKS

Eye opener

Americano

Regular brew

Espresso

Cappucino

Cane and cream cold brew

Cold brew

Pink drink 8 oz

Fruit smoothies 16 oz

All Republic of Tea choices

Iced Tea

EXTRA TIPS

Many places offer substituting whole milk for plant based alternatives like almond milk. This could significantly cut the saturated fat intake for drinks you might want.

WHY

The simplest drinks are going to be healthier. Any blended drink is made with whole milk and/or cream. Add in sugar syrups and more whipped cream and it's too much saturated fat.

If you need something sweet, go for blended fruit. Most of the drinks have added sugar, the lemonades have a lot of carbohydrates, similar to the fruit smoothies, but since there is fruit with sugar, there is fiber and more vitamins making it a better choice.

BUFFALO WILD WINGS

No whole grain options, limited vegetable options, and mostly fried foods. Most menu options will not support healthy choices.

APPETIZERS

Street tacos

MEALS

Chicken caesar salad

SIDES

Carrots and celery

Side salad

Regular potato wedges

Chips and salsa

Salsa

Guacamole

EXTRA TIPS

Splitting meals here can help with overall lowering the high contents of fat and sodium. Having half a meal with a side salad or the raw vegetables can make your meal more balanced.

WHY

Most of the appetizers are fried and have more fat and sodium content than entrees. The cauliflower wings and chip and dips appetizers are high in sugar, fat, and sodium. The side options are much better portions.

Most of the menu is fried meat and cheese options which means you will have a rich meal even if try to make better choices.

CAFE RIO

Most menu items are bigger portions than needed. Still high sodium content and carbohydrate content, but can easily get a nutrient rich balanced meal.

APPETIZERS

Chips and salsa

Chicken tortilla soup

MEALS

Two chicken, seafood, or vegetarian tacos

One chicken or vegetarian enchilada meal

Chicken or vegetarian tostada

1/2 chicken or vegetarian salad

EXTRA TIPS

There are ways to make meals vegetarian. You can omit rice or tortilla and focus on beans as a way to get more nutrients and fiber. You can always ask for lettuce and pico with your meal. The drinks are high in added sugar.

WHY

Even though there are healthier foods, the portions make it a large intake of carbohydrates and fat. Splitting meals, small options, or ordering one item is still a filling meal.

A burrito is mostly tortilla, rice, and beans. Having a salad with no tortilla is a better balance of vegetables, bean and rice, and protein.

The foods themselves are not high calorie, but adding cheese, sauce, or sour cream can make the menu choices too rich.

CAFE ZAO

Great choices for whole grains, vegetables options, and mostly lean protein. Most sauces are not too high in sugar or fat. You can find a balanced meal.

APPETIZERS

Side veggie and noodles soup

MEALS

Brown rice, broth, or salad bowls

Chicken or tofu protein

Broccoli and onion or corn vegetables

SAUCES

Teriyaki

Chili lemongrass

Chili lime aioli

Korean Red sauce

Hoisin

EXTRA TIPS

You can make a vegan and vegetarian option. Portions are better for most needs. Most options are still better than other fast food.

WHY

The most calorie dense menu option is chips and guacamole.

The best options are salads since you can get a higher amount of vegetables with protein. The bowls are not a bad option either, but will probably end up with more rice or noodles than other food.

CAFE ZUPAS

Great choices to get some fruit and vegetable intake. Whole grain options. Still high sodium and fat content for most meals.

SALADS

Half California cobb
Half chipotle chicken
BBQ chicken
Mangoberry
Nuts about berries
Strawberry harvest

SOUP

Chickpea and vegetables
Chicken enchilada chili
Chicken vegetables
Chicken noodle
Half mushroom bisque
Half tomato basil
Half southwest potato and green chili

SANDWICHES

Vegetarian

BOWLS

Half or large mediterranean bowl
Half harvest quinoa without dressing

EXTRA TIPS

The dressings add a lot of sodium and fat content. Some options would be a good choice without dressing.

WHY

The salads have great vegetable content, but some large salads could be over half your recommended intakes per day.

Everything on the menu has high sodium content. Some soups have heavy cream which increases fat content to 30 grams or more per serving which is high.

Most of the sandwiches have meat and cheese options which increases the fat content to be more than total recommended intake per day. The soups and salad options are better choices overall. Zupas does offer a grain sandwich bread which is great.

CHICK FIL A

Can find healthier options through grilled chicken. Vegetable and fruit sides. Most of the menu isn't supporting health, but can get better options than most fast food places.

BREAKFAST

Yogurt parfait
Fruit cup

MEALS

Grilled chicken sandwich
Grilled nuggets
Chick-fil-A cool wrap
Market salad with grilled options

SIDES

Side salad
Fruit cup
Chicken noodle soup
Kale crunch salad

SAUCES

BBQ sauce
Honey mustard
Zesty buffalo sauce

EXTRA TIPS

There are mostly fried options, but you can get a balanced meal with salad, fruit, and grilled chicken options. This is a better options for a family to get food everyone likes.

WHY

The fried chicken options are high in fat and sodium. With bacon and cheese options, there isn't enough nutrients for the energy intake. Grilled options are better. Whole grain bun is also available.

The sides mostly include too much fat and sodium content, but there are a few great sides.

The sauces and dressings are high is sodium, sugar, and fat content, some even more than entrée options.

CHILI'S

Most of the menu will not support a healthy diet. Drinks and meals are not a high amount of fiber or nutrients. You can still find some options for a lighter, balanced meal.

DRINKS

Original Arnold Palmer
Ice tea

MEALS

Black bean, shrimp, or chicken fajitas
Grilled chicken salad
Ancho Salmon
Margarita grilled chicken
Santa fe chicken salad
Caribbean shrimp salad
Soup and house salad

SIDES

Asparagus
Black bean
Coleslaw
Steamed broccoli
Corn on the cob

EXTRA TIPS

A lot of the salads or meals are too much of the daily recommendations, but may be a good option if you split the meal or eat half and save the rest for a meal another day.

WHY

Most meals are high calorie and sodium. The burgers, pastas, wings, and appetizers are well over the daily recommendations.

The sides mostly include too much fat and sodium content, but there are some sides that could add nutrients or fiber to your meal.

Portions are normal for some foods, but a lot of dishes will be too large of portions, this is a great place to split meals. The kids meals could work, but they still don't have a lot of nutrients.

CHIPOTLE

There are whole food options, but calories can add up quickly. You can find vegetable and fiber options. A better choice than a lot of fast food options.

MEALS

Taco

Salad

Burrito bowl

BASE CHOICES

Plant based chorizo

Sofritas

Veggie

Chicken

Pollo Asada

Brown rice

All bean choices

TOPPINGS

All salsas

Fajita veggies

Lettuce

EXTRA TIPS

Aim for beans and vegetables since they are low calorie and high nutrients. You can get a customized meal here and make it exactly what you want.

WHY

All the meat choices can be a good choice. Pork and beef are going to have more cholesterol and saturated fat, but the steak, carnitas, and barbacoa are leaner than fried foods or burgers.

The chips and dip, salsa or guacamole are higher in fat than most of the menu items. May be best to share with someone.

CORNER BAKERY

You can find better portions here. There are vegetables options and some whole grain options. Some meals are still high in calories and fat content.

BREAKFAST

- Power breakfast egg bowl
- Avocado breakfast wrap
- Fresh berry and yogurt parfait
- Apple and banana overnight oats
- Fresh fruit medley
- Steel cut oatmeal with brown sugar

LUNCH

- Mixed greens salad
- Power greens and grains
- Roasted tomato basil soup
- Chicken noodle soup

EXTRA TIPS

The choose two is not a bad way to get a variety of food. Still aim for broth soups and salads without a lot of calories.

WHY

Some of the menu items have bacon which is a high fat meat, a good thing to enjoy once in a while.

The chicken pomodori panini has 790 calories and 36 grams of fat which is the least out of the paninis. The sandwiches and paninis are not the best choice.

CULVER'S

Typical meals for fast food. Culver's does have a mindful section on their menu which is helpful, but mostly focused on low calorie. You can still find some healthier options here.

SOUP

- Chicken noodle
- Stuffed green pepper
- George's chili
- Tomato florentine
- Vegetable beef

MEALS

- Grilled chicken sandwich
- Chicken cashew salad with grilled chicken
- Garden fresco salad
- Garden fresco salad with grilled chicken
- Harvest veggie burger

SIDES

- Medium coleslaw
- Medium mashed potatoes and gravy
- Steamed broccoli

EXTRA TIPS

Some of the custards and shakes are well over 1000 calories in larger sizes, however, they do offer kids meals and mini sizes which can help with choosing normal portions.

WHY

There are a lot of fried foods here. Custard and shakes are also a big part of the menu. However, there are some great options to choose for a lighter meal.

Everything on the menu is still high in sodium.

There are vegetables on the menu so you can still find a way to eat vegetables and have a satisfying meal.

DOMINO'S PIZZA

Difficult to get a healthy meal. Most pizza ranges 300-500 calories per slice! The best options are a thin crust pizza with red sauce and vegetables, which is still not the most balanced meal.

PIZZA

- 2 pieces of small pacific veggie
- 2 pieces of small spinach and feta
- 2 pieces of small Wisconsin 6 cheese

SIDES

- Classic garden salad
- Chicken caesar salad

EXTRA TIPS

There is an online calculator where you can plug in your crust and toppings and see the nutrition information of any pizza you make.

Cheese and creamy sauces are going to be higher in fat increasing calorie intake. Consider tomato or vinegar sauces and dipping sauces instead.

WHY

Serving sizes are smaller than you think. Small serving size is 1/4 pizza, 1/5 for a medium, and 1/8 for large and extra large. That is about 2 slices of pizza.

Pizza is a meal of mostly white dough and cheese, even with better toppings. There are two salad options which could make a better meal with 2 pieces of pizza.

Pizza is high in sodium due to cheese, sauce, and meat toppings. Most small pizzas start at 630 mg per serving which is 2 pieces. Eating multiple pieces means a lot higher intake of sodium intake for larger pizzas.

EINSTEIN BAGELS

Most options fit into the daily recommendations, can get a high amount of sugar if ordering drinks or sweet menu options. Most breakfast meal options are energy dense.

BAGELS

Honey whole wheat

Ancient grain

Thin bagels

MAIN MEALS

Spinach, mushroom, and swiss on ancient grain or honey whole wheat bagel

Hummus and veggie on ancient grain or honey whole wheat bagel

Avocado veg out on ancient grain or honey whole wheat

DRINKS

Regular coffee

Cold brew coffee

Latte

Hot tea

Chai tea latte

Strawberry smoothie

EXTRA TIPS

Ordering a bagel with spread is still energy dense, could be a good lunch option. Higher sodium, so may not be a good idea to get breakfast here every day.

WHY

Most bagels are in the same numbers with nutrition facts, but you can have an advantage of more fiber with some kinds.

Most items are still high sodium content, so be aware if managing blood pressure.

Not a lot of fruit and vegetable options, avoid the cheese and high fat meat options like bacon to get a healthier meal.

FIVE GUY'S

You'll probably go here to get a burger and fries, but there are not healthier options except for one sandwich. Be aware a meal here can be upwards of 2,000 calories alone and well over the sodium limit. Little vegetable or fiber options.

SANDWICH

Veggie sandwich

EXTRA TIPS

It may not be a bad thing to have a hamburger once in a while, but you are better off going to a restaurant where you can have a burger with some vegetables as sides instead of only soda and fries.

WHY

If you worry about heart disease, diabetes, or blood pressure, this is not a good restaurant for a meal due to low fiber content, high sodium, and energy dense foods.

GREAT HARVEST

Has a good balance of vegetables and whole foods available. May be tempting to have pastries or treats, but larger portions.

SANDWICH

Hummus harvest on honey whole wheat
Peanut butter and jelly on honey whole wheat
Portobello banh mi on honey whole wheat
Tuna salad on honey whole wheat
Greek salad
Mexicali salad

BREADS

Honey whole wheat
Harvest blend
High five fiber
Dakota whole wheat

EXTRA TIPS

The menu varies by location. So look for whole wheat and fiber breads. The cookies, brownies, and pastries are large so keep in mind the calorie content is high with large portions.

WHY

There are a lot of treats and pastries here. The muffins may be a better choice over cookies and cinnamon rolls, but they are still high in calories and sugar.

There are salads and sandwiches which can be a great, balanced meal.

JAMBA JUICE

Fruit and vegetable options. Protein options as well if looking for a more substantial snack. Great selection of plant food and plant based options. Is a better option than most fast food options!

CLASSIC

Strawberry surf rider
Strawberries wild

PLANT BASED

Apple 'n' greens
Greens 'n' ginger
The go getter

SUPER BLENDS

Matcha green tea blast
Vanilla blue sky
Acai super-antioxidant

OTHER

Blissful bowls
Oatmeal

EXTRA TIPS

Most of the snacks are white flour products with sugar or cheese. You will get better nutrients from a smoothie. Having a snack and smoothie together isn't necessarily healthier either even though it may be marketed that way.

WHY

The large size of the Peanut Butter Moo'd has over 900 calories which is a lot. However, most menu items of 16 oz are 200-600 calories making the menu realistic to fit recommendations.

While juices and smoothies taste great, keep in mind the juices have nutrients, but the fiber is take out so may not be the best choice.

Even though most of the oatmeal and smoothies have nutrients, they all are a high carb intake at once, would not be helpful for diabetes or prediabetes.

KFC

There are no healthy options at this restaurant! Meals are served with cookies and soda. Every option is fried chicken or too high in fat. Some sides are ok.

SIDES

Corn on the cob

Green beans

Mashed potatoes and gravy

Coleslaw

EXTRA TIPS

Eating fried chicken is not a bad thing, but will not support health or weight loss. There might be other restaurants that would be a better choice depending on your health and goals.

WHY

There is only fried chicken on the menu, you will be better off going to other restaurants that offer more options for fried and grilled options.

The meals and sides have little fiber content and are high in sodium and fat.

KNEADERS

There are great options for a satisfying full balanced meal. There are also rich options that could be too many calories and fat grams.

BREAKFAST

Steel cut oatmeal with fruit

Greek egg white omelet

No dairy berry smoothie

SANDWICH

Ham

Turkey

Roast beef

Veggie Avocado

SALAD

Thai chicken

Large green avocado

Broccoli berry crunch

Broccoli sunflower

SOUP 8 OZ

Artichoke portabella

Chicken tortilla

Cream of broccoli

Homemade chicken noodle

Mulligatawny

Turkey and white bean chili

WHY

A whole ham sandwich has 340 calories and 23 grams of fat which isn't bad for a meal. However, the sodium content is 2040 mg. Keep in mind that doesn't include the sandwich bread which is another 160 calories and 340 mg of sodium if you choose country white.

Small portions of soup are the best options, but bigger sizes have too much sodium.

MCDONALDS

Going by calorie count alone, you can find options that fit into anyone's calorie recommendation. However, you can't find options for fiber, whole grains, or vegetables for a balanced meal.

MENU ITEM

Fruit & maple oatmeal

Hash browns

Mcchicken

EXTRA TIPS

Even though it seems a meal here is cheap, you are better off going home and making a sandwich or something simple. You can't eat fast food for regular meals and support health or energy.

WHY

There are many options that fit in for calorie intake, but won't be filling on their own.

The chicken sandwiches might be the best option, but they are still deep fried. Most of the menu items are high in sodium and fat.

There is little fiber or whole grain options.

MO'BETTAHS

There are no vegetables at this restaurant unless you order a side salad. The sides offered are not supportive of health. Portions are large so food here doesn't fit into a balance of macronutrients.

MENU

Mini or regular plate with teriyaki chicken or steak.

Side salad

Brown rice

EXTRA TIPS

You can get a side salad and brown rice and make a balanced meal with whatever meat choice you make.

WHY

The katsu and tempura are higher calorie since they are deep fried. The grilled meat is less fat.

The macaroni salad is 510 calories per scoop, so adding that as a side can add a lot to your meal.

The teriyaki steak has the lowest fat, calorie, and cholesterol intake. The next best choice is chicken teriyaki.

Fried food might be too much for you recommendations. The regular chicken katsu is 550 calories a serving and reaches over 1000 calories for the Ekolu 3 serving plate

OLIVE GARDEN

There are meals that are mostly refined carb based. Some meals that are balanced with protein and vegetables along with carbs. Portions are too much for most recommendations.

DINNER

Herb grilled salmon
Grilled chicken margherita

LUNCH

Cheese ravioli with marinara
Spaghetti with meat sauce

OTHER

Minestrone soup
Pasta fagioli
Salad with dressing

EXTRA TIPS

This is a restaurant where having salad and splitting a meal could still fit into recommendations. Most meals are more than enough portions. The USDA recommends a serving of pasta is 1/2 cup! Depending on age, you may need a few servings of grains a day, but whole grains are better.

WHY

The breadsticks have 140 calories each so eating more than 2 or 3 can add up quickly.

The chicken alfredo might be the most popular menu item, but it has 95 grams of fat. This is a meal better split.

Whole grains are recommended over refined grains, pasta is a refined grain.

PANDA EXPRESS

There are lots of fried options and sauces with added sugars. There are also a variety of vegetable options. Most places have brown and white rice options. You can find a balanced meal of protein, grains, and vegetables here!

MEALS

- Mushroom chicken
- String bean chicken breast
- Broccoli beef
- Firecracker shrimp
- Steamed ginger fish
- Eggplant tofu

SIDES

- Steamed brown rice
- Super greens

EXTRA TIPS

The bowls are the best option for getting a entrée and side since the portions are more in line with recommendations. The plates are going to be too much fat and carb intake.

WHY

Chicken and seafood are going to be leaner protein options, but opt for grilled or non-fried options.

Panda Express has a "wok smart" label on their menu for healthier options, this is a great way to make a choice.

RED LOBSTER

Seafood is a great protein with healthier fats. However, some meals are fried and too rich. There is a variety of choices on the menu, and there are some vegetable and whole grains.

APPETIZER

Jumbo shrip cocktail

Cup of new england clam chowder

LUNCH AND BOWLS

Broiled wild caught flounder

Garlic shrimp scampi

Popcorn shrimp

Grilled atlantic salmon

Caesar salads

Sesame soy salmon bowl

ENTREES AND OTHER

Garlic shrimp skewers

Live maine lobster steamed

Wild caught snow crab legs

Perfectly grilled trout

Lobster, shrimp, and salmon signature feast

3 from the sea

SIDES

Seasoned broccoli

Coleslaw

Quinoa rice

Mashed potatoes

House side salad

WHY

The only appetizer that could fit with a full meal is the jumbo shrimp cocktail.

If you do a feast- lobster, shrimp, and salmon is the best choice for nutrition content, but there are still better options.

STARBUCKS

It might be tempting to get a delicious drink, but adding to your drink can create a too rich meal especially for a breakfast.

DRINKS

- Brewed coffee-any type
- Cold brew coffee
- Americano
- Cappucino
- Cafe latte
- Chai tea
- Earl gray tea
- Royal English breakfast tea
- Green tea-regular or iced
- Herbal tea-regular or iced
- Refreshers

FOOD

- Spinach, feta, and egg white wrap
- Kale and mushroom egg whites
- Chickpea bites and avocado protein box
- PB&J protein box
- Chicken and hummus protein box
- Banana
- Classic almonds
- Cut oatmeal
- Cut oatmeal with blueberries

EXTRA TIPS

You can make a lot of different drinks here. If you order straight off the menu, you have nutrition facts. However, if you make your own drink, you will need to look up components to know what you are getting. You can still find quality snacks and drinks here.

WHY

Adding a little sugar or cream to you drink is still going to be beneficial for taste, but ordering a frappe or high calorie drink isn't since it is too much.

The simpler your drink is, the more likely it doesn't have too much fat or sugar added.

You can also find plant based options.

Keep in mind there are menu items with higher trans fat, the fat that is correlated with heart disease.

SUBWAY

Many customizable options means you can make a balanced meal. There are also a lot of options that might seem healthier, but are too high in calories. The best options are 6 inch sandwiches with multigrain bread.

SANDWICH

Veggie delight

Oven roasted turkey

Rotisserie style chicken

Tuna

Black forest ham

EXTRA TIPS

You could still get a meal here that goes over the recommendations if you choose a high fat meat like meatballs, have cheese, and sauce. Opt for leaner protein and vegetables.

WHY

You can make any sandwich into a wrap or salad which could make it a lower carb option if you needed.

All the nutrition facts assume you put fresh vegetables on your sandwich. There are a variety of vegetables you can add that make your meal have a lot of fiber!

The creamy sauces can add a lot of calories so choose vinegar based if worried about fat content.

TACO BELL

Other fast food Mexican restaurants are better. Most items are high in sodium. You can find options that would fit into daily recommendations, but you aren't getting fiber and other nutrients.

MENU ITEMS

Soft taco chicken

Bean burrito

Spicy potato soft taco

Power menu bowl veggie

EXTRA TIPS

You can easily make similar menu items at home for a quick and easy meal that will be a lot less fat and sodium.

WHY

Taco bell does have a sodium warning on a lot of their menu items.

A typical menu item is meat, cheese, and a tortilla. While you can get low calories, fat, and carb options, you aren't getting as many nutrients as you could with the power menu bowl.

Some menu items have trans fat, something that should be limited in anyone's diet.

TACO TIME

The menu has many deep fried and high sodium options. There are some vegetables, but hard to create a balanced meal. If you have health concerns, you might want to look at the sodium content for any choice you make.

MENU ITEMS

Chicken and black bean burrito

Veggie burrito

Chicken taco salad

Chicken soft taco

Enchilada soup

EXTRA TIPS

There a few menu items that would be best for health, but they are still high in sodium. The seasoned beef big juan burrito has 2890 mg of sodium. The chicken and black bean burrito only has 920 mg, which is still a lot for one meal.

WHY

Many of the menu items are over the sodium limit for one day. If you have high blood pressure, there are limited options that you could choose from.

The salad bar has many sauces and salsa which don't significantly add to your meal.

TEXAS ROADHOUSE

Known for meat, you can still find vegetables and healthier options. This restaurant serves peanuts and rolls which will add to your meal. You can easily eat an energy dense meal.

MENU ITEMS

Texas red chili with beans
House salad
Grilled BBQ chicken
Herb crusted chicken
Grilled salmon

SIDES

Green beans
Fresh vegetables
Sautéed onion
Sautéed mushrooms
Steamed broccoli
Buttered corn

EXTRA TIPS

This restaurant still has larger portions. Add in the sides, rolls, and a larger entree with two meat options and you will have too much food. You might want to split meals or plan on leftovers.

WHY

The menu only provides nutrition facts for each item, so if you look at the nutrition facts it doesn't include the sides, you will have to do math to know your total for your meal.

The grilled shrimp dinner looks great for nutrition facts except for 4,090 mg of sodium. That's almost twice the daily recommendation!

THE CHEESECAKE FACTORY

Everything on the menu is rich. You will have a hard time finding a single meal with calories, fat, sodium, and carbs that fit into daily recommendations! However, there are some better options and vegetables.

MENU ITEMS

Cup of butternut squash soup
Tossed green salad with balsamic vinaigrette
Seared tuna tataki salad
Skinnylicious soft chicken or shrimp tacos
Skinnylicious grilled salmon
Tuscan chicken

EXTRA TIPS

There is a skinnylicious menu that fits much better into recommendations. Most meals are 500-600 calories and lower in carbs and fat. Most of the meals are still high in sodium, so be aware.

This restaurant has large portions, even splitting meals might be too much, you are better off looking at the food choices you are making.

You might be thinking of getting cheesecake, but the original alone has 830 calories and 59 grams of fat. 1/3 might be too much for even a serving with a full meal here.

WHY

The buffalo chicken strips appetizer has 1,090 calories 48 grams of fat, and 4,950 mg of sodium. That is way too much if you add a meal and cheesecake with it!

There are great sides like green beans, broccoli, and a small salad, but with other food, you are going to go over the recommendations.

Even the breakfast menu is still too high in calories and fat unless you do a simple egg and vegetable omelet.

The most unhealthy menu item might be the appetizer factory nachos with spicy chicken, 2,950 calories, 210 grams of fat, and 3,170 mg of sodium.

WENDY'S

Limited healthier options, but there are few menu items that could be better for health. You can order vegetables, but there are limited whole grain options. Keep in mind, there is still high sodium in most menu items.

MENU

Parmesan caesar salad
Apple pecan salad
Grilled chicken sandwich
Chili
Baked potato

SIDES

Like most fast food restaurants, you will have a hard time finding a low energy, high nutrient meal. Restaurants like this will not support health and easily cause weight gain due to high energy intake.

WHY

The hamburgers are high in fat, but you can get a junior size and still have low calories. However you aren't getting the best nutrients.

There are a few options that could make a balanced meal, which is more than a lot of fast food restaurants.

SLC RESTAURANTS

FDA guidelines state that restaurants with under 20 locations do not need to report full nutrition facts. Because of this, you may not be able to find anything about your food other than calorie content. When looking at the menu, you can apply the same principles: look for smaller portions, whole grains, vegetables, and non-fried options.

If you have food allergies, you may need to ask specifically about ingredients when there are no ingredient or nutrition labels.

You can still use an app or nutrition guide to have an idea of what you might be eating. Just like many restaurants, eating out is probably going to be more than your needs.



CUBBY'S

This restaurant has smaller portions. There are vegetable and whole grain options. You will find higher quality ingredients so this is a place you might want to have burger or steak for enjoyment. There are still great options for healthier meals.

MENU ITEMS

Avocado toast

Healthy pancake

Black bean burger

Pomegranate citrus kale salad

Wild rice and kale salad

Bender bowl salad

EXTRA TIPS

You can find balanced meals here and healthier options. You can do a soup and half salad option as well which is full of vegetables.

WHY

There are higher quality burgers, but ground beef is still higher in saturated fat, not helpful for risk of heart disease.

The salads still have cheese, nuts, and avocado which is higher in calories.

Overall, you can find leaner protein, vegetables, and whole grains in your meal.

HIRES BIG H

Hamburgers are a high fat meat that you can enjoy once in a while, however, there are a few other options here that are better for health.

BREAKFAST

- Oven roasted turkey sandwich
- Grilled lemon chicken sandwich
- Avocado oven roasted turkey sandwich
- Veggie H burger
- Homemade chili
- Garden salad
- Grilled chicken salad
- Soup and salad

EXTRA TIPS

There are some plant based options here. You can find vegetables and a balanced meal. The portions here are better than other restaurants. If you wanted you can split items that are high calorie.

WHY

It's tempting to get a burger, fries, and a root beer float, but that is a high calorie meal.

You can pick your favorite options and add vegetables with a salad to make a more balanced meal.

KNICKERBOCKERS

There are great vegetarian and vegan options. Most of the servings are fitting for a regular meal. Aim for salads and vegetables with your meal since there are multiple options.

BREAKFAST

Veggie Burrito

Omelet with vegetables

Tuscan chicken sandwich

Black bean burger

Veggie wrap

Avocado on toast

Greek salad

Soup and sandwich combo

Soup and salad combo

WHY

There are a lot of vegetarian options that could be made vegan, however they won't be as filling on their own. The black burger is a great way to get a plant based meal, but has some beans for fiber and protein.

EXTRA TIPS

You can ask for changes or substitutions. You can make a filling meal with soup and salad or finding some protein to add to anything.

MOD PIZZA

There is variety of options for pizzas here. You can add a lot of vegetables. The crusts are not whole grain. The Mod size pizza is close to 1000 calories and the Mega sizes are above 1000 calories so can be a a problem if you eat a whole pizza.

MENU

Mini or mod size pizza

Red sauce

Garden salad

Greek salad

EXTRA TIPS

While there are pizzas on the menu you can order, you would better off making your own and adding vegetables you like. You could also split a pizza and get a salad to have more balance to your meal. Options here will still be better than most fast food pizza chains.

WHY

You might be tempted to eat a whole pizza, but that could be close to all your daily recommendations if you get the mega dough. It also has 3000-4000 mg of sodium. Carbs are also close to 200 g which is too much for one meal.

You are better off getting a mini or mod size.

RED IGUANA

Lot of vegetarian options. Portions here are large, so you may need to plan on leftovers to not overeat. There is tortillas, rice, and beans so most meals are going to be a higher intake of carbohydrates.

MENU

Fajitas

Traditional tacos

Fish tacos

Maria's comfort soup

Killer chicken salad

Dinner salad

EXTRA TIPS

There are gluten free and vegetarian options at this restaurant, but most meals are still high calories. You might want to split a meal before you start so you don't eat too much.

WHY

Even though you don't have nutrition information you can still analyze your meals. Cheese, avocado, and some meats are going to be higher fat.

If you have diabetes or prediabetes, you want to aim for meals with vegetables or get a salad along with your meal.

RUTH'S DINER

Diner food can be delicious, but meals are typically too large, have added cheese and butter, and are not focused on whole grains and vegetables. There are many meals here that are balanced, but portions are too large. You are better off if you take leftovers home.

BREAKFAST

Red trout and eggs
Smoked salmon omelet
Oatmeal
Yogurt parfait

LUNCH

Grilled artichoke
Smoked salmon salad
Fresh roasted beet & spinach salad
Fresh veggie & quinoa salad
Teriyaki chicken
Vegetables enchiladas
Vegetable wrap

DINNER

Grilled Idaho red trout
Fresh asparagus and farfalle pasta
Honey sesame seed chicken
Teriyaki vegetable stir fry

EXTRA TIPS

Portions here could be too much. You can still choose vegetable sides and find a good variety of protein, carbs, and vegetables for meals.

WHY

There are options for meals with vegetables, but they are rich meals and will still be higher calorie.

If you do want something that may not be the healthiest choice, you can still order vegetables or other food with it to make it a better meal overall.

There are few salads and better meals that have better food choices even if it might be higher calories.

SPITZ

This restaurant has a variety of vegetables with each dish. You can find meals with fiber and a balance of vegetables and protein. However, it doesn't mean your meal is low calorie and low fat. This type of meal will have more nutrients from the vegetables and variety of food in one meal.

MENU

Remix bowl
Medi bowl
Doner wraps
Quinoa salad
Greek salad

EXTRA TIPS

You can find a lot of vegetables and fiber foods here, meaning you will get a filling meal and may not need any sides for your order.

WHY

Chicken and falafel are leaner protein choices, but not necessarily less calories than the beef and lamb.

You don't know what is in the sauces, but they can add up quickly for extra calories and fat grams. However, the sauce is where a lot of flavor is so you may want to stick with what is offered instead of getting extra.

SUGARHOUSE BBQ

You will have a harder time finding a healthier meal at a BBQ restaurant. While the meat options are normal, they still may be more protein than you need. Chicken and turkey are leaner options, but comparable to beef options for portions.

MAIN MENU

Bourbon street jambalaya
Soup and salad
Half sandwich with soup or salad

SIDES

Side salad
Seasonal vegetables
Greek oven roasted potatoes
Boston cucumber salad
BBQ beans and collard greens

EXTRA TIPS

This restaurant has better portions, but can still be too much food for your recommendations. You may want to split meals,

WHY

Most of the menu is meat options which include higher fat meats like bacon, brisket, and ribs. This is not a meal you can have often if you are at risk for heart disease.

There are a few vegetable options and some fiber foods that can balance you meal if you decide to have meat for your entree.

THE PIE

For pizza restaurants this one might be a step up since they offer salads and vegan options. The pizza is still high calorie and high sodium, but you can find a more balanced meal. There is a lot of variety in toppings and options which can fit into your daily needs.

SALADS

Dinner salad
Chef salad

PIZZA

Xtreme veggie
Holy shiitake pie
Build your own
Express slice and dinner salad

EXTRA TIPS

You can make your own pizza and order a lot of veggies on top, make it vegan or vegetarian. You can get the pizza slice and salad which is a great option for portions.

WHY

Keep in mind, the 12 inch is probably closer to normal portions, but since you don't have nutrition information, you probably want to stick to 1-2 pieces of pizza.

The thin crust is going to have less calories.

The pie does have gluten free and vegan options which could be a good place to go for anyone with food allergies.

You can make the salads and pizza vegan with any option!

FINAL THOUGHTS

Eating out may not be the best choices for food intake for your health. However, there are many restaurants that do offer better food choices.

You can still be very well and eat out occasionally, you don't have to avoid eating out since it is a part of western culture and can be fun.

If you rely on eating out or take out for the majority of your meals, you may find that you struggle with risk for chronic disease, have a hard time losing weight, or see weight gain.

Planning, shopping, and making your own meals will be a better choice for health management with some eating out.

