



## Fact Sheet

Student Health Services, Texas A&M University

### Healthy Restaurant Eating – It is Possible

Eating healthy when dining out is not an impossible task. It simply takes some knowledge on what certain menu terms mean, what healthier choices look like, and tips on how to make your favorite dishes a little healthier. Also remember, if you know you are going to eat out, eat less the meals before and after your restaurant meal and don't forget the doggie bag.

The following list of meals comes from the book Restaurant Confidential by the [Center for Science in the Public Interest](#).

<u>BREAKFAST</u>	<u>Calories</u>	<u>Fat</u>
<b>Pancakes with syrup</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>16g</b>

Skip the butter, bacon, and sausage and ask for fruit instead; use little syrup or ask for light syrup; you can also ask for a short stack

<b>Denny's Grand Slam</b>	<b>1,030</b>	<b>60g</b>
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(2 hotcakes with butter and syrup, 2 eggs, 2 bacon strips, and 2 sausage links)

Try an egg substitute; skip the butter; use light syrup; ask for fruit or ham instead of the bacon and sausage

<b>Meat Lover's Skillet</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>93g</b>
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(diced ham, bacon, and sausage over country-fried potatoes with cheddar and 2 eggs)

You can't make this one better; skip it

#### *Tips for a healthier breakfast:*

Try an egg substitute

Fill up on fruit

Choose whole wheat bread over white

Nix the butter or margarine

<u>SANDWICH SHOPS</u>	<u>Calories</u>	<u>Fat</u>
<b>Turkey Club</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>34g</b>

(includes bacon, mayonnaise, cheese, and 3 slices of bread)

Request more vegetables and less bacon; try light mayo or mustard

<b>Roast Beef w/ Mustard</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>12g</b>
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Already a great choice; try light mayo or BBQ sauce if you don't like mustard

*Tips for healthier sandwiches:*

- Ask for extra veggies
- Get whole wheat bread
- Avoid bacon, corned beef, and ham to decrease sodium and fat
- Cut back on cheese
- Hold the mayo (it is very high in fat and calories)

**CHINESE** **Calories** **Fat**

Try lower-fat Chinese dishes like Szechuan shrimp or stir-fried vegetables instead of deep-fried pork or beef dishes that have few vegetables

**General Tso's Chicken** **1,600** **59g**

You can't make this one better; SKIP IT

**Egg Roll** **190** **11g**

Your best bet is to limit yourself to just one; watch the dipping sauces

**House Lo Mein** **1,060** **36g**

Mix it with an order of steamed vegetables to decrease the sodium and fat

*Tips for healthier Chinese dining:*

- Look for a "light" menu
- Ask for less oil, more vegetables, less meat
- Avoid deep-fried foods
- Get steamed or stir-fried vegetables
- Stick with steamed brown rice

**ITALIAN** **Calories** **Fat**

**Spaghetti w/ marinara** **850** **17g**

This is already the best choice. The 3 ½ cups of pasta adds on the calories so ask for a doggie bag to take the rest for another meal.

**Chicken Marsala** **460** **25g**

These numbers are without adding the side of pasta. Consider asking for a side salad or vegetables instead of the pasta

**Lasagna** **960** **53g**

Not much you can do but skipping the melted cheese on top will help

**Fettuccine Alfredo** **1,500** **97g**

Cream Sauces are high in fat. SKIP IT

*Tips for healthier Italian dining:*

- Choose Italian bread over garlic
- Start with soup or salad

Eat pasta  
Select sauces wisely – choose marinara or red or white clam sauces  
Eat your vegetables  
Control portions

<b>MEXICAN</b>	<b>Calories</b>	<b>Fat</b>
<b><i>Tortilla chips (basket)</i></b>	<b>640</b>	<b>34g</b>

Ask your server to substitute some warm corn or flour tortillas; limit your intake or share with friends

<b><i>Cheese Quesadilla</i></b>	<b>900</b>	<b>59g</b>
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(includes sour cream, pico de gallo, and guacamole)

Skip the sour cream and guacamole or try a lighter version; order chicken instead of cheese

<b><i>Beef Enchilada Platter</i></b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>58g</b>
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(2 enchiladas, refried beans, and rice)

Order just one enchilada or take one home; order a salad instead of rice and whole/black beans instead of refried

<b><i>Chicken Fajitas Platter</i></b>	<b>1,660</b>	<b>63g</b>
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(4 fajitas with refried beans, rice, sour cream, guacamole, and flour tortillas)

By far your best choice at a Mexican restaurant if you pass on the sides or order light or fat-free versions; substitute whole/black beans for the refried and order a salad instead of the rice

*Tips for healthier Mexican dining:*

Look for “light” or “healthy” selections  
Substitute salsa for sour cream and cheese  
Avoid deep-fried dishes  
Skip the typical side dishes

<b>SEAFOOD</b>	<b>Calories</b>	<b>Fat</b>
<b><i>Shrimp Scampi</i></b>	<b>150</b>	<b>5g</b>

Using a fork helps decrease the amount of the sauce; if it comes on rice or pasta, ask for those on the side to reduce the amount of sauce

<b><i>Fried Seafood Combo</i></b>	<b>970</b>	<b>50g</b>
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(shrimp, fish, clams, scallops, fries)

Skip it or see if you can get some of it grilled

<b><i>Alaskan Crab (1/4 lb)</i></b>	<b>80</b>	<b>1g</b>
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One of the best things on the menu but watch out for the butter dipping sauce

*Tips for healthier seafood dining:*

Pick a low fat preparation method (i.e. bake, grill)  
Beware of breading and batter  
Hold the fries  
Seek out healthy sides (i.e. steamed veggies)  
Avoid the biscuits

## **STEAKHOUSES**

	<b>Calories</b>	<b>Fat</b>
<b><i>Cheese Fries (no ranch)</i></b>	<b>2,380</b>	<b>151g</b>

You can't make this one better. Skip it or share with LOTS of friends

<b><i>BBQ Chicken Breast</i></b>	<b>280</b>	<b>5g</b>
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Best choice at a steakhouse; get a side of steamed veggies, baked potato, or salad to make it a meal

<b><i>Sirloin Steak</i></b>	<b>390</b>	<b>15g</b>
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Best bet on the red meat list; add a side of steamed veggies, baked potato, or salad to make it a meal

<b><i>Prime Rib</i></b>	<b>980</b>	<b>62g</b>
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Trim all the fat; add healthy sides otherwise avoid

*Tips for healthier Steakhouse dining:*

Replace red meat with another choice

Trim all visible fat from steaks

Order smaller portions

Avoid creamy sauces

Seek out healthy sides (i.e. steamed veggies)

Don't forget the doggie bag

## **CASUAL CAFES**

	<b>Calories</b>	<b>Fat</b>
<b><i>8 Mozzarella Sticks</i></b>	<b>830</b>	<b>51g</b>

Just say no

<b><i>Chicken Caesar Salad</i></b>	<b>660</b>	<b>46g</b>
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Ask for the dressing on the side

<b><i>Chicken Fingers</i></b>	<b>620</b>	<b>34g</b>
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(5 fingers w/o fries)

Ask your server if they can grill it instead of fry

***Mushroom Cheeseburger***

<b><i>- with fries</i></b>	<b>1,490</b>	<b>88g</b>
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<b><i>- w/o fries</i></b>	<b>900</b>	<b>57g</b>
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A plain burger is much better; try mustard instead of mayo otherwise forget it

*Tips for healthier casual dining:*

Look for "light" menus

Ask about substitutions

Find out how things are cooked

Hold the cheese

<b>FAMILY STYLE</b>	<b>Calories</b>	<b>Fat</b>
<b><i>Chef Salad</i></b>	<b>930</b>	<b>71g</b>

Order light dressing on the side; ask the kitchen for extra turkey in place of the ham and only half the cheese

<b><i>Country Fried Steak</i></b>	<b>900</b>	<b>52g</b>
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(with vegetable and mashed potatoes w/ gravy)

Replace the potatoes with another vegetable otherwise avoid

***Bacon & Cheese Grilled Chicken Sandwich***

- <b><i>with fries</i></b>	<b>1,230</b>	<b>61g</b>
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- <b><i>w/o fries</i></b>	<b>650</b>	<b>30g</b>
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Skip the mayo, bacon, and cheese, and pile on the veggies

*Tips for healthier family style dining:*

Look for "light" menus

Build a vegetable plate

Ask for substitutions

Control portions

Your daily requirement of fat grams may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

<b>Calories</b>		1500	2,000	2,500
<b>Total Fat</b>	Less than	50g	65g	80g

**Calories per gram:**

Fat 9      Carbohydrate 4      Protein 4