



The Be Fit Minute

By Joan Keh, Dietetic Intern (edited by Emily Gelsomin, RD, LDN)



Eating Out Without Selling Out on Health

Thousands of calories and multiple days' worth of saturated fat and sodium could be lurking in your entrée.

To keep your health in check, it is best to avoid eating out as much as you can. However, with our fast-paced lives, dining out is often inevitable.

To help maintain your weight and heart, invest in healthier options whenever possible. Many restaurants list the nutrition information online or on their menus. However, if you do not have access to this information, here are some general tips to follow when eating Ethnic-American cuisine.

(The better choices are highlighted in green.)

CHINESE

Americanized Chinese food is typically loaded with calories due to its heavy **use of oil, noodles, and deep-fried batters**. **Salt content is usually high** because many entrees are drenched in soy sauce and other heavily seasoned liquids.

TIPS

- Soups—while often high in sodium—can be a good option if you are trying to watch your calorie intake.
- **Look for dishes that feature vegetables, not meat or noodles.**
- **Order your chicken, tofu, or seafood lightly stir-fried** versus breaded, battered, or deep-fried.
- Watch your salt. A tablespoon of hoisin has 250 mg and a tablespoon of soy sauce has 1000 mg.
- **Adding a side of rice will add at least 200 calories** to your meal.

Item	Calories	Sat. Fat	Sodium
Egg Roll (1)	200	2 g	400 mg
Spring Roll (1)	100	1 g	300 mg
Veggie Dumplings (6 steamed)	400	3 g	1100 mg
Pork Dumplings (6 steamed) – add 10 calories per dumpling if you get them pan-fried	500	6 g	900 mg
Egg Drop Soup	100	0 g	900 mg
Hot and Sour Soup	100	1 g	1100 mg
Eggplant in Garlic Sauce	1000	13 g	2000 mg
Szechuan String Beans	600	6 g	2700 mg
Stir-Fried Mixed Vegetables (Buddha's Delight)	500	2 g	2200 mg
Deep-Fried Tofu and Mixed Vegetables	900	9 g	2200 mg
Shrimp with Garlic Sauce	700	4 g	3000 mg
Kung Pao Chicken	1400	13 g	2600 mg
Chicken with Black Bean Sauce	700	5 g	3800 mg
Beef with Broccoli	900	9 g	3200 mg
Sweet and Sour Pork	1300	13 g	800 mg
Combination (House) Fried Rice	1500	10 g	2700 mg
Combination (House) Chow Mein or Lo Mein	1200	9 g	3600 mg

MEXICAN

Mexican food often contains calorie-dense ingredients such as **tortillas, rice, and chips**. In addition, **large amounts of saturated fat** are not only in steak and pork entrees, but also in cheese and sour cream toppings. (Entrees do not include sides e.g. rice, beans, etc.)

TIPS

- If you must have an appetizer, guacamole is a heart-healthy choice, but beware of the amount of tortilla chips you eat with it.
- **Skip the cheese and sour cream.** If you want more flavor, **add extra salsa.**
- **Order grilled chicken or fish** for your burritos, tacos, and enchiladas to reduce saturated fat.
- **Get a side of salad greens or vegetables (without cheese) instead of white rice.**
- **Limit the number of tortillas** you eat since **each will add 150 to 300 calories**, depending on the size. To increase your fiber intake, select whole wheat, if available.
- **Leave the rice out of your burrito** to decrease its calorie content.

Item	Calories	Sat. Fat	Sodium
Chips (1 basket) and Salsa	500	4 g	230 mg
Guacamole (without Chips)	520	5 g	1170 mg
Cheese Quesadilla	1600	53 g	2720 mg
Nachos with Grilled Chicken	1890	49 g	3790 mg
Grilled Vegetable Fajitas with Flour Tortillas (3)	750	7 g	3240 mg
Grilled Chicken Fajitas with Flour Tortillas (3)	800	7 g	2770 mg
Grilled Steak Fajitas with Flour Tortillas (3)	980	16 g	3020 mg
Sautéed Shrimp Fajitas with Flour Tortillas (3)	1100	22 g	3400 mg
Chicken Tacos (3) – for beef versions, add 100 calories and 3 g sat. fat per taco	720	15 g	1860 mg
Grilled Fish Tacos (2)	800	7 g	2480 mg
Chicken Enchiladas (3)	1040	19 g	2030 mg
Beef Burrito	930	22 g	1790 mg
Pork Tamales	810	15 g	1850 mg
Tostada Salad – no dressing	1550	37 g	2480 mg

ITALIAN

Italian dishes such as **spaghetti, pizza, and lasagna** have become staples in the American diet, but portions of these foods are often super-sized in restaurants.

TIPS

- **Pasta** is not the enemy but we are often served too much of it: **split an entrée, take home half, or order a lunch-size portion.**
- For soup, minestrone typically tends to be lower in saturated fat and calories.
- Order dishes built around vegetables, seafood, or grilled chicken.
- **Make your side dish vegetables** rather than pasta or potatoes.
- **Beware of the bread basket:** each slice will add **50 to 150 calories.**

Item	Calories	Sat. Fat	Sodium
Linguine with Marinara	790	2 g	1040 mg
Spaghetti and Meatballs	1430	41 g	4540 mg
Lasagna	1060	28 g	2240 mg
Fettuccine Alfredo	1200	53 g	1200 mg
Cheese Ravioli (8)	810	17 g	1580 mg
Shrimp Primavera	690	2 g	n/a
Fried Calamari	1210	13 g	4170 mg
Fried Mozzarella	880	18 g	1770 mg
Artichoke Dip	980	24 g	3350 mg
Grilled Chicken with Veggies	330	1 g	770 mg
Grilled Salmon with Veggies	590	6 g	1390 mg
Eggplant or Veal Parmesan	1250	40 g	2600 mg
Chicken Marsala with Pasta	1090	23 g	2060 mg

Nutrition facts taken from *Nutrition Action Healthletter*.