**Burger chains**



**Tips for making healthier choices at fast food burger joints:**

* **Stick to a single hamburger patty.** No double or triple burgers! Burgers with two or three beef patties add loads of unnecessary calories and unhealthy fat (up to 800 calories and 40 grams of fat).
* **Hold or go light on the mayonnaise.** You can eliminate around 100 calories. Add extra ketchup or mustard if you need a flavor kick.
* **Go easy on special sauces,** which add a lot of calories. If you don’t want to do without, ask for the sauce on the side. A little goes a long way.
* **Say no to bacon, cheese, onion rings, and other calorie-laden burger toppings.** If you want to add some interest, go with extra pickles or heart-healthy avocado.
* **Ask about no-meat burger or sandwich options,** such as the veggie burger at Burger King or the grilled cheese at In-N-Out Burger.
* **Skip the fries.** You’ll save hundreds of calories (510 calories for a large McDonald’s fries, 340 calories for a medium)
* **Check out the kid’s menu.** Junior and children's-sized hamburgers usually have between 250-300 calories, making them a healthier choice.

Source:Helpguide.org

| **Healthier fast food burger options** | |
| --- | --- |
| **INSTEAD OF…** | **TRY…** |
| Double-patty cheeseburger | Regular, single-patty hamburger without cheese |
| French fries | Baked potato or a side salad |
| Chicken “nuggets” or tenders | Grilled chicken strips |
| Salad with toppings such as bacon, cheese, and ranch dressing | Garden salad with grilled chicken and low-fat dressing |
| Milkshake | Yogurt parfait or a vanilla sundae in a cup (no toppings or cone) |

**Best burger choices at the Top 10 chains**

* **Burger King Flame-Broiled Hamburger:** 230 calories, 9 grams fat (3 grams saturated fat), 460 mg sodium
* **Carl's Jr.'s Charbroiled Turkey Burger:** 490 calories, 22 grams fat (4.5 grams saturated fat), 960 mg sodium
* **Dairy Queen Quarter-Pound Mushroom Swiss Grill Burger:** 590 calories, 35 grams of fat (12 grams saturated fat), 700 mg sodium
* **Hardee's 1/3 lb. Low Carb Thick Burger:** 420 calories, 32 grams fat (12 grams saturated fat), 1,010 mg sodium.
* **In-N-Out Burger Hamburger With Onion, Protein Style:** 240 calories, 17 grams fat (4 grams saturated fat), 370 mg sodium
* **Jack in the Box Hamburger:** 280 calories, 11 grams fat (4 grams saturated fat), 620 mg sodium
* **McDonald's Hamburger:** 250 calories, 9 grams fat (3.5 grams saturated fat), 520 mg sodium
* **Sonic Jr**. **Burger:** 340 calories, 17 grams fat (6 grams saturated fat), 550 mg sodium
* **Wendy's Jr. Hamburger:** 230 calories, 8 grams fat (3 grams saturated fat), 470 mg sodium
* **Whataburger Whataburger Jr.:** 300 calories, 15 grams fat (4 grams saturated fat), 730 mg sodium

Source:Helpguide.org

**Pizza & Italian chains**



Tips for making smarter choices at pizza joints:

* **Order thin crust instead of regular crust, and avoid deep-dish or pan pizza** at all costs! Not only is thin crust the healthiest option, but it’s also the most authentic version of a true Italian pie.
* **Order your pizza with light cheese.** A little cheese can go a long way! You can also try substituting lower-calorie ricotta cheese for mozzarella. At the very least, don’t order extra cheese.
* **Load your pizza up with veggie toppings.** Most chains have lots of healthy options, including tomato, peppers, mushrooms, spinach, artichoke, garlic, onion, and broccoli.
* **Limit high-fat meat toppings,** such as pepperoni, bacon, sausage, Philly meat, ham, and beef. If you must have meat, stick to chicken.
* **Avoid pasta,** which tends to be less healthy than the pizza at fast food joints. Fast food pasta dishes are usually little more than a heaping serving of refined-carb noodles and meat-heavy sauces.
* **Skip the sides.** Say no to garlic knots, mozzarella sticks, and cheesy bread. You’ll cut out a lot of calories, carbs, and unhealthy fat.

Source:Helpguide.org

| **Healthier pizza and Italian fast food options** | |
| --- | --- |
| **INSTEAD OF…** | **TRY…** |
| Cheese-filled or deep dish pizza | Thin-crust pizza (whole-wheat, if available) |
| Meat lover’s pizza | Veggie lover’s pizza |
| Pepperoni, meatballs, or sausage toppings | Chicken |
| Bacon | Canadian bacon (60% less fat than regular bacon) |
| Garlic or “cheesy” bread | Plain rolls or breadsticks |

**Best menu choices at top pizza chains**

* **California Pizza Kitchen Pepperoni Supreme Thin Crust (2 slices):** 338 calories, 7 grams saturated fat, 1,016 mg sodium
* **Chuck E. Cheese Canadian Bacon and Pineapple Pizza (1 large slice):** 272 calories, 8 grams fat (3 grams saturated fat), 678 mg sodium
* **Cici’s Pizza Ole Pizza – To-Go (2 slices):** 339 calories, 8 grams fat (4 grams saturated fat), 700 mg sodium
* **Domino’s Pizza Tuscan Salami and Roasted Veggie Artisan (1 slice):** 150 calories, 6 grams fat (2 grams saturated fat), 280mg sodium OR **Domino’s Pacific Veggie Thin Crust(1 slice):** 230 calories, 12.5 grams fat (5.5 grams saturated fat), 450 mg sodium
* **Little Caesar’s Pizza Green Pepper, Onion and Black Olives (1 slice):** 196 calories, 8 grams fat (3 grams saturated fat), 336 mg sodium
* **Papa John’s Pizza Garden Fresh Pizza for One (eating only 1/2 the pizza):** 360 calories, 10 grams fat, 880 mg sodium
* **Papa Murphy’s Take ‘N’ Bake Veggie DeLite Pizza (2 slices):** 322 calories, 8 grams saturated fat, 437 mg sodium
* **Pizza Hut Fit 'N Delicious Chicken & Veggie Pizza (2 slices):** 208 calories, 9 grams fat (4 grams saturated fat)
* **SbarroThin Crust Tomato and Basil Pizza (1 slice):** 450 calories, 14 grams fat, 1,040 mg sodium
* **Uno Chicago Grill Individual Cheese and Tomato Flatbread Pizza (eating only ½ the pizza):** 405 calories, 16.5 grams fat (7.5 grams saturated fat), 1,065 mg sodium

Source:Helpguide.org

**Sandwich chains**



**Tips for making smarter choices at sandwich fast food joints:**

* **Opt for the smaller sized subs.** Ordering a 6-inch sub over the footlong can save you between 500-700 calories.
* **Choose whole-grain buns or bread** instead of white bread, French rolls, or cheese breads.
* **Go easy on the mayonnaise and condiments.** You can save even more calories by asking for the condiments on the side.
* **Dress your sandwich with mustard, vinegar, or low-fat dressing** instead of mayonnaise and calorie-heavy special sauces.
* **Go light on the cheese,** or better yet, skip it altogether.
* **Eat half the sandwich at lunch** and save the other half for later.
* **Load up on veggies,** such as tomato, lettuce, pickles, onions, green and red peppers, and olives.
* **Skip the chips.** Get something healthier on the side, such as an apple, a small side salad, or a yogurt.

Source:Helpguide.org

| **Healthier fast food sandwich options** | |
| --- | --- |
| **INSTEAD OF…** | **TRY…** |
| Foot-long sub | Six-inch sub |
| High-fat meat such as ham, tuna salad, bacon, meatballs, or steak | Lean meat (roast beef, chicken breast, lean ham) or veggies |
| The “normal” amount of higher-fat (cheddar, American) cheese | One or two slices of lower-fat cheese (Swiss or mozzarella) |
| Keeping the sub “as is” with all toppings | Subbing out cheese and meat for extra veggie toppings |
| Choosing white bread or “wraps” which are often higher in fat than normal bread | Choosing whole-grain bread or taking the top slice off your sub and eating it open-faced |

**Best sandwich choices at top chains**

* **Arby’s Turkey ‘n Cheddar Classic:** 290 calories, 5 grams fat, 1,020 mg sodium.
* **Au Bon Pain Classic Chicken Salad Sandwich (Half):** 230 calories, 480 mg sodium.
* **Cosi Hummus & Veggie Sandwich:** 397 calories, 7 grams fat, 532 mg sodium
* **Jason’s Deli Mediterranean Wrap:** 370 calories, 10 grams fat, 1160 mg sodium
* **Jimmy John’s Turkey Tom (easy on the mayo):** 430 calories, 11.5 g fat, 1085 mg sodium
* **Panera Bread Half Tuna Salad on Honey Wheat Bread:** 260 calories, 8 grams fat, 580 mg sodium
* **Quizno’s Sonoma Turkey Sammie:** 280 calories, 14g fat, 4g saturated fat, 30mg cholesterol, 740mg sodium
* **Starbucks Roasted Vegetable Panini:** 350 calories, 12 grams of fat, 770 milligrams sodium (plus 4 g of fiber and 13 g of protein)
* **Subway 6-Inch Roast Beef Sandwich on 9-Grain Wheat:** 310 calories, 5g fat (1.5g saturated fat), 24g protein, 700mg sodium OR **Subway Veggie Delite:** 230 calories, 3 grams fat, 310 mg sodium
* **Togo’s Farmer’s Market Wrap with Balsamic Vinaigrette:** 440 calories, 3g sat fat, 14g total fat, 980mg sodium, 72g carbs, 9g fiber, 8g sugar, 12g protein

Source:Helpguide.org

**Asian chains**



**Tips for making smarter choices at Asian fast food restaurants:**

* **Go easy on the rice,** which packs on carbs and calories. Pass on fried rice, which is high in fat, calories, and sodium. Steamed white rice is a much healthier choice, and brown rice even better.
* **Limit the noodles.** Fried Asian noodles add a lot of calories, carbs, and sodium, plus unhealthy fat. Stick to small portions of lo mein, chow mein, and chow fun, or avoid them altogether.
* **Say no to pork dishes,** which tend to be higher in fat than other meat options.
* **Avoid sauce heavy dishes,** such as orange chicken and Beijing beef. It’s also a good idea to pass on anything with General Tso’s, Kung Pao, BBQ, or Sweet and Sour in the name. These sauces are high in calories and sugar.
* **Skip the fatty, deep-fried sides,** such as fried wontons, egg rolls, tempura, BBQ spareribs, and crab Rangoon.
* **Use the chopsticks!** You’ll eat more slowly, since you can’t grasp as much food with them at one time as you can with your normal fork and knife

Source:Helpguide.org

| **Healthier Asian fast food options** | |
| --- | --- |
| **INSTEAD OF…** | **TRY…** |
| Deep-fried starters (egg rolls, tempura, fried wontons, etc.) | Soup (good choices include egg drop, miso, wonton, or hot & sour soup) |
| Battered or deep-fried dishes (sweet and sour pork, General Tso’s chicken) | Stir-fried, steamed, roasted or broiled dishes (chow mein, chop suey) |
| Fried rice | Steamed rice (brown instead of white rice, if that’s an option) |
| Sweet and sour sauce or regular soy sauce | Hot chili sauce (a little goes a long ways) or low-sodium soy sauce |
| Meat-based dishes | Vegetable-based dishes |

**Best menu choices at top Asian fast food chains**

* **Manchu Wok Kung Pao Chicken:** 180 calories, 12g fat, 2g sat fat, 8g protein, 540mg sodium
* **Panda Express Broccoli Beef:** 150 calories, 6 grams fat (1.5 grams saturated fat), 720 mg sodium, 12 grams carbs, 3 grams fiber, 11 grams protein
* **Panda Express String Bean Chicken Breast:** 170 calories, 7 grams fat (1.5 grams saturated fat), 720 mg sodium
* **Panda Express Tangy Shrimp with a side of mixed veggies:** 260 calories, 7.5 g fat (1.5g saturated fat)
* **Shophouse brown rice, grilled chicken satay, eggplant with Thai basil, tamarind vinaigrette, and herb salad:** 505 calories

Source:Helpguide.org

**Mexican chains**



**Tips for making smarter choices at Mexican fast food restaurants:**

* **Go easy on the rice and beans** (including in your burrito). These starches add hundreds of calories to your meal.
* **Skip the sour cream,** which can add 100-200 calories. For a healthier option, add avocado or guacamole.
* **Say no to chips.** They add hundred of calories (285 calories for a ½ order from Chipotle) and sodium you don’t need.
* **Look for Baja-style fish dishes.** Fish is usually the healthiest meat choice—as long as it’s not fried.
* **Opt for soft tortillas.** Whether made of flour or corn, soft tortillas are lower in fat and calories than crispy, deep-fried shells. Soft corn tortillas are usually healthier than soft flour tortillas.
* **Try holding the cheese.** You may be surprised how little you miss it in your burrito or taco, and it can save you over 100 calories.
* **Load up on fajita veggies.** Adding them to your burrito or burrito bowl is an easy way to add tons of flavor and heart-healthy vitamins and phytochemicals without adding a lot of calories.

Source:Helpguide.org

| **Healthier Mexican fast food options** | |
| --- | --- |
| **INSTEAD OF…** | **TRY…** |
| Crispy shell taco | Soft taco |
| Ground beef or steak | Grilled fish or chicken |
| Refried beans or pinto beans | Black beans |
| Crunch wraps or gordita-type burritos | Grilled “fresco” style steak burrito |
| Beef or steak burrito | Veggie and bean burrito |

**Best choices at the top Mexican chains**

* **Baja Fresh Original Baja Taco:** 200-230 calories, 5-8 grams fat (1-2 grams saturated fat), 230-280 mg sodium OR **Baja Fresh Grilled Mahi Mahi Taco:** 230 calories, 9 grams fat (1.5 grams saturated fat), 300 mg sodium
* **Chipotle Chicken Burrito Bowl with Black Beans, Fajita Veggies, Cheese, and Tomato Salsa:** 440 calories, 16 grams fat (8 grams saturated fat), 1430 mg sodium
* **Del Taco Taco al Carbon with Chicken:** 150 calories, 4 grams fat (0 grams saturated fat), 300 mg sodium
* **El Pollo Loco Classic Baja Fish Taco:** 209 cal, 9g total fat, 251mg sodium, 2g fiber, 8g protein
* **Freebirds two soft tacos with corn tortillas, white meat chicken, cilantro, corn relish and tomatoes:** 364 calories and 616 mg of sodium
* **Qdoba Mexican Grill Naked Burrito (with black beans, pico de gallo, cilantro-lime rice, lettuce, grilled veggies, and ranchera sauce):** 460 calories, 7 grams fat, 1,220 mg sodium, (plus 18 grams of protein and 20 grams of fiber)
* **Moe’s Southwest Grill The Full Monty taco with fish** (6-inch flour tortilla, black beans, shredded cheese, salsa, and lettuce)**:** 172 calories, 6 grams fat
* **Taco Bell Fresco Grilled Steak Soft Taco:** 160 calories, 4.5g fat (1.5g saturated fat), 11g protein, 430mg sodium OR **Taco Bell Fresco Burrito:** 330-340 calories, 8 grams fat (2.5-3 grams saturated fat), 1290-1410 mg sodium.
* **Taco John’s Super Burrito with Chicken:** 420 calories, 14 grams fat (5 grams saturated fat), 1020 mg sodium
* **Taco Time Soft Pork Burrito:** 460 calories, 690 mg sodium,

Source:Helpguide.org

**Chicken chains**



**Tips for making smarter choices at fast food chicken restaurants:**

* **Choose baked, broiled, or grilled chicken over fried or breaded chicken.** And don’t even think about chicken nuggets, which are loaded as much fat and sodium as a burger.
* **Go easy on the honey mustard, barbecue sauce, and other special sauces.** Each sauce packet adds around 60 calories.
* **Be wary of sides.** Half the fun when ordering chicken are the sides: coleslaw, biscuits, baked beans, mac ‘n cheese, and mashed potatoes. But these standard side dishes are all high in calories, so make sure to count them toward your meal.
* **Pass on the crispy chicken sandwich,** which may be flavorful, but is fried and fatty. A much better choice is a grilled chicken sandwich. Order it skinless to make it even healthier.

Source:Helpguide.org

| **Healthier fast food chicken options** | |
| --- | --- |
| **INSTEAD OF…** | **TRY…** |
| Fried chicken, original or extra-crispy | Skinless chicken breast without breading |
| Teriyaki wings or popcorn chicken | Honey BBQ chicken sandwich |
| Fried chicken sandwich | Grilled chicken sandwich |
| Chicken and biscuit “bowl” | Mashed potatoes |
| Adding extra gravy and sauces | Limiting gravy and sauces |

**Best chicken choices at top chains**

* **Bojangles’ Grilled Filet Sandwich:** 235 calories, 5 grams fat
* **Boston Market Half Rotisserie Chicken Carver Sandwich:** 375 calories, 14.5 grams fat (4 grams saturated fat), 980 mg sodium
* **KFC Kentucky Grilled Chicken Breast plus mashed potatoes (without gravy):** 310 calories, 10 grams fat (2.5 grams saturated) OR **KFC Original Recipe Chicken Drumstick:** 120 calories, 7 grams fat (1.5 grams saturated)
* **Chick-fil-A Chargrilled Chicken Sandwich:** 290 calories, 4 grams fat, 1,260 mg sodium
* **Church’s Chicken Five Nuggets:** 162 calories, 7 grams fat (2 grams saturated fat)
* **El Pollo Loco Chopped Breast Meat (2.8 ounces):** 100 calories, 1.5 grams fat, 330 mg sodium *OR***El Pollo LocoChicken Leg (1.6 ounces):** 90 calories, 4 grams fat, 170 mg sodium
* **Jack in the Box Chicken Fajita Pita made with whole grain:** 326 calories, 10 grams fat, 987 mg sodium
* **Popeyes Lousiana Kitchen Loaded Chicken Wrap:** 310 calories, 13 grams fat (6 grams saturated fat), 890 mg sodium
* **Smashburger Grilled Chicken Spinach and Goat Cheese Sandwich:** 410 calories, 14 grams fat, 1,260 mg sodium
* **Zaxby’s Chicken Finger Nibbler with Zax sauce:** 330 calories, 18.5 grams fat (3.5 grams saturated fat), 660 mg sodium

Source:Helpguide.org

**Breakfasts**



**Tips for making smarter fast food breakfast choices:**

* **Avoid sausage, bacon, and steak.** These meats are high in fat. Leaner breakfast meat choices include turkey, Canadian bacon, and ham.
* **Be careful when it comes to baked goods.** Not only are most breakfast pastries, loafs, and muffins high in sugar, they also tend to be high in sodium.
* **Focus on fiber.** Good choices include bran muffins, oatmeal, and granola. Just watch out for excess sugar.
* **Go easy on the cheese and breakfast sauces.** Ask for the sauce on the side to keep the calories down.
* **Say no to the breakfast burrito.** These diet-busters tend to be loaded with carbs, calories, sodium, and fat.
* **Choose toast or English muffins over biscuits.** Biscuits are usually higher in calories and fat than toast or English muffins.

Source:Helpguide.org

| **Healthier breakfast fast food options** | |
| --- | --- |
| **INSTEAD OF…** | **TRY…** |
| Bagel with cream cheese | English muffin with butter |
| Egg on a biscuit | Egg on wheat toast |
| Donut or pastry | Low-fat bran muffin |
| Smoothie | Yogurt with granola and fruit |
| French toast sticks or cinnamon roll | Oatmeal |

**Top 10 fast food breakfast choices**

* **Au Bon PainLarge Apple Cinnamon Oatmeal:** 370 calories, 9 grams of fiber, 11 grams of healthy protein
* **Burger King Fruit Topped Maple Flavored QUAKER Oatmeal:** 270 calories, 4 grams fat (1.5 grams saturated fat), 290 mg sodium
* **Dunkin’ Donuts Egg White Turkey Sausage Wake-Up Wrap:** 150 calories, 5 grams fat (2.5 grams saturated fat), 400 mg sodium, 11 grams protein
* **Einstein Bros Nova Lox & Bagel Sandwich on a Whole Wheat Bagel with Whipped Light Cream Cheese Schmear:** 313 calories, 12 grams of fat OR **Einstein Bros Garden Herb Turkey Bagel Thin:** 310 calories, 11 grams fat, 1,060 milligrams sodium
* **Jack in the Box Breakfast Jack:** 290 calories, 12 grams fat (4.5 grams saturated fat), 760 mg sodium
* **Jamba Juice 12-oz Mango Peach Topper:** 320 calories, 5 grams of fat, 6 grams of fiber. Add extra Whey Protein Superboost for a total of 19 grams of protein OR **Jamba Juice Berry Fulfilling (original):** 260 calories, 1 gram fat
* **McDonald’s Egg White Delight McMuffin with White Cheddar:** 250 calories, 7 grams fat (3 grams saturated fat), 770 mg sodium
* **Panera Bread Strawberry Granola Parfait:** 310 calories, 11 grams fat, 100 mg sodium, 3 grams fiber, 9 grams protein
* **Starbucks Protein Bistro Box:** 380 calories, 19 grams fat, 5 grams fiber, 13 grams protein
* **Subway Egg White Sandwich:** 180 calories, 5 grams fat, 11 grams of protein, 6 grams of fiber

Source:Helpguide.org