

# The Great Chicken Controversy

Think you're making a healthy choice by choosing chicken at your favorite fast-food place? Why it ain't necessarily so



Concerned about ever-expanding waistlines, more and more fast-food patrons are hungering for chicken sandwiches instead of burgers. To please these customers, even die-hard burger joints are offering more chicken options on their menus. They're being rewarded by seeing these become the second biggest sellers after burgers, surpassing fish, salads and the few vegetarian options out there.

But consumers need to apply a little caution to their chicken choices. "Some people automatically equate chicken with being a healthy, low-calorie option, but this is definitely not a given," says Cynthia Sass, R.D., a nutritionist and spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. "The way the chicken is prepared, as well as the condiments, such as mayo-based sauces and cheese, can seriously increase the calories and fat. Some chicken sandwiches can be even worse for you than the meat-based options." **CONTINUED ON PAGE 204**

## HOW TO CUT HIDDEN CHICKEN CALORIES

You have to be assertive to get the healthiest choices, says Hope Warshaw, R.D., author of *Guide to Healthy Restaurant Eating*. Here are her sure-fire tips for eating right while on the go.

- Avoid fried, battered or breaded chicken. The words "crispy" or "crunchy" probably mean that the chicken is fried. (If the menu doesn't specify how a chicken sandwich is prepared, suspect that it is fried. To be sure, ask.) Instead, choose sandwiches that are grilled, char-grilled, barbecued, roasted, baked or broiled.
- Look for lower-fat menu items that are labeled chicken "breast" and "skinless."
- Hold the sauce on your chicken sandwich to cut calories, fat and sodium. The McDonald's McGrill has 400 calories and 17 grams of fat, but forego the mayo that comes with it and you shave off 100 calories and drop the fat to just 6 grams.
- Add your own toppings, such as ketchup, barbecue sauce or mustard, which are much lower in fat and calories than the typical mayo-based sauce.
- Skip the cheese and bacon, and ask to have more lettuce, tomatoes, onions or pickles added to the sandwich.
- Select whole-grain breads and avoid high-fat biscuits and croissants.
- Save half of a big sandwich for a second meal.

**BY MARGIT FEURY**

# Get Your Chicken Checkup Here

To find out where your chicken calories are coming from, study our chart. Keep in mind that sizes, preparation and toppings vary widely, so calories and fat content do, too. All sandwiches listed here are “fully loaded,” meaning we measured them with all the sauces they normally come with. For context, keep in mind that a Big Mac is 590 calories and a Whopper is 760. *—Hope Warshaw*

CHICKEN SANDWICHES AND WRAPS	RESTAURANT	WEIGHT OF WHOLE SANDWICH	CALORIES	CARBOHYDRATES	FAT	CHOLESTEROL	PROTEIN	SODIUM
<b>GRILLED, BAKED, BROILED, POACHED</b>								
Tuscan Chicken	Panera Bread	15 oz	860	83 g	52 g	75 mg	34 g	1,980 mg
Frontega Chicken Panini	Panera Bread	14 oz	860	82 g	46 g	95 mg	52 g	1,920 mg
BBQ Grilled Chicken	Boston Market	11.6 oz	830	59 g	45 g	135 mg	50 g	1,410 mg
Chicken Salad on Sesame Semolina	Panera Bread	13.75 oz	690	39 g	23 g	75 mg	80 g	1,660 mg
Plain Grilled Chicken	Boston Market	10 oz	670	45 g	36 g	105 mg	42 g	810 mg
Chicken Caesar Wrap	Au Bon Pain	10.5 oz	600	63 g	25 g	80 mg	33 g	930 mg
Arizona Chicken	Au Bon Pain	11.5 oz	580	58 g	19 g	95 mg	46 g	1,590 mg
Chicken Whopper	Burger King	9.6 oz	580	48 g	26 g	75 mg	39 g	1,370 mg
Grilled Chicken Wrap	Sonic Drive-In	8.9 oz	539	40 g	27 g	70 mg	29 g	1,035 mg
Thai Chicken	Au Bon Pain	11.45 oz	490	71 g	7 g	70 mg	36 g	1,620 mg
Chicken McGrill	McDonald's	8 oz	400	37 g	17 g	60 mg	25 g	890 mg
Tender Roast Sandwich	KFC	7.4 oz	400	24 g	19 g	65 mg	31 g	820 mg
Spicy Chicken Cool Wrap	Chick-fil-A	7.9 oz	390	51 g	7 g	70 mg	31 g	1,150 mg
Char-grilled Chicken Club Sandwich	Chick-fil-A	7.1 oz	360	31 g	13 g	80 mg	30 g	1,370 mg
Grilled Chicken Sandwich	Hardee's	6.2 oz	350	28 g	16 g	65 mg	23 g	860 mg
Chicken Whopper, Jr.	Burger King	5.8 oz	350	30 g	14 g	45 mg	26 g	900 mg
Grilled Chicken Sandwich	Sonic Drive-In	7.9 oz	343	31 g	13 g	70 mg	27 g	829 mg
Grilled Chicken Sandwich	Dairy Queen/Brazier	6.5 oz	310	30 g	10 g	50 mg	24 mg	1,040 mg
Grilled Chicken Sandwich	Wendy's	6.6 oz	300	36 g	7 g	55 mg	24 mg	740 mg
Char-grilled Chicken Sandwich	Chick-fil-A	5.1 oz	280	28 g	7 g	60 mg	25 mg	1,000 mg

CONTINUED

CHICKEN SANDWICHES AND WRAPS	RESTAURANT	WEIGHT OF WHOLE SANDWICH	CALORIES	CARBOHYDRATES	FAT	CHOLESTEROL	PROTEIN	SODIUM
<b>FRIED</b>								
Crispy Caesar Twister Wrap	KFC	9.5 oz	744	66 g	41 g	55 mg	27 g	1,616 mg
Big Chicken Fillet Sandwich	Hardee's	10.7 oz	665	62 g	29 g	93 mg	39 g	1,857 mg
Breaded Chicken Sandwich	Sonic Drive-In	9.7 oz	582	66 g	23 g	53 mg	28 g	427 mg
Specialty Chicken Sandwich	Burger King	7.2 oz	560	52 g	28 g	60 mg	25 g	1,270 mg
Honey BBQ Crunch Melt	KFC	8.2 oz	556	48 g	26 g	60 mg	33 g	1,010 mg
Crispy Chicken	McDonald's	8.25 oz	500	46 g	26 g	50 mg	22 g	1,100 mg
Chicken Breast Fillet Sandwich	Dairy Queen/Brazier	7.2 oz	500	48 g	26 g	30 mg	19 g	1,090 mg
Chicken Fillet	Hardee's	6.9 oz	480	44 g	23 g	55 mg	24 g	1,190 mg
Original Recipe Sandwich	KFC	7.3 oz	450	22 g	27 g	60 mg	29 g	1,010 mg
Spicy Chicken Sandwich	Wendy's	7.7 oz	430	47 g	15 g	60 mg	27 g	1,240 mg
Chicken Breast Fillet Sandwich	Wendy's	7.3 oz	430	46 g	16 g	55 mg	27 g	750 mg
Chick-fil-A Chicken Sandwich	Chick-fil-A	6 oz	410	38 g	16 g	60 mg	28 g	1,300 mg

## DANGER ON THE SIDES

Even if you choose a healthy chicken sandwich, it's easy to undo your good intentions by throwing in a calorie- and fat-filled side dish. Some scary stats: A large McDonald's fries contains 540 calories and 26 grams of fat. A large order of tater tots at Sonic Drive-In has 365 calories and 21 grams of fat. The macaroni-and-cheese at Boston



Market has 280 calories and 11 grams of fat. Even the coleslaw at KFC has 232 calories and 13.5 grams of fat.

What's a healthier option? Look for corn on the cob, green beans or baked beans. And just say no to dessert—a Nutty Chocolate Chipper cookie at Panera Bread has 440 calories and 25 grams of fat.

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