

## X-RATED MEALS & SNACKS

Do you know how many calories are in the average American chain restaurant meal? Far more than you'd ever think or expect. Recently, the nonprofit Center for Science in the Public Interest gave out its 2010 Xtreme Eating Awards. The entrees made fast food kings like McDonalds and Burger King look like Weight Watchers. Listed below are some of the big calorie winners. To put these calorie numbers in perspective, you should know that the average women should eat approximately 1,800 to 2,000 calories per day and the average man 2,300 to 2,500.



The Cheesecake Factory Pasta Carbonara with chicken = **2,500 calories**

P. F. Chang's Double Pan-Fried Noodles Combo = **1,820 calories**

California Kitchen Tostada Pizza = **1,440 calories**

Bob Evans Cinnamon Cream Stacked & Stuffed Hot cakes = **1,380 calories**

Beriyo Banana Split, Hand-Scooped Vanilla bean = **1,070 calories**

Kraft Cheese Whiz Light dip (2 tbsp) = **500 calories**

Pinkberry large yogurt = **460 calories**

Trader Joe's Pita Chips (9 chips) Cheddar Cheese flavored= **320 calories**

**PLUS**, along with these high calories come lots and lots of fat (up to 85 grams of saturated —which should be less than 34 grams a day) —and sodium (as much as 7,690 milligrams). The average person should aim for less than 2,000 milligrams of sodium per day.

*"Be careful of reading health books. You might die of a misprint." — Mark Twain*

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# The Stewpot

A potpourri of practical ideas to help you become a better steward

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## Nutritional Myths

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Nutrition is big news! Next to celebrities, politics and religion, health and wellness may be the two favorite topics of mass media—from television to magazines, newspapers and even more importantly the Internet. The number of health resources on the Internet is mind boggling, which unfortunately, provides

more opportunities for inaccurate nutritional information and erroneous advice to flow to the general public.

According to a survey of more than 1,000 individuals conducted by the American Dietetic Association last December, 60% had trouble finding correct food and/or nutritional information on the Internet. Approximately seven in ten individuals visit two or three websites looking for food and health information. Sadly, nearly every person surveyed believed that the information they found online was dependable and truthful even though the scientific experts continually warn the public that health misinformation abounds on the Internet.<sup>1</sup>

As stewards of our health, we cannot just rely on magazine and Internet articles for authentic nutritional facts. It is easy to see how sensational stories can easily become a part of common knowledge and be accepted as real science. To help you with this confusion, here are some of the most recent half-truths and misperceptions that relate to health and wellness.\*

### GOOD CHOCOLATE, HEALTHY CHOCOLATE?

Yes, for chocolate lovers it is great news that a number of scientific studies have found that flavonoid polyphenols and antioxidants give chocolate the benefit of being heart healthy. But watch out for the high saturated fat and calories that are an integral part of this smooth tasting sweet. Make your chocolate pick one that is at least 70% cocoa to increase the amounts of polyphenols you are getting in each bite.<sup>1</sup>



Stewardship is a total lifestyle. It involves our health, time, talents, environment, relationships, spirituality and finances.

*“Common sugar is an almost ideal food — cheap, clean, white, portable, imperishable, germ free, highly nutritious, completely soluble, altogether digestible, requires no cooking and leaves no residue. Its only fault is its perfection. It is so pure that man cannot live on it.” —Anonymous*

### ALWAYS BEST RAW?

Serving raw vegetables can often be the best way to go nutritionally, but not always. While some water-soluble nutrients such as the B vitamins and some antioxidants are best eaten raw, many foods need to be heated to bring out their best nutrition. One excellent example is tomatoes because their lycopene is released by heating. Testing has shown this also applies to other compounds in carrots. The cooking of some vegetables improves their digestibility, breaks down vegetable proteins and loosens or removes the protective coatings that might keep them from being fully digested.



cannot blame all our health woes on sugar. Sugar is probably not the cause of your financial worries or your sleepless nights. On the other hand, it would be wise to follow the American Heart Association recommendation for daily sugar intake of no more than 100 calories (6 teaspoons) for women and 150 calories (9 teaspoons) for men.<sup>4</sup>

### BUTTER BETTER?

It may be true that a tablespoon of butter contains 100 calories compared to a tablespoon of liquid vegetable oil at over 120 calories, but butter is less calories because 20% of butter is water.

Once that water is released in the cooking process, then butter has far less calories than oil. Nevertheless, butter has more grams of saturated fat and less grams of healthy polyunsaturated fat. Therefore, liquid oil is definitely the smarter choice.<sup>2</sup>



### HEALTHY SMOOTHIE?

The majority of smoothies, whether bottled or made fresh in a store, are generally made from berries, mangoes, beets or carrots, which are rich in vitamins and minerals. “Boosts” — such as ginkgo, bee pollen, Echinacea, St. John’s wort,

and carotene are not likely to do much good since most contain too little of these substances to have any nutritional effect. The latest trend is to add acai, pomegranates, or other so-called superfruits.

They are not healthier than smoothies made from these other fruits. The majority of smoothies are loaded with calories— from Jamba Juice’s “original” size Strawberry Surf Rider (300 calories), to Tropical Smoothie Café Health Nut (530 calories), to the 40-ounce Smoothie King’s Slim-N-Trim (700 calories). Finally, smoothies are not cheap; ranging in price from \$4—\$7. A better long-term investment would be to purchase a blender and make your own.<sup>3</sup>



### \*TWO AREAS OF NUTRITION THAT NEED EMPHASIZING WHOLE GRAIN BONANZA

There is no question that “whole grains” play a key role in a heart-healthy, anti-cancer diet. They are definitely linked to the reduction of stroke, diabetes and heart disease. In a recent study, women who ate whole grains rather than refined



grains (those stripped of their bran and germ) reduced their risk of heart attack by 30%. No wonder the cereal manufacturers have had a field day with this scientific news. Last year cereal sales increased by 17% and are expected to reach \$6 billion by 2013. Yet surveys indicate that only 4% of Americans are eating the recommended six daily servings of whole grains. (The average is 3.2 servings). Look for the first ingredient listed to be whole grains. Do not be fooled by these mystical food words that indicate the product may have little or no whole grains: unbleached, 100% wheat, multi-grain, bromated, stone ground, 7-grain or deceiving phrases such as “made with whole grains.”<sup>1&5</sup>

### GO GLUTEN

As part of the low-carb weight loss craze of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many so-called health experts have encouraged a gluten-free diet frenzy. They forget that non-gluten free wheat has been a staple in western culture for generations. Yes, it is true that we are eating more gluten today because of the increase in snack and processed goods, but there is no scientific evidence that we need to eliminate gluten from our diet.<sup>1</sup>



### IS SUGAR THE CULPRIT?

It is true that for many Americans sugar has replaced fats as our # 1 nutritional enemy. Unfortunately, we are eating 50% more sugar than we did half a century ago. The overconsumption of added sugar is definitely to blame for the increase in obesity, particularly when you consider the additional 22 teaspoons of sugar added per day to our diet, which represents one extra pound every two weeks. However, you



*“A [so-called] balanced diet is a cookie in each hand.” Anonymous*