

## Brown Bag Lunch

Maybe you used to hate pulling out the same sandwich and banana from your brown bag lunch as a kid, but there certainly are benefits to packing your own lunch.

Now that you're all grown up, you may find yourself short on time and getting fast food more often. Below are examples of fast food items that are **not** so good, compared to smarter food choices you can make:



Fast Food Restaurant	Maybe Not ...	Choose Me!
<b>McDonalds</b>	<b>Big Mac Sandwich</b> 540 calories 29 g fat 24 g protein 1020 mg sodium 44 g carbohydrates 3 g fiber 9 g sugar	<b>Grilled Chicken Classic Sandwich</b> 350 calories 9 g fat 28 g protein 820 mg sodium 42 g carbohydrates 3 g fiber 8 g sugar
	<b>Filet-O-Fish Sandwich</b> 410 calories 20 g saturated fat 16 g protein 580 mg sodium 38 g carbohydrates 2 g fiber 4 g sugar	<b>Grilled Chicken Ranch Snack Wrap</b> 270 calories 12 grams fat 16 g protein 700 mg sodium 25 g carbohydrates 1 g fiber 2 g sugar
<p><b>Why?</b> Grilled chicken sandwiches are generally better than hamburger patties. BUT, though it may have less calories, watch out for high sodium content. Also, the size of a snack wrap is just right as long as you get them grilled and not fried.</p>		
<b>Subway</b>	<b>6" Meatball Marinara</b> 480 calories 18 g fat 21 g protein 920 mg sodium 59 g carbohydrates 8 g fiber 12 g sugar	<b>6" Oven-Roasted Chicken Sandwich</b> 370 calories 10 g fat 23 g protein 650 mg sodium 48 g carbohydrates 5 g fiber 8 g sugar
	<p><b>Why?</b> Try selecting grilled chicken over meatballs, piling your sandwich with veggies, skipping mayo, and paying a little extra for <u>avocado</u>. Though avocado may be high in calories, it's the healthy kind of fat that still provides the creaminess and flavour!</p>	

<b>Tim Horton's</b>	<b>Bacon, Tomato, Cheese Panini</b> 600 calories 30 g fat 26 g protein 1390 mg sodium 62 g carbohydrates 7 g fiber 4 g sugar	<b>Chicken Salad Sandwich</b> 330 calories 9 g fat 20 g protein 950 mg sodium 45 g carbohydrates 5 g fiber 3 g sugar
	<b>Banana Nut Muffin</b> 390 calories 18 g fat 6 g protein 400 mg sodium 52 g carbohydrates 2 g fiber 27 g sugar	<b>Vanilla with Berries Yogurt</b> 160 calories 2 g fat 4 g protein 45 mg sodium 33 g carbohydrates 2 g fiber 25 g sugar
<i><b>Why?</b> Bacon and cheese are typically the culprits of high sodium and calories. Try getting a chicken salad sandwich to reduce the fat, sodium, and caloric content. If you want to get a snack, a muffin may actually not be the wisest choice considering some muffins are unhealthier than donuts! The best snack choice is yogurt or even a grilled chicken snack wrap if you need something more filling.</i>		
<b>Wendy's</b>	<b>1/4 lb Single with Cheese</b> 580 calories 31 g fat 30 g protein 1220 mg sodium 42 g carbohydrates 3 g fiber 10 g sugar	<b>Apple Pecan Chicken Salad</b> 350 calories 11 g fat 35 g protein 970 mg sodium 27 g carbohydrates 5 g fiber 17 g sugar
	<b>Spicy Chicken Caesar Salad</b> 480 calories 27 g fat 35 g protein 1030 mg sodium 24 g carbohydrates 6 g fiber 3 g sugar	
<i><b>Why?</b> Ordering a salad over hamburger is a no-brainer but even a Chicken Caesar Salad can almost be as bad as a burger. Be careful what kind of salad dressing you get and whether the salad is filled with heart-healthy fats (ex. nuts) or saturated fat (ex. Caesar dressing).</i>		

Source: <https://www.wendys.com/>, [www.timhortons.com/](http://www.timhortons.com/), <http://www.subway.com/>, <http://www1.mcdonalds.ca/>

## How to make a good brown bag lunch...or buy one

Making lunch is the best option to save money, be environmentally friendly, and most importantly, control what goes into your body. On some days where take-out is your only option, do not fret! With some solid background knowledge on smart food choices, you won't have to worry about reading an entire nutritional pamphlet to determine what to eat!

### Make it fish friendly



**From Home:** Salmon BLT or Tuna Tabbouleh Salad with soy nuts and banana

**Take-Out:** Tuna and Salmon Sushi with edamame and avocado salad

**Why:** Tuna and salmon are full of omega-3 fatty acids which can help lower triglyceride and blood pressure levels. Soy based food (i.e. edamame and soy nuts) provide a modest reduction in LDL (bad) cholesterol levels and high concentrations of other vitamins and minerals.

### Beans, beans they're good for your heart



**From Home:** Turkey and rice bean wrap with grapes

**Take-Out:** Hummus with whole grain pita with chicken kebob and grilled vegetables

**Why:** Black beans and chickpeas (found in hummus) are high in cholesterol-lowering soluble fiber. Chicken and turkey are low in saturated fat but a great protein source helping you feel full longer and reducing the likelihood of weight gain.

### Don't skimp out on the good grains



**From Home:** Ginger beef broccoli salad with whole grain roll and orange

**Take-Out:** Turkey sandwich on whole grain bread with salad and vinaigrette

**Why:** Whole grains (ex. oats) can help lower heart disease risk factors including LDL cholesterol. Eating a lot of fruits and vegetables is also associated with decreased risk of heart disease.

Source: <http://www.heartandstroke.on.ca/>

## Top 9 Tips for Quick and Healthy Lunches

1. **Choose smart drinks.** Choose water! Keep spare bottles at home, in your car, and invest in a good water bottle to carry around with you at work. Make it a habit to pour a big glass of water at every meal, and keep a bottle on your desk for steady sipping.
2. **Plan ahead.** Make large portions of dinner to pack lunch for the next day(s). Try making a big pot of vegetarian chili and freeze it for emergency leftovers! Tip: Bake a double batch of bran or oatmeal muffins; freeze and seal individually.
3. **Jazz up your salad.** Instead of lettuce, try roasted kale. Add peas, corn, shredded cooked beets, avocado or broccoli sprouts. Finish with protein like grilled chicken, hard boiled egg, nuts, or salmon.
4. **Go for grains.** Barley, whole grain rice and quinoa make healthy bases for any lunch. Add any combination of grilled or steamed vegetables and cooked meat.
5. **Make a litter-free lunch.** If you want to be thrifty, hip, and environmentally friendly, wash and reuse glass mason jars from pasta sauce, soups, or jams. Fill the larger sizes for pasta, rice, chili, or layered salads.
6. **Plan smart snacks.** When you pack your lunch, do not forget about the other times of the day! We all crave a snack at 3pm so make sure it's nutritious. Try an apple with a slice of cheese, rice cakes with natural peanut butter, or low calorie trail mix. Pre portion snacks like nuts, cheese, carrots so you can grab and go. Pack fruits and buy single serving yogurt.
7. **Keep a record.** Keep a box or binder of your favourite recipes or handouts with these tips. If you find recipes online, bookmark them so you can refer back to them anytime!
8. **Don't give up on sandwiches.** They do not have to be boring! Try the following: mashed chickpeas with salt, pepper, olive oil, red peppers, chives, fresh basil; canned salmon mixed with egg, bread crumbs, dill to form patties and pan fried; light cream cheese on a whole grain bagel with fresh strawberries and drizzle of honey.
9. **Stash staples in your desk.** Keep these in your desk to supplement a skimpy lunch: natural peanut butter, whole grain crackers, cans of reduced sodium tuna.



Source: <http://www.chatelaine.com/>