



DINING ON A DIME

Eating Better for Less

January/February

Do you have too little time for all that you have to do, especially considering your goals for the New Year? This issue of *Dining on a Dime* is dedicated to saving you money and keeping your family safe when you're on the run.



Time for Take-Out?

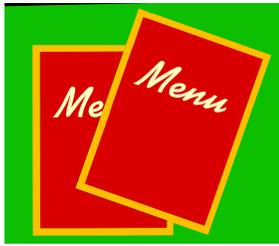
If you're getting your meals at a drive-through or by take-out or delivery, remember these three food safety rules.

- **More than Two is Bad for You.** Two hours is the maximum time that perishable foods should be kept at room temperature. Bacteria that can make you sick grow rapidly when food is left in the temperature danger zone (which is between 40 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit).
- **Here's the Rule: Get it Cool.** Refrigerate hot take-out foods right away if you won't be eating them within two hours. Leave the covers of containers open to help food cool faster. Cover tightly once the food is cooled. If you leave pizza and other perishable foods at room temperature for more than two hours, toss them out. Some types of bacteria can form a heat-resistant toxin that even cooking can't destroy.
- **Don't Miss a Beat, Safely Reheat.** Don't reheat take-out food in its original container, unless the container is described as safe for reheating use. Chemicals from carry-out containers can be absorbed into foods during heating. Use containers designed for use in microwave ovens. Cover the container with a lid or with plastic wrap that you've turned back at one corner. The plastic wrap shouldn't touch the food. Trapped steam helps destroy bacteria and ensures uniform cooking. Reheat foods until they are steaming hot throughout and a food thermometer inserted into the food reaches 165 degrees Fahrenheit.



Source (Accessed 12/18/2013): [Don't Hesitate... Refrigerate!](http://www.lancaster.unl.edu/food/fridge2.pdf), University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, www.lancaster.unl.edu/food/fridge2.pdf

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What's Your Choice from the Menu?

Two out of every three adults living in the U.S. are overweight or obese. So it's not surprising that weight loss is one of the most popular New Year's resolutions. Do you think you're ordering low calorie foods when dining out? Answer these questions, then read on to see how well you know a menu!

1. Which sandwich has fewer than 500 calories?

- a. Tuna wrap b. Tomato and fresh mozzarella c. Turkey

Answer: Turkey has fewer calories (350) than a tuna wrap (600) or tomato and fresh mozzarella (700). Calories start to climb if you add cheese, mayo, guacamole or sauce. For low calorie flavor, add mustard or, better yet, veggies.

2. Which breakfast has about half the calories of the others?

- a. Belgian waffle & fruit topping b. Two eggs & 1 slice buttered toast
c. 3 slices French toast & syrup d. Eggs Benedict

Answer: Two eggs, scrambled, and a slice of buttered toast (430) have fewer calories than eggs Benedict (700), three slices of French toast with syrup (800), or a Belgian waffle with fruit topping (800). To avoid eating 400 milligrams of cholesterol in the eggs, choose egg whites or scrambled egg substitute.

3. Which Italian dish has fewer than 800 calories?

- a. Fettuccine Alfredo b. Spaghetti with meatballs
c. Eggplant Parmigiana d. Cheese ravioli

Answer: A plate of cheese ravioli typically has about 600 calories, fewer than the eggplant Parmigiana (800), spaghetti with meatballs (1,200), or fettuccine Alfredo (1,500). They all have at least half a day's portion of saturated fat (the Alfredo has more than two day's worth). For a lower fat choice, split an order of pasta with red sauce.

4. Which side dish has at least twice the calories of the others?

- a. Mashed potatoes with gravy b. Rice pilaf
c. Buttered baked potato d. Cole slaw

Answer: A buttered baked potato typically has about 400 calories, double that of cole slaw, rice pilaf, or mashed potatoes with gravy (200 each). Higher calorie choices include French fries (600), loaded baked potato (600), and onion rings (900). You'll get fewer calories by choosing steamed vegetables.

Source (Accessed 12/18/2013): [Calorie Overkill](http://www.cspinet.org/nah/10_06/calorie_overkill.pdf), Nutrition Action Healthletter, www.cspinet.org/nah/10_06/calorie_overkill.pdf

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Be “Wallet Wise” when Dining Out



Many people in the U.S. eat out frequently. In 2012, Americans spent about half of their food dollars on foods prepared away from home, or \$2,167. Here are ways to lower your family’s costs when dining out:

- **Share a Main Dish.** Restaurant portions are growing in size, along with our waistlines and the bill at the end of our meals. To decrease all of the above, share a main dish or side dish with a friend or family member. This is a great way for kids to eat healthier, too. Kids’ menus are typically made up of foods high in fat, yet low in nutrients. Small children often don’t eat much, so let your children share from your plate to expand their palate and shrink your calorie intake — and your bill.
- **Drinks Anyone?** Order water with meals instead of sodas or specialty drinks. Even a glass of iced tea can easily add an extra dollar per person to your meal cost. Ask for a slice of fresh lemon to add a special touch and a dash of flavor to your water.
- **Do Lunch.** Lunch menus often offer the same items as dinner menus, but in smaller and lower-priced portions. So opting to go out for lunch, or for an early afternoon supper, can save money. However, even during the evening, a smaller portion or half-order may be offered. Opt for the smaller size and you’ll get more than enough food while saving money.
- **Clue in on Coupons.** Some restaurants send out coupons to entice your business. Check your mail, local paper, and even the Internet for special offers. Many restaurants have a weekly kids’ night — where kids under a certain age get a free or reduced-cost meal when they eat with an adult.
- **Plan your Budget.** To reduce your spending on away-from-home dining, reduce how often you and your family eat out. For instance, pick one time every two weeks. Plan where you want to go, cut your coupons and enjoy the meal! If you have a hectic family schedule, look for inexpensive foods when shopping at the grocery store that you can easily use to pack your own “meals-to-go,” and for foods to make quick meals to serve at home.

Sources (Accessed 12/18/2013): 1. Per Capita Food Expenditures, USDA Economic Research Service, www.ers.usda.gov/datafiles/Food_Expenditures/Food_Expenditures/table13.xls
2. How to Eat Out at a Restaurant: 12 Tips to Save Money, Eat Healthy, & Still Enjoy by www.sixwise.com, at www.sixwise.com/newsletters/06/09/13/how-to-eat-out-at-a-restaurant-12-tips-to-save-money-eat-healthy--amp-still-enjoy.htm

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office. This material was funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.



Dining on a Dime's Cooks' Corner

Easy Aromatic Herbed Meat Rub

(Makes 1/3 cup, enough to flavor 16 servings)

Use this recipe to flavor pork, chicken, turkey, seafood, or tender cuts of beef — whatever is in your freezer or on sale at the supermarket. Serve with vegetables, a slice of whole grain bread, fruit and yogurt for a complete meal.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground paprika
- 1 tablespoon coarse salt (or less, if desired)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves

Directions

1. In a small bowl, combine the ingredients. Label, date and store in an airtight container, away from heat and light, for up to six months.
2. To use: Put raw meat in a bag. Sprinkle about 1 teaspoon of meat rub onto each portion. Rub it all over the surface of the meat. Remove meat from bag and grill, bake or pan-fry the meat until done.

Nutrition Facts: Each teaspoon of meat rub provides 5 calories, 0 g fat, 1 g carbohydrate, 0 g protein and 440 mg sodium.



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