

Scariest New Restaurant Foods

By David Zinczenko
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There's an arms race going on, and it could mean disaster for your waistline.

But this terrifying competition to build the biggest, scariest weapons of mass destruction isn't happening between the United States and Russia, or on the Korean peninsula, or among angry rivals somewhere in the Middle East. It's happening between America's restaurants—every one of them, it seems, is eager to show it has the biggest, scariest, most destructive new food in the marketplace. And the unsuspecting victims of this Strangelovian contest? You and me.

See, even the most well-established restaurant chains can't rest on their laurels, serving the same old standbys that we've loved since we were kids. They have to keep us interested and attracted with shiny new bells and whistles. And since no one has invented, say, a new kind of potato, they've got to go with the next best thing: gimmicky entrees with terrifyingly complicated ingredient lists and rapidly expanding serving sizes. It wasn't enough that pizza makers started putting cheese *inside the crust!* Kentucky Fried Chicken saw that and ramped up its own destructive powers, by making a sandwich in which the bread is replaced by slabs of fried chicken. Then a few major league ballparks started serving their burgers on doughnuts instead of buns. What's next: fried Fluffernutter franks?

Almost. Take a look at what's being whipped up in the labs of the mad fast-food scientists, compliments of the upcoming *Eat This, Not That!* 2011 book, and be afraid—be very afraid!



Scary Meal #5

Denny's Fried Cheese Melt with wavy fries and marinara

1,260 calories

63 g fat (21 g saturated, 1 g trans)

3,010 mg sodium

CALORIE EQUIVALENT: 18 T.G.I. Friday's Frozen Cheddar & Bacon
Potato Skins

Apparently, Denny's deemed the classic grilled cheese too boring for our novelty seeking taste buds, so they fixed it by driving four deep-fried cheese sticks into the core of the sandwich. So what you end up with are cheese sticks with extra cheese between slabs of buttered bread and a pile of fried potatoes on the side. If Denny's was serious about improving the grilled cheese, they would have skipped the novelty and brought in big-flavor ingredients like sautéed mushrooms or sliced figs. But, of course, if they did that, they might not be able to sell this entire meal for \$4. Here's to cheap food and expensive health care!

Eat This Instead!

Denny's BLT with Hash Browns

730 calories

47 g fat (10.5 g saturated)

1,270 mg sodium

Bonus tip! For FREE instant health and nutrition tips every day, click here to follow me on Twitter. Some followers have lost 20 pounds or more just by adopting the super-simple tips.



Scary Meal #4

IHOP New York Cheesecake Pancakes

1,270 calories

CALORIE EQUIVALENT: 28 McDonald's Chicken McNuggets

Further blurring the line between dessert and breakfast, IHOP has infused their fluffy flapjacks with gooey hunks of cheesecake. Next thing you know they'll be serving breakfast with big scoops of ice cream and chocolate syrup. The best breakfast is one with protein and fresh fruit, but if you're going to go for the carb-heavy indulgence, there's a better way to do it. Don't make it a habit, but IHOP's Chocolate Chip Pancakes will save you 660 calories.

Eat This Instead!

Chocolate Chip Pancakes

610 calories

Bonus Tip: Novelty isn't the only thing threatening your waistline; some of the world's most dangerous foods are also the most common. Beware of

these gut bombs: The 10 Worst Fast Food Meals in America.



Scary Meal #3

Friendly's Grilled Cheese BurgerMelt

1,500 calories

97 g fat (38 g saturated)

2,090 mg sodium

CALORIE EQUIVALENT: 15 Snickers Kudos Granola Bars

Is this a joke? Because it should be. Where a normal hamburger has buns, this one has grilled cheese sandwiches. Yes, that's two grilled-cheese sandwiches with one hunk of ground beef wedged between them. Other iterations of this sandwich have been dubbed "fatty melts"—for obvious reasons. They have twice as much cheese and bread as a regular cheeseburger.

Eat This Instead!

Grilled Cheese

790 calories

37 g fat (12 g saturated)

1,280 mg sodium

Bonus Tip: Yes, you too have abs—you just can't see them. (They're like the third cousins you met at a past family reunion.) But with the right diet and fitness plan, you'll slim down and tone up in no time, and get the abs back. Check out our list of the 50 Hottest Celebrity Bodies, and put their secrets to work for you.



Scary Meal #2

Uno Chicago Grill Lobster BLT Thin Crust Pizza

1,530 calories

87 g fat (30 g saturated)

3,480 mg sodium

CALORIE EQUIVALENT: 51 Nabisco Ginger Snap Cookies

On its own, lobster is sweet, healthy, and loaded with lean protein. Yet, for some reason, restaurants never seem to know what to do with it. Case in point: Lobster BLT Pizza, an amalgam of foods that don't quite fit together: One is seafood, one is diner grub, and one is an Italian-American hybrid. We're all for trying new things, but not when the toll is 75 percent of your day's calories and 1½ day's worth of sodium and saturated fat.

Eat This Instead!

Lobster Wrap with side of roasted vegetables

570 calories

30.5 g fat (4 g saturated)

1,660 mg sodium

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Scary Meal #1

Applebee's Provolone-Stuffed Meatballs with Fettuccine

1,550 calories

97 g fat (46 g saturated)

3,910 mg sodium

CALORIE EQUIVALENT: 148 Whoppers Malted Milk Balls

Yes, America has a cheese fetish, but this is just excessive. Cheese-filled meatballs? It's like a beef-based Gusher, a sort of meaty water balloon of fat. Especially problematic is the fact that said meatballs are served on a bed of fettuccine Alfredo, which is basically flat noodles basting in oil, butter, and—yes—cheese. Cut more than a thousand calories by switching dishes. A smart swap like this one (and the hundreds of others in *Eat This, Not That!*) a couple times a week and you can lose 2½ pounds a month without ever dieting!

Eat This Instead!

Spicy Shrimp Diavolo

500 calories

10 g fat (3.5 g saturated)

1,910 mg sodium