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# America's Best and Worst Burgers Posted Tue, Nov 18, 2008, 10:51

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The burger industry in America is looking more and more like an arms race these days. Every few months, we watch in horror as another bacon-enhanced, cheese-embalmed, ranch-riddled weapon of mass inflation hits menu boards at the country's largest restaurant chains.

The Baconator, the Monster Thickburger, the FlameThrower — they sound like weapons, not something you'd order for dinner.

What makes our hamburger habit particularly scary is the Super Size Phenomenon, which for years has been mutating our burgers into double burgers and our double burgers into 1,250-calorie Triple Whoppers with Cheese.

A 1957 burger contained little more than one ounce of meat, but by 1997 that same meat wad had grown to six ounces. Stack one of the bloated burgers out there next to a beverage like those among these unhealthiest drinks in America and you're risking two days' worth of calories in a single, misguided meal.

Each year Americans eat about 40 billion burgers, which means that each of us downs nearly 150 of them. Choose better burgers, and you can save 10 or 15 pounds over the course of a year.

To get you started on your own burger war, we've compiled a list of the seven greasiest patties ever to be sandwiched between two buns. But because we understand you still need your burger fix, we've thrown in five of our favorites that you can eat with relative impunity (along with a delicious burger recipe at the end of this post).

**Chili's Smokehouse Bacon Triple-The-Cheese Big Mouth Burger with Jalapeno Ranch Dressing**
2,040 calories
150 g fat (53 g saturated)
110 g protein
4,900 mg sodium

You know this burger's in trouble when it takes more than 20 syllables just to identify it. If you think the name's a mouthful, just wait until the burger hits the table. You'll be face to face with two-and-a-half day's worth of fat — a full third of which is saturated. To do that much damage with roasted sirloin, you'd have to eat about eight 6-ounce steaks. It's nearly three days' worth of saturated fat.

**T.G.I. Friday's Cheesy Bacon Cheeseburger**
1,590 calories
unknown g fat
unknown mg sodium

Although Friday's is mum on the fat and sodium, it takes only one number to realize that this burger suffers from bigger-is-better syndrome. T.G.I. Friday's average burger has 1,250 calories, and their appetizers are some of the toughest in the country to swallow, calorie-wise, as we've shown with this <span style="color:green">America's worst appetizers list</span>.

**Red Robbin A.1. Peppercorn Burger**
1,440 calories
97 g fat

There's hardly a burger on Red Robin's menu that contains fewer than a thousand calories. What pushes this particular burger to the position of worst — aside from the gratuitous use of cheese and bacon — is the bed of fried onion straws wedged between patty and bun. Now we're beginning to understand why, while researching the story <span style="color:green">16 Secrets the Restaurant Industry Doesn't Want You to Know</span>, it may have taken Red Robin so long to come clean about the impact of its burgers.

**Denny's Double Cheeseburger**
1,540 calories
116 g fat (52 g saturated, 7 g trans)
3,880 mg sodium

Add this to our ever-expanding list of the <span style="color:green">Trans-Fattiest Foods in America</span>. (This burger has more than three days' worth of the stuff.) In fact, with as much saturated fat as 52 strips of bacon and

more sodium than 21 small bags of Lay's potato chips, this burger also belongs on the salt-packed list of 20 Foods Your Cardiologist Wouldn't Eat.

**Dairy Queen ½ lb. FlameThrower GrillBurger**

1,140 calories
82 g fat (27 g saturated, 1.5 g trans)
1,940 mg sodium

Regular consumption of the FlameThrower will torch any hopes you have of losing weight. This potential aortic uh-oh contains 60 percent more calories than the Bacon Cheddar Grillburger and more than twice as many calories as DQ's own Double Hamburger.

**Hardee's Two-Third Pound Monster Thickburger**

1,420 calories
108 g fat (43 g saturated)
2,770 mg sodium

Hardee's and Carl's Jr. take a misplaced pride in their shamelessly caloric approach to everything they put under a heat lamp, which is probably reason enough for some to find another place to eat. Need more motivation? Many of their burgers break the perilous 1,000-calorie barrier; their worst bun-buster has nearly 75 percent of your entire day's calories and as much fat as a dozen Taco Bell soft tacos.

**Ruby Tuesday Bella Turkey Burger**

1,057 calories
65 g fat

The scariest part about this burger is how completely harmless it sounds: a slice of Swiss melted over sautéed mushrooms and ground turkey. Yet somehow Ruby Tuesday manages to slick it up with as much fat as five Baby Ruth bars. The kid's version of this — the Turkey Mini — has an astounding 893 calories, earning it the No. 7 spot in our list of the 20 Worst Kid's Meals in America. (To find out what's best (and worst) for your kids at the nation's big restaurant chains, check out this revealing report first.)

**THE *EAT THIS!* BURGER HALL OF FAME**

**DQ Original Burger**

350 calories

14 g fat (7 g saturated)

680 mg sodium

**Wendy's Quarter-Pound Single**

430 calories

20 g fat (7 g saturated)

870 mg sodium

**Burger King Whopper Jr. w/o mayo**

370 calories

21 g fat (6 g saturated)

570 mg sodium

**McDonald's Quarter Pounder**

410 calories

19 g fat (7 g saturated)

730 mg sodium

**In-N-Out Protein-Style Protein-Style Cheeseburger**

330 calories

25 g fat (9 g saturated)

720 mg sodium

After you've conquered the burger field, make sure to nail down the rest of the all-time best restaurant swaps while you're at it. With knowledge and discipline, you can eat all of your favorite foods — without ever being on a diet — and still lose weight!

And don't forget about these 17 best fitness foods for women.