

# Product Reformulation

## *A Beneficial Outcome of Menu Labeling*

- Nutrition labeling not only allows consumers to make informed choices, it also provides an incentive for companies to reformulate products and introduce healthier options.
- Nutrition Facts labels spurred product reformulation. Following the implementation of Nutrition Facts labeling on packaged foods, a survey conducted by the Retail Bakers of America found that the demand for low-fat, low-sugar items increased by 65%. To address the growing demand, 79% of retailers said they developed new products.<sup>1</sup>
- Trans-fat labeling went into effect on January 1, 2006. Since that time, the use of partially hydrogenated oils in foods in North America decreased by 50%.<sup>2</sup>

### Menu Labeling

- A national menu labeling law passed in March 2010, with implementation expected in 2012. Menu labeling policies have already been implemented in California, Vermont, New York City, many New York State counties, Philadelphia, King County (WA), and more.

Item	Calories
Hot Cakes	300
Hot Cakes with Egg	450
Hot Cakes with Egg & Bacon	600
Big Breakfast	580
Deluxe Breakfast	660
Breakfast	560
	570

- Many popular chains have introduced smaller portions on their menus, such as:
  - California Pizza Kitchen's "Small Cravings"
  - The Cheesecake Factory's "Small Plates & Snacks"
  - T.G.I. Friday's "Right Portion, Right Price"
  - Au Bon Pain's "Au Bon Portions"
  - Denny's "Fit Fare"
  - Daily Grill's "Simply 600"

- Starbucks cut a significant portion of fat and calories from its pastry and beverage items when New York City's menu labeling requirements went into effect. On average, 5% of the calories and 15% of the fat have been cut from pastry items. Beverages, on average, lost 14% of the calories and 36% of the fat.



- Applebee's introduced its "Unbelievably Great Tasting and Under 550 Calories" menu featuring lower calorie alternatives to their regular menu items.
  - A healthier substitute for the Grilled Shrimp and Spinach Salad (940 cal) is the Grilled Shrimp and Island Rice (370 cal).
  - The Asiago Peppercorn Steak with potatoes and steamed vegetables (390 cal) is a lower calorie choice than the Shrimp and Parmesan Sirloin (660 cal).<sup>3</sup>



**Kid's Menu  
Reformulation**

**Goopy Grilled Cheese**  
Previously - 360 cals  
Now - 270 cals

**Peanut Butter & Jelly**  
Previously - 560 cals  
Now - 340 cals

- In addition to introducing their new “Lighten Up! Menu,” which features lower-calorie versions of menu items, Cosi also was able to bring down the caloric content in some of their most popular menu items. On the Cosi Club, they brought the calories down from 800 cals to 450 cals; and for their Signature Salad, they switched to reduced-fat dressing and half the cheese, reducing calories from 610 cals to 380 cals.<sup>4</sup>
- IHOP’s “Simple & Fit” menu items are all less than 600 calories, including a Spinach, Mushroom and Tomato Omelet with fresh fruit for 330 cals, which has 2/3 fewer calories than their regular menu’s Spinach and Mushroom omelet (910 cals).
- Daily Grill has a menu with items under 600 calories, “Simply 600”, including a pan-seared salmon burger with 550 cals, a Thai noodle chicken salad with 470 cals, and a blackened ahi tuna salad with 320 cals.
- Taco Bell’s Fresco menu contains 8 items with 9 grams of fat or less.
  - Fresco Crunchy Taco has 150 calories and 8 g of fat, compared with Double Decker Taco Supreme with 350 calories and 15 grams of fat.
  - Fresco Burrito Supreme - Steak has 340 calories and 8 g of fat, compared with Burrito Supreme - Beef with 420 calories and 16 grams of fat.
- Additional reformulations to fewer calories include:
  - Macaroni Grill dropped the calorie content in its Scallops and Spinach Salad from 1,270 to 340 cals (including dressing).<sup>3</sup>
  - Silver Diner reduced the calorie content in its Grilled Flounder dinner from 1,090 to 720 cals.<sup>5</sup>
  - Denny’s All-American Slam, normally 800 cals, can instead be built from their new “Fit Fare” menu with 2 egg whites, an English muffin, turkey bacon strips, and fresh fruit for 390 cals.
- A comparison of menu items in New York City before (March 2007) and after (June 2008) calorie posting requirements went into effect showed significant decreases in calories in several items:<sup>6</sup>

	<b>March</b> (before menu labeling)	<b>Calories</b> <b>June</b> (after menu labeling)	<b>Change</b>
<b>Dunkin’ Donuts – Glazed Cake Stick</b>	490	360	-130
<b>KFC – Boneless Firey Buffalo Wings</b>	530	420	-110
<b>McDonald’s – French Fries (large)</b>	570	500	-70
<b>Starbucks – Blueberry Muffin</b>	400	320	-80

<sup>1</sup> Kramer L. “Nutrition Labels Help Build Deli, Bakery Sales.” *Supermarket News* March 1995, vol. 20, p. 21, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Watkins C. “North American Vegetable Oil Use in Flux.” *Inform* July 2008, vol. 19 (7), p. 493.

<sup>3</sup> Enkoji M. “Retail Watch: California Calorie Law Alters Chains’ Fare.” *The Sacramento Bee* July 14, 2009. Retrieved 4/16/11 from <http://www.sacbee.com/2009/07/14/v-print/2023450/retail-watch-california-calorie.html>

<sup>4</sup> Melinda B. “On the Table: the Calories Lurking in Restaurant Foods.” *The Wall Street Journal* July 29, 2008, p. D1.

<sup>5</sup> Black J. “On These Menus, Calories Count.” *The Washington Post* January 6, 2010, p. E1.

<sup>6</sup> Basset M. Declaration in *California Restaurant Association v. City and County of San Francisco*, No. C08-3247 CW (N. D. Cal.), p. 6, Table 2.