Double Your Trouble

Designed like 1950s soda shops, Johnny Rockets restaurants are a place to “experience the uncomplicated goodness of classic Americana.”

And what’s more classic Americana than the Bacon Cheddar Double—a white-flour bun stuffed with two one-third-pound beef patties, four slices of cheddar cheese, four strips of bacon, and a “special” sauce?

The tab: 1,770 calories, 50 grams of saturated fat, and 2,380 milligrams of sodium. Three McDonald’s Quarter Pounders with Cheese have “only” 1,570 calories.

But wait. Who gets just a burger? Johnny’s Sweet Potato Fries add another 590 calories—110 more than his regular “American Fries” and 90 more than a large McDonald’s Fries—and 800 mg of sodium.

And what’s Americana without a shake? Johnny’s hover around the 1,000-calorie mark, thanks to their size (20 oz.) and their “premium vanilla ice cream, whole milk, and real whipped cream.” Surely, you have room for the extra 1,140 calories, 37 grams of saturated fat, and estimated 13 teaspoons of added sugar in a Big Apple Shake, which squeezes a slice of Johnny’s “all-American” Apple Pie into your drinkable body-fat booster.

Your meal ends up with a cool 3,500 calories (enough for today and most of tomorrow), 88 grams of saturated fat (a four-day supply), and 2½ days’ worth of sodium (3,720 mg) and added sugar (15 teaspoons). It’s like finishing off your three Quarter Pounders with Cheese and large Fries with a medium McCafé Vanilla Shake and two Baked Apple Pies.

If that isn’t uncomplicated goodness, what is?

No Limits!!!

“It’s time to have it all!” chirps the IHOP Web site. “When it comes to breakfast, why choose just one thing? Our breakfast combos put your favorites together on one plate, so you can dig into everything you love—from eggs to steaks to pancakes!”

That’s right. IHOP’s Country Fried Steak & Eggs isn’t one thing. It’s “8 oz. fried beef steak smothered in country gravy. Served with two eggs, hash browns and two buttermilk pancakes.” Nothing like a mix of fried red meat, fried eggs, fried potatoes, and a load of refined carbs (from the breading, pancakes, syrup, and potatoes) for breakfast.

IHOP isn’t kidding. The meal does have it all—all the calories (1,760—almost a day’s worth), all the saturated fat (23 grams—your full quota until this time tomorrow), all the sodium (3,720 milligrams—2½ days’ worth), and all the sugar (11 teaspoons—close to two days’ worth), if you use a typical quarter cup of syrup. Think of it as five McDonald’s Egg McMuffins sprinkled with 10 packets of sugar.

No worries. As the Web site says, IHOP is the place “Where it’s all about flavor. Not about limits.” They probably wouldn’t charge too much to add some French toast, waffles, sausage, and bacon if you ask nicely.
**The Veal Thing**

Veal is an innocent-sounding name for the meat from a young calf that has been made anemic by its milk-only diet so that its flesh attains the light pink or white color that is so prized.

But why think about that? You’re dining out. Like many Italian restaurants, **Maggiano’s Little Italy** offers several veal dishes that may appeal to people who think veal is a healthy alternative to beef. Oh dear.

Take the 18 oz. **Veal Porterhouse**, which is drizzled with butter sauce and comes with half a pound of roasted, fried, and garlic-buttered **Crispy Red Potatoes**. Even without the spuds, you’re talking 1,900 calories, 40 grams of saturated fat, and 2,860 milligrams of sodium. The potatoes bring the total to 2,710 calories (almost 1½ days’ worth), 45 grams of saturated fat (a two-day supply), and 3,700 mg of sodium (2½ days’ limit). And those numbers don’t include the **Ciabatta Roll** that comes with the meal.

You’d be better off eating four **Pizza Hut Personal Pan Pepperoni Pizzas**.

But why think about that? You’re dining out.

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**Spaghet(not so)tini**

“Crispy battered shrimp, fresh mushrooms, tomato and arugula tossed with spaghettini and a basil-garlic-lemon cream sauce.”

Nothing about the way **The Cheesecake Factory** describes its **Bistro Shrimp Pasta** sounds extreme. Sure, there’s cream and battered shrimp, but they’re mixed in with mushrooms and arugula, for heaven’s sake.

Granted, The Cheesecake Factory has a knack for creating over-the-top dishes. It has made eight appearances in our last four Xtreme Eating articles—more than any other chain. And this dish has the dubious distinction of delivering **more calories than any other entrée on the menu**.

More than the fettuccini Alfredo, more than the steaks and chops, more than the cheesecakes.

According to company headquarters, the Bistro Shrimp Pasta has 3,120 calories. And keeping those 1½ days’ worth of calories company are 89 grams of saturated fat (enough to keep your arteries busy from Monday morning to Friday noon) and 1,090 milligrams of sodium (two-thirds of a day’s worth).

That’s what happens when you mix 3½ cups of pasta with a butter-and-cream sauce topped with battered, fried shrimp. It’s like eating three orders of Olive Garden’s Lasagna Classico plus an order of Tiramisu for dinner.

What’s for dessert?

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**Pot Belly & Jowls?**

“PB&J isn’t just for kids,” says the **Smoothie King** Web site. “We blend fresh ground peanut butter and banana with your choice of plump strawberries or tasty grape juice.”

Go with grape juice and you end up with a **Peanut Power Plus Grape Smoothie**. A 40 oz. large (“The King”) has 1,460 calories (three-quarters of a day’s worth) and a 3½-day supply of added sugar (22 teaspoons). Make that 6½ days’ worth, since the 17 teaspoons of naturally occurring sugar in the grape juice aren’t much better than added sugar. The numbers for the strawberry version are in the same ballpark.

Only The Hulk Smoothies have more calories—1,600 to 1,930 in a large—but they’re “developed specifically for gaining weight,” notes the Web site. In contrast, the Peanut Power Plus Grape is in Smoothie King’s “Indulge” section. (Translation: not developed for gaining weight, but darn good at it.)

Somehow, people believe that smoothies are healthy no matter what. Do two cups of grape juice, five tablespoons of peanut butter, a banana, and a boatload of sugar sound like a healthy lunch or (heaven forbid) snack? Even if you “make it skinny”—that means they leave out the added sugar—you’ll still be downing 1,060 calories.

“You’ll love it no matter how old you are,” says Smoothie King. “And definitely be ready to go out and play.” Or just sit around and make new fat cells.
Baby Backside

Chili’s serves 20,000 miles’ worth of Baby Back Ribs every year, says the Web site of Brinker International, the chain’s corporate parent. It’s “almost enough to wrap around the globe!” And a good start if you want to look like one.

A Full Rack of Baby Back Ribs with Shiner Bock BBQ Sauce (made with Shiner Bock Beer) packs 1,660 calories, 39 grams of saturated fat, and 5,025 milligrams of sodium. Toss in the Homestyle Fries (400 calories) and Cinnamon Apples (270 calories) that come with the ribs and you’re talking a real ribs dinner. That assumes you can still open your mouth after swallowing 2,330 calories (more than a day’s worth), 45 grams of sat fat (two days’ quota), and 6,490 mg of sodium (a stunning four-day supply).

It’s like ordering two Chili’s 10 oz. Classic Sirloin Steak dinners (each with Loaded Mashed Potatoes and Steamed Broccoli), with a 10 oz. Classic Sirloin Steak on the side. After all, who would be full after only two steak dinners?

Macadoozy

“Penne with Cabot Aged Cheddar, Parmesan & Romano. Sprinkled with buttery crumb topping and baked in a deep dish pan.”

That’s how Uno Chicago Grill describes its Deep Dish Macaroni & 3-Cheese. Sounds like a classy upgrade of a classic comfort food. It’s an upgrade, all right. The calories shoot up to 1,980 (you’re done for the day!), the saturated fat hits 71 grams (3½ days’ worth), and the sodium reaches 3,110 milligrams (a two-day dose).

The Mac & 3-Cheese has more calories than any individual pizza on Uno’s menu except the sausage-laden Chicago Classic (which squeezes by with 2,300 calories). But it makes the Classic’s sat fat (53 grams) look prudent.

It’s not just the three cheeses. There’s the Alfredo sauce, which is made with heavy cream, cheese, rendered chicken fat, and butter. And the four cups of pasta plus the crushed Ritz Cracker crumbs also do their share to boost the calorie (and white flour) load.

Each Deep Dish Macaroni & 3-Cheese is like a Family Size box of Stouffer’s Macaroni & Cheese (which serves five) with half a stick of butter melted on top. Some comfort.

It’ll Cost Ya

The Cheesecake Factory Crispy Chicken Costoletta doesn’t sound like much of an indulgence. Sure, the chicken breast is “lightly breaded and sauteed to a crisp golden brown,” but it is chicken breast, after all. And the dish comes with mashed potatoes (not fries) and fresh asparagus (a green veggie!).

So you might be a tad surprised to learn that, according to the company, the meal packs 2,610 calories (more than a day’s worth), 89 grams of saturated fat (enough for almost a full work week), and 2,720 milligrams of sodium (your limit for today and most of tomorrow). In fact, the dish has more calories than any steak, chop, or burger meal on The Cheesecake Factory’s menu.

How do they do it? It’s partly the lemon (read: butter) sauce, the chicken’s oil-soaked breading, and the butter and cream in the three-quarter-pound serving of mashed potatoes. And it’s partly the sheer quantity of chicken (each of the three pieces could serve as an entree at most other restaurants).

Think of the Crispy Chicken Costoletta as an entire KFC 12-piece Original Recipe bucket (2,550 calories), except that the KFC has less than half the sat fat.

Get-a-Gutto Cake

“Chocolate cake layered with sambuca chocolate mousse, iced with chocolate frosting and dusted with cocoa powder.”

Yessiree. The Chocolate Zuccotto Cake at Maggiano’s Little Italy is big on chocolate. And big. Period.

Each slice is five inches tall and four inches wide and weighs just short of a pound. That helps explain why it delivers 1,820 calories (almost a day’s worth), 62 grams of saturated fat (a three-day load), and 26 teaspoons of added sugar (four days’ allowance) to your middle.

That’s roughly equal to an entire (eight-serving) Entenmann’s Chocolate Fudge Cake. Or 15 Hostess Ho Hos (may they rest in peace). And odds are, you just had dinner. ♦