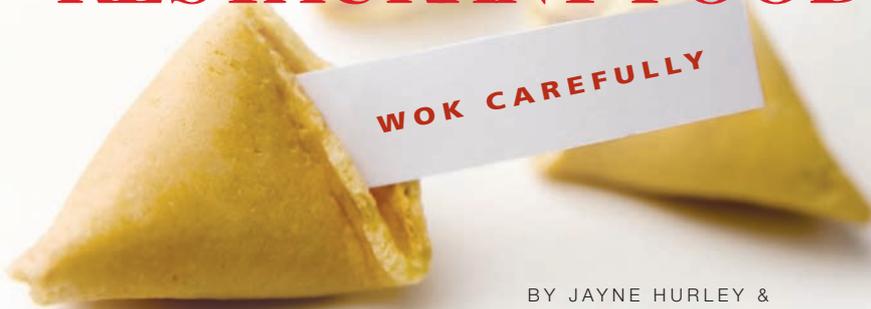


CHINESE RESTAURANT FOOD



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When it comes to eating out, Americans love Chinese. And Chinese restaurants deserve credit for keeping a lid on saturated and trans fat, thanks to vegetable oil, no cheese, and a host of seafood, poultry, and (hooray!) vegetable dishes. (While the sat fat in some dishes seems high, the unsaturated fat in their oil lowers bad cholesterol more than the oil's saturated fat raises bad cholesterol.)

But Chinese restaurant food is loaded with salt and—if you're not careful—delivers a load of calories, thanks to its oil, noodles, and deep-fried batter or breading.

Here's a guide to a few dozen popular dinner-size dishes from a typical Chinese restaurant menu. The numbers are based on our independent lab analyses, as well as information from two nationwide chains. Just remember that dishes vary from restaurant to restaurant. (Too bad real menus don't disclose calories, sodium, and saturated fat, as our mock menu does.)

Information compiled by Danielle Hazard, with help from Kirsten Bokenkamp and Kate Sherwood.

CHOP TIPS

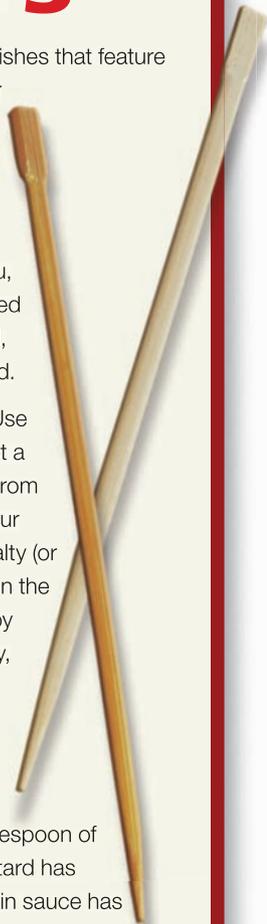
■ **Veg out.** Look for dishes that feature vegetables, not meat or noodles. Ask for extra broccoli, snow peas, or other veggies.

■ **Don't go deep.** Order your chicken, tofu, or seafood *lightly* stir-fried or braised, not breaded, battered, and deep-fried.

■ **Hold the sauce.** Use a fork or chopsticks, not a spoon, to get the food from the serving platter to your plate. That keeps the salty (or sugary or fatty) sauce on the platter, not soaked up by your rice and, eventually, your waist.

■ **Don't add in-salt to injury.** The food is salty enough without adding more. Each tablespoon of duck sauce or hot mustard has 100 mg of sodium; hoisin sauce has 250 mg; soy sauce has 1,000 mg.

■ **Urp!** Many entrées have 1,000 to 1,500 calories (not counting the 200 calories in every cup of brown or white rice). Share or ask for a doggie bag.



APPETIZERS & SOUPS

EGG ROLL (1)

Calories: 200 Sat Fat: 2 grams Sodium: 400 mg

SPRING ROLL (1)

Calories: 100 Sat Fat: 1 gram Sodium: 300 mg

A thinner wrapper and smaller size give spring rolls fewer calories than egg rolls.



BBQ SPARE RIBS (4)

Calories: 600 Sat Fat: 14 grams Sodium: 900 mg

An order is equal to two pork chops.
Some appetizer.

VEGETABLE DUMPLINGS (6 steamed)

Calories: 400 Sat Fat: 3 grams Sodium: 1,100 mg

PORK DUMPLINGS (6 steamed)

Calories: 500 Sat Fat: 6 grams Sodium: 900 mg

Add just 10 calories per dumpling if you get them pan-fried. (All bets are off for calories in the deep-fried wonton appetizer.) Dipping sauce means even more sodium.

EGG DROP SOUP

Calories: 100 Sat Fat: 0 grams Sodium: 900 mg

HOT & SOUR SOUP

Calories: 100 Sat Fat: 1 gram Sodium: 1,100 mg

WONTON SOUP

Calories: 100 Sat Fat: 1 gram Sodium: 800 mg

Soups are bad for your blood pressure (but not your waistline). Think of every ½-cup side of fried noodles as a small (150-calorie) bag of potato chips.



VEGETABLES

STIR-FRIED GREENS

Calories: 900 **Sat Fat:** 11 grams **Sodium:** 2,200 mg

Yikes! Spinach and other greens are packed with vitamins, but (thanks to the added oil and salt) your waist and blood pressure pay a price for them.



EGGPLANT IN GARLIC SAUCE

Calories: 1,000 **Sat Fat:** 13 grams **Sodium:** 2,000 mg

Eggplant isn't a vitamin-rich superstar, but it is a vegetable. It also really soaks up the oil, which boosts the calories and saturated fat.

TOFU & MIXED VEGETABLES (HOMESTYLE TOFU)

Calories: 900 **Sat Fat:** 9 grams **Sodium:** 2,200 mg

Blame the deep-fried tofu (bean curd). Ask them to stir-fry it instead.

SZECHUAN STRING BEANS

Calories: 600 **Sat Fat:** 6 grams **Sodium:** 2,700 mg

String beans in chili-pepper-garlic sauce don't sop up as much oil as spinach or eggplant, but the sodium is still ridiculous.

STIR-FRIED MIXED VEGETABLES (BUDDHA'S DELIGHT)

Calories: 500 **Sat Fat:** 2 grams **Sodium:** 2,200 mg

A veggie lode. Mix it with a vegetable-poor dish to create two (or three) healthier meals.

MA PO (HUNAN) TOFU

Calories: 600 **Sat Fat:** 4 grams **Sodium:** 2,300 mg

A pound of soft tofu (bean curd) with scallions isn't too bad if—like the samples we analyzed—it comes without the pork that some restaurants add.

SEAFOOD

SHRIMP WITH GARLIC SAUCE

Calories: 700 **Sat Fat:** 4 grams **Sodium:** 3,000 mg

Shrimp stir-fried with veggies. The calories and saturated fat—but not the sodium—stay on the lowish side.

SHRIMP WITH LOBSTER SAUCE

Calories: 400 **Sat Fat:** 3 grams **Sodium:** 2,300 mg

Shrimp in wine sauce with a sprinkling of mushrooms, egg, and scallions isn't quite as good as shrimp with snap peas, broccoli, or other veggies. But at least it won't pad your midsection like battered, deep-fried dishes will.

SZECHUAN SHRIMP

Calories: 700 **Sat Fat:** 2 grams **Sodium:** 2,500 mg

Shrimp stir-fried with vegetables in chili-pepper-garlic sauce. It's likely to be almost half vegetables, so the calories (though not the sodium) stay under control. If it's breaded and deep-fried or contains nuts, the calories climb.

CHICKEN

CHICKEN WITH BLACK BEAN SAUCE

Calories: 700 **Sat Fat:** 5 grams **Sodium:** 3,800 mg

Expect ½ to ¾ pound of sliced stir-fried chicken with chunks of green pepper and onion. If only it weren't so high in sodium.

LEMON CHICKEN

Calories: 1,400 **Sat Fat:** 13 grams **Sodium:** 700 mg

It's like eating three McDonald's McChicken sandwiches plus a 32-oz. Coke. The culprit? The deep-fried breading.

MOO GOO GAI PAN

Calories: 600 **Sat Fat:** 4 grams **Sodium:** 1,800 mg

Stir-fried vegetables and chicken keep the calories and saturated fat (but not the sodium) relatively low.

GENERAL TSO'S CHICKEN

Calories: 1,300 **Sat Fat:** 11 grams **Sodium:** 3,200 mg

The name may sound exotic, but it's essentially fried chicken with a smattering of vegetables.

KUNG PAO CHICKEN

Calories: 1,400 **Sat Fat:** 13 grams **Sodium:** 2,600 mg

The calories may be high (thanks to nuts). But at least you're getting stir-fried (not battered and deep-fried) chicken and veggies.

CHICKEN CHOW MEIN (WITH CRISPY NOODLES)

Calories: 700 **Sat Fat:** 10 grams **Sodium:** 2,500 mg

Chow Mein varies. Our numbers are for vegetables and chicken served with rice (not soft noodles). Add 120 calories if you eat the thin, crispy fried noodles that come on the side.

MEAT

MU SHU PORK (WITHOUT THE PANCAKES)

Calories: 1,000 **Sat Fat:** 13 grams **Sodium:** 2,600 mg

Two-thirds of the dish is veggies. Add roughly 90 calories for each 8-inch pancake or 60 calories for each 6-inch pancake. Mu Shu Chicken cuts about 200 calories and 5 grams of sat fat.



ORANGE (CRISPY) BEEF

Calories: 1,500 **Sat Fat:** 11 grams **Sodium:** 3,100 mg

Orange (or Crispy) Beef has roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ pound of flour-coated, deep-fried meat that isn't outweighed by the garnish of vegetables. Shrimp or chicken might trim the sat fat, but you'll still be downing more than 1,000 calories and two days' sodium.

BEEF WITH BROCCOLI

Calories: 900 **Sat Fat:** 9 grams **Sodium:** 3,200 mg

Although more than half the dish is broccoli, the $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of beef still packs half a day's worth of saturated fat.

SWEET & SOUR PORK

Calories: 1,300 **Sat Fat:** 13 grams **Sodium:** 800 mg

More sugar means less salt. Sweet & Sour Chicken may be slightly lower in calories and saturated fat. But either way, you're eating more oil-soaked breading than meat.



Numbers for the meat, vegetable, chicken, and seafood dishes don't include rice. Add 200 calories for every cup you eat. A typical takeout carton of rice contains about two cups.

RICE & NOODLES

CHICKEN CHOW FOON

Calories: 1,200 **Sat Fat:** 7 grams **Sodium:** 3,400 mg

Like the thinner lo mein noodles, these soft, wide, rice noodles are a blow to your belly and blood pressure, and the veggies are still largely AWOL.

Two meals in one.

Most chicken, tofu, beef, or pork dishes have 50 to 100 grams of protein—at least a day's worth—so it makes perfect sense to eat only half and take the rest home.

COMBINATION (HOUSE) FRIED RICE

Calories: 1,500 **Sat Fat:** 10 grams **Sodium:** 2,700 mg

Why blow three-quarters of a day's calories on 4 or 5 cups of salted white rice, oil, and meat sprinkled with vegetable bits? A single version (vegetable, shrimp, chicken, beef, or pork) still has at least 1,000 calories.



COMBINATION (HOUSE) LO MEIN

Calories: 1,100 **Sat Fat:** 7 grams **Sodium:** 3,500 mg

Beef, chicken, pork, shrimp, vegetables, and oily noodles. Budget fewer calories for the solo chicken, shrimp, or vegetable version, but it's still a load of greasy refined carbs.

COMBINATION (HOUSE) CHOW MEIN (WITH SOFT NOODLES)

Calories: 1,200 **Sat Fat:** 9 grams **Sodium:** 3,600 mg

This version of chow mein features soft egg noodles stir-fried with beef, pork, chicken, shrimp, and a smattering of vegetables. It looks like lo mein on the plate...and on your hips and arteries. You can lose a few hundred calories by switching to a single version (chicken, shrimp, or vegetable).

Daily Limits (for a 2,000-calorie diet): **Saturated Fat:** 20 grams. **Sodium:** 1,500 milligrams.

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