

By David Zinczenko, with Matt Goulding Provided by:



[Eat This, Not That](#)

America's Worst Breakfast Foods

Posted Wed, Sep 17, 2008, 11:50

am PDT

92% of users found this article helpful.

[Post a Comment](#) [View All 73 Comments](#)

It's hard to overestimate the importance of eating breakfast. Studies show that people who take time for a morning meal consume fewer calories over the course of the day, have stronger cognitive skills, and are 30 percent less likely to be overweight or **obese**. Beyond that, people who skip breakfast are more likely to drink alcohol and smoke, and they're less likely to exercise.

But just because breakfast is the most important meal of the day doesn't grant you permission to go into a feeding frenzy. But that's exactly what many of the country's most popular breakfast joints are setting you up for, by peddling fatty scrambles, misguided muffins, and pancakes that look like manhole covers.

These foods are loaded with unhealthy fats, added sugars, and refined carbohydrates, which catapult your blood sugar, sap your energy levels, and tell your body to store fat.

To help you avoid the morning mishaps, we searched out the good, the bad, and the greasy, and uncovered some of the worst breakfast foods in America. We've presented a sampling of the worst offenders below. It's like a lineup down at the local police station, except in this case, they're all guilty as charged.

Worst Side Dish

Burger King Hash Browns (large)

620 calories

40 g fat (11 g saturated; 13 g trans)

1,200 mg sodium

60 g carbs

Yes, you're ingesting more than a meal's worth of calories from a side dish, but the real cause for concern here is that these little potato cakes pack seven times more trans fats than you're supposed to eat all day! Until BK learns to cut out the partially hydrogenated oils, avoid

encounters with potatoes of any kind at that fatty food joint.

Eat This Instead!

Burger King Egg & Cheese Croissan'wich

300 calories

17 g fat (6 g saturated; 2 g trans)

740 mg sodium

26 g carbs

Worst Breakfast Sandwich

Hardee's Monster Biscuit

710 calories

51 g fat (17 g saturated)

2,250 mg sodium

37 g carbohydrates

When they say "Monster," they mean it. This 700-calorie behemoth should be enough to scare anyone: It contains nearly a full day's worth of sodium and saturated fat. Instead try the Sunrise Croissant with Bacon. It's not exactly diet-friendly, but if you're stuck at Hardee's, it's a way to escape without too much damage.

Eat This Instead!

Hardee's Sunrise Croissant with Bacon

450 calories

29 g fat (12 g saturated)

900 mg sodium

28 g carbs

Worst Kids Meal

Denny's Big Dipper French Toastix with margarine and syrup

770 calories

71 g fat (13 g saturated)

107 g carbs

As important as it is for mom and dad to eat a good breakfast each morning, it's even more

critical that their kids do. After all, breakfast affects their energy levels, metabolism, and performance in school. Better think twice before feeding them these dubious little sticks. For more healthy kids' choices, [check out Eat This, Not That! for Kids](#).

Eat This Instead!

Kid's D-Zone Smiley Alien Hotcakes

340 calories

12 g fat (5 g saturated)

49 g carbs

Worst Pastry

Cinnabon Classic Cinnamon Roll

813 calories

32 g fat (5 g trans fat)

117 g carbs

You wouldn't start your day with three brownies, would you? As far as your body knows, that's exactly what you'll be doing if you wake up with this cinnamon-swirled disaster area. In fact, because Cinnabon offers no healthy alternatives, you'll have to invite friends (or enemies?) to share the risky roll, or steer clear of Cinnabon altogether.

Worst Smoothie

Smoothie King Grape Expectations II (40 oz.)

1,102 calories

256 g sugars

740 mg sodium

Why Smoothie King would even offer a 40 oz. serving size is beyond us. With more than half the calories you need in a day and the sugar equivalent of 12 Haagen Dasz ice cream bars, this "drink" should be renamed "diabetes in a glass." Just goes to show you the importance of drinking responsibly.

Drink This Instead!

Smoothie King Low Carb Strawberry Smoothie (20 oz.)

268 calories

3 g sugars

176 mg sodium

Worst Combo Meal

McDonald's Deluxe Breakfast

1,360 calories

64 g fat (22 g saturated)

2,325 mg sodium

160 g carbs

49 g sugars

With four vehicles for refined carbohydrates (biscuit, hash browns, hotcakes, syrup), this “deluxe” disaster will send your blood sugar soaring. Why blow nearly an entire day’s calories under the arches, when a perfectly satisfying Egg McMuffin will save you more than 1,000 calories?

Eat This Instead!

McDonald's Egg McMuffin with coffee

310 calories

12 g fat (5 g saturated)

820 mg sodium

30 g carbs

3 g sugars

Worst Omelet

IHOP Big Steak Omelet

1,490 calories

(No additional nutrition information available)

IHOP doesn’t provide nutritional information aside from calorie counts, but with a boatload of steak, a bucket of cheese, and handfuls of hash browns, this omelet’s fat and sodium numbers are surely just as appalling.

Eat This Instead!

IHOP For Me Garden Scramble

440 calories

The Worst Breakfast in America

Bob Evans Stacked and Stuffed Caramel Banana Pecan Hotcakes

1,543 calories

77 g fat (26 g saturated; 9 g trans)

2,259 mg sodium

198 g carbs

109 g sugars

It's not a good sign when it takes you nearly five seconds to spit out the name of your breakfast.

This bad boy packs in more than 75 percent of your calories for the day, along with more sugar and fat than nine glazed Dunkin' Donuts, and nearly as much sodium as five Bloody Marys.

Eat This Instead!

3 Scrambled Egg Beaters with 2 slices of bacon and fresh fruit

314 calories

19.5 g fat (5 g saturated)

700 mg sodium

21 g carbs

18 g sugars