



# LOW CAL FOOD SWAPS

Avoid packing on the pounds this winter with these everyday low calorie food swaps! With all those cravings for rich home cooked meals, it is easy to put on a few extra pounds between November and January. "Americans probably gain only a pound during the winter season -- but this extra weight accumulates through the years and may be a major contributor to obesity later in life," according to a study performed by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Easily avoid those extra pounds by using these tips to eat a little cleaner and stay a little leaner this winter.

| KEEP                               | DITCH   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. <b>Water &amp; Seltzer</b>      | Soda, Juice, Sweetened tea<br>Sweetened drinks, even 100% juice, are full of sugar and calories. Think of them as liquid candy. Give up the sweetened beverages and save an average of 120 calories per 8oz serving! Wouldn't you rather eat your calories instead of drink them?   |
| 2. <b>Oatmeal</b>                  | Granola<br>The calories in granola can add up quick. It is often coated in oil and covered in sugar which can pack more than 150 per ¼ cup serving. Start your morning with a bowl of filling whole grain oatmeal, top with sliced fruit & nuts for an added crunch.  |
| 3. <b>Greek Yogurt</b>             | Traditional Yogurt<br>Greek Yogurt has more than twice the protein than traditional style yogurt. It is impossibly thick and creamy- even when it is fat free. Best of all, that added protein will keep you full all day and the touch of sweetness can ward off that sweet tooth.   |
| 4. <b>Salmon</b>                   | Steak<br>In the mood for something savory and meaty? Salmon might be the answer. You don't have to give your red meat up all the time but a serving of salmon vs. steak can save over 10g saturated fat and provide a heart healthy dose of Omega-3 fats.   |
| 5. <b>Avocado, Greek Yogurt</b>    | Mayonnaise & sour cream<br>Instead of ruining a perfectly healthy sandwich by slathering on high-cal mayo, try some simple avocado slices or mash some up with a dash of lemon juice, salt & pepper. Making tuna or chicken salad? Cut calories by adding some plain Greek yogurt or mashed avocado in place of half the mayonnaise in your recipe. Greek yogurt is also a great swap for a dollop of sour cream.           |
| 6. <b>Cauliflower</b>              | Potatoes<br>Cut some carbohydrates and calories by using cauliflower for mashed potatoes. Steam your cauliflower, add some garlic, salt & pepper and puree in the food processor. Rich and creamy just like mashed potatoes but a fraction of the calories.   |
| 7. <b>Popcorn</b>                  | Chips, pretzels & other crunchy snacks<br>When you are in the mood for something slightly salty with a big crunch- reach for some microwave popcorn. Low cal versions such as Smart Pop can give you a 3 cup serving for around 120 calories. 3 cups! Where you can eat around 15 chips for the same amount of calories.  |
| 8. <b>Coffee &amp; Iced Coffee</b> | Fancy Café drinks & Coffee creamers<br>Keep your coffee simple; use a little low fat milk, a touch of honey or even some Stevia or Truvia to sweeten your cup. These can add the sweetness without adding too many calories. Steer clear of frappes, blended coffee drinks & sweetened lattes, these can pack hundreds of calories. The calories are now posted on the menu at Starbucks to help you make better decisions. |

# Recipe Reduction

## 1. Reduce sugar content

Many baking recipes call for large amounts of sugar, which can often be reduced with very little effect on the taste of the finished product. Try using only two thirds of the recommended sugar to reduce the calories.

Another alternative is to substitute some of the sugar with a fruit puree or sauce or add dried fruit for sweetness. This may not always cut the calories, but at least it will provide more nutritional benefit to your food in the form of fiber and vitamins.

Remember that even sugar in a more natural form, such as honey, it still contains just as many calories, so **swapping white sugar for brown or other sweeteners will have no effect on the calorie content if the same quantity is used.**

## 2. Reduce fat content

Fat has the most calories per gram of any of the nutrients, so cutting back the added fat content when cooking is a sure fire way to reduce calories as well. In baking, substitutes such as apple sauce, and dairy products such as milk and yogurt may add the extra moisture needed to be able to reduce the amount of fat in the dish.

In cooking, an oil spray can be a helpful tool, as oil can be evenly distributed in a thin layer, meaning less calories are added than if it is poured on.

It is important to remember, however, that some fats are healthy, so by substituting an unhealthy saturated fat such as **butter**, for a healthier oil such as olive, **you will make the dish healthier.** This will not lower the calories however, as all fats contain the same amount of calories per gram.

If you can do without- then do without. For example, think about if you really need that spread of butter on the bread in your sandwich or that extra butter stirred through your pasta.

## 3. Add vegetables

Adding vegetables and legumes to meat dishes is a great way to cut calories, as well as lower the content of saturated fat, add fiber and nutrients. Try grating vegetables into ground turkey or beef dishes such as burgers, chili, and meatloaf and meat sauce to reduce the meat per portion. Chop up carrots, onion, mushrooms, zucchini, etc.

## 5. Buy low fat & trim meats and poultry well

The fat on meat and in chicken skin is of the unhealthy saturated type. Therefore, by removing this fat before cooking you are not only cutting calories, but also reducing the fat content of the dish.

Choose lean cuts of meat such as chicken, turkey, ground turkey, 90/10 or 95/5 ground beef, pork tenderloin or center cut pork chops. Avoid more processed meats such as hot dogs, sausage, salami, and lunch meats- these are higher in fat and calories.

## 6. Choose reduced fat & more flavorful cheeses

Fat free cheese may not be close enough to the real deal, but you can choose a reduced fat or 2% milk version to save up to ½ the calories. Ask for reduced fat, even at the deli counter. Have them slice it as thin as possible so that you can have more than one slice. Swiss is naturally the lowest in cholesterol and sodium so it is always the safest choice.

Always choose low fat ricotta and cottage cheese as well, you won't even know that they aren't the full fat version.

Also try choosing cheeses that have a stronger flavor, like sharp or aged cheddar over regular cheddar. Hard, aged, cheeses like parmesan or pecorino Romano are very low in calories but can add a lot of flavor.

## 7. Use low fat cooking techniques

Be creative with your cooking and try different methods that require less fat for calorie reduced versions of your favorites.

For example, try oven roasting French fries and chicken rather than frying them or cook fish on a hot grill, roasted in foil in the oven or on a BBQ, where much less oil is needed.

Boiling, steaming and poaching are also great low fat cooking methods.

## 8. Reduce portion sizes of carbs and increase vegetables

By simply adding a few extra veggies to a dish and reducing the carbohydrate portion, you can easily cut a significant amount of calories. Serve pasta with chunky vegetables such as zucchini or broccoli to replace some of the pasta, or make a noodle free lasagna, using eggplant slices instead of the pasta sheets. When making rice, make it more of a pilaf by adding diced vegetables and hydrating it with low sodium broth.

## 9. Use herbs and spices for flavor

If you usually add generous portions of fat or salt to a meal to improve the flavor, get creative to find interesting ways to spice up dishes without adding extra calories.

Fresh and dried herbs and spice are an excellent way to add flavor. Use salt free blends like Mrs. Dash for quick meals. Keep fresh herbs in the freezer- throw them in a zip top bag and cut off a few leaves when you need some.

Use vinegars, mustards, hot sauces, lime & lemon to add acidity and spice.