

# Dining Out with Dr. Boz

by Park Center's own Tim Ostrich



Welcome back to the dinner table, my dear readers. Before I get started, I have to express my gratitude for the response received after my initial column about McDonald's last month. I'm pretty sure I heard from at least a half dozen people, almost all of whom refrained from cussing me out! I thought it might be fun to share a few of their comments:

"What an eye opener! Who would've thought a grilled chicken sandwich would be so sketchy!"

"There is **no** way I'm drinking another Frappe again - at least not a large one."

"Did you really eat all that for breakfast?"

"Way to ruin McDonald's for me, Jerkface!"

I'll just say this: if opening the eyes of a few people to the nutritional bombs waiting to go off at your local fast food joint or restaurant means I'm a jerkface, then I happily accept the label. I don't write this column to be popular. Okay, that's a lie. I **do** write this column to be popular, but I don't write this column to be liked. Sometimes revealing the truth, much like ripping off a bandage, is a painful process. So sling those bad words and derogatory names my way, baby! Just keep reading the column, taking to hear the information provided, and make better food choices. Fair trade?

This month we'll be exploring the menu of **Subway**. You might be saying to yourself, "But, Dr. Boz, isn't everything at Subway healthy? I mean, that Jared guy lost like 9,000 pounds or something, and *he* eats there all the time!" Yes, Jared was quite successful on the "Subway Diet." And yes, there are plenty of excellent options on the menu. This doesn't mean *everything* on the menu is good for you. Far from it, quite honestly. Let's take a look-see at the menu, starting with the ever-popular "6 grams of fat or less" subs:

Item	Calories	Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)	Sugar (g)	Protein (g)
Black Forest Ham	290	4.5	1	1200	5	7	18
Oven Roasted Chicken	320	4.5	1	750	5	7	23
Roast Beef	310	4.5	1.5	840	5	6	26
Subway Club®	320	5	1.5	1160	5	6	26
Sweet Onion Chicken Teriyaki	380	4.5	1	1010	5	17	26
Turkey Breast	280	3.5	1	920	5	6	18
Turkey w/Black Forest Ham	300	4	1	1140	5	7	19
Veggie Delite®	230	2.5	0.5	410	5	5	9

(All information at <http://subway.com/subwayroot/MenuNutrition/Nutrition/PDF/NutritionValues.pdf>)

A couple important notes with Subway's nutrition facts: **1)** Data for all subs, unless otherwise specified, includes the 9-grain wheat bread (six inch), lettuce, tomatoes, onions, green peppers, and cucumbers. **2)** items **not** included in the nutrition values (which **must be added separately**) are cheese, dressings, sauces, condiments, and additional meats. **3)** Unless you go absolutely bonkers with extra tomatoes and onions (or add a bunch of olives), you won't see much of a change in calories (a maximum of five calories for each additional "serving" of vegetables). **4)** Chips, cookies, and drinks are separate, as well.

Now, since we got THAT little disclaimer out of the way, let's get down to the business of scrutinizing the subs. It's good to see all eight subs really **do** have 6g of fat or less (5g or less, actually). Also, you'll notice every sub has 5g of fiber, almost exclusively from the bread. This is an important fact, as the vast majority of bread options at Subway have less fiber. Not surprisingly, the "Sweet" Onion Teriyaki has a lot more sugar, but overall, these eight subs are pretty similar across the board. The one negative, a big one at that, is the sodium. Half of the subs are over 1000mg, which pushes you close to about 50% of the recommended allotment for the day with just **one** sandwich. And again, this **isn't** including cheese, sauces, condiments, and chips (all of which will add more sodium to the meal). The winner here is the Veggie Delite®, where the only thing lacking is protein.

Of course, Subway has more than just these low-fat options. Sadly, dear reader, not everything at Subway is good for

you. Get a load of **these** six-inch masterpieces:

Item	Calories	Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)	Sugar (g)	Protein (g)
Big Philly Cheesesteak	520	18	9	1570	6	7	39
BLT	360	13	6	990	5	5	17
Chicken & Bacon Ranch	570	28	19	1190	6	7	35
Cold Cut Combo	410	16	6	1450	5	6	21
Italian B.M.T.®	450	20	8	1730	5	7	22
Meatball Marinara	580	23	9	1530	9	17	24
Spicy Italian	520	28	11	1830	6	7	22
Subway Melt®	380	11	5	1530	5	7	25
The Feast	540	22	9	2470	6	8	39
Tuna	530	30	6	930	5	6	21

I double checked. Those numbers are correct. I don't even know where to start here. I guess the first gigantic flashing red light I see is the sodium. Only **two** of these subs are under 1000mg, with more than half over 1500mg and one at a whopping **2470!!!** I don't mean to sound like a broken record, but we're talking **over** the daily recommended allotment of sodium **in one 6" sandwich!** A sandwich that, again, doesn't include cheese, sauce, dressing, chips, and so on. Another big shock is the level of saturated fat in all these subs. In a day and age where everything has "zero trans and saturated fats," it is simply shocking to see these numbers. 19g in one sub alone? Wow. Just . . . wow.

It's hard to really offer anything positive on this group of sandwiches. When the sub with bacon on it is your best option, I think it's high time to move on to a different part of the menu. And let's be honest, how many people eat BLTs without including mayo, cheese, or both? So any positive would be negated by the extras. On a personal note, my favorite sub from "before" was the Meatball Marinara, foot long, with shredded mozzarella and Parmesan cheeses. Grand total for that sub, including cheese? 1,240 calories and over 3000mg of sodium. I have to laugh, otherwise I'd start to cry. Probably the most telling fact about these subs is this: the nutritional data provided by Subway includes tables for both 6" and foot long subs for the low-fat subs, while these "other" sandwiches do not have a separate foot long table. In other words, you shouldn't be eating them, and definitely not the foot long variety. It doesn't take an advanced degree to realize you get more bang for your caloric buck going with the low-fat subs.

Subway also offers salads. Really! Seriously, I've never had a salad at Subway, but they always look good when I see other people eating them. Basically, all of the low-fat sub meats can be turned into a salad. Also, all salad nutritional data includes the same vegetables as the corresponding sandwich as well as olives. Again, these numbers do not include cheese, dressings, croutons, or any other extras. Only major point worth noting is, apparently, meat (except chicken) has lots of sodium. It's still lean meat for the most part, but the price you'll pay for eating it is salt. And as far as dressings, there is a simple rule to follow: if it isn't fat free, you probably should flee. Any dressing not listed as fat free is almost **all** fat. Sure, the fat might not be saturated, but it's fat nonetheless. Opt for your Fat Free Italian or Red Wine Vinaigrette, but also recognize you'll be getting a lot of salt with both of those.

My new favorite thing with Subway is breakfast. I've been proclaiming to one and all the breakfast options at Subway are the best things since the release of the Nintendo Wii, which is saying a lot because the Wii is **AWESOME!** Bonus points also go to Subway for offering an egg white option for these sandwiches, along with a light wheat English muffin. Much to my delight, the nutritional values for the majority of options weren't too shabby. Here are the numbers for the Egg White Muffin Melts:

Item	Calories	Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)	Sugar (g)	Protein (g)
Egg White and Cheese only	140	3.5	1	490	5	0	12
Black Forest Ham	160	4	1.5	680	5	1	15
Double Bacon	190	7	3	670	5	0	16
Sausage	270	15	6	750	5	0	16
Steak	170	4.5	1.5	630	5	0	16
Western	160	4	1.5	680	5	1	15

Nutritional values for all Melts include the muffin, cheese, egg white, and meat. No need to add in any extra info with these sandwiches, unless of course you add sauces or mayo. We see the same theme with breakfast, as sodium is the big negative mark in all these Melts. What I've come to realize is if something is low in fat and calories, it's probably going to be high in sodium. The only obvious exception would be fresh produce. We'll probably see the same thing each month, as restaurants tend to compensate for the cry to make things "healthy" by adding a bunch of salt to make sure people don't also cry about everything being bland.

The other negative with these sandwiches can be found in the meat selected. Sausage and Bacon are the clear losers here. If you can avoid those meats, the rest of the Melts are fairly decent, especially for a breakfast sandwich. And if you're like me and enjoy the Egg McMuffin, I'd suggest going with the no meat Melt and adding your own Canadian bacon afterwards. Surprisingly, Canadian bacon is one of the better options when it comes to breakfast meats.

There are plenty of options with the breakfast sandwiches. In addition to the different meats, you can also select between egg white and regular egg (i.e., egg yolk included). The caloric increase in choosing the regular egg option is about 25-30 calories, all of which is fat (2-3g total fat, 1g saturated). In addition, you can also order 6" Omelet Sandwiches, either with egg whites or regular eggs. My recommendation is to not do this, as you start moving into some dangerous nutritional territory. The 6" Omelet Sandwiches are, roughly speaking, 2.25 times bigger than the Melts, and all of these sandwiches have more than 1000mg of sodium (nearly 1800mg for one type). If you're **that** hungry, I'd strongly recommend just getting two Melts instead of one 6" sandwich. You actually get more fiber and protein while missing out on a little bit of the excess sodium and fat. Or you could get one Melt and have some fruit along with it. Wouldn't hurt, that's for sure.

Some people ask me if there's much difference among the bread and cheese options at Subway. Generally speaking, not really. You're looking at similar calorie counts with only minor variations across the other nutritional categories. However, in the interest of full disclosure, here is the data for various breads and cheeses (all for 6" subs):

Item	Calories	Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)	Sugar (g)	Protein (g)
Italian (White)	200	2	0.5	390	1	5	7
9-Grain Wheat	210	2	0.5	410	4	3	8
Parmesan Oregano	220	2.5	1	620	2	5	8
Honey Oat	260	3	0.5	430	5	8	9
Monteray Cheddar	240	5	3	460	1	5	10
Italian Herbs and Cheese	250	5	2	590	2	5	10
Roasted Garlic	230	2.5	0.5	1360	2	7	8
Light Wheat English Muffin	90	0.5	0	170	5	0	7
Flatbread	240	5	1	480	2	<1	8
Mini Italian	130	1.5	0	260	1	3	5
Mini Wheat	140	1.5	0	270	3	2	5

Item	Calories	Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)	Sugar (g)	Protein (g)
American	40	3.5	2	200	0	0	2
Monteray Cheddar Shredded	50	4.5	3	90	0	0	3
Natural Cheddar	60	5	3	100	0	0	4
Mozzarella Shredded	40	3	2	100	0	0	3
Pepperjack	50	4	2.5	140	0	0	3
Provolone	50	4	2	125	0	0	4
Swiss	50	4.5	2.5	30	0	0	4

Nutritional values show a few different things. First, any bread involving cheese (e.g., Parmesan Oregano, Italian Herbs and Cheese) jacks up the sodium content. And I can't say I've ever seen the Roasted Garlic, but **man** that is a crazy sodium level! Second, Wheat and Honey Oat are your fiber champions. Third, there isn't much difference among your cheese choices. Swiss is a nice option to help cut back on the sodium. Mozzarella is a decent choice as well, since it

has the lowest calories and fat with one of the lower sodium numbers as well. Finally, you can see just why I'm such a fan of the breakfast Melts. Wheat Muffins, with 5g of fiber, 90 calories, and almost no fat, are awfully hard to pass up.

Subway also offers soups, which may be a surprise to many of you. Personally, most of the Subway restaurants I've seen aren't big on selling their soups. It also seems like they have the same soup every day (usually something I hate like Broccoli and Cheese), although this might just be my local Subway. At any rate, soups do exist. There is a pretty easy rule with Subway soups as well: if it involves cream, chili, or cheese, it is best to take a pass. Also, much the same as most soups anywhere, they are filled with sodium. Here are a few choices, just to give you a sample of what Subway has to offer:

Item	Calories	Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)	Sugar (g)	Protein (g)
Chili Con Carne	340	11	5	950	10	7	20
Cream of Potato with Bacon	240	13	5	870	3	3	5
Golden Broccoli & Cheese	180	11	5	990	4	3	5
New England Clam Chowder	150	5	1	990	4	2	6
Roasted Chicken Noodle	80	2	0.5	950	1	2	6
Wild Rice with Chicken	230	11	3.5	900	1	3	6
Chicken Tortilla	110	1.5	0.5	440	3	4	6

I threw the Chicken Tortilla on the end to show there **is** a good option when it comes to Subway soups. A significantly smaller amount of sodium, coupled with low calories and low fat makes the Chicken Tortilla a clear frontrunner as the healthiest Subway soup option. While the Chicken Noodle may be good in terms of calories and fat, it appears to consist primarily of water and salt. The rest of the soups? Well, you can see the numbers. You tell me, do you want to take in the calories, fat, and sodium just to have a bowl of Chili Con Carne?

Last but not least is my favorite part of the review - Desserts and Sides. I will admit going through a bad episode of eating Subway cookies on a daily basis a few months ago. They are **very** tasty. But again, my new rule is "if it tastes good, it's either high in salt or high in fat and calories." All Subway cookies are almost identical in their nutritional content:

Calories	Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)	Sugar (g)	Protein (g)
200-220	8-12	4-6	100-190	0-1	14-20	2-4

Subway offers three of these bad boys for \$1. How can you say no to an offer like that? Well, simply print the table above and carry it with you everywhere you go. Remind yourself that **one** of those cookies is 200 calories, never mind eating **three** of them! They're delicious, I grant you that much. But they ain't **that** delicious.

There are healthier options available for sides and desserts. Also, Subway offers the "Fresh Fit" value meals. For example, you can get apple slices or a light yogurt, both of which are fat free and less than 100 calories. In addition, Subway offers Baked Lays which are typically between 120-140 calories per bag. Just be sure to stay away from your "regular" versions of salty sides, as well as the SunChips (only because the bags are slightly bigger and therefore have more calories and fat). And, of course, when it comes to beverages, water is always your best option. If you need something else, opt for your unsweetened tea, preferably in a size smaller than "ginormous."

There you have it! (Almost) everything you ever wanted to now about the nutritional content of Subway products. Unlike last month, where it seemed as if each food was worse than the last, Subway truly does offer a variety of healthy options to meet your dietary needs. They also offer up a whole lot of questionable choices, too, but at least you have some options available. Now for our winners and losers:

**Winners**

- Low-Fat 6: Sub Menu (Veggie Delite® in particular)
- Breakfast Melts (especially the egg white option)
- Wheat Bread
- "Fresh Fit Value Meals (e.g., apples, yogurt, water)
- Availability of Baked Lays
- Chicken Tortilla Soup
- Most Salads (with Fat Free dressing)

**Losers**

- Any Sub NOT on the Low Fat Menu
- 6" Breakfast Omelet Sandwiches
- Breads Baked with Cheese
- Cookies (all of them)
- Regular Chips (i.e., not "baked")
- Cream and/or Cheese Soups
- People who love cheese, sauces, mayo, and various other condiments, since these items are not included in the stats

Well, in the immortal words of Biff Tannen (of *Back to the Future* fame), time for me to make like a tree and get out of here. I'll meet everyone back here next month. Dinner is on me. ☺

Is there an eating establishment you'd like me to review? If so, drop me an email at [drboz75@yahoo.com](mailto:drboz75@yahoo.com). Or if you have any other ideas for the column, feel free to send me a message. I'm definitely open to your feedback and/or harassment.