

Summer BBQ Eating Guide



Fit Woman
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With summer season in full swing, I thought it would be timely to create a guide on Summer BBQ eating. While I've written this guide from the perspective of being a Calgary resident (in terms of specific product analysis), my hope is that anyone can find value in the comparisons made. Also, there's a good chance that you can find "like" products wherever you reside. If you're reading this and would like to get my opinion on any food product that you're curious about, simply send me the name and label (when possible) of said product, and we can discuss how it will best fit in with your current goals.

I should preface by suggesting that you make food decisions based on a "cost-benefit analysis". If you really like a certain food, and the calorie-reduced version of that food takes the flavour level down from a 10/10 to a 3/10, for example, then the cost of opting for the healthier version may be too great. However, if you find a burger that has 50% of that fat of your favourite burger, yet still yields a high score on the flavour meter, then the benefits of eating said burger could potentially outweigh the cost of a marginal reduction in flavour.

The guide below is laid out in 5 parts: Hamburgers, Sausages, Chicken, Steak, and Salad.

At the end of the guide you'll find two sample BBQ meals with drastically different calorie contents. These plates are designed to give you a visual of how two somewhat similar looking BBQ-based meals can have a very different impact on fat loss/gain.

At the end of the day though, fat loss/gain still comes down to net energy balance. A lower calorie plate of food is only going to elicit fat loss if you ate in accordance the rest of the day. Vice versa for the higher calorie plate; you could still eat said plate of food and lose weight, if you curtailed your caloric intake throughout the rest of the day.

Part 1 - Hamburgers

I love burgers. I eat them once per week whether I like it or not. It's important to note that there is high variability in calories/fat from one burger to the next, even if they come from the same meat source.

Let's look at few different **chicken burgers**, for example:

- Costco Chicken burgers have 130 calories and just 6g of fat
- Compliments (Safeway/ Sobey's) have 180 calories and 10g fat
- Co-Op Chicken burgers have 270 calories and 15g fat

Now let's look at a few different **beef burgers**:

- Compliments Lean Sirloin Burgers have 180 calories and 10g fat
- Kirkland (Costco) Beef Burgers have 310 calories and 25g fat
- Compliments Jamie Oliver Juicy Beef Burgers have 310 calories and 21g fat

As you can see there is high variability between similar types of burgers, and, there are even more extreme examples than the ones I chose. There are even higher calorie/fat burgers on the market.

It's also important to note that while Bison meat naturally lean, many pre-made bison patties have just as much fat as their beef counterparts. Purchasing your own bison meat and making your own patties is a great way to ensure that you're reaping the low-fat benefits of bison. The same goes for any other type of burger, if you make your own; you can better regulate the content and taste of your burgers.

Vegetarian Burgers typically have less fat (and more carbohydrates) than your typical beef burger (usually just around 10g of fat per burger); unless of course, we're talking about Beyond Meat Burgers. They carry 270 calories and 20g fat per patty; probably one of the reasons why it's regarded as the tastiest non-meat burger on the market...they don't skimp on the fat!

Key takeaway:

Read your labels. If you can find a burger with about 15g of fat or less, then go nuts.

BONUS: Buns and a New Burger on the market!

Buns: Many hamburger buns contain just 20g of carbs per bun. I'd suggest having these. The cool thing is that usually the more gourmet type of buns have more carbs (sometimes nearing 40g per bun), so purchasing the buns that have less carbs usually means saving some \$\$\$. Another option is to forego the bun, or even do an open-face burger to cut the carb levels in half. It's certainly not necessary, but is an option, especially for you non-bun lovers.

Belmont Meats: I wanted to mention a new burger on the market called Belmont Meats Pure Burgers. This company has just started popping up on shelves (Safeway and Sobey's and likely other grocery chains). They have a variety of vegetarian, chicken, and beef burgers. My favourite one is their 50/50 beef and veggie/grain blend. It has a great taste, while also carrying more fiber and nutrition than your typical beef burger. Below is a Facebook post outlining their different burgers:

[Belmont – New Burgers](#)

Part 2 – Hot Dogs and Sausages

Most **hot dogs** have between 8 and 12g grams of fat and about 100-150 calories per dog. There isn't much variation on this between brands, so there's no need to break down the difference between different hot dogs

Some of the **turkey dogs** only bring the fat content down by a negligible amount and don't seem to contain better ingredients (overall) than regular hot dogs.

Smokies and Such

Most smokies have a high amount of fat. My "go-to"(for those of you living in Calgary) are Spolumbo's Chicken and Turkey based sausages which contain more protein and significantly less fat than your average big sausage.

Here are some examples of some Smokey-type sausages

- Costco Polish Sausage contains 370 calories comprised of 17g of protein and 31g of fat
- Johnsonville Original Brat contains 260 calories comprised of 14g of protein and 21g of fat
- Co-Op Gold Mozzarella Smokies contain 290 calories comprised of 13g protein and 24g fat
- Spolumbo's Chicken Apple sausages contain 220 calories comprised of 24g protein and 12g fat (their Turkey Spolumbo has even less calories/fat)

Vegetarian Options

- Tofu-based hot dogs are typically lower in fat and calories (than meat-based hot dogs). I've seen some as low as 60 calories per tofu dog. I've tried a few different varieties and find that, when consumed on their own, they all taste somewhat rubbery, and frankly a little gross. However, once you throw one on a bun with a few condiments such as ketchup and mustard, they're actually quite palatable.
- Beyond Meat has come out with a vegan Bratwurst-style sausage called, "Beyond Brat", which has 16g of protein, 12g of fat; much better than your typical Bratwurst sausage. It's also getting really good reviews based on taste and texture. There are other Beyond Meat sausage flavours including, "Sweet Italian" which has a nearly identical amount of protein/fat to the Beyond Brat.

Side note: Most hot dogs buns have about 20g of carbs per bun. There doesn't appear to be as much variability between hot dog buns as there is between hamburger buns.

Key Takeaway:

While they aren't terribly nutritious, hot dogs are not overly high in calories, either. Bigger, smokey-type sausages are usually high calorie/fat, so it might be worthwhile to shop around and read some labels.

Part 3 - Chicken

Eating the "healthiest" type of chicken (in terms of fat and calories), is quite easy compared to some of the other cuts of meat and burgers.

Essentially, bone-in and skin-on chicken has more fat than its counterpart.

If you want to err on the side of caution, then boneless, skinless chicken breast is a safe bet. I call it the "gold standard" for a meat-based lean protein, and, it tastes phenomenal when cooked on a BBQ.

Below you'll see a breakdown of the math of chicken breasts, thighs, and wings.

Chicken Breast:

3oz. cooked weight (equivalent to 1 small breast)

- Boneless skinless chicken breast contains 122 calories comprised of 26g protein and 2g of fat
- Boneless, skin-on chicken breast contains 150 calories comprised of 24g protein and 6g fat

Chicken Thigh:

3oz. cooked weight (equivalent to about 2 small thighs)

- Boneless, skinless chicken thigh contains 147 calories comprised of 21g protein and 7g fat
- Bone-in and skin on chicken thigh contains 201 calories comprised of 21g protein and 13g fat

Quick observation: The skin nearly doubles the fat content for the chicken thigh and triples it for the chicken breast,

Chicken Wings:

- 3 small chicken wings (there is high variability here, so these are averages) contain 226 calories comprised of 18g protein and 16g fat

Chicken wings are deceptively high in fat for their size. Some fried wings at restaurants contain as much as 10g of fat per wing. If you have a sweet/sugary sauce such as honey garlic, they can also be very high in carbs/sugar.

Cooking your own wings (especially on a BBQ) will allow you to drain some of the fat and spare you the extra calories in the form of oil, breading, and/or sauce.

Key Takeaway:

Relative to many burgers, cuts of steak (as you'll see below), and smokies, chicken is generally lower in calories and fat. Just make sure to exercise caution with chicken wings!

Part 4 – Steak

Compared to the other types of meat discussed, there are many more types (cuts) of steak. I've laid out the different cuts of steak below according to low, medium, and high, fat content. This is based on an average cut of 6oz steak. Obviously, two pieces of the same cut of steak can have different fat content, even for the same servings size, so it's best take the numbers below as an average. A simple rule of thumb when looking at steak is that the more marbled the steak is, the more fat it is likely to contain.

The leanest cuts:

***Sirloin tip side steak** contains 206 calories comprised of 5g fat and 39g protein*

Very lean, but still holds flavor.

***Top round steak** contains 240 calories comprised of 5g fat and 37g protein*

Considered flavorful and more tender than other cuts from the round.

***Eye of round steak** contains 276 calories comprised of 7g fat, and 50g protein*

the cuts taken from the tenderloin, but tougher and less juicy.

***Bottom round steak** contains 300 calories comprised of 11g fat and 47g protein*

Tends to be tough and typically needs marinating.

***Top Sirloin** contains 316 calories comprised of 11g fat and 51g protein*

Has good flavor, but can be tough, so it typically needs marinating.

***Flap steak** contains 240 calories comprised of 12g fat and 33g protein*

Very flavorful, but can be tough and chewy.

“Medium” Fat Steaks:

Filet mignon contains 348 calories comprised of 16g fat and 46g protein

The most tender and sought-after of all cuts of beef. Kind of like me; a tender and somewhat sought-after trainer ;

Porterhouse steak contains 346 calories comprised of 16 fat and 46g protein

Very expensive and flavorful. Cut from the tenderloin.

Skirt steak contains 348 calories comprised of 17g fat and 45g protein

Also known as a flank steak. It's known for its flavor overall tenderness.

New York strip steak contains 360 calories comprised of 18g fat and 46g protein

Tough cut of meat taken from the T-Bone area.

Higher Fat Steak:

T-bone steak contains 376 calories comprised of 25g fat and 33g protein

Its high fat content means that it stays tender while cooking.

Rib-eye steak (rib roast, prime rib) contains 466 calories comprised 38g fat and 30g protein

Regarded as the tastiest of the steaks. Very marbled cut, which means it's flavorful and stays tender while cooking.

**Nutritional facts provide by *caloriecount.com* Based on a six-ounce serving. **

Key Takeaway: The more marbling means the fattier the steak. Leaner steaks typically require more time marinating to bring up the old flavor meter 😊

Part 5 – Salad

With every good BBQ there is usually a salad or two that come along for the ride. Many salads can be deceptively high in calories.

A few tips:

- If you're making the salad, try to give people the option to put their own dressing on the salad, even if it's one of the "build your own salad" kits. One thing I do is pour the pouch of dressing into a small serving bowl or Tupperware so that people can add their own dressing

- For standard salad dressings, see if you can keep your serving size limited to about 2 TBSP. Obviously there is variability from one dressing to the next, so think of this as a ballpark amount
- If someone has pre-made a salad, chances are you will be getting 1-2 servings of fat per standard salad bowl (unless of course they are using a low-cal dressing or Balsamic vinegar as a dressing)

High Fat Salads:

Pre-made pasta, potato, and macaroni salads are quite high in carbs and, more often than not, very high in fat. In fact, many people will unknowingly add 400-500 extra calories to their plate in the form of a few heaping spoonful's of these types of salads. These salads typically use a mayonnaise type of dressing as their base.

Here are some examples (based on a $\frac{3}{4}$ cup serving)

- Kirkland (Costco) Potato Salad contains 315 calories comprised of 18g carbs, 24g fat, and 3g protein
- Kirkland (Costco) Mediterranean Pasta Salad Contains 300 calories comprised of 30g carbs, 12g fat, and 3g protein
- Safeway Signature Macaroni Salad contains 450 calories comprised of 36g carbs, 30g fat, and 6g protein.

Takeaways and Advice:

- If you have the choice of pre-made salad, it's usually safe to assume that it's quite high in fat
- If you have the chance to add your own dressing, aim for a low-calorie dressing, such as balsamic vinegar with a small amount of oil, or, a modest serving of a higher fat dressing.
- If you have a choice between a salad and raw veggies, I suggest the raw veggies as you'll likely get more nutrients and less fat (in the form of dressing).

PS - One of my favourite low-cal dressing is Bolthouse Farm Salsa Ranch (found in the pre-made salad area of the Produce section at Safeway, and Wal-Mart. They make some other dressings including ranch, honey mustard, and balsamic. They are Greek Yogurt based, and taste great 😊:)

Part 6 – Bonus Tips – Sauces

Sneaky Sauces:

- This bonus tip is particularly relevant to hamburgers and some “sneaky” high calories condiments that can easily add 100-200 calories to your burger without even realizing it. Some common sneaky sauces include: Mayonnaise, Aioli Sauce, and Southwest (Chipotle) Sauce.

Low Calorie Condiments:

- Sauces that provide a lot of extra taste while containing little to no calories, include mustard and hot sauce. Regular yellow mustard and Frank's Red Hot Sauce each contain 0 calories, and most hot sauces are similar in that they contain little to no calories.

Ketchup Criticism:

- If anyone ever criticizes you for putting ketchup on your burger because it has “lots of sugar”, I suggest that you “accidentally” squirt the ketchup towards their face. Regular ketchup contains 4g of sugar and 20 calories per tablespoon. If you're trying to lose weight, ketchup is likely one of the last things you need to worry about, unless of course your chugging it right out of the bottle, then, in that case, I suggest seeking some professional help 😊

Final Thoughts:

I want to reiterate that the purpose of this guide was not to suggest that any food should be off limits, but rather to provide you some insight into how you might make a few shifts to your summer BBQ meals that drop calories, without dropping taste. If you can have a 650 calorie plate with a burger and fries that tastes very similar to a 1500 calorie plate, then I'd encourage you to go for the 650 calorie plate (check out the plates visuals below to see what I mean!). Making decisions like this can have a huge impact throughout the course of a couple of months, let alone an entire year.

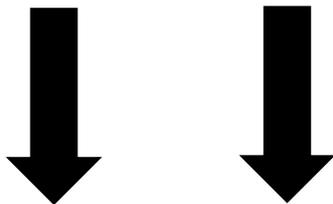
If you've made it this far, then thanks for reading!

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments, and/or suggestions at : kristianleach@krisfit.ca

Cheers!

Kristian Leach

Scroll Down to see the Sample Meal Plates

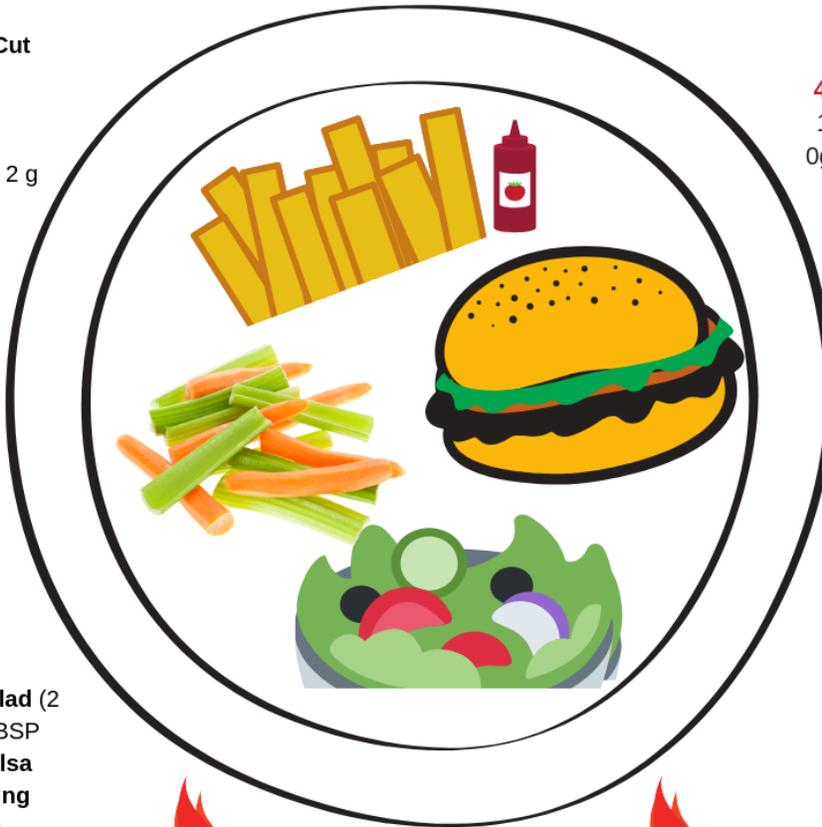


649 Calorie BBQ Meal

Safeway Steak Cut Fries
(150g)
154 calories
25g carbs, **4g fat**, 2 g protein

Celery and Carrot Sticks
(150g) w/ 2 tsbp **Opadipity Cucumber Dill Dip**
85 calories
11g carbs, 4 fat, 3g protein

Mixed Green Salad (2 Cups) with 2 TBSP **Bolthouse Salsa Ranch Dressing**
60 calories
6g carbs, 3g fat, 2 g protein



Ketchup
2 TBSP
40 calories
10g carbs, 0g fat/protein

Compliments Lean Sirloin Burger
180 calories
4g carbs, 10g fat, 19g protein

Compliments Hamburger Bun
110 calories
22g carbs, 1g fat, 4g protein

Ketchup and Mustard
1 TBSP each
20 calories
5g carbs, 0g fat/protein



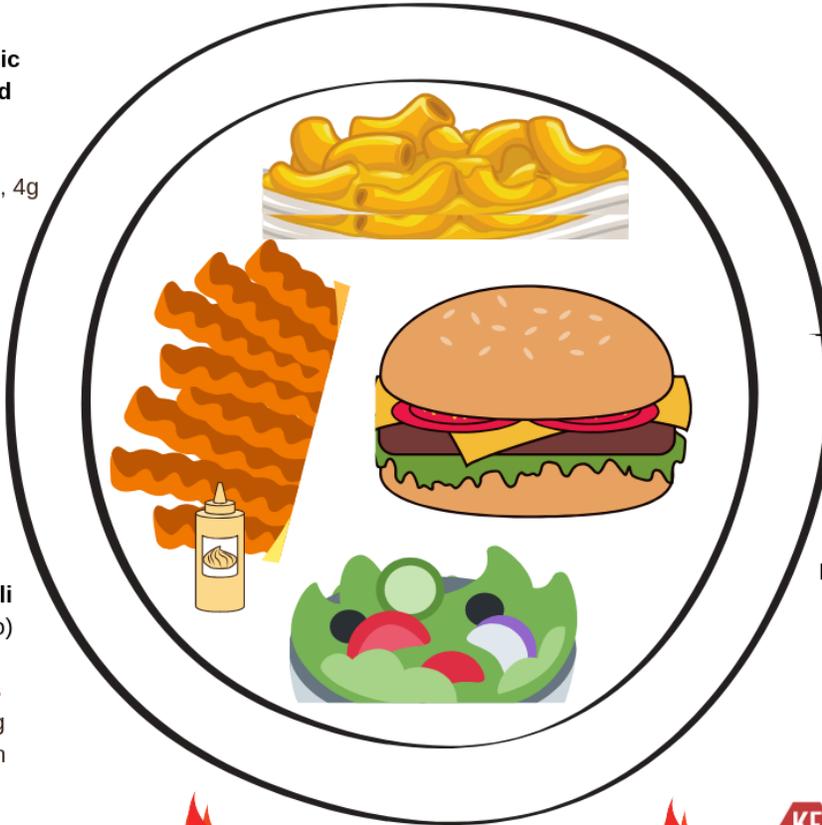
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1521 Calorie BBQ Meal

Safeway Classic Macaroni Salad
1/2 cup
300 calories
24g carbs, 21g fat, 4g protein

McCain Sweet Potato Fries (150g)
230 calories
33g carbs, 10g fat, 1g protein

Culinary Treasure Aioli Sauce(Costco)
2 TBSP
200 calories
2g carbs, 22g fat, 0g protein



Costco (Kirkland) Beef Burger
310 calories
0g carbs, 25g fat, 20g protein,

Cracker Barrel Cheddar Cheese Slice
70 calories
0g carbs, 6g fat, 4g protein

Dempster's Deluxe Hamburger Bun
180 calories
34g carbs, 4g fat, 6g protein



Safeway Caesar Salad
100g
213 calories
6g carbs, 13g fat, 9g protein



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