



RESTAURANT CONFIDENTIAL

TREME EATING 2015

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It's not easy to win an Xtreme Eating award. For starters, most restaurant meals pack around 1,000 calories, so anything in that neighborhood is a yawner. To stand out in the crowd, you've got to hit around 2,000 calories—an entire day's worth of food—even if it's just dessert.

But our winners have what it takes...a total disregard for the obesity epidemic and the coming diabetes tsunami. Of course, you can't blame restaurants for that. That would be so unfair.

The information for this article was compiled by Paige Einstein.



Omelot

"Take a trip south of the border one bite at a time!" suggests the **IHOP** (1,564 locations) website.

Its **Chorizo Fiesta Omelette**, which is "loaded with spicy chorizo sausage, roasted peppers, onions & pepper jack cheese, then topped with a citrus chili sauce & sour cream and served with a fresh

grilled serrano pepper...will have you saying 'excelente!'"

"Ay, caramba!" is more like it. A 1,300-calorie sausage omelette alone would strike many as a tad on the heavy side. But this one comes with three buttermilk pancakes (or hash browns, toast, or fruit; but this is IHOP, after all). Remember when three pancakes alone was a big breakfast?

Add four tablespoons of syrup, and you shuffle out with a day's calories (1,990), plus a bonus 42 grams of saturated fat, 4,840 milligrams of sodium, and 1,035 mg of cholesterol (two to three days' worth of each). And don't forget the passel of white flour and the 12-or-so teaspoons of added (refined) sugar—the kind that doesn't occur naturally in fruit and milk. It's your lucky day!

You might as well have ordered a McDonald's Big Breakfast (scrambled eggs, hash browns, biscuit, and sausage) with three Sausage McMuffins and five packets of grape jam on the side. Time for a siesta.

Pit Belly

As **Dickey's Barbecue Pit** (416 locations) "continues to expand from coast to coast, customers are wooed by the home-style flavor and family friendly atmosphere," says the chain's website. And nothing woos like the **3 Meat Plate**.

"Can't decide?" asks Dickey's. "This is the perfect plate to have everything you're craving!"

We craved the Polish sausage, pork ribs, and beef brisket (saving the pulled pork, barbecue honey ham, spicy cheddar sausage, and turkey or chicken breast for next time).

For our two sides, we went with fried onion tangles and mac & cheese (passing up sides like the chips, fries, barbecue beans, green beans with bacon, baked potato casserole, coleslaw, fried okra, and potato salad). And along with the free roll, pickles, and onions, we tossed in a Big Yellow Cup of Miss Ollie Dickey's Famous Southern Sweet Tea. (It's "only" 32 oz., but don't worry: refills are free.)

Then we noticed the sign: "Help Yourself to Some ICE CREAM! Cold Creamy Delicious And It's Free!" Yup. At Dickey's, you can have free soft-serve while you wait for your order, for dessert, or whenever you feel the urge. Need a palate cleanser mid-meal? Have a cone! Take one for the road! Is this a great country or what?

With just a half cup of ice cream in a cone (and no refills), your meal comes to roughly 2,500 calories, 49 grams of sat fat and 4,700 mg of sodium (2½ to 3 days' worth of each), plus 29 teaspoons of (mostly added) sugar. It's like having three Big Macs with five Vanilla Cones.

What's for dessert?



Crime Rib

“No matter your path, a delicious destination awaits,” says the **Outback Steakhouse** (767 locations) menu. If your destination is the **Herb Roasted Prime Rib** dinner, you may want to walk home...the long way.

The 16 oz. prime rib alone delivers 1,400 calories to *your* rib area. For sides, let's say you get the dressed baked potato and the classic blue cheese wedge (it's a “premium side salad,” so it'll cost you a buck), and that you eat just half the loaf of bread and use just a light schmear of butter.

The tab: 2,400 calories, 71 grams of sat fat (3½ days' worth), and enough sodium (3,560 mg) for today and tomorrow. It's like eating three Outback 10 oz. Ribeye steaks with three sides of garlic mashed potatoes. How do people survive on just *one*?



Pastaway

“Parmesan crusted chicken served over pasta with mushrooms, peppers and onions in a spicy New Orleans sauce” doesn't sound excessive. Then again, you're at **The**

Cheesecake Factory (167 locations), which has a knack for turning its patrons into walking (make that *sitting*) fat-cell factories.

The **Louisiana Chicken Pasta**, which weighs an impressive 1½ pounds, comes topped with four slices of heavily breaded chicken (in case you didn't get

enough white flour in the mound of pasta). Add the New Orleans sauce (butter and heavy cream), and your plate is up to 2,370 calories (more than a day's worth), plus 80 grams of saturated fat (a four-day supply) and 2,370 milligrams of sodium (1½ days' worth).

For those numbers, you could have had *two* Fettuccine Alfredos plus two breadsticks at Olive Garden. Bottoms up!



Blast Off

“All meals should be topped off with dessert: it's the **SONIC** way,” suggests “America's Drive-In” (3,522 locations). Take the **Pineapple Upside Down Master Blast**.

“SONIC's real, vanilla ice cream perfectly mixed with pineapple, salted caramel & pie crust pieces” comes in a 32 oz. cup topped with several inches of whipped cream.

That's for a large, which fires 2,020 calories at your midsection, and 61 grams (three days' worth) of sat fat and 4½ grams (two days' worth) of trans fat (from the pie crust) at your arteries. And it comes with some 29 teaspoons of added sugar.

One Master Blast has the calories of roughly four Dairy Queen Banana Splits. Sonic offers “heaping helpings of fun,” says its website. Wouldn't the equivalent of *one* banana split be enough fun?



Red Alert

For our **Create Your Own Combination** at **Red Lobster** (679 locations), we picked three shrimp dishes (**Parrot Isle Jumbo Coconut**, **Walt's Favorite**, and **Linguine Alfredo**). With french fries as our side, Caesar as our salad, and just one Cheddar Bay Biscuit (such willpower!), our total came to 2,710 calories, 37 grams (two days' worth) of sat fat, and 6,530 mg (a four-day supply) of sodium.

It's like eating an 8-piece bucket of KFC Original Recipe chicken with four sides of mashed potatoes with gravy, four pieces of corn on the cob, and eight packets of “buttery spread.”

And since we were at Red Lobster, we *had* to order the chain's namesake drink. So we added a 24 oz. **Traditional Lobsterita** (with its 890 calories and 860 mg of sodium). Ahoy, matey! Make room for 3,600 calories under that (newly expanded) belt.





Pick & Lose

“One Person, Two Dishes, Tons of Choices.” That’s the deal with the **2 For \$12 Pick & Choose** menu at **Uno Pizzeria & Grill** (131 locations), which lets you choose from five salads, four pastas, and three pizzas. Oh boy!

We started with the **Baked Ziti & Sausage Pasta** (“ziti and sausage in a tomato cream sauce topped with mozzarella and baked in a deep dish pan”). That’s 720 calories (a third of a day’s worth), which is high-but-reasonable...*for an entire meal.*

Then we added a **Chicago Classic Deep Dish Pizza** (“a small plate version of our famous Chicago Classic Deep Dish with sausage, mozzarella, chunky tomato sauce and romano”). Yes, it’s small next to Uno’s 1½-pound, 2,300-calorie individual Chicago Classic. But 1,470 calories is small? *Really?*

Add ‘em up and you get 2,190 calories, 49 grams of saturated fat (2½ days’ worth), 5,420 mg of sodium (a 3½-day supply), and white flour galore. It’s like eating three Pizza Hut Pepperoni Lover’s Personal Pan Pizzas. Our advice: think of Uno as No-no.

Warm Crapple

Who gets a dessert *other than* cheesecake at **The Cheesecake Factory**? Maybe someone who’s trying to avoid overdoing it. The **Warm Apple Crisp** looks nice.

Sigh. Between the apples, “delicious crispy nutty topping,” two scoops of ice cream, small mountain of whipped cream, and caramel sauce, you’re looking at 1,740 calories—more than any cheesecake on the menu. And don’t forget the bonus 48 grams (2½ days’ worth) of saturated fat and 32 teaspoons of sugar (much of it added).

For the same calories, you could (shudder) eat *two* slices of The Cheesecake Factory’s Original Cheesecake.



Why Stop at 7?

“It’s 7 Steakburgers and 7 slices of American cheese—a one pounder!” says **Steak ‘n Shake** (513 locations).

Yes, the **7X7 Steakburger ‘n Fries** (available from midnight to 6 a.m. on the “Up All Night” menu) squeezes seven beef patties between its buns. The 1,330 calories in the burger make the 240 calories in the small side of fries seem puny. But what’s puny about the plate’s 47 grams of sat fat and 4,570 mg of sodium?

If that’s not enough to keep you “up all night,” why not add a shake? With the 960-calorie **Chocolate Fudge Brownie Milkshake** (“What’s not to love?”), you hit 2,530 calories, plus 68 grams of sat fat and 5,060 mg of sodium (about 3½ days’ worth of each) and 26 teaspoons of sugar.

It’s like polishing off four 9 oz. Outback sirloin steaks, each topped with two half-cup scoops of Breyers Chocolate Ice Cream.

We can’t wait until Steak ‘n Shake comes out with its 8X8 Steakburger ‘n Fries. Or its 9X9.



Restaurant Survival Tips

- **Order from the “light” menu.** IHOP calls them Simple & Fit (under 600 calories). The Cheesecake Factory calls them SkinnyLicious (590 calories or less).
- **Skip the beef burgers & fries.** Try a grilled chicken, turkey, or veggie burger. Get a green salad as your side...or main dish.
- **Want pizza? Go thin.** To cut calories, order a thin crust or flatbread pizza. (Whole grain’s better than multi-grain, which is better than white.) To cut sat fat, ask for less cheese and veggie, chicken, or seafood toppings instead of sausage, beef, bacon, salami, or pepperoni.
- **Forget fried seafood.** Order it baked, broiled, grilled, or steamed. Ditch the complimentary bread (or biscuits) and dig into the salad instead.
- **Swap your steak.** A small filet or sirloin is a bargain compared to a New York strip, porterhouse, ribeye, or T-bone. Instead of mashed or baked potato, order a side of broccoli, asparagus, or another non-starchy veggie. 🍷