



# A healthy lunch?

Find out which supermarket salad has more calories than a Big Mac and medium fries

**N**ow that the warmer weather is here, you may want to switch from hearty winter lunches to lighter summer salads. But if you think a salad is always the healthy option, think again.

Our researchers have discovered that if you're trying to cut down on the calories, fat and salt you eat, not all salads are created equal.

We bought a selection of 20 prepacked salads from Asda, Boots, Marks & Spencer, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose to find out how many calories and how much fat, saturated fat and salt they contained.

## Our findings

Many of the salads we looked at were surprisingly high in calories and fat.

## SALAD DAZE

We found there were surprisingly large differences between the amount of fat, saturated fat, salt and calories in prepackaged salads when we bought a selection from high-street chains



### Sainsbury's Rainbow Salad £2.20 (215g)

**Calories** 300 **fat** 14.8g  
**sat fat** 1.3g **salt** 0.6g

This colourful salad contains lots of vegetables and has soya beans and lentils, which are low in fat and are a great vegetable protein. The dressing is on the side, so you can add as much or as little as you want. It has the least salt of the salads we looked at: 10% of what an adult should eat in a day.



### Sainsbury's Thai Chicken Noodle £2.95 (260g)

**Calories** 379 **fat** 6g  
**sat fat** 0.8g **salt** 0.8g

Grated carrot and spring onions are the only vegetables in this salad, but it is low in fat, salt and sat fat (just 4% of the sat fat that a woman should eat in a day). The nutrition values we show include dressing. As with the Rainbow Salad, the dressing is in a separate container.



### Morrisons Smedleys Atlantic Prawn Marie Rose Salad\* £1.49 (300g)

**Calories** 855 **fat** 66.3g  
**sat fat** 5.4g **salt** 2g

This contains 855 calories and 66.3g fat. This is more calories and fat than a McDonald's Big Mac and medium fries. It has 70% of the fat that a man should eat in a day. The only vegetables it contains are a small amount of spinach and cucumber.



### Asda Chicken Caesar Pasta Salad £2 (297g)

**Calories** 683 **fat** 41.3g  
**sat fat** 8.9g **salt** 1.4g

The 43g of fat in this salad is nearly as much as six Cadbury's Creme eggs. It has almost 60% of the fat and 45% of the saturated fat a woman should eat in a day. A quarter of the salad is calorific and fatty creamy dressings. It contains as much mayonnaise as it does chicken.

Fat, saturated fat and salt contents given above are per portion \*This salad is available in Morrisons, but isn't exclusive to it

## PREPACKAGED SALADS

Mainly this was because they had mayonnaise or creamy sauces. The ingredient lists showed these were often added generously. Asda's Chicken Caesar pasta salad, for example, contains as much mayonnaise as it does chicken (13%). Caesar dressing makes up another 10%.

Mayonnaise dressing is the second highest ingredient (27%) in M&S Pasta with Tomato & Basil British Chicken.

Some salads were low in two of the three nutrients. The M&S King Prawn Salad was low in fat and sat fat, had the



dressing on the side and contained lots of vegetables. However, it had 2g of salt, a third of what an adult should eat at most in a day.

### How to make a healthier choice

■ Look for salads that contain separate containers of dressing, as they allow you to add as much or as little as you want.

■ Salads that have a lot of cheese are often high in fat. For vegetarians looking for a lower fat option, go for something with pulses or beans. These are low-fat and contain protein, which is important for the body's growth and repair.

■ Croutons tend to be fried or baked in oil, so they quickly increase calorie and fat content.

■ Don't assume the ingredients refer to the entire salad. At a glance, the Tesco Tuna Layered Salad contains 275 calories and 20.5g fat. But looking closely at the label shows this is for half the pack. If you eat the whole 350g pack, you would consume 550 calories and 41g fat.

WHICH.CO.UK

Some pre-packed sandwiches contain 75% of the salt you should eat in a day

www.which.co.uk/sandwiches



■ Salads can be a great way to get some of your five fruit and veg a day. Sainsbury's Rainbow and Waitrose's Tuna Niçoise salads were full of different leaves and vegetables. However, in others, such as Morrisons Smedleys Prawn Marie Rose Salad, salad or vegetables were barely visible. Look for a salad with lots of different colours as it's likely to have one or two of your five a day.

### Can a salad fill you up?

It's a myth that salads can't fill you up. Choose one with carbohydrates, such as pasta or potatoes, and lean protein – for example, skinless chicken, ham, tuna, pulses and beans, or cottage cheese.

## HOW THE SAME MEAL CAN VARY BETWEEN SHOPS

It's lunchtime and you fancy a tomato and basil chicken pasta salad. But how does the nutritional content of the dish compare at four high-street chains? We found out



### Asda Tomato & Basil Chicken Pasta Salad

£2 (330g)  
Calories 541 fat 29.7g  
sat fat 2.6g salt 1.6g  
Mayonnaise was high in the ingredients list

for all the salads, but Asda took the extra step of dressing its salad in a creamy tomato and soft cheese mayo dressing. It's the same size as the Boots option, but has twice as much fat.



### Boots Delicious Tomato & Basil Chicken Pasta

£2.80 (331g)  
Calories 425 fat 15g  
sat fat 1.4g salt 0.8g  
The Boots salad contains the fewest

calories and the least amount of fat, saturated fat and salt out of all four of the tomato and basil chicken pasta salads that we looked at, both in terms of total salad and per 100g.



### M&S Pasta with Tomato & Basil British Chicken

£3.20 (380g)  
Calories 760 fat 46g  
sat fat 4.9g salt 2.4g  
The Marks & Spencer salad,

which is the largest, has by far the most calories, fat, sat fat and salt. Per 100g, it's got three times as much saturated fat and salt as the Boots salad and almost three times as much fat.



### Sainsbury's Tomato & Basil Chicken

£2.95 (350g)  
Calories 595 fat 27.7g  
sat fat 2.1g salt 0.6g  
Sainsbury's salad specified it had no

mayo but it was still comparatively high in fat. The ingredients list revealed that the dressing contained many of the same ingredients as mayonnaise: namely white wine vinegar, egg yolk and oil.

### OUR RESEARCH

We bought a selection of 20 prepackaged salads from high-street chains and assessed the ingredients list and nutritional content looking at calories, fat, saturated fat and salt.

## DAILY GUIDELINES



Men



Women

Total calories  
**2,500**

**2,000**

Total fat (g)  
**95**

**70**

Saturated fat (g)  
**30**

**20**

Salt (g)  
**6**

**6**