



Which sandwich?

What's really in your lunch? We assess chicken salad sandwiches to find out

IN BRIEF

In this report we help you to:

- compare chicken sandwiches for price, fat, salt and calorie content

- save money by making your own sandwiches.

We spend around £5.3bn on pre-packed sandwiches a year, making them our number one lunchtime choice. But how do you choose the best place to buy your sandwich?

In February and March this year, we bought chicken salad sandwiches from supermarkets and major sandwich outlets. Some places only had 'healthy' or 'premium' versions, so we included both in our assessment.

We looked at the sandwiches' labels for nutritional content (see 'What's in your chicken sandwich?') and information about the amount of chicken and its origin. We found a cheap sandwich from Morrisons contained more chicken than an expensive one from Caffè Nero.

Sandwiches unpacked

Chicken is a good sandwich filling, and accounts for 30% of all sandwich sales. It's high in protein to keep you full long after lunch and, as long as it's skinless, it should be low in fat and saturated fat. But how it's cooked can make a difference, as can the ingredients alongside it, such as mayonnaise.

Labels uncovered

The sandwiches we bought from supermarkets, Boots and the coffee chains were all labelled with nutritional information. Those from Greggs, Pret a Manger and Subway were not. Pret and Subway provide nutritional information online, and Pret keeps information in-store – but consumers have to ask for it.

It's not mandatory for companies to provide nutritional information on food – but we would like it to be provided for all products.

Which? has always wanted this information to be clear at the point of sale, so we're pleased to hear that Pret and Subway have signed up to the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) pilot to provide nutrition information when eating out.

How much chicken?

Of the 14 chicken salad sandwiches we bought (see www.which.co.uk/sandwiches for a full breakdown), the Sainsbury's Taste the Difference had the most calories – 495 kcal – perhaps because its chicken was butter roasted. Pret's Herb Chicken and Rocket sandwich contained 456 kcal – the next highest.

All the sandwiches contained whole chicken meat, mainly chicken breast – but labels showing this information varied between the outlets. You might assume that the meat is 100% chicken, but labels showed that it also contained corn flour, salt, water or tapioca starch. These ingredients can be used during cooking, but some can be used to bulk up chicken. While some labels were clearer than others on the amount of such ingredients, none were clear on why they were used. Sandwiches from M&S, Sainsbury's,

SANDWICH SHOCKERS

Some sandwiches contain more than 75% of your max daily sat fat or salt intake

Asda Vintage Cheddar Ploughmans (no mayo) has 15.2g of sat fat – more than 75% of a woman's max guideline daily amount.



Subway 6-inch Meatball Marinara has 4.7g salt – equal to nine packs of Walkers ready salted crisps and more than 75% of an adult's 6g max daily intake.



M&S Wensleydale & Carrot Chutney is high in sat fat thanks to the cheese, and has 25.5g of sugar – more than five tea-spoonfuls.



Make your own?

Making your own chicken salad sandwich can save money – and cut down on calories

The shop-bought sandwiches in our test contained an average of 57g of chicken. When we made a sandwich with 57g pre-packed roast chicken, it cost £1.38 –

compared with between £1.79 and £3.20 in shops. To make it even cheaper, use leftover chicken and only use supermarket own-brand products.



To make your own:

2 slices thick Hovis granary bread	16p
57g Asda sliced roast chicken	67p
15g Hellmann's light mayonnaise	7p
1 tomato	15p
5 cucumber slices	5p
20g salad leaves	28p
TOTAL COST	£1.38

NUTRITION 355 kcal, 7.6g fat, 1.4g saturated fat and 1.5g salt



Starbucks, Tesco (only on its premium range) and Waitrose all labelled the country of origin of their chicken.

Money matters

The cost differences between the 14 sandwiches were significant – from £1.79 to £3.20 – but there was no firm match between price, the amount of chicken, or the nutritional value.

Our lowest-priced sandwich, Morrisons' Deep Fill Chicken Salad (£1.79), contained the most chicken, (83g) – but only the fourth-highest amount of calories (383 kcal).

Which? says

Consumers should be able to make informed choices about their health when they pop out for a lunchtime sandwich. It's great to have a wide choice of sandwiches available, but we've found that they can be unexpectedly high in calories thanks to mayonnaise and chutneys, for example. So we're pleased to see that some coffee shops and sandwich chains have signed up to the FSA's proposals for nutritional information.

WHAT'S IN YOUR CHICKEN SANDWICH?

Morrisons' sandwich contains the most chicken. Sainsbury's and Pret sandwiches contain the most fat



Asda Chicken Salad (185g) £1.80

Chicken content: 57.4g

Nutrition: 373 kcal, 12.4g fat, 2.2g sat fat, 1.7g salt

WHICH? VERDICT This is one of the cheapest sandwiches we looked at. Nutritional levels aren't bad, and it contains more chicken than the Caffè Nero sandwich, despite costing £1.40 less.



Caffè Nero Chicken with Oven Roasted Tomatoes & Spinach (163g) £3.20

Chicken content: 45.6g

Nutrition: 288 kcal, 4.8g fat, 0.6 sat fat, 1.8g salt

WHICH? VERDICT Poor value for money. Nutritionally it looks good, but chicken content is low and it's the most expensive sandwich we bought.



Morrisons Deep Fill Chicken Salad (230g) £1.79

Chicken content: 82.8g

Nutrition: 383 kcal, 11.8g fat, 2.1g sat fat, 2g salt

WHICH? VERDICT Reasonable nutrition levels, and the chicken content was highest among our samples. A good-value option and likely to keep you full long after lunch.



Pret Herb Chicken and Rocket (195g) £2.39

Chicken content: Unspecified

Nutrition: 456 kcal, 23g fat, 5.5g sat fat, 2.1g salt

WHICH? VERDICT Packed with calories, the Pret sandwich we assessed contained the most fat and saturated fat of all the options we looked at.



Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Butter Roasted Chicken Salad (238g) £2.50

Chicken content: 76.2g

Nutrition: 495 kcal, 20.9g fat, 4.9g sat fat, 1.9g salt

WHICH? VERDICT Only Morrisons had more chicken in its sandwich, but Sainsbury's had the highest calorie content.



Tesco Chicken Salad (217g) £1.80

Chicken content: 69.4g

Nutrition: 390 kcal, 12.6g fat, 1.3g sat fat, 1.2g salt

WHICH? VERDICT This sandwich ticked the right boxes in terms of nutritional content, contained plenty of chicken and was a good price.

We also bought: Boots Shapers Roast Chicken Salad, M&S British Roast Chicken Salad, Sainsbury's Be Good to Yourself Roast Chicken Salad, Tesco Finest British Roast Chicken Salad, Waitrose Roast Chicken with Mixed Leaves, Juicy Vine Tomatoes & Mayonnaise, Costa Coffee Chicken Caesar Handmade Sandwich, Starbucks Roasted Chicken with Slow Roast Tomato & Herb Mayonnaise, Subway Chicken Breast with Lettuce, Tomatoes, Pickles, Green Peppers, Olives, Onions (no mayo). For nutritional information, go to www.which.co.uk/sandwiches