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Foodtv.ca Blogs

- ▶ Food for Thought
- ▶ Bazaar

About

- ▶ Bazaar Blog Home
- ▶ About This Blog
- ▶ Code of Conduct

Categories

- ▶ Cookbook Releases (14)
- ▶ Food Products (19)
- ▶ Holidays (17)
- ▶ Houseware Items (20)
- ▶ Kitchen Gadgets (13)
- ▶ Markets (14)
- ▶ Restaurants (17)

Recent Entries

- ▶ All-In-One Measuring Solution
- ▶ Take a Delicious Seat
- ▶ New Robin Miller Cookbook Giveaway
- ▶ A CLOSER LOOK: Breakfast To Go
- ▶ GUEST BLOGGER: Michael Olson's St. Martin Food Journey

Recent comments

- ▶ Victoria on Take a Delicious Seat: "Those gummi lights would ..."
- ▶ Jessica on New Robin Miller Cookbook Giveaway: "Hi Stacy-- Be sure you e..."
- ▶ Stacy~Creativemuse on New Robin Miller Cookbook Giveaway: "As a SAHM with 4 and 2 ar..."
- ▶ lisa on A CLOSER LOOK: Breakfast To Go: "true u r what u eat a,but..."
- ▶ Sherry P on New Robin Miller Cookbook Giveaway: "DOes this woman currently..."

Archive by date

- ▶ March 2008 (4)
- ▶ February 2008 (21)
- ▶ January 2008 (21)
- ▶ December 2007 (25)
- ▶ November 2007 (21)

Blog roll

- ▶ Chef-girl.net
- ▶ Everybody Likes Sandwiches
- ▶ Food for Thought
- ▶ Jumbo Empanadas
- ▶ Kitchen Vixen
- ▶ Lisa's Kitchen
- ▶ Maple Syrup and Poutine
- ▶ The Spice Who Loved Me
- ▶ Once Upon a Feast
- ▶ Winnipeg Eats

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MAR 02

A CLOSER LOOK: Breakfast To Go

by Jessica Sunday, March 02, 2008 9:44 AM [Edit](#)



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What's in a breakfast sandwich? Some sort of bread, eggs, cheese and bacon. Are any of these breakfast sandwiches healthy choices? According to Registered Dietitian Kimberly London, no, they're not considered a healthy choice. Surprised?

"Traditional fast food breakfast sandwiches do not have any fruit or vegetable servings; the roll/English muffin is usually white, not whole grain; the meat is processed and usually high in fat and salt; and the cheese slices may not even be made with milk (many are made with oil)!" says London. But she also says if you are on the run and absolutely need to pick up a breakfast sandwich, choose just the egg and cheese variety and have a piece of fruit with it.



And how do all those ingredients get stamped out so uniformly anyway? The mystery of the franchised chain is something that I'm not looking to investigate at the moment. But comparing the calories and fat many fast food breakfast sandwiches have to what the [Nutrition Calculator](#) says is pretty similar. When I plug in an English muffin, one large egg, cheddar cheese and bacon, I get 463 calories and 27 grams of fat (mind you this number is inflated because the only serving size for cheese you can enter into the

calculator is 100g).

So I decided to pull some numbers and tracked down the nutritional details of some of the more popular breakfast sandwiches available at a drive-thru near you. All these sandwiches are made with bread (usually an English muffin), bacon, egg and cheese just to keep things consistent.

- **A&W's Bacon n' Egger®:** 430 calories, 19 grams of fat
- **Burger King's Breakfast Sandwich:** 290 calories, 13 grams of fat
- **McDonald's Bacon n' Egg McMuffin®:** 310 calories, 14 grams of fat
- **Tim Horton's Breakfast Sandwich:** 400 calories, 24 grams of fat

What is going on with the A&W and Tim Horton's sandwiches? Why are the calories and fat significantly higher than the others? Tim Horton's doesn't list the size of its servings, but the serving size of the others are all pretty similar (BK's is 128g, A&W's is 140g and McDonald's is 123g). But like London says, it has a lot to do with the ingredients they're putting into these sandwiches. Cheese made with oil? Ick.

We're all guilty of the occasional morning drive-thru run on the way to work or on a road trip, but **if you've got the time to whip up your own healthy version of this sandwich at home, here are some tips** from Registered Dietitian Kimberly London:

- Choose whole wheat or whole grain rolls or English muffins (avoid bagels -- they can be up to five servings of bread)
- Use cheese made with milk
- Fry your egg in a small amount of non-stick cooking spray or poach it
- Avoid processed meats; use a small amount of low-fat ham or a couple slices of turkey bacon (remember your egg is already a protein source)
- Add some veggies -- onion, tomato, lettuce
- Have a fruit salad on the side and you have a well-balanced meal

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