



CHICK-FIL-A  
Grilled Chicken Wrap  
340 Calories



TACO BELL  
Bean Burrito  
370 Calories



# FAST FOOD ON THE GO

Lighter options for those times when  
your family has to eat on the run

Written by Cherri Northcutt



JACK IN THE BOX  
Chicken Fajita Pita  
360 Calories

MCDONALD'S  
Fruit Maple Oatmeal  
290 Calories





**B**usy families on the go often rely on fast food for quick lunches and dinners when there isn't time to cook. The downside is that fast food meals aren't always as healthy as we would like. With that in mind, several establishments are offering lighter and healthier options. A recent FDA ruling is requiring all chain restaurants to list calorie counts on their menus. Some restaurants already do, making it easier to plan if you're watching your weight or want to provide lighter meals for your family. Here are a few ideas to try at your local fast food favorites.

## Chick-fil-A

Various Katy locations

One look at the menu board at Chick-fil-A will tell you that there are many lighter items to choose from. Grilled chicken, salads, and wraps are just some of the options available. The new grilled market salad comes with grilled chicken, blue cheese crumbles, apples, strawberries, and blueberries. It's only 200 calories and five grams of fat when served with zesty apple cider vinaigrette. But be careful about your salad dressing choice. One serving of buttermilk ranch dressing will cost you 280 calories and a whopping 30 grams of fat. As a side dish the chicken tortilla soup makes a great substitute for fries with only 280 calories and six grams of fat. Local mother of three, Michelle Lovett, says, "I get the grilled chicken salad and a fruit cup. It's yummy, and at least I'm not eating anything fried." The fruit cup weighs in at only 50 calories and no fat. For the little ones, there are the kid's grilled nuggets with only 100 calories and just over two fat grams.

## Freebirds World Burrito

21923 Katy Fwy.  
281-574-3704

Katyite Christina Emanis likes to take her two boys to Freebirds. "It's a fun place to get a bite to eat," she says. "I like their burrito bowl." Depending on the ingredients you choose, a burrito bowl can be a lighter choice. A bowl with Spanish rice, pinto beans, grass fed steak, and roasted vegetables will run you 313 calories and eight grams of fat. You can also build a freedom salad with mixed greens, roasted veggies, white meat chicken, and tomatilla dressing for only 190 calories and seven grams of fat. A kid's burrito with flour tortilla, cilantro lime rice, black beans, jack cheese, and ground beef runs 250 calories and 11 grams of fat.

## McDonald's

Various Katy locations

If you're nutrition-minded or counting calories, McDonald's offers several lighter options. John Rovell of Katy says, "Having the calories printed next to everything on the menu helps me make better choices." For a light breakfast, McDonald's egg white delight McMuffin for only 250 calories and eight fat grams is a good choice. Or try the fruit and maple oatmeal with only 290 calories and four grams of fat. Danielle Harrison, a local teacher and mother of three, advises, "You have to watch out for so called 'healthy items.' Salads are good, but when you add too many extras like cheese, meats, and creamy dressings, it's not such a healthy option." Harrison likes McDonald's bacon ranch salad with balsamic vinaigrette with only 230 total calories and eight grams of fat. The Happy Meal hamburger is 240 calories and eight fat grams. It's not a bad choice when paired with side dish options like apple slices, oranges, or yogurt as alternatives to French fries.

## Panda Express

Various Katy locations

There are several smart choices for grabbing a quick dinner at Panda Express. Christina Emanis says, "I like the stir-fry veggies and Shanghai beef with the mushrooms and asparagus." Her fave dish comes in at 290 calories and 19 grams of fat for a full-size order. The black pepper chicken has 200 calories and 13 fat grams and comes with diced celery and onions in a mild ginger soy sauce. You might want to take it easy on the rice, though. A full order of white rice adds 380 calories but zero fat. Panda Express does not offer children's meals, but they do have half-size portions on all their entrées for little Chinese food lovers.



CHICK-FIL-A  
8-Count Grilled Chicken Nuggets  
140 Calories



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## Subway

### Various Katy locations

Due to the weight loss success of spokesperson Jared Fogle, Subway has long been associated with eating light. Their "Fresh Fit" choices include eight six-inch sandwiches with fewer than six grams of fat each. These include the sweet onion chicken teriyaki sub featuring teriyaki glazed chicken strips and a fat-free sweet onion sauce. "I like the chicken teriyaki sub," says Katy area resident Allen Gilchrist. "The great thing about Subway is that you can pack on all the veggies you want." Another good choice is the oven-roasted chicken salad with only 140 calories and only two-and-a-half grams of fat. Kid's meals come with apple slices and low-fat milk. The black forest ham kid's meal has only 180 calories and two-and-a-half grams of fat.

## Taco Cabana

373 S. Mason Rd.

281-578-9144

Mexican food doesn't have to be bad for you. Skip the tortilla chips and head straight for the main course. Here are a few good options to try. Taco Cabana's beef street tacos will cost you only 290 calories and six grams of fat for three beef tacos in soft corn tortillas. You can dress that up with plenty of salsa at 10 or fewer calories and zero fat for one

ounce. Chicken lovers will enjoy their chicken fajita bowl for only 370 calories and eight grams of fat. "It's a lighter option for dinner than the regular fajitas," says John Rovell. It comes with rice, black beans, lettuce, sour cream, pico de gallo, and salsa roja. The Cabana kid's menu offers a choice of a taco, an enchilada, or a kid's quesadilla. The healthiest choice is the chicken breast fajita taco with 180 calories and five grams of fat. Opt for the kid's size beans and rice as side dishes, rather than the chips and queso. Beans and rice on the kid's meal are just 190 calories with seven fat grams.

## Wendy's

### Various Katy locations

You can find variety at Wendy's. Michelle Gregovic is a yoga instructor and mother of two Katy teens. "I'm a pretty picky eater when it comes to fast food," she shares. "I usually get the Wendy's chicken wrap with dressing on the side." The grilled chicken wrap has 10 grams of fat and only 260 calories. With their kid's meals, Wendy's offers apples slices as an alternative to French fries and drink choices include juice, milk, or bottled water. Apple slices add only 40 calories to the meal and no fat. Pair that with the four-piece chicken nuggets for an additional 180 calories and 12 grams of fat.

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## Whataburger

Various Katy locations

Eating light doesn't always mean saying, "No," to burgers. Barbara Cupp is a grandma and frequent visitor to Katy. She enjoys lunches at Whataburger with her grandson, Sam. "I order their smallest hamburger and skip the fries," she shares. The Whataburger Jr. has 340 calories and 14 grams of fat. Whataburger also offers a chicken fajita taco that includes a whole marinated chicken breast, poblano peppers, and onions with 400 calories. It's enough to satisfy even a big appetite. For the little ones, a Justaburger contains 320 calories and 14 grams of fat. Apple slices are available instead of fries, and milk is a drink choice. Kid's meals do come with dessert though. The cookies are 230 calories and have 11 grams of fat. **KM**

*CHERRI NORTHCUTT is a freelance writer and full-time receptionist. She and her family have enjoyed living in Katy for over 14 years.*

## MORE FAST OPTIONS

Be sure to check out these additional lighter options at fast food eateries.

### Burger King

Tendergrill chicken sandwich without mayo  
320 calories and five grams of fat

Whopper Jr. sandwich without mayo  
240 calories and 10 grams of fat

### Jack In the Box

Egg white and turkey breakfast sandwich  
250 calories and six grams of fat

Grilled chicken salad  
250 calories and nine grams of fat

### Panera Bread

Kids smoked turkey sandwich  
290 calories and eight grams of fat

Breakfast turkey power sandwich  
410 calories and 12 grams of fat

### Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen

Blackened BBQ chicken po'boy  
340 calories and seven grams of fat

Chicken and sausage jambalaya  
220 calories and 11 grams of fat

### Sonic Drive-In

Grilled chicken wrap  
430 calories and 14 grams of fat

Veggie burger with ketchup  
460 calories and 14 grams of fat

### Taco Bell

Fresco burrito supreme  
340 calories and eight grams of fat

Shredded chicken mini quesadilla  
180 calories and eight grams of fat



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