

Eat Cheap - Sandwich

Nothing beats a good sandwich for lunch. I think John Montagu, the 4th Earl of Sandwich, would be surprised that his simple request for meat served between slices of bread, is now the staple for the American lunch.

Today, sandwiches are served cold, hot, open-faced, grilled, wrapped and dipped. The only limitation is one's imagination. My job is to show you how sandwiches can also be healthy. Let's see how well the reporters did.

Half Muffaletta

Ariel Hansen, I agree, a warm sandwich this time of year is what we crave, but a traditional muffaletta is served at room temperature. A muffaletta is made with several types of processed meats, cheeses and olive salad. It is then refrigerated for a few hours to allow the olive salad to soak into the bread and the flavors to meld. It is then served at room temperature.

It is said that the olive salad is the key to a great muffaletta. It is also the healthiest part of this sandwich. A muffaletta is not the sandwich to order when you want a healthy lunch. It looks yummy, but between the lunch meats, cheeses and olives, it is filled with sodium, saturated fat and cholesterol.

I can understand why the side salad at O'Dunken's Draught House sounded good to you. The water content in the iceberg lettuce is refreshing but also cooling to the body- not what we need this time of year. Perhaps the cup of soup would have complemented this sandwich better and warmed you up on a cold day.

Ariel, your instinct to drink a beer with this sandwich was a good one. Beer helps balance out salt in a meal.

Veggie sub

Melissa Davlin, a veggie sub is always the healthiest sub to order. That way you can have your sub and eat it too!

However, I would recommend mustard over mayo. Mayonnaise is made with egg yolks and oil, so it contains cholesterol and saturated fat. If you are ordering a sub or sandwich with cheese and meat, why add more fat and cholesterol? Since many restaurants slather on mayo, requesting mustard is one way to keep it healthier.

And don't think the low-fat or light mayo versions are better. They contain chemicals, preservatives, high fructose corn syrup or artificial sweeteners, which are hard on the body.

Chips are hard to resist. Nonflavored potato chips, like the ones you ordered, or regular corn chips are the best choices because they do not contain artificial colors and flavors.

Melissa, dining out is a total experience. We eat not only with our stomachs but with our eyes. It is difficult to enjoy a meal, no matter how delicious, in an unpleasant environment. So, even when we dine at home, it is important to eat at the table and set it nicely. Pull out the china from time to time - even if you are eating subs- turn on nice music and create an experience. A nice, calm atmosphere not only helps our digestion but calms us.

But, Melissa, don't worry about the lack of sanitizer at Papa Kelsey's Pizza & Subs – germs do strengthen the immune system!

Turkey Panino

Virginia Hutchins, turkey is a better choice than other processed meats when ordering a sandwich. Adding as many veggies as possible to a sandwich is an easy way to get your daily veggies.

Your inclusion of an avocado at The Divine Grind adds healthy fat to this sandwich. Avocados are known as the “butter pear” because they contain 30 grams of mono-unsaturated fat, which lowers cholesterol levels. Saturated fat is derived mostly from animal sources, is solid at room temperature and increases the body's cholesterol. So, limiting the saturated fat in your diet is good.

I am glad this sandwich was delicious. It is hard to beat grilled bread.

Lunch Box Special 1

Melissa, at least your sandwich at Espresso Etc. sounded like it was special. For those of you who have never tried pesto, it is traditionally made with fresh basil, garlic, pine nuts, Parmesan cheese, olive oil, salt and pepper. It adds freshness and flavor to any sandwich or pasta.

Ordering your panino with eight-grain wheat bread not only gives your taste buds something to cheer about, but adds fiber to your diet. Whenever available, always choose whole-grain over white bread.

The problem with out-of-date chips is that the oil can become rancid, which you would be able to smell. I am glad you suffered no ill effects from the chips.

Panino and salad

Panino, which means sandwich in Italian, can be made with any ingredient. The only limitation is your imagination. Nothing beats a warm, oozing sandwich this time of year.

It is nice to know Tori Wakewood at Tori's Eatery Gourmet Food & Coffee uses fresh ingredients in her food.

Virginia, requesting a veggie panino is the healthiest option. It is hard to omit the cheese in a panino because it is the glue that holds the sandwich together. So, a way to cut down on the saturated fat in this sandwich is to order it with only vegetables.

Portobello mushrooms are large, more mature cremini mushrooms. They are hearty in texture and often described as tasting like meat. Honest!

If you are ordering only veggies in your lunch, adding beans to a salad is a great way to get protein and more fiber. Vegetarians need to make sure they eat a bean or bean product every day so their diet is balanced.

Because this lunch contained so many veggies and limited the saturated fat, I am choosing this lunch as the healthiest of the bunch.