

Eat healthy anywhere!

Sure, they're nutritional black holes, but sometimes food courts, movie theaters or mini-marts at highway rest stops are the only places available to grab a bite. Luckily, there are good-for-you options if you just know what to look for. SELF's go-anywhere guide helps you bypass the junk and make the healthiest food choices in the unlikeliest places.

By Liz Krieger Photographs by Paul Costello

You're at the airport, waiting for a flight, when hunger strikes. You (a) hit the food court's Chinese station for an egg roll and fried rice, (b) grab a bag of chips at the newsstand or (c) starve, because there is nothing healthy to eat. Finding a nutritious meal or snack when you're stuck in fast food wastelands like airports or on road trips, where the gas station quickie mart is your only option, can seem pretty hopeless. Think about it: When was the last time you met your nutritional requirements at the movies? (Sorry, there is no recommended daily allowance of Jujubes.) In fact, when surveyed in a SELF poll, 43 percent of you said too much temptation to eat unhealthy food is your biggest obstacle to eating right. And when you're bored, famished or travel-weary, you're especially vulnerable. Unfortunately, it's at such times of reduced resistance, says SELF contributing editor and sports nutritionist Heidi Skolnik, "that you're most exposed to these nutritional disasters." Forty-one percent of you said that sheer convenience was what lured you into ordering greasy fast food in the first place.

We got Skolnik to take SELF on a tour of the venues most bereft of healthy foods and tease out the best finds. "You can't change what's out there," Skolnik says, "but you can know ahead of time what you're going to do when you get there." Now you'll be in the nutritional know *anywhere* you go.



Don't let a day at the amusement park end in a serious sugar crash. Forgo the fried dough and cotton candy in favor of this potassium-rich corn on the cob.



At the movies

It used to be dinner and a movie. These days, with busy schedules and 7 P.M. showings, it's more like dinner *at* the movies. Though most concessions are nutritional nightmares, some theaters have introduced healthier snacks, including sorbet bars. If yours hasn't, try these options.

You want to grab

A medium buttered popcorn, regular (28-ounce) Coke and 5.3-ounce package of peanut M&M's that you can split with your date

Calories: 1,023

Fat: 55 g

You should grab

A large soft pretzel that you can share, a pack of strawberry Twizzlers (limit yourself to five; give the rest to your date so you're not tempted!) and a seltzer

Calories: 392

Fat: 2.5 g

Why it's better

The pretzel-Twizzler combo can sate your salt and sweet cravings. While Twizzlers do have trans fats (partially hydrogenated oil lurks in many movie-counter candies, including Skittles and Starburst), they have fewer calories than, say, the healthier-sounding Raisinets, which have 380 calories and 16 g of fat per 3.5-ounce box. Another option: your own child-sized popcorn (without the butter) and a Diet Coke (300 calories, 20 g fat).

In a diner

Steak and eggs. Burgers. The lumberjack special. Whose mouth doesn't start to water over the range of choices found at a good greasy spoon? Skolnik's advice: Don't get lured in by a diner's long menu. Instead, learn how to make it work for, not against, you.

You want to grab

Three oversize pancakes (with syrup), two fried eggs and a side of sausage

Calories: 966

Fat: 56 g

You should grab

A made-to-order omelette (ask for two egg whites and one whole egg) with spinach, tomatoes and 1 ounce of feta cheese, with a side of fruit salad and unbuttered rye toast

Calories: 596

Fat: 28.5 g

Why it's better

You skip the saturated fat in the sausage but still get protein in the egg whites. The vegetables pack a phytochemical punch as well as a dose of fiber from the spinach. Another pick: a bowl of heart-healthy oatmeal made with nonfat milk and a sprinkle of raisins (232 calories, 3 g fat).



Skip the park's soft-serve ice cream for the lower-calorie Italian ice.

You want to grab

A tuna melt on white bread with a side of french fries and a small bowl of coleslaw

Calories: 1,337

Fat: 83 g

You should grab

A grilled cheddar cheese on rye (split it with a friend), a bowl of tomato or minestrone soup and a side of steamed broccoli with a squeeze of fresh lemon

Calories: 472

Fat: 18 g

Why it's better

You eliminate the trans fats (from the fries) and keep the warm, cheesy essence of the sandwich while adding fiber in the rye bread, vitamin A in the broccoli and B vitamins in the soup. Another good bet: a cup of chicken-noodle soup and turkey on rye with 1 tablespoon of cranberry sauce (352 calories, 5.5 g fat).

At a cookout

Where else are you going to eat a hot dog, a hamburger and a couple of spareribs—all in one sitting? Backyard barbecues are great excuses to nibble the afternoon away on some fat-filled dishes. Mayonnaise potato salad, anyone? Luckily, some of the most popular items are also the healthiest—you just need to know what to choose and what to lose.

You want to grab

Two barbecued chicken drumsticks, a side of potato salad made with real mayonnaise and two small chocolate brownies

Calories: 829

Fat: 45.5 g

You should grab

A grilled hamburger (minus the bun) with mustard, ketchup, lettuce and tomato; an ear of corn (with a pat of butter); a side of baked beans; and two watermelon wedges

Calories: 611

Fat: 23 g

Why it's better

Flame-grilled hamburgers are rich in protein and zinc and, if you choose a lean cut, are lower in fat than you'd think. Corn not only tastes good, it's also rich in folate and thiamin. Baked beans offer an even greater potassium punch, plus folate and fiber. More good 'cue: a grilled chicken breast, a slice of corn bread (hold the butter) and grilled veggies (452 calories, 17 g fat).

In SELF's poll, 49 percent of you said you felt

On the road

You stop to get your car—and stomach—fueled up. Zonked out and ravenous, you enter the rest stop's quickie mart and reach for the nearest pack of Twinkies. Not so fast! Although it's challenging to make wise choices at these junk food emporiums, if you resolve to break out of your Doritos-and-soda routine, you'll learn to spot a few nutritious items hiding behind the day-old doughnuts.

You want to grab

Two packaged chocolate doughnuts and a cup of flavored coffee with milk

Calories: 528

Fat: 33 g

You want to grab

Half an 8.8-ounce bag of cheddar cheese Combos and a Kit-Kat bar

Calories: 805

Fat: 31 g

You should grab

Cereal-in-a-cup (opt for Raisin Bran Crunch) with a half-pint of lowfat milk, a Dole Fruit Bowl and a cup of tea with milk

Calories: 494

Fat: 2 g

You should grab

Two string cheeses and a Nature Valley granola bar

Calories: 340

Fat: 18 g

Why it's better

By ditching the doughnuts, you save on fat and avoid a sugar crash. The fibrous cereal keeps you feeling fuller longer, and the lowfat milk and fruit cup give you calcium and vitamin C. Another option: a bottled lowfat yogurt smoothie (250 calories, 3 g fat).

Why it's better

The protein in the cheese will keep your energy high, and the granola bar gives you fiber. Other options: half a 2-ounce bag of mixed nuts (168 calories, 14.5 g fat) or a box of raisins (130 calories, 0 g fat).

In the airport

Whether you've got a three-hour layover in a major-city airport or three minutes at a glorified airstrip, airport food can amount to a rubbery hot dog or a bag of chips from a vending machine or newspaper stand. And holding out for the airplane meal may be a mistake, because many carriers have stopped serving food in an effort to save money. Still, even if you didn't have time to pack a snack at home (always the best and cheapest option), you can avoid greasy gateside grub.

You want to grab

A cheese-filled Danish from Starbucks

Calories: 460

Fat: 28 g

You want to grab

A jumbo hot dog (with bun), a small bag of potato chips and a can of regular soda

Calories: 739

Fat: 40 g

You want to grab

A regular-sized Snickers bar from the newsstand

Calories: 280

Fat: 14 g

You should grab

A nonfat yogurt and a vanilla biscotti from Starbucks

Calories: 200

Fat: 5 g

You should grab

Tomato lentil soup at Au Bon Pain (or a non-cream-based soup from a deli), a whole-grain roll and a glass of orange juice

Calories: 340

Fat: 2 g

You should grab

A 2-ounce bag of dried fruit and nuts from the bulk-food stall or a small package of trail mix

Calories: 262

Fat: 16 g

Why it's better

Losing the high-calorie pastry and filling up on a protein-packed yogurt instead will carry you from liftoff to landing. You get a sweet fix from the biscotti, too.

Why it's better

A frank may taste good, but the lower-calorie soup will make you happier: The protein and fiber from the lentils fill you up. The juice gives you a wallop of vitamin C. Another option: the tuna sandwich at Au Bon Pain (450 calories, 10 g fat).

Why it's better

The dried fruit and nuts (go for heart-helping walnuts and almonds) provide a megadose of vitamin E, fiber and protein. Another option: a cup of calcium-filled frozen yogurt (234 calories, 8 g fat).

At the mall

Take an à la carte approach to food court dining and keep it light and healthy. Your motivation? The better you fuel, the more shop-'til-you-drop stamina you'll have. And the better the clothes will look when you try them on!

You want to grab

Panda Express's double entrée platter (sweet and sour chicken, beef with broccoli, served with chow mein noodles)

Calories: 790

Fat: 33 g

You should grab

A grilled chicken sandwich (Burger King's is 380 calories, 4 g fat, while Chick-Fil-A's is 270 calories, 3.5 g fat) and stir-fried veggies (Panda Express: 70 calories, 3 g fat)

Calories: 450

Fat: 7 g

Why it's better

Use the food court's options to your advantage. "Remember, you're not chained to one station," Skolnik says. Avoid fried foods and pick a high-protein sandwich or a sushi roll. Stop at Panda for the fibrous veggies. Another find: Taco Bell's Fresco-style soft chicken taco (170 calories, 4 g fat).

guilty after eating an unhealthy meal or snack.