

A Healthier 30-Minute Meal Cheaper Than Fast Food!

The convenience of fast food is quite appealing at times. But, what about the nutritional value? Is there something comparable that can be made quickly at home? Will the kids like it? Will it cost a lot more money?

Below is a meal plan that parallels a typical fast food meal favorite - chicken, fries and salad. It can be made in 30 minutes and tastes great. No one has to pile the kids in the car (they can actually be working on homework while you prepare the meal), search for shoes and socks so you can leave, or cope with greasy foods. We compared the nutritional value and then the cost - you might be surprised to see how much is saved!

Start-to-Finish 30-Minute Menu

Oven-Fried Chicken Chunks (p. 144)
Dipping Sauce (Dijon Salad Dressing, p. 98)
Oven Fries (p. 76)
Side Salad (use pre-washed lettuce in a bag)
Dijon Salad Dressing (as above)

Meal Timing

1. Preheat oven—425°.
2. Prepare and start Oven Fries bake on lowest rack possible.
3. Prepare and start Chicken Chunks; bake on middle rack. Stir Oven Fries
4. Portion salad onto plates or salad bowls. Prepare Dijon Salad Dressing for dipping sauce and salad.
5. Serve and enjoy a family meal.

Nutritional Comparison*

	Calories	Fat Calories	Fat (grams)	Saturated Fat (grams)	Sodium (milligrams)	Carbohydrates (grams)	Sugar (grams)	Protein (grams)
Fast Food Meal	860	410	45.5	7	1550	76	12	20
Healthier 30-Minute Meal	458	175	19.4	2.7	562	45	4	28
	47% less	57% less		60% less	63% less	41% less	67% less	40% more

*Specific data used to determine values is listed at the end of this document.

Price Comparison

	Organic/Natural	Non-organic	Fast Food
Chicken Chunks/Nuggets - 6 pieces	1.45	.70	3.69
Dipping Sauce	.12	.08	xxx
Oven Fries (1 serving)/French Fries (small)	.45	.26	1.00
Side Salad (bagged)	.92	.57	1.00
Dressing (2 teaspoons)	.08	.05	xxx
Bottled Water	xxx	xxx	1.29
Total for one serving	\$3.02	\$1.66	\$5.69 without water
Total for family of 4	\$12.08	\$6.64	\$22.76 without water
Savings for family of 4	\$15.84	\$21.28	
Savings for family of 4 using combo* below	\$11.04	\$16.84	
Savings for family of 4 using combo** below	\$9.80	\$15.24	

*6-piece nugget combo includes medium fries (increases calories, fat, carbohydrates and sodium over our nutritional comparison) and medium soda (may add empty calories unless substitute water) = \$4.87. Add \$1 for the salad x 4 dinners = \$23.48 total.

**If you purchase 2 adult combos and 2 kids meals (small fries and 6 nuggets for \$4.07 + \$1 for salad), the total would be \$21.88.

Healthier 30-Minute Meal



Data Used for Nutritional Comparison - Look what happens if you include the "extras" (like ketchup)!

Fast Food Meal: 6-piece chicken nuggets, small fries and salad

Item	Amount	Calories	Fat Calories	Fat (grams)	Saturated Fat (grams)	Cholesterol (milligrams)	Sodium (milligrams)	Carbohydrates (grams)	Fiber (grams)	Sugar (grams)	Protein (grams)
Chicken Nuggets	6-piece	280	160	17	3	40	600	16	-	-	14
Hot Mustard	1 packet	60	20	2.5	-	5	250	9	2	6	1
French Fries	Small	230	100	11	1.5	-	160	29	3	-	3
Side Salad	1	20	-	-	-	-	10	4	1	2	1
Dressing - Ranch	1 packet	170	130	15	2.5	20	530	9	-	4	1
TOTAL		860	410	45.5	7	65	1550	76	6	12	20
Extras											
Salt packet	1 packet	-	-	-	-	-	270	-	-	-	-
Ketchup packet	1 packet	15	-	-	-	-	110	3	-	2	-
Crouton packet	1 packet	60	15	1.5	-	-	140	10	1	-	2
TOTAL with EXTRAS		935	425	47	7	65	2070	89	7	14	22

Simple Choices for Healthier Eating Meal: 6-piece Chicken Chunks (serving), Oven Fries (serving) and salad

Item	Amount	Calories	Fat Calories	Fat (grams)	Saturated Fat (grams)	Cholesterol (milligrams)	Sodium (milligrams)	Carbohydrates (grams)	Fiber (grams)	Sugar (grams)	Protein (grams)
Chicken Chunks	Serving	190	57	6.3	1	63	254	7.9	1	-	24
Dijon Dressing/dip	1 Tbsp.	53	46	5.1	.8	-	57	1.8	-	1.7	-
Oven Fries	Serving	165	41	4.6	.4	-	143	30	2.3	1.1	3.4
Bagged lettuce	87 grams ~2 cups	15	-	-	-	-	70	4	2	-	1
Dijon Dressing	2 tsp.	35	31	3.4	.5	-	.8	1.2	-	1.1	-
TOTAL		458	175	19.4	2.7	63	562	44.9	5.3	3.9	28.4