

# Turning Up the Heat on Supermarket Mexican Food

## Nutrition Comparison of Supermarket Mexican Food

As with all of EN comparisons, this is only a sampling of what's available. Products are listed alphabetically.

✓ =EN's Picks. Entrees contain 280 to 450 calories (14 to 23% DV), at or below 16 grams fat (25% DV), and 800 mg sodium (33% DV). Sides contain at or below 200 calories (10% DV), 7 grams fat (11% DV), and 270 mg sodium (11% DV).

Mexican Food	Serving size	Calories	Total Fat (g)	Sat Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Protein (g)
<b>ENTRÉE, BOXED</b>						
Casa Fiesta Taco Dinner Kit	¼ package <sup>4</sup>	175	7	5	580	3
Chi Chi's Fiesta Plates Creamy Chipotle Chicken	1	330	21	9	890	17
✓ Chi Chi's Fiesta Plates Salsa Chicken	1	260	10	3.5	720	17
✓ Garden of Eatin' Blue Corn Taco Dinner Kit	½ package <sup>5</sup>	150	6	0.5	600	2
Hamburger Helper Mexican Crunchy Taco	1 cup, prepared	340	14	5	870	20
Old El Paso Enchilada Dinner Kit	¼ package	140 <sup>1</sup>	3.5	1	1430	3
		430 <sup>2</sup>	24	10	1630	29
		380 <sup>3</sup>	16	7	1640	34
Old El Paso Fajita Dinner Kit	½ package	170 <sup>1</sup>	4.5	1	890	4
		340 <sup>3</sup>	12	1.5	940	25
Old El Paso Soft Taco Bake Dinner Kit	¼ package	180 <sup>1</sup>	7	1.5	890	3
		380 <sup>2</sup>	20	6	960	23
Ortega Lasagna	¼ package <sup>4</sup>	210	8	1.5	1500	4
✓ Ortega Taco Kit	½ package <sup>5</sup>	160	7	1	640	2
<b>ENTRÉE, FROZEN</b>						
✓ Amy's Black Bean Burrito	1	280	8	1	580	9
Amy's Black Bean –Vegetable Enchilada	1	160	6	0.5	390	5
Amy's Mexican Tamale Pie	1	150	3	0	590	5
✓ Amy's Southwestern Burrito	1	290	10	3.5	680	12
✓ Amy's Tamale Cheese Verde	1	360	16	5	780	10
✓ Patio Beef & Bean Burrito	1	340	13	4	710	9
✓ PJ's Organics Original Beef Burrito	1	380	10	1.5	800	12
✓ Smart Ones Chicken Enchilada Suiza	1 meal	290	5	2	640	11
Smart Ones Fiesta Quesadilla	1 pc/½ pkg	220	5	2.5	630	10
✓ Stouffer's Lean Cuisine Baja Style Chicken Quesadilla	1 pkg	280	8	3	690	18
TGI Friday's Complete Skillet Meals Sizzling Chicken Fajitas	2 pieces	290	8	2.5	990	21
Trader Jose's Black Bean & Corn Enchilada	1	130	4	0	490	10
✓ Trader Jose's Cheese & Green Chili Tamales	1	280	15	5	640	8
✓ Trader Jose's Chicken Fajita Burrito	½	280	9	2.5	710	14
✓ Trader Jose's Mildly Spiced Vegetable Burritos	1	350	10	1	680	9
Trader Jose's Ready to Heat & Serve Handcrafted Cheese Enchiladas	1	220	11	4	490	10
Trader Jose's Shredded Beef Burritos	½	190	8	2	510	10
✓ Whole Kitchen Chicken Enchiladas	2	310	8	3	610	16
<b>SIDES</b>						
Casbah Spanish Rice Pilaf Mix	¼ cup (dry)	160	0.5	0	480	4
✓ Fantastic World Foods Refried Beans	¼ cup (prepared)	130	2	0	270	7
Knorr Fiesta Sides Mix Mexican Rice	1 cup (prepared)	290	7	1	940	7
Old El Paso Fat Free Refried Beans	½ cup	90	0	0	590	6
Old El Paso Heat & Serve Fiesta Rice	1 cup	240	4.5	1	680	5
Old El Paso Heat & Serve Mexican Rice	1 cup	250	4.5	1	930	5
Old El Paso Traditional Refried Beans	½ cup	90	0.5	0	580	5
Uncle Ben's Spanish Style Ready Rice	1 cup	200	2.5	0	680	4
Zatarain's Spanish Rice	¼ cup (dry)	180	0	0	520	4

Source: Food manufacturer labels. Note: g=gram, mg=milligram, Sat fat=saturated fat, DV=Daily Value, daily requirement based on 2,000 calorie/day diet. <sup>1</sup>As packaged. <sup>2</sup>As prepared with one pound lean ground beef. <sup>3</sup>As prepared with one pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts. <sup>4</sup>Per serving, prepared as directed with one pound lean ground beef would add 200 calories, 13 g of fat, 4.5 g saturated fat, and 20 g protein. <sup>5</sup>Per serving, prepared as directed with one pound lean ground beef would add 133 calories, 9 g of fat, 3 g saturated fat, and 13 g protein.

Need to spice up your life? Your local supermarket can help. Back in the day, the Mexican section of the grocery store included a few boxes of hard taco shells, some taco seasoning packets, and, if you were lucky, a couple of jars of salsa. But as Americans' desire for more international flavors, and our quest for heat increased, the size of that spicy little section of the market has exploded. Now you can find almost any kind of South of the Border food you desire in boxes, bags, cans, and frozen pouches, some ready to be eaten in only minutes. Ole!

**Don't Get Burned.** When it comes to meal kits, several Mexican food manufacturers provide nutrition information only for what's in the box and do not account for the ground beef, chicken, or other ingredients required to make the meal. Keep this in mind when shopping.

- **Watch the salt.** As with many processed foods, supermarket Mexican foods can be notoriously high in sodium. One way to get around this is to ditch the seasoning packet found in many of the dinner kits. It's easy to make your own by combining a few common spices: cumin, chili powder, pepper, onion powder, and garlic powder.
- **Use Mexican meal kits to your advantage.** The benefit of kits is that you have greater control over what you eat. Choose lean protein sources such as extra lean ground beef, skinless chicken breasts or soy crumbles. Use reduced fat cheeses and load up on the veggies.
- **Choose condiments wisely.** Your choice of condiments, along with the amount you use, may have quite an impact on the calories, fat and sodium content of your meal.

Mexican Food Condiments			
BRAND (2 T Serving Size)	Sodium (mg)	Calories	Fat (g)
Newman's Own Chunky Salsa	105	10	0
Old El Paso Cheese 'n' Salsa	280	35	3
Trader Jose's Habanero & Lime Salsa	210	10	0
Sour Cream, Regular	10	60	5
Sour Cream, Fat Fre	25	30	0

— Heidi McIndoo, M.S., R.D.