

Nutrition Comparison

Convenient Comfort Foods: Memories of Mom's Kitchen

Nutrition Comparison of Supermarket Comfort Foods

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

✓= EN's Picks. Side dishes contain no more than 200 calories, 5 grams total fat, 2 grams saturated fat, 450 milligrams sodium and no more than four ingredients you couldn't find in your own pantry. Entrees contain no more than 400 calories, 14 grams total fat, 5 grams saturated fat, 600 milligrams sodium, at least 15 grams protein, and no more than four ingredients you couldn't find in your own pantry.

Brand	Serving Size	Calories	Total Fat (grams)	Sat Fat (grams)	Sodium (milligrams)	Protein (grams)
SIDE DISHES—FROZEN						
365 Organic Macaroni & Cheese	9 oz	370	12	8	760	20
✓ 365 Organic Potato & Onion Pierogi	1 cup	190	1.5	0.5	320	6
Alexia Mashed Red Potatoes with Garlic & Parmesan	½ cup	150	7	4	390	4
Moosewood Organic Vegetarian Macaroni & 3 Cheese	10 oz	400	17	9	670	17
Joe's Diner Macaroni & Cheese	1 cup	360	15	8	590	16
SIDE DISHES—MIXES*						
✓ 365 Organic Instant Mashed Potatoes	⅔ cup	150	0	0	10	2
Betty Crocker Cheesy Scalloped Potatoes	½ cup	90	0	0	650	2
Betty Crocker Homestyle Creamy Butter Mashed Potatoes	⅔ cup	80	1.5	0.5	460	3
Betty Crocker Sweet Potato Mashed Potato	½ cup	120	1	0.5	310	2
Kraft Original Macaroni & Cheese	1 cup	260	3.5	2	580	9
Stovetop Stuffing Mix for Chicken	½ cup	110	1	0	430	3
✓ Trader Joe's Cheddar Cheese Potatoes Au Gratin	½ cup	90	0.5	0	450	2
✓ Trader Joe's Garlic Mashed Potatoes	½ cup	80	0	0	270	2
Trader Joe's Organic Shells & White Cheddar Macaroni & Cheese	⅔ cup	260	3.5	2	570	10
SIDE DISHES—REFRIGERATED						
Shedd's Country Crock Garlic Mashed Potatoes	⅔ cup	160	7	3	430	2
Simply Potatoes Traditional Mashed Potatoes	½ cup	120	6	4	420	2
TGI Friday's Steakhouse Mashed Potatoes	⅔ cup	220	11	4.5	670	4
Trader Joe's Diner Classics Macaroni & Cheese	1 cup	370	18	7	300	15
SIDE DISHES—MICROWAVEABLE						
Kraft Easy Mac	1 (2 oz)	220	4	2.5	700	6
Velveeta Shells & Cheese made with 2% milk cheese	1 (2.2 oz)	180	3	1.5	640	7
ENTREES—FROZEN						
365 Organic Macaroni & Beef	1 (9 oz)	310	7	3.5	840	18
Amy's Broccoli Pot Pie with Cheddar Cheese Sauce	1 (7.5 oz)	430	22	10	630	11
Amy's Chili & Cornbread	1 (10.5 oz)	340	6	2.5	680	11
Amy's Shepherd's Pie—Light in Sodium	1 (8 oz)	160	4	0	290	5
Healthy Choice Classic Meatloaf Complete Meal	1 (12 oz)	300	7	2.5	530	15
Healthy Choice Homestyle Salisbury Steak Complete Meal	1 (12.5 oz)	290	6	2	520	16
Hungry Man Boneless Fried Chicken Meal	1 (16 oz)	860	39	9	1340	39
Marie Callender's Beef Pot Pie	1 (8 oz)	510	29	11	780	15
Stouffer's Meatloaf with Mashed Potatoes	1 (10 oz)	340	19	8	780	22
Stouffer's Tuna Noodle Casserole	1 (12 oz)	450	20	6	990	22
Trader Joe's Shepherd's Pie	1 cup	190	3.5	1	590	18
Weight Watchers Smart Ones Macaroni & Cheese Meal	1 (10 oz)	270	2	1	790	11
ENTREES—MIXES*						
Annie's Organic 5 Grain Elbows & White Cheddar	1 cup	260	4	2	570	10
Annie's Organic Cheeseburger Macaroni	1 cup	140	2.5	1	520	6
Annie's Organic Creamy Tuna Spirals	1 cup	200	2.5	1.5	620	8
Back to Nature 100% Whole Wheat Macaroni & Cheese	1 cup	230	2	1	620	11
Betty Crocker Hamburger Helper Classic						
Double Cheeseburger Macaroni	1 cup	120	1	0	630	3
ENTREES—REFRIGERATED						
Mrs. Budd's Fully Baked White Meat Chicken Pie	1 cup	330	17	5	890	11
✓ Trader Joe's Diner Classics Chili Mac	1 cup	290	14	4.5	440	15
Tyson Fully Cooked Seasoned Meatloaf	5 oz	320	23	10	600	14
ENTREES—MICROWAVEABLE						
Dinty Moore Beef Stew	1 bowl (10 oz)	250	11	5	1250	15
Hormel Compleats Chicken & Dumplings	1 (10 oz)	260	8	2	1140	13
Hormel Compleats Tuna Casserole	1 (10 oz)	240	7	4	880	17

Note: oz=ounce. Source: Manufacturer information on food label and website.

*Nutritional information for dry mix only, does not include addition of suggested ingredients.

Bad day? A little under-the-weather? Case of the blahs? Whatever the situation, a creamy bowl of mac & cheese or a big steaming helping of mashed potatoes will help put you back on top again, right? Even if you don't have time to slave over a hot stove recreating one of your grandmothers' famous recipes, you're not out of luck. You need look no further than your grocer's shelves to get that comfort you crave.

Helpful Hints. Before you start loading up your cupboards for the next rainy day, check out the following tips.

- **Watch the fat.** Butter, cream and cheese are often hallmark ingredients in the comfort foods we love, giving total fat and saturated fat levels a much *un*-needed boost. Aim to keep total fat below 5 grams and saturated fat below 2 grams in side-dishes, and below 14 grams and 5 grams, respectively, in entrees.

- **Not worth their weight in salt.** As with many pre-made foods, salt is often used for both flavor and as a preservative, leading some of these foods to have more than half a day's worth of sodium (recommended daily intake is no more than 2,300 milligrams). A healthy goal is to try to get no more than about 450 milligrams in side dishes and about 600 in entrees.

- **Get your protein.** If you're counting on a convenience comfort food to stand in for a meal, keep an eye on protein levels. Many comfort foods such as macaroni and cheese are skimpy on protein, an essential nutrient that can help you feel full longer. If you're favorite comfort food contains less than 15 grams of protein, add a small serving of lean meat like skinless chicken breast or plant protein such as tofu.

- **Pair with veggies.** When it comes to comfort, pasta, potatoes and meat often take precedence over veggies. To boost the fiber, as well as vitamin and mineral content of a comforting meal, consider adding a simple green salad or steamed vegetables to these meals.

— Heidi McIndoo, M.S., R.D.