

YES, I would like to compromise: Lame phone High-priced minutes Spotty-to-nonexistent coverage **NO THANKS, I don't want to compromise.**[Back to Article](#)[Click to Print](#)

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School Cuisine

By Carolyn Sayre

The lunchroom wasn't always such a complicated place. Fifty years ago, kids would gulp down helpings of fatty pot roast and butter-soaked mashed potatoes without thinking twice about the impact on their waistlines. But that was before the rise of supersized portions and sedentary lifestyles.

Today it seems that what goes on students' trays has become everyone's business. And while efforts are being made by governments to ensure that cafeterias offer healthier meals, many schools are still failing to make the grade. According to a report issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture last year, fewer than one-third of public schools meet the recommended standard for either total or saturated fat in their meals. Here's what kids used to eat, what they still do eat and, most important, what they could eat.

Ice Cream 100 calories 55 mg of sodium 6 g of fat **FACT:** It's a good idea to ditch the Dixie Cup. Satisfy your sweet tooth with low-fat alternatives like frozen yogurt

Apple 90 calories 1 mg of sodium 0 g of fat **FACT:** Don't let the Atkins diet fool you. Packed with fiber, fruits are a healthy and nutritious snack choice

Bread and Butter 142 calories 65 mg of sodium 12.5 g of fat **FACT:** Go for whole grains. Kids feel fuller when they replace white bread with whole wheat

A 1950s Lunch Meat, potatoes and perhaps some grudging greens were the menu at home, so why not at school? The bread was white and the butter plentiful.

Whole Milk 150 calories 0 mg of sodium 8 g of fat **FACT:** Avoid empty calories. Fatty milk is rich in nutrients but also calories. Go for 1% or 2% milk instead

Peas and Corn 60 calories 390 mg of sodium 0 g of fat **FACT:** A healthy alternative to sides like fries. But fresh is

best since it spares you the sodium in canned foods

Mashed Potatoes 194 calories 40 mg of sodium 4 g of fat FACT: Bag the butter. Without that excess, this is a starchy dish that is fat-free

Pot Roast 200 calories 740 mg of sodium 2.5 g of fat FACT: Meat is fine, but keep portions modest and trim the fat. Drop the gravy too--that's where the sodium is

Meal Summary [This article contains a table. Please see hardcopy of magazine.]

% Daily Value Calories: 936 39% Sodium: 1,291 mg 57% Fat: 33 g 44%

BASED ON A DAILY INTAKE OF 2,400 CALORIES, 2,250 MG OF SODIUM AND 74.5 G OF FAT, THE AVERAGE OF THE DIFFERING RECOMMENDED RANGES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

From Bad To a Whole Lot Worse Modern cafeteria food might be more exciting than it was in the 1950s, but that comes at a nutritional price. This Mexican-style meal--a popular staple in a lot of schools--is stuffed with calories, fat and sodium

Chocolate-Chip Cookies 300 calories 190 mg of sodium 16 g of fat FACT: Sugary desserts may feel satisfying in the short term, but they won't keep you feeling full for long

Peaches 80 calories 10 mg of sodium 0 g of fat FACT: A great dessert, packed with nutrients and fiber, but it's made less great by all the sugar. Fresh fruit is better than canned

Mexican Rice 190 calories 600 mg of sodium 0 g of fat FACT: Although this starchy side dish doesn't contain fat, it's loaded with sodium. Rice can be tasty without all the salt

Orange Juice 95 calories 0 mg of sodium 0 g of fat FACT: Fruit Juice is a better choice than soda, but sugary drinks like this can lead to rapid weight gain

Refried Beans 90 calories 560 mg of sodium 0 g of fat FACT: It may be high in sodium, but this Mexican-style dish is at least low in sugar and high in fiber

Salsa 10 calories 75 mg of sodium 0 g of fat FACT: A national favorite, it's low in calories--and when eaten in moderation, low in sodium too

Nachos 408 calories 629 mg of sodium 29.4 g of fat FACT: This perfect storm of cheese, beef and chips accounts for more than a third of your daily fat allowance

Meal Summary [This article contains a table. Please see hardcopy of magazine.]

% Daily Value Calories: 1,173 49% Sodium: 2,064 mg 92% Fat: 45.4 g 61%

Lunch Like It Could Be Some schools are offering healthy alternatives to the usual fare. Whole grains, fruits and lean protein like chicken are turning up on trays. Vending machines are slowly getting better too, but choose carefully

Strawberries 25 calories 0 mg of sodium 0 g of fat **FACT:** High in fiber and low in fat, this fruit is a choice that's hard to quarrel with

Carrots and Dip 136 calories 224 mg of sodium 12 g of fat **FACT:** Vegetables are always a sensible snack, but dipping sauces may carry hidden fats

1% Low-Fat Milk 100 calories 107 mg of sodium 2.4 g of fat **FACT:** Rich in nutrients like calcium, low-fat milk is the perfect choice to accompany a healthy lunch


Vegetable Soup 100 calories 480 mg of sodium 2 g of fat **FACT:** Foods like soup, which contains a lot of water, help kids feel full--but keep an eye on the salt

Grapes 71 calories 2 mg of sodium 0 g of fat **FACT:** Perfect little packages--sweet, juicy and a great alternative to high-calorie desserts like cookies

Turkey Wrap 216 calories 580 mg of sodium 9 g of fat **FACT:** With lean meat, whole wheat and a modest helping of cheese, it's well balanced-- but the salt, again, is a worry

Meal Summary [This article contains a table. Please see hardcopy of magazine.]

% Daily Value Calories: 648 27% Sodium: 1,393 mg 62% Fat: 25.4 g 34%

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