

Eat This, Not That!

RESTAURANTS

Expert-Recommended

The Best Keto-Approved Orders at Your Favorite Fast-Food Chains

If you end up at a fast-food chain, don't fret—you have options.

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SEPTEMBER 25, 2019



If you follow a specific meal plan, you've probably dreamt of meal prepping on weekends, carried approved snacks on you at all times, and been ready with alternatives when you find yourself at a dinner party or a meal out of your control. But in reality, many of us find ourselves on the go and without any backup plan. The good news is that if you are eating a keto diet, there are a number of options available at restaurants. You might not think there are many fast-food keto options, but you can actually eat keto at many of your favorite fast-food restaurants if you know what to order.

No matter where you go, you should start with something as "basic" as possible, says Kristin Kirkpatrick, MS, RDN. "That means fewer ingredients," Kirkpatrick says. "Most fast-food eateries have either burgers or grilled chicken, and getting these on salad wraps is always safe... Other than a restaurant that only specializes in pasta or fried foods, most places will always have at least one option to choose from."

And while you may find yourself at a fast-food joint because you didn't plan ahead properly, that doesn't mean you shouldn't plan at all. "If eating at a fast-food chain, you can often check out their nutritional facts table online," says Abbey Sharp, RD, YouTuber and blogger at Abbey's Kitchen. "Zero in on the carb and fat content of their food items—this will easily tell you if it's keto-friendly or not."

As the standard keto diet calls for low carbs, moderate proteins, and high fats, this means that you'll likely have to do some substitutions when eating out. Sharp recommends swapping out buns for lettuce wraps and rice and beans for extra guac, veggies, or lettuce. Dining out for breakfast? Kirkpatrick says to look for egg bites or egg bowls. Here are other options you can look for at major fast-food restaurants, according to both dietitians.

1 Chick-fil-A

Eating keto at Chick-fil-A is easier than you might think. The chicken hotspot may be known for its fried chicken sandwiches...but bread and fried foods are two keto no-nos. However, people often forget the fast-food chain carries grilled chicken as well. Consider the following for your next order at Chick-fil-A.

Breakfast

- **Egg White Grill**, without English muffin
- **Bacon, Egg, and Cheese**, without the biscuit or egg muffin
- **Sausage, Egg, and Cheese**, without the biscuit or egg muffin
- **Hash Brown Scramble Bowl with Grilled Filet**, no hashbrowns

Lunch or Dinner

- **Grilled Chicken Sandwich**, without the bun
- **Grilled Chicken Club**, without the bun
- **Grilled Chicken Cool Wrap**, without the wrap
- **Grilled Nuggets**

2 McDonald's

Need your Mickey D's fix? Well, you may be able to satisfy that craving with a few modifications. Just don't do it too often because "fast-food items can be very high in sodium, and most of the foods on their menu are highly processed," Sharp says. These are the items you can get when you're splurging.

Breakfast

- **Egg McMuffin**, without English muffin
- **Sausage McMuffin with Egg**, without English muffin
- **Bacon Egg and Cheese**, without the biscuit, bagel, or McGriddle
- **Sausage Biscuit**, without the biscuit
- **Sausage Biscuit with Egg**, without the biscuit
- **Sausage McGriddles**, without the McGriddles
- **Sausage Burrito**, without the tortilla

Lunch or Dinner

- **Quarter pounder**, in a lettuce wrap
- **McDouble without cheese**, in a lettuce wrap
- **Cheeseburger**, in a lettuce wrap
- **Double Cheeseburger**, in a lettuce wrap
- **Hamburger**, in a lettuce wrap
- **Artisan Grilled Chicken Sandwich**, in a lettuce wrap with mayo or mustard
- **Bacon Ranch Grilled Chicken Salad**, without dressing

3 Wendy's

Before you ask, no, you can't have a frosty. But a Baconator? Go for it—as long as you skip the bun. When eating at fast-food spots, Sharp suggests you also skip the ketchup if you're being extra carb-conscious that day. "One ketchup packet is around two to three grams of carbs," she says.

Breakfast

- **Sausage and Egg Burrito**, without the tortilla
- **Sausage Biscuit**, without the biscuit
- **Bacon, Egg, and Cheese**, without the croissant or biscuit
- **Sausage, Egg, and Cheese**, without the croissant or biscuit

Lunch or Dinner

- **Dave's Double**, in a lettuce wrap
- **Baconator**, in a lettuce wrap
- **Barbecue Cheeseburger**, in a lettuce wrap; no fried onions or BBQ sauce
- **Any cheeseburger**, in a lettuce wrap
- **Grilled Chicken Sandwich**, in a lettuce wrap; no smoky honey mustard
- **Grilled Asiago Ranch Club**, in a lettuce wrap; get extra mayo
- **Parmesan Caesar Chicken side salad**, without croutons
- **Southwest Avocado Chicken Salad half size**, without dressing

4 Taco Bell

Yo Quiero Taco Bell? The good news is: There are options for you. But no matter where you are, tortillas (both corn and flour) are always off-limits. Luckily, the Mexican fast-food restaurant can prepare things in bowls for you.

Breakfast

- **Grilled Breakfast Burrito**, in a bowl instead of a tortilla
- **Grande Scrambler**, in a bowl instead of tortilla; swap out potatoes for protein like chicken or add guacamole
- **Mini Skillet Bowl**, remove potatoes; swap in protein or guacamole/sour cream

Lunch or Dinner

- **Power Menu Bowl**, remove the rice and beans; add extra lettuce and double the grilled chicken or guacamole
- **Fiesta Taco Salad**, in a bowl instead of the fried tortilla shell; remove the rice and black beans; add more lettuce and add extra sour cream and cheese
- **Beefy 5-Layer Burrito**, in a bowl instead of tortilla

5 Shake Shack

Starting from a hot dog cart in Madison Square Park in Manhattan, New York, Shake Shack is now an international hot spot. Sharp suggests adding extra ShackSauce to burgers for an extra six grams of fat (and zero grams of carbs) and bacon slices for an extra 4.5 grams of fat and six grams of protein.

Breakfast

- **Sausage, Egg N' Cheese**, without bun; add an extra egg on top
- **Bacon, Egg N' Cheese**, without bun; add an extra egg on top
- **Egg N' Cheese**, without bun; add an extra egg on top

Lunch or Dinner

- **Double ShackBurger**, in a lettuce wrap
- **SmokeShack**, in a lettuce wrap
- **Hot Dog**, without bun; with cheese sauce

6 Burger King

Burger King may be dabbling in the meatless options with its Impossible Whopper, but you should stick to the original Whopper if you're an omnivore on the keto diet. Here's what else you can eat.

Breakfast

- **Double Crossan'Wich with Sausage and Bacon**, without the croissant
- **Bacon, Egg & Cheese**, without waffle or croissant
- **Fully Loaded Biscuit**, without the biscuit
- **Egg-normous Burrito**, no tortilla, hash browns, or spicy sauce; get Picante sauce on the side

Lunch or Dinner

- **Bacon & Cheese Whopper**, without bun and ketchup; extra mayo
- **Double or Single Cheeseburger**, without bun and ketchup

- **Single, Double, or Triple Whopper**, without bun or tomatoes; extra mayo
- **BBQ Bacon Whopper**, without bun or BBQ sauce; extra mayo
- **Chicken Garden Salad**, no croutons
- **Chicken Club Salad**, swap crispy chicken for grilled chicken; no croutons

7 Panda Express

On any low-carb diet, rice is usually a no-go, and that's also true of keto. But that doesn't mean you have to forgo Asian food altogether. These options at Panda Express will help you meet those cravings.

- **Grilled Teriyaki Chicken**
- **Super Greens Side**

8 KFC

Like Chick-fil-A, KFC has branched out into the grilled chicken arena, which opens up additional options for keto eaters. A grilled piece of chicken boasts only about one gram of carbs. Try the following.

- **Kentucky Grilled Chicken**
- **Green beans**
- **Coleslaw** (if you're having a really low-carb day because it contains 10 grams of carbs)

9 Chipotle

Who said you can't have your burrito bowl and eat it, too? You can! As long as you skip the rice and beans, that is. Many of the toppings are also OK on a keto diet. Build your bowl like this:

- **Burrito or salad bowls with chicken, steak, or carnitas**, no rice and beans; fajita veggies, salsa, sour cream, cheese, queso, guacamole, and lettuce are OK as toppings

If you do choose to eat at a fast-food restaurant on the keto diet, you'll probably have to make a lot of substitutions, especially where buns are concerned. But there are still plenty of keto restaurant orders, even at fast-food chains, if you know what to look for.

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FILED UNDER

FAST FOOD // KETO DIET
