

# More fun, less fat

SELF put American cuisine on a diet. Now you can eat your way across the USA without gaining a pound.

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Photographs by John Blais

**C**hicago is known for its deep-dish pizza and for being among the fattest U.S. cities in 2001. Philadelphia has its trademark cheese steak and a mayor who put the entire town on a diet. Drive cross-country and you'll realize that every region has its own unique flavor; but we're one nation united under...a huge weight problem. So SELF set out to track down the states' most delicious—and disastrously decadent—signature dishes. Then we lightened them up, slashing calories and trimming fat to a healthy 30 percent or less. Now we're serving up the results: eight seemingly sinful regional specialties that, at a total savings of 1,690 calories and 197 grams of fat, are pretty darn healthy after all.

## WELCOME TO BALTIMORE, WHERE CRAB CAKES RULE

This seafood fave has nutritional potential: Crab provides calcium, B vitamins and iron. But the traditional version, made with mayo and fried in lots of oil, is too fatty to qualify as healthy fare. We cut the fat by more than half and lost 130 calories per serving with simple changes: using egg whites instead of whole eggs; subbing light mayo for the full-fat version; and going easy on oil. Recipes start on page 130.

	BEFORE	AFTER	SAVED
Calories	510	380	130
Total fat (g)	27	12	15
Saturated fat (g)	4.5	1.5	3



## GREETINGS FROM BOSTON, HOME OF NEW ENGLAND CLAM CHOWDER

Clam chowder is a year-round comfort food. But knowing that just one bowl of the creamy kind can pack 41 grams of fat isn't so comforting. We lightened the soup considerably—without sacrificing its velvety texture and rich flavor—by cutting back on butter and using lower-fat Canadian bacon and fat-free half-and-half (we used Land O'Lakes). Now you can feel good about spooning up this soup, which is high in iron (the clams) and calcium (the "cream").

	BEFORE	AFTER	SAVED
Calories	590	340	250
Total fat (g)	41	7	34
Saturated fat (g)	21	3	18



## WISH YOU WERE HERE IN PHILADELPHIA, EATING A CHEESE STEAK

No doubt about it, cheese steak is the quintessential Philly food. Too bad it can pack more than 60 grams of fat. To keep the greasy drippings from staining shirts, Philadelphians have learned the "Philly lean," a way of bending forward to the cheese steak rather than bringing it to the mouth. SELF's "Philly lean" features a trimmer cut of meat, less cheese and more peppers so it has about half the calories and a third of the fat of the original—and provides 60 percent of your daily vitamin C needs.

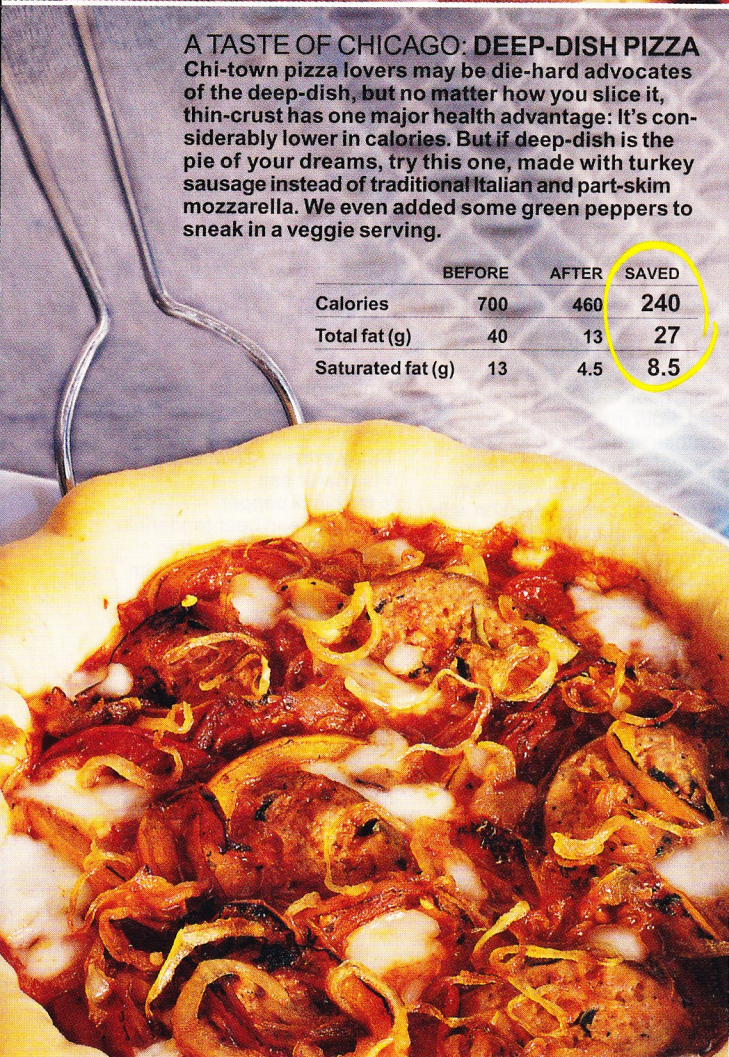
	BEFORE	AFTER	SAVED
Calories	960	530	430
Total fat (g)	61	17	44
Saturated fat (g)	25	6	19



## A TASTE OF CHICAGO: DEEP-DISH PIZZA

Chi-town pizza lovers may be die-hard advocates of the deep-dish, but no matter how you slice it, thin-crust has one major health advantage: It's considerably lower in calories. But if deep-dish is the pie of your dreams, try this one, made with turkey sausage instead of traditional Italian and part-skim mozzarella. We even added some green peppers to sneak in a veggie serving.

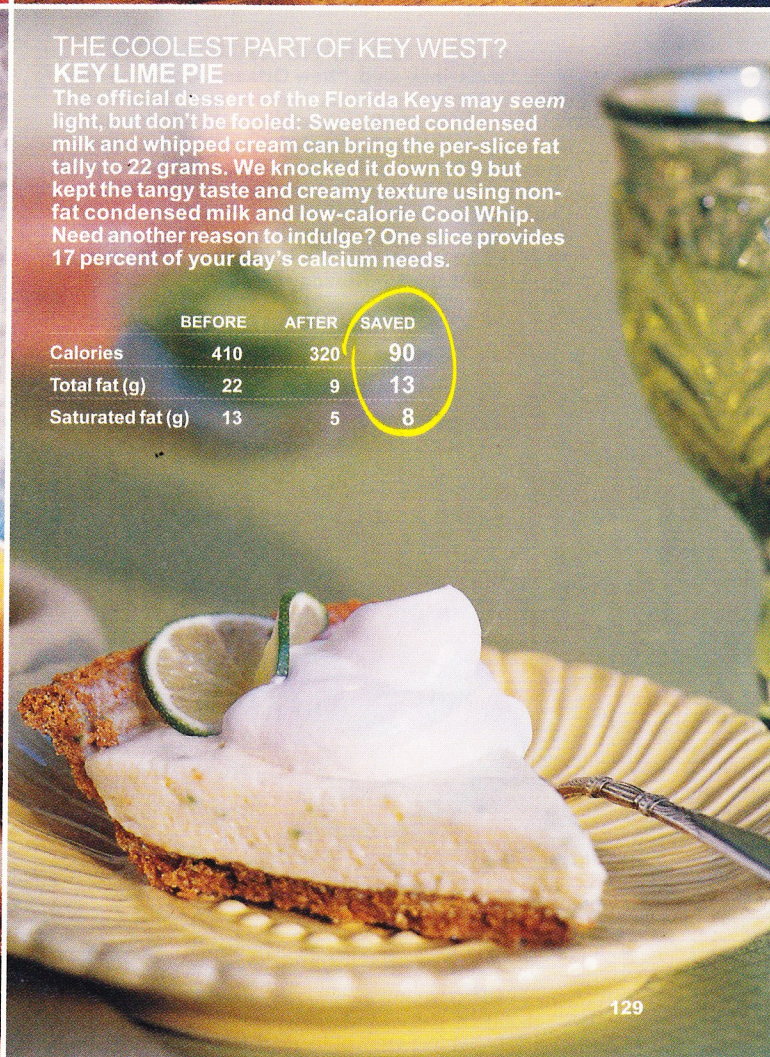
	BEFORE	AFTER	SAVED
Calories	700	460	240
Total fat (g)	40	13	27
Saturated fat (g)	13	4.5	8.5



## THE COOLEST PART OF KEY WEST? KEY LIME PIE

The official dessert of the Florida Keys may seem light, but don't be fooled: Sweetened condensed milk and whipped cream can bring the per-slice fat tally to 22 grams. We knocked it down to 9 but kept the tangy taste and creamy texture using non-fat condensed milk and low-calorie Cool Whip. Need another reason to indulge? One slice provides 17 percent of your day's calcium needs.

	BEFORE	AFTER	SAVED
Calories	410	320	90
Total fat (g)	22	9	13
Saturated fat (g)	13	5	8





## LOS ANGELES: LAND OF SUN, FUN AND BURRITOS

Southern California's Mexican-influenced cuisine has the potential to be an all-out fat fest (cheese, sour cream) or a healthy mix of carbs (tortillas, beans) and protein (chicken, beans). A chicken burrito with the full-fat works can tip the scales at nearly 600 calories and 31 fat grams. To slim it down, we stuffed it with all-white-meat chicken, less cheese and nonfat sour cream. We also rolled it in a whole-wheat tortilla for extra fiber.

	BEFORE	AFTER	SAVED
Calories	560	330	230
Total fat (g)	31	9	22
Saturated fat (g)	15	3.5	11.5



## HELLO, NEW ORLEANS! JAMBALAYA

Mark Twain once said, "New Orleans food is as delicious as the less criminal forms of sin." Speaking nutritionally, meat-heavy jambalaya is a misdemeanor. But toss in chicken instead of andouille sausage and pick a leaner cut of ham—keep the shrimp, of course—and you can dine with a clear conscience. Use brown rice instead of white and be generous with the veggies, and one bowl will provide 4 grams of fiber and 20 essential vitamins and minerals. Pretty impressive for a Fat Tuesday feast.

	BEFORE	AFTER	SAVED
Calories	450	340	110
Total fat (g)	18	7	11
Saturated fat (g)	7	1.5	5.5



# Slimmer pickings!

UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL RECIPES SERVE SIX.

## CRAB CAKE SANDWICH

- 1 lb lump crabmeat
- 2 egg whites, beaten
- ¼ cup light mayonnaise
- 2½ tsp Old Bay seasoning
- ¼ tsp Worcestershire sauce
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 cup plain bread crumbs
- 1½ tbsp vegetable oil (for frying)
- 6 sandwich rolls, split

Remove shells and cartilage from crabmeat. Add egg whites and mix lightly with a fork. Add mayonnaise, Old Bay, Worcestershire sauce, pepper, parsley, mustard and bread crumbs. Mix gently, leaving crab lumps as large as possible. Using hands, form six patties. Add oil to a nonstick skillet; fry patties until golden brown on each side, about 10 minutes total. Serve on toasted roll with cocktail sauce or lowfat tartar sauce (two parts light mayo to one part pickle relish). *Note: Calorie and fat counts do not include sauce.*

## NEW ENGLAND CLAM CHOWDER

- 1 lb canned clams
- 5 oz Canadian bacon, diced
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 medium onion, minced
- 3 medium red potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 4 cups fat-free half-and-half
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme, minced
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper (or to taste)
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, minced

Drain clams and reserve juice. In a medium-sized skillet, cook Canadian bacon, stirring until hot, 1 to 2 minutes. Add butter and onion; cook until onion is softened. Pour in clam juice, add potatoes and cook 10 to 12 minutes, until tender. Stir in clams, half-and-half, thyme, cayenne pepper and parsley. Season with salt and pepper. Heat through. Do not boil. Serve with oyster crackers. *Note: Calorie and fat counts do not include crackers.*

## DEEP-DISH PIZZA

**For the dough (or use two balls of premade dough)**

- 1 envelope active dry yeast
- 1 cup warm water
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp salt
- 2½ tbsp olive oil

In a small bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. In a separate bowl,

combine flour and salt. Add yeast mixture and oil. Mix thoroughly with a wooden spoon until dough forms a ball. Place dough on a well-floured board and knead until smooth (about 10 minutes). Dust a large bowl lightly with flour, place dough in it and cover with plastic wrap. Let dough rise until doubled in size, about one hour. Punch it down and, with a rolling pin, roll out dough until 1 inch thick. Place dough in a nonstick deep-dish pizza pan or 9-inch square casserole dish, pushing the dough up and slightly over sides.

## For the pizza

- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 2 bell peppers, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- ¾ lb turkey-sausage links, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1½ cups (6 oz) part-skim mozzarella, shredded
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- 1 tbsp dried oregano
- 1 tbsp dried basil
- Hot pepper flakes to taste
- 3 tbsp Parmesan cheese, grated
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley or basil, chopped (optional)

Preheat oven to 400°. In a small skillet, sauté onions and peppers in olive oil. Set aside. In a nonstick skillet, dry pan-fry turkey-sausage pieces until brown. Mix with onions and peppers. Distribute shredded cheese over dough. Top with veggies and meat, then spread sauce over pie. Sprinkle on oregano, basil, hot pepper flakes and Parmesan. Bake 25 to 30 minutes until golden brown. Remove and immediately sprinkle on fresh parsley or basil. Cut and serve.

## PHILLY CHEESE STEAK

- 3 medium onions, sliced very thin
- 2 green or red sweet peppers (or combination), sliced very thin
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp garlic salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 2 lb extra-lean beef tenderloin (9% fat), sliced very thin
- 6 slices (1 oz each) part-skim mozzarella
- 6 soft Italian rolls, split

In a large skillet, sauté onions and peppers in oil, adding garlic salt and black pepper. Transfer mixture to bowl and set aside. In same skillet, pan-fry steak until brown but not crispy. Add onions and peppers. Place cheese on meat until slightly melted. Spoon cheese steak, onions and peppers onto rolls and serve.


*Continued on page 142*



NASHVILLE: TRY THE  
"FRIED" CHICKEN, Y'ALL

Southern hospitality wouldn't be quite so hospitable without corn bread, collard greens and, of course, fried chicken. If you haven't already guessed that grease is what's so "finger-lickin' good," we'll let you in on a secret: You can spend nearly half a day's calories on one thigh of this Southern-fried favorite. So make our baked version instead.

	BEFORE	AFTER	SAVED
Calories	650	440	210
Total fat (g)	42	11	31
Saturated fat (g)	11	3	8



Our "fried"  
chicken  
is crispy and  
delicious.  
It's also  
baked—so go  
ahead:  
Have another  
piece.



## MORE FUN, LESS FAT

*Continued from page 130*

### KEY LIME PIE

SERVES 10

**For the crust (or use a commercially prepared graham crust such as Keebler Ready Crust Graham Cracker Pie Crust)**

1½ cups graham crackers, crushed  
¼ cup sugar  
5 tbsp butter, melted

Preheat oven to 325°. Mix graham cracker crumbs with sugar and melted butter. Spread evenly over bottom and sides of a nonstick 9-inch pie pan and bake 5 minutes. Remove from oven; let cool.

#### For the filling

1 can (14 oz) nonfat sweetened condensed milk  
½ cup lime juice  
1 tbsp lime zest, minced  
1 egg  
2 egg yolks  
2 egg whites  
¼ tsp cream of tartar  
2 cups low-calorie whipped cream (such as Cool Whip)  
1 lime, thinly sliced, for garnish (optional)

Preheat oven to 325°. In a medium bowl, using a fork, beat condensed milk, lime juice and zest. Add one whole egg and two egg yolks (reserve whites) and beat well. Set aside. In a large mixing bowl, beat egg whites until foamy. After about 20 seconds, add cream of tartar. Fold whites into custard mixture and pour into partially baked crust. Bake 45 to 60 minutes or until set. Let cool. Serve with whipped cream and lime slices.

### CHICKEN BURRITOS

1 small onion, chopped  
2 small garlic cloves, minced  
2 tsp vegetable oil  
12 oz boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 2-inch strips  
1 can (12 oz) black beans, rinsed and drained  
1½ cups hot salsa  
½ tsp chili powder  
6 (8-inch) whole-wheat tortillas  
¾ cup cheddar cheese, shredded  
6 cups fresh spinach, shredded  
½ cup nonfat sour cream

In a large skillet, sauté onion and garlic in oil over medium-high heat until onion is translucent. Add chicken; cook 4 minutes or until no longer pink. Stir in beans, ½ cup salsa and chili powder; cook 2 minutes longer. Place tortillas between moist paper towels and microwave on high for 10 seconds. Spoon ½ cup filling onto each tortilla; top with 1 tbsp cheese. Fold each into burrito. Serve with a cup of spinach, salsa, remaining cheese and sour cream.

### JAMBALAYA

1 tbsp olive oil  
1 large onion, chopped  
2 medium cloves garlic  
1 large green bell pepper, chopped  
2 celery stalks, diced  
3 tbsp fresh Italian parsley, minced  
4 oz extra-lean smoked ham, cut into ½-inch cubes  
5 oz skinless, boneless chicken breast, diced  
1 large bay leaf  
1 tsp cayenne pepper  
1 can (28 oz) diced tomatoes  
1 can (8 oz) tomato sauce

¾ cup brown rice, uncooked  
1½ lb medium shrimp, peeled, deveined and chopped into bite-sized pieces

Add oil to a large nonstick saucepan. Over medium heat, sauté onion, garlic, green pepper and celery until onion is translucent. Add parsley, ham, chicken, bay leaf and cayenne pepper. Cook, stirring often, 5 to 6 minutes. Add tomatoes (with juice), tomato sauce and 1¾ cup cold water. Gently simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes. Pour rice into the pan and stir well. Bring mixture to a boil. Lower heat and simmer, covered, for 45 minutes or until rice is cooked and most of the liquid is absorbed. Stir in shrimp and cook 5 minutes more. Remove bay leaf. Season to taste with cayenne pepper and salt.

### "FRIED" CHICKEN

3 cups Italian-style bread crumbs  
2 tbsp paprika  
2 tbsp garlic salt  
1 tbsp ground red pepper  
2 cups 1.5 percent buttermilk  
12 chicken pieces (6 breast halves, 6 thighs), skinless  
Butter-flavored cooking spray

Preheat oven to 400°. In a shallow bowl, combine bread crumbs, paprika, garlic salt and pepper. Place buttermilk in a separate shallow bowl. Dip chicken in buttermilk, then dredge in bread-crumbs mixture. Place chicken, meaty side up, in a large baking pan. Generously spray chicken pieces with butter-flavored cooking spray. Bake for 40 minutes or until done. Check internal cooking temperature of chicken with a meat thermometer until breasts reach 170° and thighs reach 180°. ■

## HEART ATTACK

*Continued from page 119*

is just like pouring grease down your sink—eventually it's going to stick to the pipes. (See "Your Healthy-Heart Eating Plan" on page 118 for diet advice.)

Then there's our national aversion to working out. At most, only 27 percent of us exercise regularly. And leading a couch potato life may more than double your risk of heart disease. "As a society, we talk about exercise incessantly, but we're becoming more and more sedentary," says Dr. Johnson. "We know we have to do it, but it just never gets high enough on our lists."

Without regular heart-pumping workouts, problems like weight gain, high blood pressure and skyrocketing cholesterol levels can really put the squeeze on your arteries. Myrna Ruacho, 35, a full-time mom in Plano, Texas, recently found out that she was on the fast track to heart problems. While she admits she wasn't religious about exercise, Ruacho did try to hit the treadmill or bike once

or twice a week. But that wasn't enough. "Normal activities, like making the beds, began to exhaust me," Ruacho says. "Even on the mile-and-a-half walk to the kids' school, I'd have to stop and rest two or three times." Her weight had jumped 15 pounds in three years, her blood-iron levels were low and her cholesterol levels were through the roof at 286 mg/dl. Now she hits the gym for at least an hour, three times a week, and has revamped her recipes: "I've made simple changes like using ground turkey in my tacos," she says. "After all, my husband works for the American Heart Association, so we should be eating better!" In addition to changing her diet and exercise habits, nine months ago Ruacho began taking a cholesterol-lowering medication.

Kimberly Jerkins, a 21-year-old receptionist in Birmingham, Alabama, worked out even less often than Ruacho did and was hit with a heart double whammy: While at the hospital for a wrist injury, she found out that her blood pressure was 150 over 110 (anything over 140/90 is considered high). When she followed

up with her physician for additional tests, she learned that her cholesterol topped 300 mg/dl. Her first move: Toss the birth control pills. Not only is high blood pressure two to three times more common in women who take the Pill than in those who don't, but oral contraceptive users who do develop high blood pressure face a 15-fold increase in their stroke risk, according to the AHA. But that wasn't the only change Jerkins had to make: "I had to stay away from all the foods that taste good!" she jokes. "Now my husband knows that if he wants something fried or salty, his mom has to make it."

More frequent exercise can help control high blood pressure for women like Jerkins. Plus, it has another important heart benefit: It can knock the socks off stress. When you're stressed, and particularly when you're also angry, your body spills a cocktail of hormones into your blood that decreases the level of protective estrogen (the sex hormone works to keep your arteries flexible). Depression can be even more dangerous to