Traditional Fish and Chip takeaways

Adapting your menu to create healthier alternatives

Helping you to promote healthier options to existing customers and attract new ones, increasing business, sales and profits
Fish and Chip takeaways

Healthy catering is not about removing lots of existing dishes from the menu and replacing them with healthier alternatives. Although you may decide to introduce some totally new dishes, the main emphasis is on making small changes to existing dishes.

This may mean changing some of the ingredients used, the amounts of ingredients used or how the food is prepared and cooked. Healthy catering is also about promoting the healthier options so customers are more aware of the choices available.

The following sections provide further guidance as to how to make these small changes in relation to your style of food preparation, cooking and service.

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Sausages, fried burgers, scallops and pies etc. are high in fats and salts. Try to promote healthier options such as breaded fish, lightly battered/tempura battered fish. You could offer the healthier options as part of a meal deal; making these cheaper than the less healthy options could boost their sales.

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Fish and chip making tips

The ‘great’ British chip has long been a sign of our culture and is recognised worldwide; here’s a few ways to make our signature dish healthier:

- **Thicker chips are better** because they absorb less fat.
- **Change your chipper blades once they become blunt**, this is approximately yearly. Smooth chips absorb less fat due to less surface area.
- **Offer smaller portions** of chips and advertise how much fat and calories are in each.
- **Offer half size fish portions**, these will attract children and smaller appetites.
- Try lightly battering your fish or using Tempura batter as a healthier option.
- **Fish done in bread crumbs is healthier** than in batter as it absorbs less fat; this is also a cheaper option.
- **Fish and chips cooked in oil at the right temperature taste better and absorb less fat.**
- If you **buy in chips** it is better to buy ones that are described as ‘**thick cut**’, ‘9/16th’, beefsteak chips or wedges. As French fries, julienne, ‘shoestring’ style and crinkle-cut chips absorb as much as 1.5 times more fat!
- **Chips that are shaken and drained for at least 20 seconds absorb 20% less fat.**
Following these tips when you are deep frying can help you:

- save money
- make your fried foods crispier and tastier
- lower the amounts of saturated fat and salt in a portion

Where you see this symbol £ this means the tip could save you money. A poster with these tips on is available at:

http://www.potato.org.uk/sites/default/files/publication_upload/Tips%20for%20Healthier%20Chips%20Poster%20FINAL.pdf

1. Use thick, straight-cut chips
These absorb less fat, so you use less oil and it’s healthier for your customers. £ Make your chips using a cutter with at least a 14mm (just over ½ an inch) cross section.

2. Fry at 175°C
Getting oil to 175°C (350°F) before you start frying gives you crispier, more appealing chips and food that absorbs less fat. That means you use less oil. £

Each time you fry a new batch, let the oil come back up to 175°C before you start.

Overloading your fryer, or adding too much food when you’re frying, makes the temperature of the oil drop. That makes the food greasier and uses more oil. If you use baskets, they shouldn’t look more than half full.

3. Check the temperature
Make sure the temperature on your range is accurate. You can do this by heating the oil and testing the temperature in the middle of the oil with a probe thermometer. If you have a range with a thermostat, make sure the probe is clean when you drain the fryer. You should have the thermostat checked as part of a regular service of your equipment.

4. Cook for 5-6 minutes
The cooking time for chips will depend on the type of potato you use, but for thick-cut fresh potatoes cooked at 175°C it’s about 5-6 minutes, until the chips are a pale, golden colour. If you cook them straight through and take them out of the oil as soon as they are cooked, they will absorb less fat. And you will use less oil. £

If you decide to blanch some chips to help with a busy service, then you should blanch at 175°C, allowing the oil to come back up to temperature between batches. This will reduce the fat absorption and help prevent greasy chips.
5. Bang, shake and drain
By shaking the chips and banging the wire scoop several times, you can reduce fat absorption by 20% and make your chips crisper. This is because chips carry on absorbing fat after they come out of the fryer. If you bang and shake you’ll use less oil, need to top up less often, and need to empty the drain in the chip box less often.

6. Look after your oil
Try to change your oil before it foams, froths or smokes. It will also change colour, smell rancid or fishy when you heat it and will affect the flavour of the chips.

Follow these tips to keep your oil fresh for longer. Then you will use less oil.
- Don’t heat your oil above 175°C.
- Dry fresh chips for as long as possible after soaking. If you use a potato preparation you will be able to dry your chips for longer.
- Keep fryer topped up with oil.
- Don’t ‘idle’ a fryer at high temperatures, let it cool to 100°C and cover it.
- Sieve the oil every time you fry a batch and throw the scraps away.
- Filter your oil often, ideally once a day.

7. Fry chips on their own
If you fry foods like sausages, chicken and anything in breadcrumbs, don’t fry these in the same oil you use for chips as they will affect your oil quality. Gently shake any food in breadcrumbs before you fry it to knock off any loose bits – this will help keep your oil fresh.

8. Use a liquid oil
The more saturated fat in your oil, the more saturated fat there will be in your chips.

Liquid oils such as sunflower and rapeseed have about 10% saturated fat. Solid oils such as palm oil or beef fat have about 50%. Some suppliers provide palm oil blends (a mix of palm and other oils) that have about 30% saturated fat. If you choose sunflower or rapeseed oil, you need to use a ‘high oleic’ version, as these are more stable (provided you look after your oil well).

Whichever oil you choose, always make sure it is not hydrogenated.
Other options

A balanced meal should be based around healthier starchy foods, such as potatoes, breads and rice or pasta. Lean protein, fruit or vegetables should form a substantial part of the dish. Could you offer the following to encourage your customers to eat healthier? New menu items could increase sales and generate new custom.

- If you serve bread, try using wholegrain, wholemeal, malted wholegrain or brown bread as standard, unless customers ask for white.
- Could you offer jacket potatoes, noodles or rice as an alternative to chips? Only add butter if customers ask.
- Try offering beans or sweetcorn as an additional option to mushy peas?
- Could you offer a salad option; this could be popular with fish.

Children’s/smaller meals

Offering different portion sizes makes good business sense. Maybe you could offer small cones, for people with smaller appetites, as well as regular and large trays. This will allow you to charge more for the bigger portions. It might also help your lunchtime trade when some people only want a small amount to eat. Make sure your staff are certain about portion sizes or they could be giving away extra chips – and your profit.

- Have smaller portions available (at a reduced price) for children and people with a smaller appetite. This can help prevent people over-eating and food being wasted.
- Make sure there are healthier options available, such as grilled or shallow fried foods.
- If there is a dedicated children’s menu, make sure it contains healthier options and not just options with chips. Offer deals including fruit or vegetable sticks or dried fruit. Package children’s meals in a fun way.
Reducing fat, salt and sugar

- Choose bread that has less than 1g salt per 100g or less than 0.4g sodium per 100g.
- Read the labels on products you buy and choose lower salt varieties or ask your supplier to help.
- Bought-in processed foods e.g. pies, sausages, burgers and nuggets can contain high levels of fat and salt. Where possible, replace with lower fat/salt alternatives, or add spices and seasoning in-house.
- If you serve cheese offer a reduced fat type
- If you’re including a drink in your meal deal make sure you offer diet, low-calorie drinks or water rather than sugary fizzy drinks.
- Swap tomato ketchup for a lower salt and sugar variety, this could save you money!
- Do not double/re-fry food as it increases fat absorption further.
- Battered, breaded and deep fried dishes contain lots of fat. Offer a limited number of these dishes and use a monounsaturated/polyunsaturated oil that is suitable for deep frying (e.g. rapeseed/canola, corn). Use the right frying temperatures (look at the recipe/packet or fryer instructions, but usually 175°C is ideal) as a lower temperature can lead to increased fat absorption.
- If you offer coleslaw, offer a low fat version using reduced fat mayonnaise.
- Don’t offer salt, only add it to food and chips if the customer asks.
- Use a salt shaker with fewer holes; you can request a free five hole shaker when you apply for the award.
- Use low-fat spread, ideally made from sunflower, rapeseed, olive or vegetable oil. Compared with butter, these spread more easily and are lower in fat, especially saturated fat, and cost less.
- Choose a spread that has less than 1.13g salt per 100g (or less than 0.45g sodium per 100g).
- Use lean meat where possible and cut visible fat off meat and poultry.
- Grill, oven bake, boil or stir-fry in minimal amount of monounsaturated/polyunsaturated oil wherever possible.
- If omelettes are included in the menu, try to include some vegetables. If milk is added, use semi skimmed milk instead of whole milk or cream.
- Don’t add salt to gravy, curry and batter mix. If you buy these mixes, check the ingredients and try to choose one that doesn’t contain added salt or sodium.
Drinks – cold/chilled

Soft ‘fizzy’ drinks are high in sugar, diet versions are better but still contain sugar; always have healthier options available; e.g. unsweetened fruit juice, NOT “Fruit juice drinks” as they usually contain added sugar, so should be avoided. Have bottled mineral water (still/sparkling) and artificially sweetened ‘diet’ soft drinks available.

Display, pricing and marketing

- List healthier options higher up on the menu.
- Try promoting the healthier dishes as ‘specials’ or ‘dish of the day’, but do not increase the price as this may put customers off.
- Include healthier options on the menu and highlighting them using a logo or symbol. Make sure staff are aware of the healthier options and promote them to customers. Consider using some price promotions for the healthier options e.g. offer a portion of salad/sweetcorn/coleslaw half price with every order, or free with every order over £5.
- Some customers aren’t afraid to ask for what they want, but most are too shy to ask for something that isn’t on the menu. Highlight on your menus or train staff to tell customers that they can ask for food to be boiled or grilled instead of fried, giving your customers that authentic, tasty option.
- Promote adding larger portions of mushy peas, or beans if you sell them.
- Meal deals and other promotions can help you compete with the larger retailers and they’re a great way of encouraging your customers to pick something healthier to eat.
- Advertise healthier snacks like fresh fruit, dried fruit, unsalted nuts and healthier drinks like water and no-added-sugar drinks with meal deals.
- Have promotional fish e.g. breaded or tempura style.
Further information
The Public Health Responsibility Deal

Public health is everyone’s responsibility and there is a role for all of us, working in partnership, to tackle these challenges.

Too many of us are eating too much, drinking too much and not doing enough physical activity. Creating the right environment can empower and support people to make informed, balanced choices that will help them lead healthier lives.

The Public Health Responsibility Deal aims to tap into the potential for businesses and other influential organisations to make a significant contribution to improving public health by helping us to create this environment.

Further information on how to get involved or to just get access to lots more advice can log onto https://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/ or search online for ‘responsibility deal.’

Change 4 Life – What is it?

These days, ‘modern life’ can mean that we’re a lot less active. With so many opportunities to watch TV or play computer games, and with so much convenience and fast food available, we don’t move about as much, or eat as well as we used to.

The change for life website contains a wealth of information aimed initially at individuals and families however the principles and guidance contained within the site can be very useful and include topic such as:

- Meal mixer
- Try our tips to make your weekly shop healthier.
- What's on the label?
- Be calorie smart
- More about calories
- Lunch boxes
- Packed lunch ideas
- Cooking terms

Log onto http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx or simply search online for Change4life

If you would like further information regarding Eat Well Wirral please contact: environmentalhealth@ wirral.gov.uk OR visit www.wirral.gov.uk

The guidance in this booklet was compiled by Wirral Borough Council from multiple sources including The Department of Health and the Director of Public Health Wales.