

Beware of the calorie count for CNY goodies!

Learn which five yummy snacks to steer clear of, plus a nutritionist tells you how to work it all off.

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POSTED: 19 JAN 2017 UPDATED: 19 JAN 2017



Parents-Beware-of-the-calorie-count-
for-CNY-goodies-MAIN

It's tough to abstain from pigging out on festive goodies during Chinese New Year (CNY). Besides, you have the best excuse — you don't want to come across as rude when you keep refusing the loads of snacks being passed around! That said, over-indulging simply means you have to work that much harder to burn off all those extra calories...

To avoid gaining unwanted kilos, heed the sound advice of Jaclyn Reutens, a dietitian at [Aptima Nutrition & Sports Consultants](#):

***Savour that *kueh*...slowly** Try to finish it in four bites rather than one. Better yet, swap that pastry out for some mandarin oranges. Reutens notes that this fruit contains fibre — which will keep you feeling fuller for longer — and is also refreshing on the taste buds.

***Eat a light and healthy breakfast before visiting** Tucking into a high-fibre breakfast before you head out gives you energy and prevents you from overindulging.

***Choose plain water, instead** If you can't say no to snacks, then stick to water, which ensures that you won't be consuming any additional — and unnecessary — sugar and calories. It's a good idea to bring a mini-bottle of mineral water with you.

***Talk more, eat less** The more time you spend interacting with others, the less likely you'd be eyeing that inviting pile of *bak kwa* (barbecued pork slices).

***Restrict yourself** Allow yourself to consume no more than four pieces of a CNY goodie at each house, Reutens suggests.

***Practise mindful eating** Force yourself to decide if an item is worth the calories. If not, there's no harm in passing it on to others.

"Self-control is the key to surviving this festive season!"

Calories aren't the only thing you should be worried about either! Reutens points out that the high sugar and fat content are contributing to your nasty weight gain during the festive season. Also, these ingredients are found in everything! Sugar is in cake icing, syrup in desserts and is also hidden in packet drinks and cordials. Fat can be found in the ghee and butter used in baked goods, the oil used to fry *keropok* (prawn crackers) or chicken and even the coconut milk in curry!

Consuming sugary and oily foods can make you crave more of the same. Reutens explains, "When you eat a pineapple tart, its sweetness in the pineapple filling raises your blood sugar level quickly then causes a dip, making you crave the next piece."

And if you must snack, Reutens suggests that you

keep away

from these five treats...

***Peanuts.** Once you start, it's very hard to stop because these high in fat and calorie nuts are so small, you don't feel like you ever eat enough.

***Love letters** High in fat (from coconut milk) and sugar. Best to stick to two pieces, which already works out to 112 calories.

***Bak kwa** One square slice is about 230 to 290 calories, the equivalent of a bowl of rice. Eat just half a slice a day.

***Pineapple tarts** High in sugar and fat. Depending on size, every tart you consume can range from 80 to 120 calories each. Take no more than five tarts a day.

***Shrimp rolls** It's high in sodium and purine, which can cause gout when taken in excess. Avoid consuming if you have high blood pressure or gout. Plus, given its small size, it is hard to stop once you start to chomp on these bite-sized snacks.

... And take these instead:

***Kueh bangkit** These aren't as high in fat and sugar as other baked items. Stick to a maximum of four a day.

***Mandarin oranges** High in fibre and vitamin C.

***Melon seeds** Eat no more than a handful. Reutens points out, "It does take a bit of effort to eat, so hopefully, that helps to control the amount [*consumed*]."

***Pistachios** Stick to 10 nuts.

***Unsweetened tea** Stick to pu-er or freshly brewed chrysanthemum tea and fruit juices.

Reutens stresses, "Self-control is the key to surviving this festive season!"

Refer to our calorie counter for common CNY goodies to watch out for. Plus, learn ways in which you can work up a sweat if you just can't seem to get a grip on all that festive noshing!

Infographic: Lim Jae-Lynn



Your CHY snacks CALORIE COUNTER

PINEAPPLE
TARTS

410 CAL
FOR 5 PIECES
(82 Cal per piece)



23 LAPS*
SWIMMING
(20 laps for men)



1HR 16 MINS*
WALK IN THE PARK
(1hr 5 mins for men)

BAK KWA

300 CAL
FOR 94G SLICE



17 LAPS
SWIMMING
(15 laps for men)



56 MINS
WALK IN THE PARK
(47 mins for men)

MINI-PRAWN
ROLLS

110 CAL
FOR 5 PIECES
(22 Cal per piece)



7 LAPS*
SWIMMING
(6 laps for men)



20 MINS*
WALK IN THE PARK
(17 mins for men)

KUEH BANGKIT

125 CAL
FOR 5 PIECES
(25 Cal per piece)



7 LAPS*
SWIMMING
(6 laps for men)



23 MINS*
WALK IN THE PARK

KUEH BAHULU

175 CAL
FOR 5 PIECES
(35 Cal per piece)



10 LAPS*
SWIMMING
(9 laps for men)



32 MINS*
WALK IN THE PARK

KUEH LAPIS

237 CAL
PER SLICE



14 LAPS
SWIMMING
(12 laps for men)



44 MINS
WALK IN THE PARK

PEANUTS
217 CAL
FOR 56G



13 LAPS*
SWIMMING
(11 laps for men)



40 MINS
WALK IN THE PARK
(35 mins for men)

PEANUT PUFFS
195 CAL
FOR 5 PIECES
(39 Cal per piece)



11 LAPS*
SWIMMING
(10 laps for men)



36 MINS*
WALK IN THE PARK
(31 mins for men)

SUGEE COOKIES
265 CAL
FOR 5 PIECES
(53 Cal per piece)



15 LAPS*
SWIMMING
(13 laps for men)



50 MINS*
WALK IN THE PARK
(42 mins for men)

MANDARIN
ORANGES
255 CAL
FOR 5 ORANGES
(51 Cal per orange)



15 LAPS*
SWIMMING
(13 laps for men)



47 MINS*
WALK IN THE PARK
(40 mins for men)

LOVE LETTERS
280 CAL
FOR 5 PIECES
(56 Cal per piece)



16 LAPS*
SWIMMING
(14 laps for men)



52 MINS*
WALK IN THE PARK
(44 mins for men)

CASHEW NUT
COOKIES
310 CAL
FOR 5 PIECES
(62 Cal per piece)



18 LAPS*
SWIMMING
(15 laps for men)



58 MINS*
WALK IN THE PARK
(49 mins for men)

*For 5 pieces.

NOTE: The average Singaporean man (63.5kg) burns 21 calories per lap in a 50m pool, while the average woman (54kg) burns 18 calories. A man can burn up to 62.6 calories for every 10 minutes of walking in the park, a woman can burn up to 53.3 calories.



Jaclyn Reutens is a dietician at Aptima Nutrition & Sports Consultants.

Main Photo: iStock