

WHAT'S IN YOUR HOT POT?

Choose your ingredients more wisely with this menu of popular items. We've included their nutritional information so you know what you're chowing down! Don't forget that an average Asian woman with a sedentary nine-to-five lifestyle should keep within her recommended daily intake of 1,600 calories, 50g of fat (not more than 18g should be saturated) and 2,000mg of sodium. (Note: A tablespoonful of meat weighs about 25g.)

MEAT



Pork ball (one) 63kcal, 5.3g fat (1.9g saturated), 101mg sodium



Chicken breast (25g) 46kcal, 1.8g fat (0.5g saturated), 16mg sodium



Pork (25g) 75kcal, 5.6g fat (1.9g saturated), 15mg sodium



Pig's liver (25g) 44kcal, 1.3g fat (0.6g saturated), 13mg sodium



Mutton (25g) 54kcal, 3.4g fat (1g saturated), 102mg sodium



Sliced beef (25g) 61kcal, 4.5g fat (1.8g saturated), 12mg sodium



Egg (one) 73kcal, 5.3g fat (1.6g saturated), 60mg sodium



Pork belly (25g) 130kcal, 13.3g fat (4.8g saturated), 8mg sodium

SEAFOOD



Squid (25g) 23kcal, 0.4g fat (0.1g saturated), 11mg sodium



Canned abalone (25g) 27kcal, 0.1g fat, 150mg sodium



Crabstick (one) 16kcal, 0.3g fibre, 109mg sodium



Sea cucumber (one piece) 14kcal, 20mg sodium



Fishball (one) 17kcal, 0.2g fat, 165mg sodium



King prawn (one) 7kcal, 0.1g fat, 33mg sodium



White pomfret (25g) 28kcal, 1g fat (0.4g saturated), 31mg sodium



Garoupa (25g) 190kcal, 0.2g fat (0.1g saturated), 24mg sodium



Fried fishcake with chilli (one) 78kcal, 2.3g fat (1.1g saturated), 1.4g fibre, 767mg sodium

❶ **Chicken frank (one)**

74kcal, 5.5g fat (1.5g saturated), 0.4g fibre, 353mg sodium

❷ **Red chili with fish**

paste (one) 7kcal, 0.2g fat (0.1g saturated), 0.5g fibre, 71mg sodium

❸ **Lady's fingers (one**

cup) 35kcal, 0.3g fat (0.1g saturated), 4g fibre, 10mg sodium

❹ **Bitter gourd with fish**

paste (one) 9kcal, 0.2g fat (0.1g saturated), 0.3g fibre, 73mg sodium

❺ **Tau pok (100g)**

305kcal, 23.6g fat (8.3g saturated), 0.8g fibre, 18mg sodium

Too many cooks spoil the broth

➡ Half the fun of having family or friends over for steamboat is crowding around the common pot. Set these golden rules for guests to have a steamy good time, instead of rolling out of your home with food poisoning.

● **Use separate utensils** for raw and cooked food.

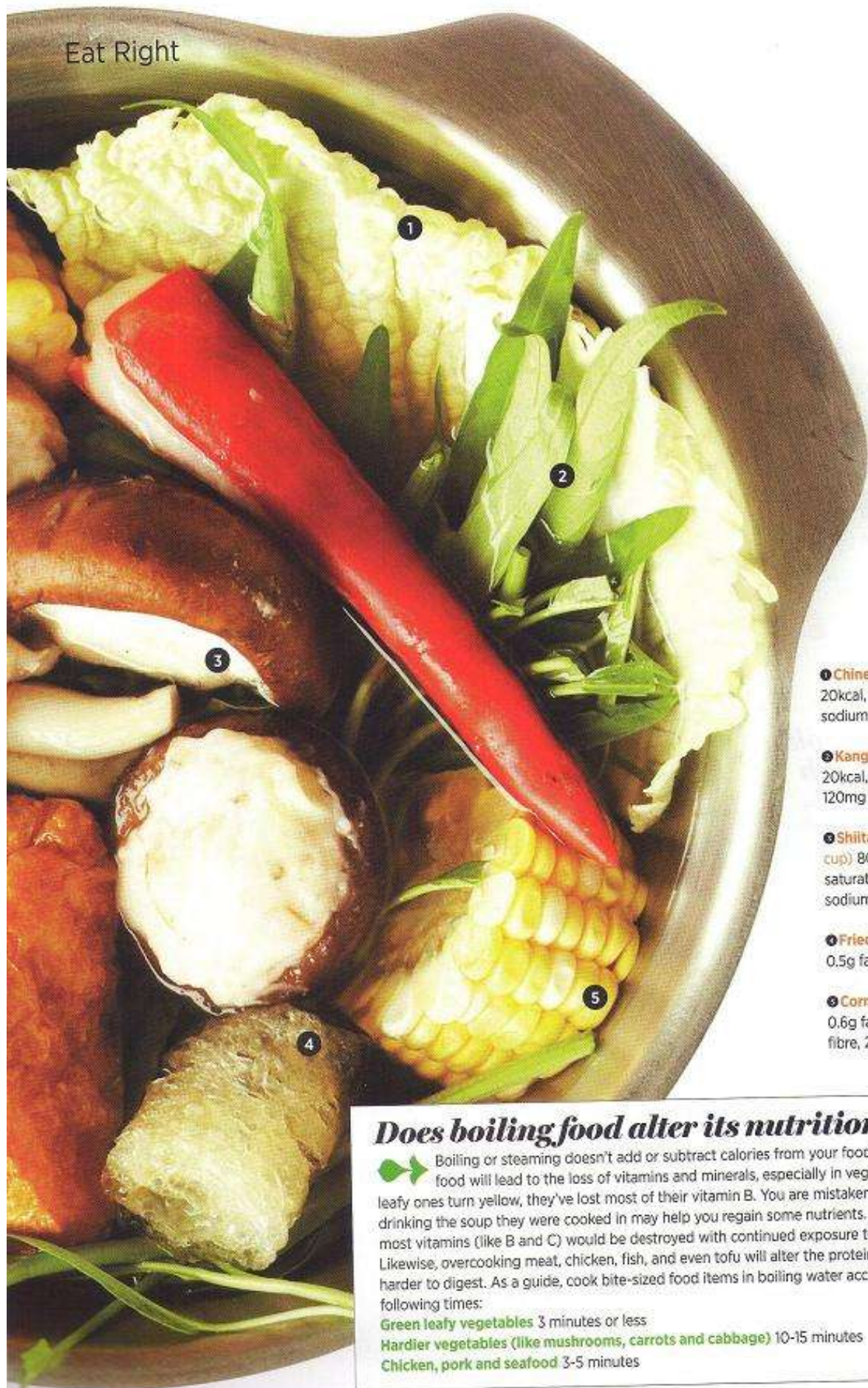
● **Use tongs to put food into the pot** instead of your chopsticks (which you eat with) or bare hands, especially when picking up vegetables.

● **Avoid double dipping** if an item is not cooked. Toss it instead of putting it back into the pot.

● **Make sure the soup comes to a full boil** for a few minutes before taking items out to eat. Same goes for if you add in any raw food (with items already cooking in the pot).

● **Wash your hands** - especially after a trip to the loo!





❶ **Chinese cabbage** (one cup)
20kcal, 0.3g fat, 1g fibre, 58mg sodium

❷ **Kangkong** (one cup)
20kcal, 0.2g fat, 1.9g fibre, 120mg sodium

❸ **Shiitake mushrooms** (one cup)
80kcal, 0.3g fat (0.1g saturated), 3.3g fibre, 6mg sodium

❹ **Fried fish maw** (one)
85kcal, 0.5g fat, 4mg sodium

❺ **Corn on cob** (85g)
79kcal, 0.6g fat (0.1g saturated), 2.4g fibre, 212mg sodium

Does boiling food alter its nutritional value?



Boiling or steaming doesn't add or subtract calories from your food. But overcooking food will lead to the loss of vitamins and minerals, especially in vegetables. If the green leafy ones turn yellow, they've lost most of their vitamin B. You are mistaken to think that drinking the soup they were cooked in may help you regain some nutrients. Jaclyn says that most vitamins (like B and C) would be destroyed with continued exposure to high heat. Likewise, overcooking meat, chicken, fish, and even tofu will alter the proteins and make them harder to digest. As a guide, cook bite-sized food items in boiling water according to the following times:

Green leafy vegetables 3 minutes or less

Hardier vegetables (like mushrooms, carrots and cabbage) 10-15 minutes

Chicken, pork and seafood 3-5 minutes

VEGETABLES



Chinese spinach
(one cup) 19kcal,
1.1g fat (0.1g
saturated), 0.3g
fibre, 5mg sodium



English spinach (one
cup) 14kcal, 0.1g fat,
1.9g fibre, 6mg sodium



Watercress (one cup)
5kcal, 0.8g fibre,
7mg sodium

OTHERS



Fried yam (one slice)
152kcal, 8.1g fat (4.8g
saturated), 1.8g fibre, 114mg
sodium



Enoki mushrooms (one
cup) 24kcal, 0.2g fat, 1.7g
fibre, 2mg sodium



Seaweed (one cup)
298kcal, 1.6g fat, 31.1g
fibre, 1,022mg sodium



Chinese tofu (100g) 51kcal,
2.2g fat (0.5g saturated), 0.5g
fibre, 4mg sodium



Fried beancurd skin
(one) 79kcal, 7.4g fat
(3g saturated), 0.1g
fibre, 15mg sodium

Nutritional data is obtained from the Health Promotion Board Food Composition Guide Singapore, USDA Nutrient Database, and relevant product labels.

DOUBLE DOUBLE, TOIL AND TROUBLE

TO ENJOY A HEALTHY STEAMBOAT MEAL, AVOID COMMITTING THESE CARDINAL SINS.

Dipping into too much soya or chilli sauce. Just one tablespoon could up your sodium intake by about 1,000mg and 500mg respectively! Think before you dip. Most foods are already naturally salty – if the meat tastes bland, it could just be overboiled.

Going for the balls. We're talking meatballs and other processed foods like sausages, crabsticks and fishcakes. Go for fresh meat and produce instead as they contain less fat and sodium. According to Jaclyn, the best meats are thinly sliced lean pork, striploin, skinless chicken breast and fish fillets. Besides offering little in terms of nutrition, processed foods are also high in nitrites. Excessive levels of these compounds in the body may result in methaemoglobinemia, a blood disorder that occurs when haemoglobin is unable to effectively release oxygen to body tissues, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Adding prawn heads to the broth. While these juicy bits impart sweetness to the soup, it's true that prawn heads also add cholesterol. Jaclyn advises consuming just the body and tail as these parts contain protein and iron. Choose your food battles wisely, we say.

Slurping very hot soup. Besides scalding your tongue and roughing up those taste buds, having food while it's steaming hot could also harm your health down the road. A 2010 study published in the *International Journal of Cancer* showed that there was an increased risk of oesophageal cancer associated with higher-temperature beverage consumption. Consider yourself warned.


Gobbling everything really quickly. Give your brain some time to receive signals from your tummy – you could be full but eating out of greed! It's not uncommon to eat the equivalent of three meals in one sitting, says Jaclyn. So take it slow and let the conversation flow!

Drinking too much soup – or scum. If you think that leaving the soup to boil continuously is just like healthy double-boiled soup, you're wrong. (Double-boiled soup actually refers to the use of two bowls, where ingredients are put in a deep porcelain bowl then placed in another pot of boiling water.) Continuously boiling your soup also increases its nitrite content. As for soup scum – scoop it up and throw it away now! This unsavoury frothing is made up of fat and coagulated protein, says Jaclyn. Always skim this off.

Getting your money's worth. By skipping the cheaper ingredients like vegetables, rice and noodles, as well as overloading on meat and seafood, you might feel like you've gotten a good deal. The truth is, you probably chalked up way more calories than if you had gone for a more balanced selection.

If you suffer from hypertension and kidney problems, avoid steamboat as it contains high amounts of sodium that will overload kidneys, causing excessive water retention and swollen extremities, says Jaclyn. Diabetics and those with high cholesterol levels should also watch their saturated fat intake – especially when it comes to eating a lot of seafood.

Make your own soup

 The soup base is an important feature in steamboat. In general, clear broth tends to be lighter than spicy (read: lots of chilli oil) and thick ones that contain ingredients like ground peanuts. If you're hosting a steamboat party at home, Jaclyn suggests making your own broth from scratch with meat bones as it will contain significantly less sodium than the prepared stock sold in supermarkets. Or try your hand at these recipes from Jpot Singapore. "It's a big plus that they do not use sodium-laden stock cubes," adds Jaclyn.

Superior Broth

SERVES: 4
PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 3.5 HOURS

YOU'LL NEED

5 litres water
500g pork
1kg pig's leg bone
500g chicken
White pepper to taste

- 1/ Bring water to the boil on high heat.
- 2/ Add ingredients to pot and remove scum.
- 3/ Reduce heat to low and simmer for three hours.
- 4/ Add a dash of pepper before serving.

Vegetarian Broth

SERVES: 4
PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 3.5 HOURS

YOU'LL NEED

3 litres water
200g carrots
300g grams of turnip
2 sprigs mao bamboo cane root
100g chestnuts

- 1/ Bring water to the boil on high heat.
- 2/ Reduce heat to low and add all ingredients.
- 3/ Simmer for three hours before serving.



PREFER TO EAT OUT?

If you're too lazy to prepare everything at home, head to Jpot at #01-53 Vivocity or #03-16 Tampines 1. This three-year-old establishment boasts nine flavourful soup bases and offers mostly local produce sourced from hydroponic farms. Best of all, monosodium glutamate is banned here and you'll be able to tell the difference. Jpot's soup won't leave you feeling thirsty like those laden with sodium.

Special thanks to Jpot for the use of their premises and food items for our photo shoot.