

## 5 healthy kopitiam breakfasts in Singapore

These healthier options from your neighbourhood kopitiam or hawker centre will help you start the day right.

23 October 2015 by Azlinda Said



### **One piece of thosai**

**97 calories and 2g fat**

If roti prata is your usual choice, pick thosai instead. Thosai is made from rice flour, chickpea flour, yeast and spices. One thosai has only 1g (about five teaspoons) of ghee – clarified butter that's extremely high in calories and saturated fat.

In comparison, one roti prata needs 18g of ghee, so the figures shoot up to 184 calories and 9g of fat, says Jaclyn Reutens, clinical dietitian from Aptima Nutrition and Sports Consultants.

Thosai is also cooked in a healthier way – on a hot plate with just a little oil to prevent the dough from sticking.

To keep it healthy, go easy on the gravy, advises Jaclyn. "Limit it to less than one quarter of a cup (about 4 tablespoons). This gives you 60 calories and about 2g of fat. Side dishes like rava and chutney have about 25 calories a tablespoon."

### **A bowl of chicken porridge**

**177 calories and 5g fat**

"Porridge is rice cooked with more water, hence the larger volume, so it's all right to

eat the full serving you get from the hawker stall,” says Jaclyn. “In comparison, 500g of cooked rice has three times the number of calories.”

However, this doesn't mean that you can eat all kinds of porridge. Chicken and fish, says Jaclyn, are the healthiest. “Pork porridge has 286 calories and 12g fat.”

It's better, too, to opt for porridge over congee, which has a thicker consistency. Because it's thicker, congee has more rice grains, and in turn, more carbohydrates. Jaclyn says it has 10 per cent more calories than porridge.

### **Two slices of plain toast with two soft-boiled eggs**

#### **243 calories and 11g fat**

For a low-fat breakfast, skip the kaya and butter – plain toast tastes just as good dipped in soft-boiled eggs. “The spreads will add an extra 150 calories to the meal, and that's mainly from fat,” notes Jaclyn.

There's no harm in adding pepper and soya sauce to the eggs, as the additional calories are negligible. But avoid the soya sauce if you suffer from high blood pressure – it's high in sodium.

### **A bowl of sliced-fish bee hoon**

#### **254 calories and 5g fat**

This contains a good amount of carbohydrates, protein and fibre, so eat half or three quarters of it. “You can finish the soup, though, as it is mainly made from boiled fish heads, coriander, ginger and tomatoes,” says Jaclyn.

If you add milk to the soup, you're adding 50 calories. If you add milk and fried fish slices, you'll double the total calorie count to 500 because of the oil used to fry the fish, Jaclyn warns.

If you'd rather have a bowl of sliced-fish soup with rice, go ahead. The calorie count is similar to bee hoon, says Jaclyn. “Still, you would have to eat only half or three quarters of the rice, like with the noodles.”

### **A plate of mee siam**

#### **694 calories and 24g fat**

Yes, it's a lot of calories, carbohydrates (92g) and fat. So eat only half the noodles and slurp up less gravy, and you could cut your calorie intake to 431. Jaclyn says that if you compare mee siam to other Malay breakfast dishes like nasi lemak and mee rebus, it is still healthier.

You don't have to skip the hard-boiled egg and tofu – they provide protein. And the egg will fill you up so you don't end up snacking before lunch. "Leave about four tablespoons of gravy behind," advises Jaclyn. "The gravy is oily and high in sodium as it is cooked with bean paste and chilli oil."

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