

Health

What 5 Dietitians Order at Panera Bread

This cafe practically begs you to grab a pastry and get comfy, but there are healthy, everyday options are hiding in plain sight.

By Cecily McAndrews Updated February 09, 2021



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With cozy seats all around and the smell of baking baguettes wafting through the air, [Panera Bread](#) practically begs you to pull up a chair, grab a pastry, and get comfy.

In that sort of soothing atmosphere, it's easy to end up with a more hefty meal than you intended (we're looking at you, [980-calorie mac and cheese!](#)), but some healthy, everyday options are hiding in plain sight.

We enlisted 5 nutritionists to tell us what they choose from this cafe's extensive menu.

Here are their top picks:

If you like to mix and match

"One of my go-tos is half the chicken cobb salad with avocado and a veggie soup (like their seasonal autumn squash or the garden vegetable with pesto). And I get the apple option on the side."

—Anne Mauney, MPH, RD, creator of the [Fannetastic Food blog](#)

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If you're in the mood for a satisfying salad

"With the calories right on the menu, Panera makes it easier to choose lighter items right at the point of purchase. I like to get a Greek Salad with Chicken or the Asian Sesame Chicken Salad."

—[Marisa Moore, RD](#)

If you're craving gooey cheese

"I actually love the kids' meal that comes with a normal-sized grilled cheese (like one you would make at home) and a yogurt squeezer by Stonyfield. They even serve organic milk!"

—[Laura Cipullo, RD](#)

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If you like to customize your order

"I like to have the You Pick Two with black bean soup and the classic salad, but instead of the dressing I ask for avocado and fresh lemon wedges, which I mash up to coat the greens and veggies as a dressing."

— [Cynthia Sass, MPH, RD](#), *Health's* contributing nutrition editor

If you need a post-workout boost

"Between the hummus and the chicken, the Power Chicken Hummus Bowl is packed with healthy protein, and the portion size is substantial without being too large. It's a great lunch or dinner option!"

— [Brittany Kohn, RD](#)

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