

Up front

Tips, trends, everyday products

Far-fetched fast food

THE DUNKIN' DONUTS Glazed Donut Breakfast Sandwich—a pepper-fried egg and bacon between doughnut halves—is just one of many, um, unusual foods being lobbed at an innocent public. That item, described as “going where no breakfast has gone,” has a relatively svelte 360 calories (and 20 grams of fat). But other combinations are just as strange and far more heft-inducing. We’ve rounded up a few of the indulgent items at restaurant chains.

A decade ago, the fast-food industry unveiled a new menu item about once a year. Today new burgers may be unwrapped two, three, or four times a year. Other, stranger temptations are offered annually. “If they did it every day, it wouldn’t be as cravable,” says Darren Tristano, executive vice president of Technomic, a food-industry research group.

“If you have an item that just sounds ridiculous and extreme, a certain number of people will try it,” says Bret Thorn, senior food editor at Nation’s Restaurant News. Tristano says that extreme foods are designed to appeal to younger millennials (ages 18 to 33), who are more likely than others to try anything once.

Thorn says that men might be more

likely than women to send their taste buds for a ride. (“Every man’s cave needs electricity and an oven” is the pitch for Papa Murphy’s 5-Meat Stuffed Pizza, a pie housing Canadian bacon, pepperoni, sausage, bacon, and ground beef, with additional meat on top.)

Baby boomers shouldn’t be discounted as extreme foodies, Thorn adds. “They are the ones that can spend their extra cash on crème-filled doughnuts wrapped in bacon.”

Notice a trend? Bacon also stars in Burger King’s limited-time Bacon Sundae (510 calories) and Sonic’s Peanut Butter and Bacon Shake (700 to 1,720 calories).

Despite such fare, Tristano is confident that fast-food restaurants will continue to offer healthful alternatives. So you’ll still be able to order a garden salad, with dressing (and bacon) on the side.

Fairly outrageous snacks

State fairgrounds have their share of over-the-top treats. Coming up:

Iowa State Fair (Aug. 8 to 18) has deep-fried candy bars and sweet snacks (think Ho-Hos).

Texas State Fair (Sept. 27 to Oct. 20) has deep-fried bubble gum, deep-fried butter, and Texas-fried cookie dough.

▶ **Johnny Rockets Big Apple Shake** An actual slice of apple pie is blended into each treat. The count: 1,140 calories and 67 grams of fat.



▶ **Wendy’s Pretzel Bacon Cheeseburger** “A delicious new twist on our classic hot n juicy cheeseburger,” the chain’s website says. There’s also honey-mustard sauce, cheese, and (what else?) bacon on a pretzel bun. The count: 680 calories and 36 grams of fat. Want chili cheese fries with that? That adds 530 calories and 28 grams of fat.



▶ **Crazy Cheesy Crust Pizza** The crust of this pizza, which Pizza Hut offers occasionally, is kneaded into 16 pockets holding a five-cheese blend “that’ll blow your mind,” the company’s website says. The count: 390 calories per slice of pepperoni and 20 grams of fat. That sounds far more tame than what the chain sold last year in the Middle East: pizza with a dozen mini-cheeseburgers nestled into its crust.

