

200 calorie eats

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Meal deal: Au Bon Pain

In our land of supersized food—and people—a little portion control is a welcome advance. Especially when it comes from a chain.

That's why we were pleased to hear about Au Bon Pain's brand new 200-calorie "portions." They include more than a dozen small (about 2 1/2 to 5 ounce) dishes that pack less than 200 calories each.

They are so attractively packaged that we had a hard time choosing, picking only eight during a recent visit to the Merchandise Mart location (222 W. Merchandise Mart No. 118; 312-755-9779).

Among the various cheese dishes, we spied an herbed cheese ball with fruit and crackers, a fresh mozzarella with roasted pepper and olive spread, and brie with grapes and crackers. We picked up the last two. We also tried the asparagus spears topped with a balsamic vinaigrette and shaved almonds (only 70 calories), red pepper hummus with cucumbers (130 calories), Thai peanut chicken over snow peas (200 calories), and a chickpea and tomato salad (100 calories).

Our favorites were sliced turkey rolls filled with asparagus, cranberry chutney and gorgonzola (140 calories) and an apple, blue cheese and cranberry salad (200 calories). Most dishes cost about \$2.99 each but some, like the smoked turkey, go up to \$3.49 each. Counting calories has rarely been so easy or tasty at a fast-food chain.