



THE STEW

A taste of Chicago's food, wine and dining scene

By Chicago Tribune's Good Eating and Dining staffs

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Au Bon Pain's new 200 calorie items a bon idée



In our land of super sized food -- and people -- a little portion control is a welcome advance. Especially when it comes from a fast-food 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 smallish (about 2.5 to 5 ounces) dishes that pack fewer than 200 calories into each. They are so attractively packaged that we had a hard time choosing, picking only eight to try during a recent visit to the Merchandise Mart location.



Prepared by



Public Relations ♦ Events Management

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, and a chickpea and tomato salad (100 calories). Our two 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 of the 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.