



DIET TRENDS

Which meal delivery service is right for your family?

By Frances Largeman-Roth · Published June 16, 2015 · FoxNews.com



NOW PLAYING

How healthy are meal delivery services?



Putting a healthy dinner on the table for yourself or your family can be a real challenge at the end of a busy day. That's why so many delivery and meal prep services have sprung up, each offering something unique to consumers. I sampled meals from some of the most popular companies and drilled down what you can expect from each one.

Blue Apron

Meals arrive: Prepped and ready to cook; some chopping is required.

Best for: Busy couples or families who might turn to takeout for meals instead. Great for folks who love variety.

Nutrition info: Calorie information is provided; meals are 500-700 calories per serving.

Vegetarian option: Yes

What it costs per meal: \$9.99 for the 2 person plan and \$8.74 for the family plan

On the menu: Steak Fajitas with Guacamole & Roasted Zucchini Rounds from the family plan (about 595 calories per serving)

Locations: Full coverage in California, Connecticut, Washington DC, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia

The Fresh Diet

Meals arrive: Chef-prepared, ready-made and chilled to reheat and eat that day. You get three meals and two snacks/day.

Best for: People who want to transform their diet, lose weight and are nutrition conscious, but don't want to cook. Great for those who need help with portion sizes. You can customize your meals and can choose which days you want to be on the plan, which is great for the summer when you have travel plans.

Nutrition info: Full nutrition information is available online for each item. A nutritionist is also available for consultations and menu questions.

What it costs per meal: about \$9.99

On the menu: Spice-Rubbed Flank Steak with Sweet Potato and Green Bean Salad with Mustard and Lime Vinaigrette (361 calories, 14.6g total fat, 4.5g sat fat, 606mg sodium, 3.7g fiber, 25.2g protein)

Locations: 574 US cities including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas and Miami

Good Eggs

Meals arrive: It depends — a meal kit may require you to boil water to cook pasta. Prepared foods may come either chilled or frozen.

Best for: Foodies who want the flexibility to order just local ingredients and flowers, meal kits, prepared meals or everything! If you're a farmer's market type of person, but can't get there regularly, this is the service for you.

Nutrition info: Since offerings come from various small, local purveyors, nutrition information isn't available across the board.

Vegetarian option: Yes

What it costs per meal: \$7.50 on up

On the menu: Quinoa, Kale and Avocado Bowl with Ginger Dressing

Locations: LA, New Orleans, NYC, San Francisco Bay area

Munchery

Meals arrive: Ready-made and chilled; reheat when you want it.

Best for: Busy parents who don't want to slave over the stove, but do want to have quality mealtime with their family. Sides, breakfast, dessert and beverages, are also available.

Nutrition info: Complete nutrition info is available for each meal, but the caveat is that each container may actually include up to 1.5 servings, making the calories much higher. Also, nutrition info may exclude condiments, dressings, marinades and brines, which is why the sodium appears to be much lower than it likely is. Also, while the adult meals seemed to be in a very healthy range (400-650 for dinner), the kids' meals were sometimes too caloric (720 calories)

Vegetarian option: Yes

What it costs per meal: \$9.95-\$15.95; kids meals are \$3.95-\$5.95

On the menu: Nigiri Sushi Plate (490 calories, 8g total fat, 1.5g sat fat, 180mg sodium, 3g fiber, 33g protein); Raw Beet and Herb Salad (200 calories, 14g total fat, 2g sat fat, 115mg sodium, 3g fiber, 4g protein); Kids Beef Teriyaki Skewers (270 calories, 4g total fat, 1.5g sat fat, 220mg sodium, 2g fiber, 20g protein)

Locations: Seattle, NYC, Los Angeles, San Francisco

Plated

Meals arrive: Prepped and ready to cook; some chopping is required.

Best for: Busy urban couples looking to expand their repertoire and experiment with new ingredients. Focus on seasonal produce and meat raised without antibiotics. You can see the recipes online and choose them based on difficulty (easy, medium, difficult).

Nutrition info: Full nutrition info for each recipe is listed under the FAQ section. While some options are high in fat and sodium (see below), others are healthier and recipes are in the 450-850 calories per serving range. Nine new recipes are offered each week including three vegetarian options and one dairy-free option, so there's something for everyone.

Vegetarian option: Yes

What it costs per meal: \$12

On the menu: Pad See Ew with Pork and Sweet Peppers (730 calories, 41g fat, 12g sat fat, 4490mg sodium, 5g fiber, 35g protein)

Locations: The lower 48 states

Frances Largeman-Roth, RDN, is a New York Times bestselling author and nationally recognized health expert. She writes for Parents, BabyCenter, Cooking Light magazine and other publications and is a frequent guest on national TV, including the Today Show, Good Morning America, Access Hollywood Live, Fox News, and The Dr. Oz Show. To learn more, go to franceslargemanroth.com, or follow her on social media @FrancesLRothRD.