

# Los Angeles Times

September 22, 2008

## For starters, deep-fried cupcakes; then, deep-fried Oreos

Time is running out to take in the sights at the L.A. County Fair: Black-clad teenagers viciously tearing apart cinder block-sized squares of fried potato strings. Genteel women ripping into freakishly large sausages. Linebacker-esque men feeding turkey legs to their stroller-bound infants. (At least the latter shared -- on a recent Saturday, that was rare.) And the things people do to fried dough...

The L.A. County Fair is not for the squeamish.

But it does provide thrills. For the most excitement possible, fairgoers should know what they're getting into. Brushing up beforehand will ensure the richest possible fair experience -- whether one decides to partake with gleeful, calorie-deriding abandon or to simply watch in revolted, slightly smug horror.

For a taste of what the fair-food experience is all about, WebMD offers an explainer on just why it might not fit into a nutritious diet (i.e. something about sugar and fat). The story contains a partial list of typical food offerings and the calories therein. Giant turkey leg, 1,136 calories.



Calorie King provides a slightly more extensive breakdown of carnival and fair food, but without belaboring the obvious. (Much of this is taken up by Dippin' Dots analyses. Those who would be destroyed to realize that ice cream bits, unlike cookie crumbs, do in fact contain calories shouldn't even look.)

In this world, the Twinkie Dog Sundae doesn't fare too badly: 501 calories.

Now to plan the visit. The fair's website is here to help, theoretically allowing fairgoers to chart their course based on their favorite deep-fried, frozen or liquid refreshments. Start with the introduction, then proceed to the list of food booths (locations provided). Seven choices for giant turkey legs. Eight for funnel cakes. Too much trouble? Just search for the type of concoction desired.

When all is said and done, cotton candy might be one of the more healthful alternatives: 171 calories, says the WebMD story.

But calories, schmalories. Fair food doesn't actually count. The rides do. Somehow, being spun at high speeds as children eventually leads to morbid obesity in adults. Been to the fair? It's hard to deny a connection.

-- Tami Dennis