

A survey on the nutritional content and portion sizes of cheesecake

Area of research interest: [Consumer Interests \(aka Wider Consumer Interests\)](#)

Study duration: 2019-07-01

Conducted by: Food Standards Agency and District Councils in NI

Background

Obesity is one of the most important public health challenges currently facing Northern Ireland, with 62% of adults and 27% of children aged 2-15 classified as overweight or obese. Research shows the NI population is eating too much sugar, saturated fat and salt and not enough fruit, vegetables and wholegrain foods.

Research commissioned by the FSA in 2018 reported that 71% of NI consumers eat out at least once a month, meaning these businesses now have a greater part to play in helping to make the healthier choice the easy choice.

Public Health England (PHE) identified 'puddings' such as cheesecake, pies, tarts, crumbles, gateaux etc. as one of the top ten sources of sugar in the UK diet, and have therefore included this category in its reduction and reformulation programme. Cheesecake was recognised as a food of 'particular relevance' to the NI population as it is a popular option on dessert menus, with many restaurants and hotels offering it as a hand-made dessert on their menus.

Approach

Between July and September 2019, the 11 district councils in NI surveyed a minimum of three cheesecakes sold in restaurants and hotels in each Council area. A total of 47 samples were collected. Samples of each cheesecake portion were sent for nutritional analysis.

The samples included a range of cheesecake flavours which were categorised into four groups – luxury (e.g. salted caramel, raspberry and white chocolate), chocolate (e.g. white chocolate, chocolate bar flavoured), fruit and other flavours (e.g. passionfruit, blueberry and lemon) and baked.

The survey was commissioned by the FSA and district councils as part of the [Eating Well Choosing Better programme](#).

Results

Results are available per portion and per 100g for energy, sugar, fat, saturated fat and salt content of cheesecake samples. Analysis was also conducted by preparation method i.e. made by businesses or bought in ready-made; made with or without the use of measuring equipment; how the cheesecake was portioned.

- The average portion of cheesecake weighed 145g
- The largest portion of cheesecake weighed 273.9g
- As portion size increased so did energy, sugar, fat, saturated fat and salt content
- The average portion of cheesecake provided 534kcal

- The portion with the highest amount of energy provided 972kcal – this is almost half an adults daily recommended energy intake
- The highest amount of sugar in one portion was 68.0g – this is the equivalent of almost 14 teaspoons of sugar
- The highest amount of fat in one portion was 72.8g – this is almost all the adult fat recommendation no more than 35% of daily energy intake

The full results of the survey are outlined in the [Nutritional Content of Cheesecake Report](#).

The FSA is committed to working with academia and industry to develop technical guidance to help businesses to reformulate recipes and to reduce portion sizes and levels of energy, sugar, saturated fat and salt in food served in NI.