



## FRESHEN UP



Cream cheese is high in saturated fat. (It's mostly cream, not cheese.) Cottage cheese is low in sat fat but typically high in sodium. Quark is low in both.

**Quark** (the word means "curds" in German) is also called "fresh cheese" because, unlike cheddar,

Swiss, and other hard cheeses, it isn't aged. It's made by heating and straining soured milk. (In contrast, ricotta cheese is made by straining scalded whey, which is the liquid that's left when milk is curdled.)

By all rights, quark should rule the dairy aisle. Every 100-gram serving of **Liberty Quark**, for example, delivers 11 grams of protein and 10 per cent of a day's calcium in just 60 fat-free calories. Yet many people pass it by. Don't.

Quark is thick and creamy enough to spread on crusty whole-grain bread or crackers. Or you can mix it with fresh berries, peaches, bananas, or other fruit. (Sprinkle with toasted almond slices for extra oomph.)

Having poached fruit or compote? Scoop a dollop of quark on top. Making basil pesto for your pasta? Stir in a spoonful to make a creamy, rich sauce. Sautéing fish? Mix some quark with chopped fresh dill and chives for a quick and easy topping.

In fact, you can swap quark for mayo or sour cream in salad dressings and dips or use it in mousses, soufflés, cheesecakes, and filled pastries (not that you'd ever make any of those).

And quark has the distinct advantage of having a terrific name, whether you're a fan of "Finnegans Wake" ("Three quarks for Muster Mark"), elementary particle physics (with its different "flavours" of quarks), or healthy eating (think Liberty).

**Liberty: (888) 340-9306**

## THAI ONE ON



"Rice noodles with bean sprouts, fried egg, green onions and a sweet and sour tamarind sauce. Topped with red peppers and crushed peanuts." That's how **Jack Astor's** describes its **Pad Thai**.

The dish may sound reasonably healthy...even a bit exotic. But check the online Nutrition Guide (thanks, Jack!) before you go. The "Vegetable" version delivers roughly 1,080 calories' worth of mostly white rice noodles—with a few chunks of red and green pepper and a little sliced zucchini and carrot—to your new and emerging fat cells. (Make it roughly 1,200 calories with chicken or shrimp.) Except for some sprouts, the chicken and shrimp versions are largely vegetable-free seasoned refined grain.

And the "seasoning" supplies a cool 2,160 milligrams of sodium (2,260 mg with chicken and 2,440 mg with shrimp). Yikes. You'll pass a day's worth (1,500 mg) when your plate is still a third full. And that's without any soy sauce (910 mg of sodium per tablespoon) or Sambal Oelek chili pepper sauce (220 mg in every two teaspoons).

Instead, try Jack's **Soy-Ginger Salmon Salad**. The grilled salmon

comes on mixed greens, grape tomatoes, and cucumbers topped with bean sprouts, spicy pecans, and toasted sesame seeds. Without the ginger dressing, it has just 550 calories and 410 mg of sodium. But you'll have to get the dressing on the side and use just half to add "only" another 550 mg of sodium. (Try a third or a quarter. It's *that* zippy.)

As for the pad Thai, think of it as a recipe for padded thighs.

**Jack Astor's: (905) 681-2997**

**dish**  
OF THE MONTH

**Can't Beet It Salad**

Arrange 250 grams of sliced cooked beets on a platter. Top with ½ thinly sliced small red onion, ¼ cup of crumbled feta cheese, and ¼ cup of sliced celery hearts. Drizzle with 2 Tbs. of extra-virgin olive oil and 2 tsp. of red wine vinegar.

Photos: Natalie Walsh (left), Namita Davis (right).

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