Which of these new Swiss Chalet cakes causes the least damage to your arteries and waistline: Old Fashioned Carrot, Classic Fudge, or Chocolate Lava?

If you think the Carrot Cake is the least harmful, you’re wrong. Unfortunately, the carrots are buried in a pile of white flour, sugar, and cream cheese icing, all of which add up to 610 calories per serving, somewhere between the Chocolate Lava Cake (430) and the Classic Fudge Cake (720). Likewise, the saturated-plus-trans fat (11 grams) falls between the (smaller) Chocolate Lava (7½ grams) and the Classic Fudge (13 grams). Instead of carrot cake, you might as well order half a rack of Chargrilled BBQ Ribs for dessert.

And who can afford roughly 600 calories on top of dinner? That’s a third of the calories that a 50-something sedentary woman should eat in an entire day. A scoop of Swiss Chalet’s ice cream or (better yet) cranberry raspberry frozen yogurt has just 110 to 130 calories. Even with a drizzle of butterscotch, chocolate, or strawberry sauce, the total comes to 230 calories, max.

That used to be enough for dessert. Now a scoop of ice cream has to compete against desserts like Caramel Pecan Cheesecake (660 calories) or Baked Apple Crumble (480 calories).

Swiss Chalet deserves kudos for putting calories and other numbers on its Web site. Now if the chain would just put them on its menus, diners might have a fighting chance.

Swiss Chalet: (866) 450-2903

About CSPI, publisher of Nutrition Action Healthletter

The Centre for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), founded in 1971, is an independent non-profit consumer health group. CSPI advocates honest food labelling and advertising, safer and more nutritious foods, and pro-health alcohol policies. CSPI’s work is supported by Nutrition Action Healthletter subscribers and foundation grants. CSPI accepts no government or industry funding. Nutrition Action Healthletter, which has been published in the U.S. since 1974 and in Canada since 1996, accepts no advertising.

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Photograph: McCain (left), Lauren Clark (right).

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