

The Smithsonian Institutions: Feeding America's Minds with Knowledge and Their Stomachs with Healthy Creations

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All the Smithsonian museum cafes offer locally grown fruits as a quick snack

The Smithsonian is the largest museum and research complex in the world. The institution consists of 19 museums and galleries along with the National Zoological Park. The zoo and 17 of the Smithsonian's museums are located right in Washington D.C. The museums allow the American public to explore and learn about American history, culture, and ingenuity as well as the multitude of cultures and knowledge from people all over that world that make up our diverse population. However, this article is not about the learning opportunities and knowledge on display in the museums and zoo. This article is about how the Smithsonian promotes the health of every visitor that enters its doors.

Despite the National Air and Space Museum containing a McDonalds, all the Smithsonian museums possess one or multiple cafes that offer a wide variety of healthy and nutritious options to take a break from touring and to grab a bite to eat. While the majority of the article is about what the cafes have to offer, included is a bit of information on the approximate amount of exercise done and calories burned while walking through the exhibits. This article will focus on the National Museum of the American Indian, the National Museum of Natural History, and the National Zoological Park.

The National Museum of the American Indian is a three story museum exhibiting the lives, cultures, and hardships of native peoples past and present in the Americas. The distanced traveled touring the entire museum including the gift shops and taking the stairs is approximately 2.3 miles. This exercise equates to burning about 200 calories just by walking around viewing the exhibits. The only source of food in this museum is the Mitsitam Native Foods Café. The café stays true to the identity of the museum and creates foods authentic to different regions of North and South America.

Mitsitam Café serves about 1,000 people per day. All the produce used in the foods are locally grown and organic. The meat used for steaks and burgers is from free-roaming buffalo from South Dakota that are hormone free. The fish, such as Wild King Salmon and Lin Cod, is obtained by a fishing company from



Wild Rice & Watercress Salad

the Pacific Northwest. One of their popular dishes is the Wild Rice & Watercress Salad. The rice is grown on a Minnesota Indian Reservation. It also contains red onions, pine nuts, picked watercress leaves, and a cider vinaigrette. Other dishes served include Buffalo Burgers, Pollo de Mole Verde, Cedar Planked Salmon, Grilled Chicken Sandwiches, and Calabaza Tarts and Fennel Whoopee Pies for dessert.

The Nation Museum of Natural History is another three story building (including the ground floor) dedicated to the research and exhibition of all science in the natural world. At this



Peppercorn Crusted Roast Beef Sandwiches

museum you are walking a bit more. The distanced traveled touring this museum approximately 3.2 miles including the gift shops and taking the stairs. This amount of exercise burns about 300 calories. There are two places to eat in Natural History, but the central location to eat is the Atrium Café. The cafe serves about 3,500 people per day. Like the Mitsitam Café, all the produce is organic from local farms. The meats used in

the dishes are antibiotic and hormone free. The fish is obtained by a fishing company located in Skuna Bay, British Colombia. The Atrium Café offers a wide variety of options to choose from such as burgers, chicken tenders, pizza, a few different soups, and salads. Sides include Homemade Mac & Cheese, BBQ Baked Beans, and Potato Salad. A favorite sandwich served in the cafe is the Peppercorn Crusted Roast Beef which consists of Certified Angus Roast Beef cooked in-house, lettuce, sea salt, black pepper, and Provolone cheese.

The National Zoological Park is one of the largest Smithsonian areas in terms of size and the amount of walking done in order to see everything. The rough approximate for the amount of distance walked is 4.7 miles, but this number includes most but not all of the exhibits, gift shops, and eating locations. The estimated amount of calories burned associated with the walking approximation is 420 calories. The zoo has multiple places to eat all along Olmstead Walk, but the focus for this article will be

the Mane Grill. As with the other Smithsonian Institutions, the grill uses locally-sourced produce that is also organic. The beef for hotdogs and burgers is all-natural. The chicken is antibiotic-free and vegetarian-fed. The



Grilled Chicken Sandwich with Fries

grill offers typical foods such as burgers, chicken tenders, and hot dogs. The Grilled Chicken Sandwich comes with tomato and lettuce on a Kaiser Roll and a side of fries. The restaurant also offers specials such as Chicken & Waffle Cone and local favorites such as Cheese Ravioli and the Salmon BLT.

The Smithsonian Institutions are the top visited museums in Washington D.C. and the world. While their primary focus is spreading the collective knowledge of all things history, culture, and science regarding the United States and the people who inhabit it, the museums also seek to provide the best quality nutritional foods for its patrons through their assorted restaurants.