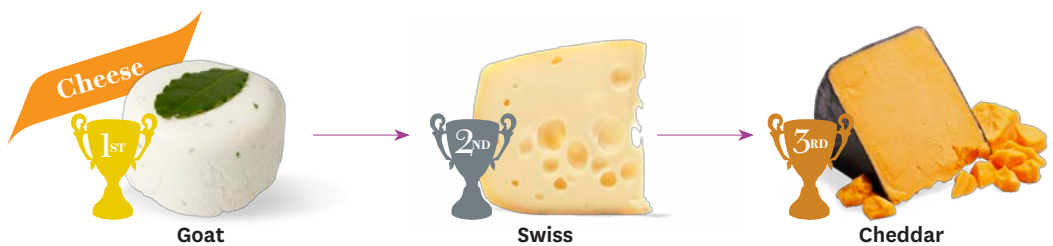


Food Fight!

Who's the healthiest of them all? You may be surprised.

WHEN IT COMES TO making smart dietary choices, there are standout winners (three cheers for salmon, blueberries, and broccoli) and unmistakable losers (cheese fries, we're looking at you). But sometimes the champions aren't so obvious. We've compared a few favorite foods and drinks to find out which offer the most nutritional value. —LESLIE GOLDMAN



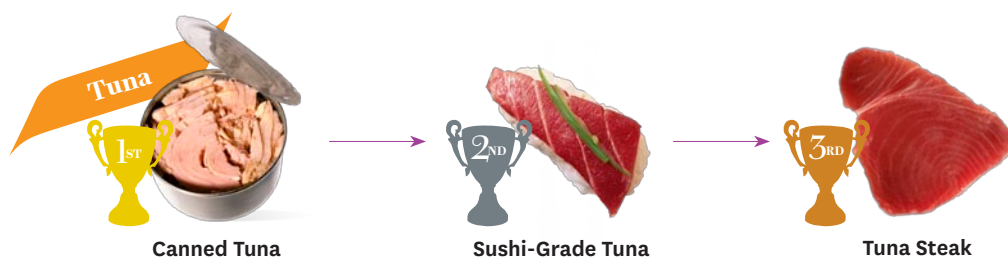
As cheese ages, it becomes denser in calories. So while goat cheese may taste decadent, it's typically better for the waistline than hard varieties. Swiss is usually higher in saturated fat but earns points for having five times as much calcium. Third place goes to Cheddar: A one-ounce chunk can have as much salt as a serving of potato chips.



Yes, the condensed sugar in dried fruit will deliver a burst of energy, but you'll be hungry again before you know it. Fruit-on-the-bottom yogurt isn't much better: It can harbor five teaspoons of sugar per serving. For a balance of carbohydrates, protein, and fiber, pick a granola bar that's low in sugar and loaded with whole ingredients, like oats, nuts, and seeds.



A crisp G&T has more calories than an eight-ounce cola. Light beer is better; its carbonation will make you feel full without the added sugar. But the lightest libation is a shot of tequila (or any hard alcohol): "We sip liquor and gulp cocktails and beer," says Wendy Bazilian, coauthor of *The SuperFoodsRx Diet*. "Gulping equals more empty calories."



Of the three, a cooked tuna steak contains the most mercury per ounce, because as the meat loses water while it cooks, the neurotoxin becomes more concentrated. But sashimi isn't a great option, either. Sushi-grade tuna tend to be quite large, and the bigger the fish, the more mercury it accumulates. Go with canned chunk light, which is made from smaller species.

THIS JUST IN

The Latest Science on Placebos

In a Harvard Medical

School study, researchers gave people with irritable bowel syndrome a bottle of pills labeled PLACEBO and explained that placebos have been shown to be effective in clinical studies. Even though the meds were obvious fakes, they still worked. Patients experienced significant improvement in their symptoms.

A March report from the German Medical Association found that placebos injected intravenously are more effective than those taken orally, and that the more expensive the placebo, the higher the success rate.

Among patients with osteoarthritis of the knee, sham acupuncture (in which needles are inserted at nontraditional locations) worked just as well for pain relief as the real thing, according to a study in *Arthritis Care & Research*. And patients reported better results when the practitioner said things like "I've had a lot of success with treating knee pain" than when she said, "It may or may not work for you."