



## **Calorie Counting or Not, Carrot Cake is Still Carrot Cake**

The calories may be high, but Bridgehead is still selling lots of their decadent desserts -- even after posting their nutritional information through Menusano.



# BRIDGEHEAD®

*"We try to cater to a wide base of health-conscious consumers. However, health consciousness takes several forms," says Kevin Harbison, Bridgehead's Customer and Community Representative. "We make most of our food in our kitchen and buy local and organic whenever it makes sense and is possible. And we try our best to provide our consumers with low-calorie, vegan, non-dairy, and gluten-free options in different categories."*

**Bridgehead** first began serving its fair trade coffee in 1981. The brainchild of two United Church ministers and two social activists, the company's mission is to support small-scale coffee farmers' in Nicaragua. Since that time, Bridgehead has grown to 20 locations by successfully giving their customers what they want - and has kept them wanting more.

As the second fair trade coffeehouse in Canada and the first in Ottawa, Bridgehead prides itself on its organic (and fair trade), roasted coffee. "Being able to roast our coffee here adds a lot of value to what we do. It has become important to us," said Harbison.

*But what, besides the coffee, do consumers look for when they go to Bridgehead? And why do they keep coming back?*

*"Fairtrade has been a big differentiator for us. However, our commitment to environmental sustainability is also a big draw," explains Harbison. "The way in which organic coffee is grown, utilizing shade, is something many of our customers and we believe is significantly more sustainable and important to foster."*



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Bridgehead's eco-conscious, sustainable brand also extends to its menu offerings. The company makes a point of providing its guests with low-calorie, vegan options, and insight into the nutritional content of menu options.

To give that nutritional information and comply with Ontario's new **Healthy Menu Choices Act** which recently came into law, Bridgehead turned to **Menusano**. The online nutrition calculator offers the restaurant chain an easy, fast way to calculate the nutritional content of its recipes.

"Now that we have **20+ locations**, we are required to provide nutritional information. However, our guests have continually requested this information before, and we were always proud to have the answers. The requirement to post nutritional information was more a matter of re-designing and communicating this information on our labels and signage," says Harbison.

While some restaurants find that posting nutritional information drives change in customer behavior, Bridgehead finds it simply enriches customer decision-making.

***"We noticed a significant change in a few items and minimal change in others. It surely depends on the type of food. People's decisions about nutrition labeling seem to be changing when they're offered a range," says Harbison.***

Harbison points out that, "One of our more indulgent desserts, the carrot cake is still going well and hasn't seen much of a change since it's been labeled. However, when it comes to things like muffins where there is a range of options presented, we're seeing people pick more low-calorie/vegan options instead of muffins made with buttermilk and eggs."



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That said, it's not only just the calorie count that keeps Bridgehead consumers informed about their nutritional choices.

*"While the calorie count seems to be of primary importance for many guests, we have many, who have specific concerns about sodium, saturated fat, fiber, etc.," says Harbison.*

*"MenuSano allows us to calculate our recipes with accuracy and instantly check potential variations in the recipe. For instance, if we notice one item in development might be slightly higher in calories, salt, or other factors that we would like, we can make the necessary changes. Since we're often making food and ingredients from scratch, being able to specify custom ingredients in MenuSano. This has allowed us to provide much more accurate information in items than we would otherwise have been able to do."*



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