WHAT’S NOODLES?

What’ll they think of next? You may have spotted a new kind of pasta in the dairy or produce section.

**House Foods Tofu Shirataki Spaghetti** is a “spaghetti shaped noodle substitute” that comes in a small, liquid-filled plastic bag. The noodles are made of water, tofu, and Konnyaku, a member of the yam family.

Why would spaghetti need a sub? As many a dedicated dieter knows, spaghetti (and most other pasta) has about 200 calories per cup. Tofu Shirataki has 40 calories per cup (one bag). To dieting pasta lovers, that’s a steal.

A serving of Tofu Shirataki isn’t equal to a serving of tofu, though. A cup has far less protein (2 grams) than you’d get in a 4 oz. serving of extra-firm tofu (11 grams)...or in a cup of whole- or refined-grain spaghetti (8 grams), for that matter. And you’d get more fiber in the whole-grain pasta (6 grams) than in the Shirataki (4 grams) or the extra-firm tofu (1 gram).

What’s more, Shirataki has a slightly spongier texture than pasta. It’s closer to rice or cellophane noodles than to semolina. And if you’re serving a crowd, it’s easier (and far cheaper) to buy a 16 oz. box of whole-grain pasta for $2 than eight bags of Shirataki for $2 a pop.

But if you’re looking for lower-calorie noodles, add some Shirataki Spaghetti, Angel Hair, or Fettuccine to a soup or stir-fry. Or toss them with toasted sesame oil, then a mix of minced garlic, grated ginger, vinegar, soy sauce, peanut butter, and a touch of sugar.

Late-Summer Gazpacho

Purée 3 cups of chopped ripe tomatoes, 2 cups of peeled, seeded, chopped cucumber, 1 roasted red pepper, 1 Tbs. of red wine vinegar, 2 Tbs. of extra-virgin olive oil, and ½ tsp. of salt in a blender. Process until very smooth. Chill for 1 hour and serve with minced chives. Makes 4 cups.

**Food Porn**

“Satisfy your sweet tooth and your coffee craving in one indulgent sip,” urges the Dunkin’ Donuts Web site.

One sip of Dunkin’s Frozen Caramel or Mocha Coffee wouldn’t be so bad. But an entire large (32 oz.) may be a tad more indulgence than you’re looking for...unless you want your fat cells to find housing for another 1,050 calories, 30 grams of saturated fat (1½ days’ worth), and some 30 teaspoons of added sugar. It’s like drinking four Chocolate Frosted Donuts. M-m-m-m.

How can frozen coffee cause so much trouble? For starters, it’s not really frozen coffee. (Why anyone think that?) It’s a frozen coffee drink—a “base” of sugar with coffee extract, coloring, and flavors is mixed with cream and syrup and topped with whipped cream. (Get it with whole or fat-free milk instead of cream and the calories drop to “only” around 700.)

Dunkin’s Frozen Coffees make Starbucks’ Frappuccinos look like diet food. A venti (24 oz.) Mocha Frappuccino with 2% milk and whipped cream at Starbucks, for example, has 80 calories, 9 grams of sat fat, and around 17 teaspoons of added sugar.

If you want a cold coffee drink at Dunkin’, get a small (16 oz.) Iced Latte Lite (coffee, fat-free milk, and Splenda), and you’ll escape with only 80 calories, no sat fat, and no added sugar. That’s also what a grande (16 oz.) Iced Skinny Latte at Starbucks runs. For something closer to Dunkin’s Frozen Coffee, try a Starbucks grande Coffee Frappuccino Light (110 calories, no sat fat, and around 4 teaspoons of added sugar).

That Dunkin’. Always tryin’ to put a spare doughnut around our midsections.

Dunkin’ Donuts: (800) 859-5339