

THE
★ ULTIMATE ★
TO
KETO

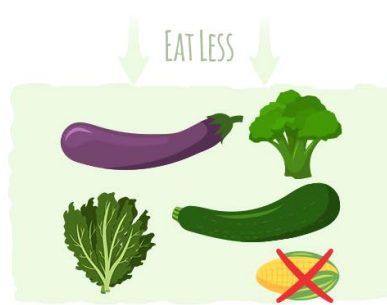
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET STARTED



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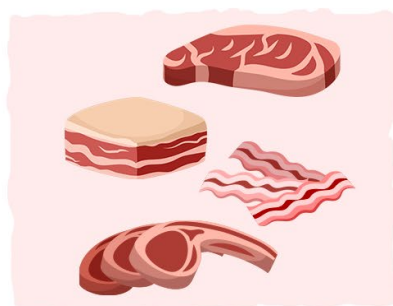
KETOGENIC DIET OVERVIEW



A ketogenic diet should be high in fat, moderate in animal protein, and low in carbohydrates. Knowing and counting your macronutrients is encouraged until you reach your goals. At goal weight, employ the tactic "eat until full."



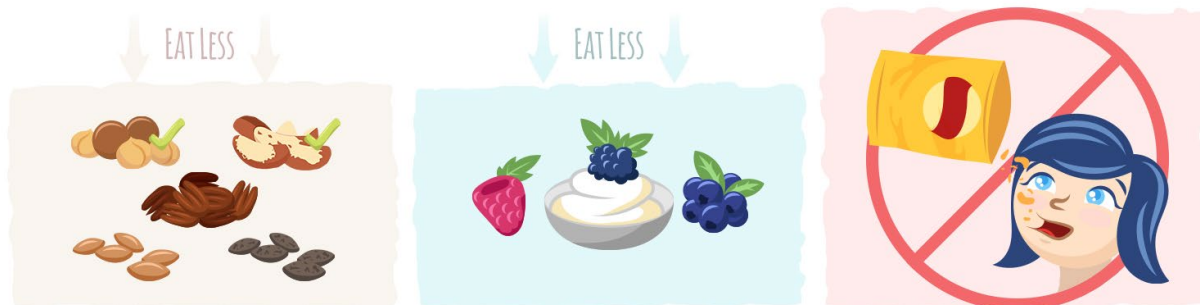
Eat generous amounts of saturated fats like coconut oil & butter or ghee. Beef tallow, lard, & duck fat are great for cooking as they have high smoke points. Olive, avocado, & macadamia oil are also good fats to use in salads & drizzle over food. Do not use these for high-heat cooking.



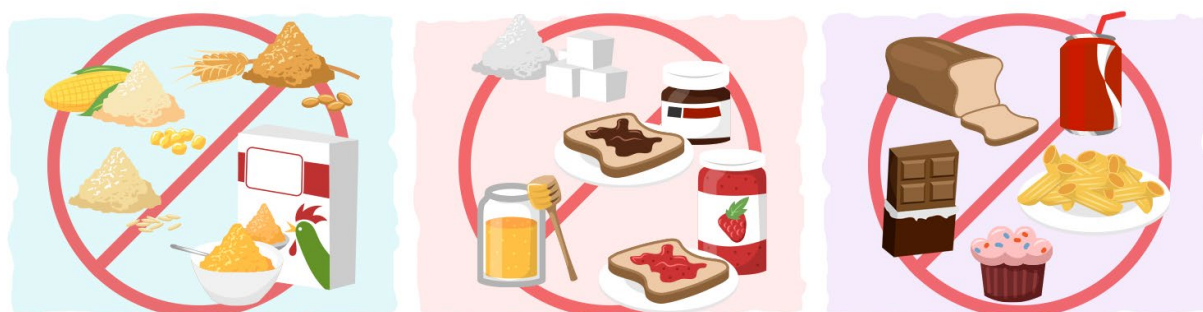
Eat moderate amounts of animal protein and don't over indulge. This includes red meat, poultry, pork, eggs, organs (liver and kidney), fish & shellfish. Aim for fattier cuts of meat where possible; all meals with protein should contain added fat as well. Be careful about sugars in cured meats like bacon, salami, & jerky.



Eat fairly free amounts of fresh or frozen green, leafy vegetables like spinach. Moderate amounts of cruciferous vegetables (like cauliflower, broccoli, and cabbage). Small amounts of nightshades (eggplant, tomatoes, and peppers) and berries (raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries). Starchy vegetables like sweet potatoes should be avoided completely on keto.



Eat restricted amounts of nuts and seeds. Aim to eat nuts high in omega-3 and low in omega-6 like macadamia nuts and brazil nuts. Try to eat limited amounts of blackberries and raspberries as other berries are higher in carbs. Pair the foods you eat with added fats to keep hunger down. Consider cutting snacks out of your diet completely as it generally leads to slower weight loss.



Cut out all grains (wheat, corn, rice, cereal, etc.) & sugar (added sugar, honey, agave, maple syrup, etc.) from your diet. This includes, but is not limited to soda, juice, sports drinks, candy, chocolate, bread, pasta, cereal, cakes, pastries, oats, muesli, & quinoa.



Try to limit your intake to only high-fat dairy like hard cheese, heavy cream, butter, and mayonnaise. Eat less soft cheese and half n' half to keep carb counts down. Too much dairy intake can lead to slower weight loss, so try to create balanced meals that don't heavily rely on dairy.

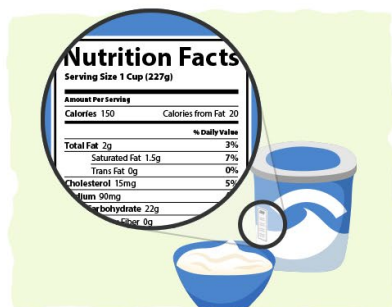


It's common to experience the "keto flu" when transitioning to a ketogenic diet. Drink plenty of water and supplement electrolytes. Consider drinking bone broth as it's filled with micronutrients that will make you feel much better. Most side effects are caused by dehydration or lack of electrolytes.

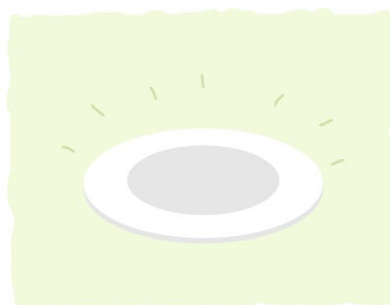
The Ultimate Guide to Keto

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET STARTED

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Make sure that you read nutrition labels and ingredient lists. There are tons of products out there with hidden carbs and sugar inside. Be especially careful with “low-carb” products that are not using good sweeteners.



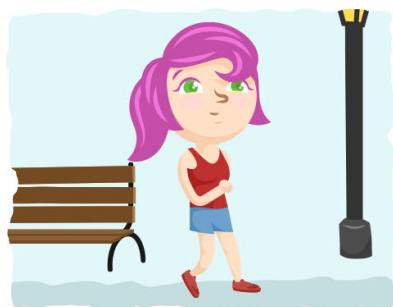
You don't have to eat three square meals a day, do what feels most natural to you. Eat when you're hungry and don't worry if you skip a meal – everything balances out. If you find that you feel better when you skip a meal, you can always consider adding intermittent fasting into your routine.



Try to reduce the spikes in your insulin levels throughout the day by cutting back on snacking. Try to go to sleep on a light stomach, eating 3 hours or more before bed. Getting a good night's sleep will help regulate hunger your hormones as well.



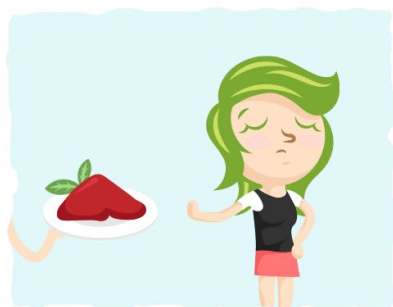
Try to stay strict with your eating habits, tracking where necessary. Don't weigh yourself too often as it can lead to stress – we recommend once a week. Make sure to take measurements with a tape measure too – sometimes the scale doesn't move but the measurements do!



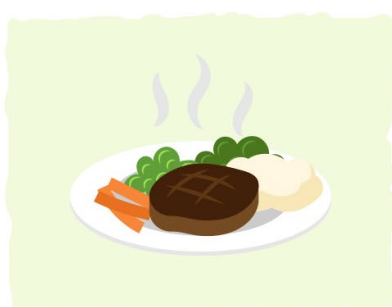
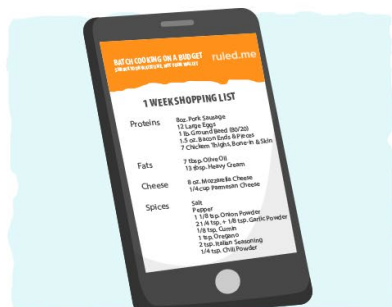
Adding in light exercise after meals or during the day is always beneficial. If you already work out, be sure not to over-exercise. Many people under-eat when exercising; make sure that you're feeding your body enough energy. You can calculate your macros with our easy keto calculator >



If you feel low energy or aren't seeing the results you expect, consider adding more fat to your diet and consuming less protein and carbs. Many people find it easy to increase their fat intake by drinking ketoproof coffee in the morning. Reducing dairy and nut intake can also sometimes help with slow weight loss.



If you don't consume organ meat, consider supplementing with a multivitamin. This can help with micronutrient deficiencies, which can lead to lethargy and problems focusing. Increasing the amount of leafy green vegetables you consume can also help.



P.S. If you're still not sure where to start and want to make it as simple as possible, consider using our Keto Academy Program. Leave the guesswork out of keto by using our shopping lists, meal plans, and expert guidance!

KETO IN A NUTSHELL

A ketogenic diet is a diet that's mainly high in fat, moderate in protein, and low in carbohydrates. It allows the body to convert fat to be used as energy.

When you eat food that's high in carbs, your body will produce glucose and insulin.

- **Glucose** is the easiest molecule for your body to convert and use as energy, so it will be chosen over any other energy source. Typically on a normal, higher carbohydrate diet, the body will use glucose as the main form of energy.
- **Insulin** is produced to process the glucose in your bloodstream, by taking it around the body. Since the glucose is being used as a primary energy, your fats would not be needed, and are therefore stored.

By lowering the intake of carbs, the body is induced into a state known as ketosis. Ketosis is a natural process where we produce ketones, which are formed by the breakdown of fats in the liver.

The end goal of a properly maintained keto diet is to force your body into this metabolic state. We don't do this through limitation of calories, but through limitation of carbohydrates. Our bodies are extremely adaptive to what's put in them - when you overload it with fats and take away carbohydrates, it will begin to burn fat (via ketones) as the main energy source.

WHAT IS KETOSIS

When you're on a ketogenic diet and don't have much access to glucose, the body will burn fat and create molecules called ketones. This is a normal process that the body goes through on an everyday basis, known as ketosis.

Ketones are created when the body breaks down fats, creating fatty acids which are burned off in the liver in a process called beta-oxidation. The end result of this process is the creation of ketones, which are used as fuel by the muscles and brain.

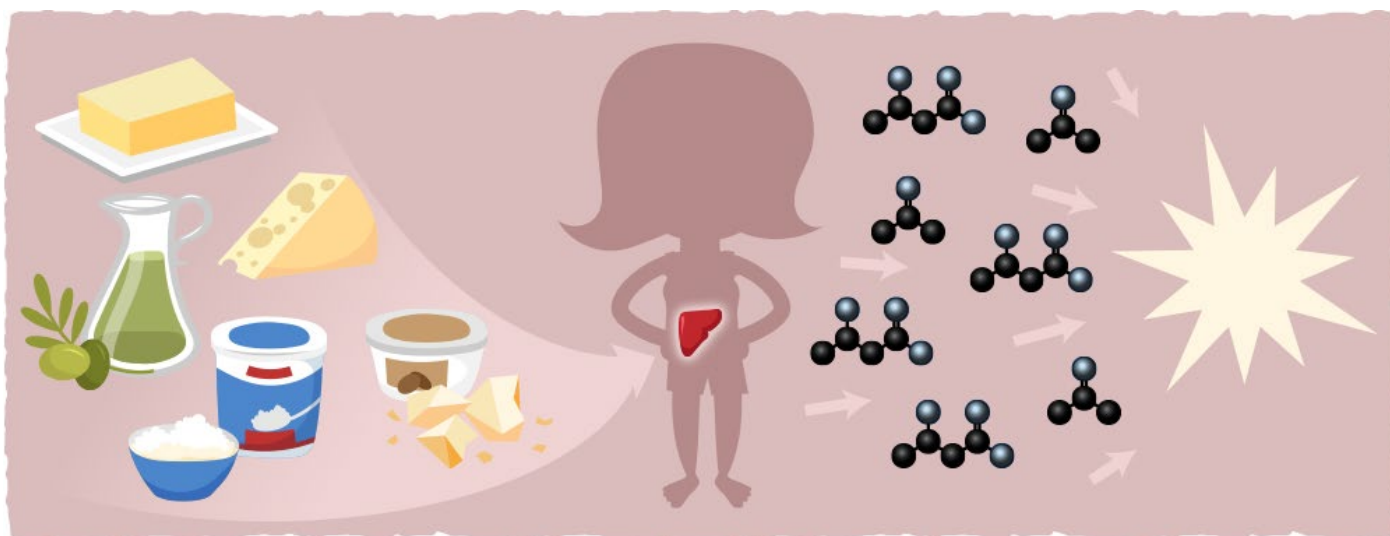
Although glucose is the main source of fuel for most people, these fatty acids are used by the brain cells when carbohydrate or food intake is low. In simpler terms, since you have no more glucose or glycogen, ketosis kicks in and your body will use your stored and consumed fat as energy.

Studies show that the body and brain actually prefer using ketones, being able to run 70% more efficiently than glucose. From an evolutionary standpoint, this makes perfect sense. Cavemen and cavewomen didn't have access to high carbohydrate foods easily; rather, they hunted mainly meats and gathered what they could.



HOW THE BODY WORKS IN KETOSIS

When fat is broken down by the liver, glycerol and fatty acid molecules are released. The fatty acid is broken down further, in a process called ketogenesis, and a ketone body called acetoacetate is produced.



Acetoacetate is then converted into 2 other types of ketone bodies:

- **Beta-hydroxybutyrate (BHB)** – After being in ketosis for a while, your muscles will convert the acetoacetate into BHB, since it's preferred by the brain as fuel.
- **Acetone** – This can sometimes be metabolized into glucose, but is mostly excreted as waste. This gives the distinct smelly breath that most ketogenic dieters know.

Over time, your body will expel less acetone, and you may think that ketosis is slowing down. That's not the case – your brain is burning the BHB as fuel, and your body is trying to give your brain as much efficient energy as possible.

The glycerol that was created when breaking down the fats will be converted into glucose in a process called gluconeogenesis. This is a normal metabolic process that creates glucose from the amino acids in protein, lactate from the muscles, and the glycerol from fatty acids.

Glucose is needed by the body, in small amounts, to maintain good health – but carbohydrates aren't needed for this. Your liver will always make sure you have enough glucose in your bloodstream for the body to perform healthily, no matter what.

Protein can be a great source of glucose for the liver when needed. In fact, about 56% of excess protein will be turned into glucose, which is why too much protein is a bad thing and can knock you out of ketosis. Don't worry – if you're eating to your macros (we'll get into this later), this will not be a problem for you. As long as you are eating enough protein and fats each day, the liver can perform gluconeogenesis from the amino acids and fatty acids you ingest. This is important, because if you are not eating enough protein, your muscle tissues will be burned to make the glucose that your body needs.

SOME HEALTH BENEFITS OF KETO

- **Cholesterol.** A keto diet has shown to improve triglyceride levels and cholesterol levels most associated with arterial buildup. Keep in mind that triglycerides commonly go up as you are losing weight, but equalize as you get towards a healthy weight.
- **Weight Loss.** This is what most of us are here for! As your body is burning fat as the main source of energy, you will essentially be using your fat stores as an energy source while in a fasting state (while sleeping and between meals).
- **Blood Sugar.** Many studies show the decrease of LDL cholesterol over time and have shown to help and even eliminate ailments such as type 2 diabetes.
- **Energy.** By giving your body a better, more efficient and more reliable energy source, you will feel more energized during the day. Fats are shown to be the most effective molecule to burn as fuel.
- **Hunger.** Fat and protein are naturally more satisfying which ends up leaving us in a satiated ("full") state for longer.
- **Acne.** Recent studies have shown a drop in acne lesions and skin inflammation over a 12 week period in teenagers and young adults.



WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN TRANSITIONING

Your body is used to the simple routine of breaking down carbohydrates and using them as energy. Over time the body has built up an arsenal of enzymes ready for this process, and only has a few enzymes for dealing with fats – mostly to store them.

All of a sudden your body has to deal with the lack of glucose and increase in fats, which means building up a new supply of enzymes.

As your body becomes induced into a ketogenic state, your body will naturally use what's left of your glucose. This means your body will be depleted of all glycogen in the muscles – which can cause a lack of energy, and a general lethargy. In the first few weeks, most people report:

- Headaches
- Mental foggiess
- Flu-like symptoms
- Dizziness
- Aggravation

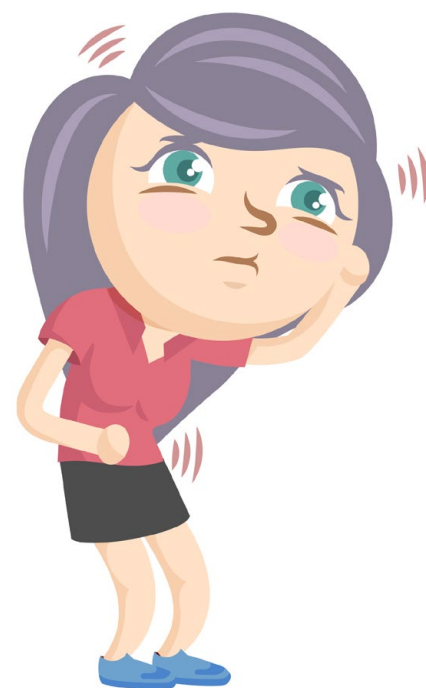
Most of the time, this is the result of your electrolytes being flushed out, as ketosis has a diuretic effect. Make sure you drink plenty of water and keep your sodium and magnesium intake up. The most common way to do this is making your own drink out of bouillon cubes, making a bone broth soup, and increasing the amount of table salt you use. This will help with water retention, and help replenish the electrolytes. Dehydration is common for most people starting out, and can even aid the other side effects of the transition. If you're prone to urinary tract infections or bladder pain, you have to be doubly prepared.

Remember those 8 glasses of water we are supposed to drink? I suggest drinking those, and then more. Water plays a substantial role in our body (considering it's made up of $\frac{2}{3}$ water), and it's extremely important to keep hydrated.

For a normal person that is starting a ketogenic diet, eating 10 to 30g of net carbs a day, the total adaptation process will take about 1 to 2 weeks in total. This means that these symptoms can last quite a while if you don't deal with them.

You may notice that if you're an avid gym goer, you will lose some strength and endurance. This is normal. Once your body becomes keto-adapted, your body will be able to fully utilize the fats as its primary source of energy. Many studies done have shown that there is no long term drop in performance for professional athletes on a very low carb ketogenic diet.

There are a huge number of reasons why you should be eating your vegetables, but I won't go into them. Primarily they are packed full of soluble fiber, which helps slow the process of food through your intestines and colon. This makes sure that your body sucks up as much nutrients as possible before it's passed. Spinach and other leafy greens are additions all of us should make to our diets.



EXPECTATIONS OF WEIGHT LOSS

After starting a keto diet, many people jump for joy after stepping on the scale, but don't be fooled. This initial weight loss isn't burnt fat – it is water leaving the body. Ketosis can be known for the high sodium content ingested and is also well known for its diuretic effect.

Weight loss expectations are completely skewed in the media nowadays. Even in keto success stories, we see someone losing 100 pounds or more – and we need to address the realities of these.

When losing weight, you always have to look at the percentages of weight that you have lost. For example, if someone that weighs 300 pounds loses 10 pounds, this is just over 3% of their total body mass. But, if someone that is 140 pounds loses 10 pounds, this is just over 7% of their total body mass.

Not only is 7% a large amount of weight lost for someone this size, it's also a much harder to lose the weight at a rapid speed when you are smaller. You have less body fat to deal with, and your total calories burned per day (TDEE) is generally larger.

Conversely, if you're on the larger side then you can expect some larger drops in pounds in the first few weeks. Just remember that this number will slowly taper down to a lower and lower number each week. As you lose weight, you should start looking at the percentage of weight lost compared to body mass, rather than the number of pounds you lose per week.

If you're an obsessive scale user, try to get away from this and only weigh once every 2 weeks. This can help with the daily ups and downs of water weight and give a gradual weight loss that's both healthy and realistic.

Being realistic is the key to healthy weight loss. You don't always know the full story of someone that has lost weight when you read headlines. It may have taken someone 3 years to lose 200 pounds, or they could have exercised every day for an hour. Knowing that putting on weight takes time, you should also know that losing the weight will take time too. Be patient and keep positive!

There are three main stages of weight loss that happen on a ketogenic diet. These are:

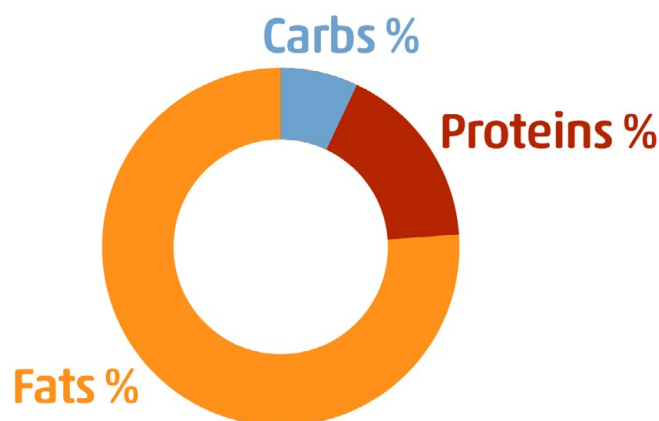
- **Introductory Stage.** Lots of weight will come off quick, which is mainly water tied up with glycogen molecules. As your glycogen is burnt off, the water weight drops quickly and you'll notice quite a lot of weight gone within the first week. Not everyone is as lucky – so sometimes no weight is lost in the initial week.
- **Adaption Stage.** Normally known for the stalls and possibly weight gain, your body is balancing itself out to see what it needs to survive. This is a normal phase and can last a week or two, but will pass eventually. Keep strong and keep doing what you're doing.
- **Keto Adaption.** After 4-6 weeks, you will be efficient at burning fat as the main fuel. Your liver is converting both ingested fats and body fat into ketones for your brain and body to thrive on. This is where the weight loss will happen. Don't expect a constant downward trend – expect some gains and stalls here and there (even up to a week at a time), but know that there will be a downward trend.



WHAT ARE MACROS

The 3 main macronutrients that are relatable to a keto diet (and any diet, for that matter) are fats, proteins, and carbohydrates. All three of these nutrients have different effects on ketosis from their digestion and have consequent effects on blood glucose and hormones.

- **Fats** are 90% ketogenic and 10% anti-ketogenic, due to the small amount of glucose that is released in the conversion of triglycerides.
- **Proteins** are typically ranged at 45% ketogenic and 55% anti-ketogenic since insulin levels rise from over half of the ingested protein being converted to glucose.
- **Carbohydrates** are of course 100% anti-ketogenic, as they raise both blood glucose and insulin.



Protein and carbohydrates will impact our bodies from transitioning into ketosis, but the most important thing to understand is how these nutrients are being utilized for energy. They are utilized through our metabolic pathways after we have eaten food.

You might be asking yourself what metabolic pathways are. It's pretty much the way our bodies handle the breakdown of fats, proteins and carbohydrates. When we eat:

- Fats go straight to the liver to be broken down into fatty acids and glycerol. They are then sent around the body to repair cells and make different chemicals/ tissues in the body.
- Proteins are processed into amino acids through transamination and sent off to create neurotransmitters, non-essential amino acids, and other protein based compounds in our body. If we have any extra amino acids, they circulate and repair tissue or get stored as glucose.
- Carbohydrates are broken down into glucose which is used as immediate energy. The spike in glucose levels will trigger insulin release, which then helps store the glucose as either glycogen or fat in our cells.

FATS

Since fats are 90% ketogenic and only 10% anti-ketogenic, we can get away with big amounts of fat intake. Yes, the glycerol from triglycerides produce glucose, but think of it in terms of the amount of grams you eat. If you eat, say, 130g of fats in 1 day – that is only 13g of glucose.

Since fats are mostly consumed over the entire day, and not just in 1 sitting, your body will be using that glucose without you even noticing it's there.

For gym goers, the only time in the day we should deviate from a consistent fat intake is after a workout. Fats slow down the digestion process and will slow the absorption of the protein you intake after your workout, so they're generally not recommended post-workout.



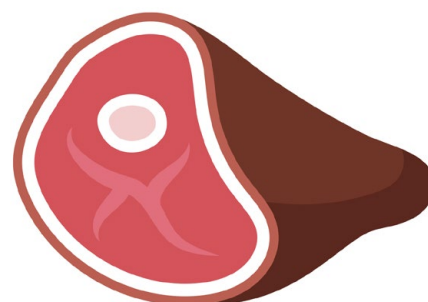
PROTEIN

Protein is vitally important in a ketogenic diet, but it's also a tricky nutrient. If we don't eat enough protein, we lose muscle mass. You might be thinking "well I can just eat all the meat I can to overdose on the stuff". Well, that would be pretty delightful, but the massive amounts of proteins would raise the glucose levels in our blood stream.

As you saw, protein is in the range of 45% ketogenic and 55% anti-ketogenic, meaning that too much of the stuff will knock us out of ketosis. We have to fall between narrow ranges in our protein intake: enough to not lose muscle mass, but not too much to knock us out of ketosis. This "narrow range" is quite hard to determine, as it differs from person to person.

This also has a relation to the amount of exercise you do, as glycogen depletion will allow glucose to be used up quicker. That being the case, the suggested protein intake depends on your lean body mass and what your activity levels are like.

- **Sedentary:** 0.6-0.8g of protein per pound of lean body mass.
- **Lightly Active:** 0.8 – 1.0g of protein per pound of lean body mass.
- **Highly Active:** 1.0 – 1.2g of protein per pound of lean body mass.



CARBOHYDRATES

As one of the most restricted nutrients on a ketogenic diet, the carbohydrate has the biggest effect on ketosis. The general rule is to consume no more than 30g of net carbs a day.

As carbohydrates are processed, they are converted almost gram for gram? into glucose when entering the bloodstream. Here, the glucose really has a number of different things that it can do. It will either be burned up immediately for fuel, stored as glycogen in the muscles or liver, or if excess carbohydrates are consumed, it will be stored into fat cells.



HOW TO CALCULATE NET CARBS

Normally, anywhere between 10 and 30g of net carbs is recommended for every day dieting – but the lower you keep your glucose levels, the better the overall results will be.

You might have been asking, “What’s a net carb?” It’s simple – really! The net carbs are your total dietary carbohydrates, minus the total fiber. Let’s say for example you want to eat an avocado – a fantastic food that’s packed full of healthy fats.

- There are a total of 17g carbohydrates in an average avocado. You may be thinking that’s a lot!
- But, there’s also 14g of fiber in an avocado.
- So, we take the 17g (total carbs) and subtract the 14g (dietary fiber).
- This will give us our net carbs of 3g. Which, in reality, is not very many at all.



WHAT TO EAT

FATS AND OILS

Fats will be the majority of your daily calorie intake when you are on a ketogenic diet, so choices should be made with your own digestion system in mind. Fats are very important to our bodies, but they can also be dangerous if you are consuming the wrong types of fats.



Saturated and monounsaturated fats such as butter, macadamia nuts, avocado, egg yolks, and coconut oil are more chemically stable and less inflammatory to most people, so they are preferred.

Fats and oils can be combined in a number of different ways to add to your meals – sauces, dressings, or just a simple topping off a piece of meat with butter.

The main fat to avoid is any hydrogenated fats, such as margarine, to minimize your trans-fat intake. There have been studies linking it to higher chances of coronary heart disease.

If you're using vegetable oils (olive, soybean, flax, or safflower) choose the "cold pressed" options if they are available. When you fry things up, try to go after non-hydrogenated lards, beef tallow, ghee, or coconut oil, since they have higher smoke points than other oils.

Watch your intake on anything nut or seed based, as they are quite high in inflammatory Omega-6's – these include almond oil, sesame oil, flaxseed oil, and any nuts other than walnuts and macadamia nuts.

Some foods that are great for fats and oils (organic and grass-fed sources are preferred) include:

- Avocado
- Beef tallow
- Butter
- Chicken Fat
- Ghee
- Non-hydrogenated Lard
- Macadamia Nuts
- Mayonnaise (*watch out for added carbs*)
- Olive Oil
- Coconut Oil
- Coconut Butter
- Red Palm Oil



PROTEIN

Your best bet when it comes to protein is choosing anything organic or grass fed, and using free-range eggs. This will minimize your bacteria and steroid hormone intake.

- **Fish.** Preferably eating anything that is caught wild like catfish, cod, flounder, halibut, mackerel, mahi-mahi, salmon, snapper, trout, and tuna.
- **Shellfish.** Clams, oysters, lobster, crab, scallops, mussels, and squid.
- **Whole Eggs.** Try to get them free-range from the local market if possible. You can prepare them in a number of different ways like fried, deviled, boiled, poached, and scrambled.
- **Meat.** Beef, Veal, Goat, Lamb, and other wild game. Grass fed is preferred as it has a better fatty acid count.
- **Pork.** Pork loin, pork chops, and ham. Watch out for added sugars in ham.
- **Poultry, Chicken, Duck, Quail, Pheasant.** Free range or organic is the best choice here if possible.
- **Bacon and Sausage.** Check labels for anything cured in sugar, or if it contains extra fillers.
- **Peanut Butter.** Go for natural peanut butter, but be careful as they have high counts of Omega-6's and carbohydrates. Try to opt for macadamia nut butter if you can.



VEGETABLES

On a ketogenic diet, try to go after vegetables that are grown above ground and are leafy greens. If you can, opt for organic as there's less pesticide residues, but if you can't then don't worry too much. Studies show that organic and non-organic vegetables still have the same nutritional qualities.

Vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet due to the micronutrients, but if you're not a fan of vegetables at all – you can substitute grass fed, organic organ meats in place of them.

When eating vegetables, we're stuck with decisions we might regret later. Some vegetables are high in sugar and don't cut it nutritionally – so we need to wean them out. These include potatoes, beans, corn, and carrots.



DAIRY

Raw and organic milk products are preferred here. Choose full fat everything over low fat or fat free.

- Heavy Whipping Cream
- Hard and soft cheeses (*Cheddar, Mozzarella, Cream Cheese, Mascarpone Cheese, etc.*)
- Sour Cream
- You can eat some other dairy, but dairy is best to be kept relatively low.



NUTS AND SEEDS

Nuts and seeds are best when they are roasted to remove any anti-nutrients. Try to avoid peanuts if possible, as they are actually legumes which are not highly permitted in keto.

- Macadamias, walnuts and almonds are the best in terms of your carb count and can be eaten in moderate amounts.
- Cashews and pistachios are higher in carbs, so make sure you track these carefully.
- Nuts are high in Omega-6 Fatty Acids, so try to be careful with over consumption.
- Nut and seed flours, such as almond flour and milled flax seed are great to substitute for regular flour. This means baking can be done in moderation also.



BEVERAGES

My recommendation is to drink at least 120 oz. of water a day. Some of the things you can get hydration from are:

- Water, water, water. Drink plenty.
- Coffee
- Tea (Herbal and non)

Keep in mind that coffee and tea are both caffeinated, and this also has a dehydrating effect on the body. If you can, stick to a low amount of tea or coffee a day the vast majority of your fluids in by drinking water.



SPICES

Spices are a tricky part of keto, and something you have to watch out for. Spices have carbs in them, so make sure you are adding them into your counts.

Most pre-made spice mixes will have sugars added to them, so make sure you read the nutrition label beforehand to make sure you know what's inside. Sea salt is preferred over table salt, since table salt is usually mixed with powdered dextrose. Some good low carb spices include:

- | | |
|------------------|------------|
| ■ Sea salt | ■ Cumin |
| ■ Black Pepper | ■ Oregano |
| ■ Basil | ■ Parsley |
| ■ Cayenne Pepper | ■ Rosemary |
| ■ Chili Powder | ■ Sage |
| ■ Cilantro | ■ Thyme |
| ■ Cinnamon | ■ Turmeric |



CONDIMENTS

Condiments will always be hard to pick out while you are shopping, but make sure you check the nutrition labels for absolutely everything you pick up. Look at the serving sizes, because that can skew nutrition values greatly. Great condiments will have a base of vinegar, eggs, or oil, so watch the ingredients to see what you can find. Some examples of condiments you can eat are:



- Mayonnaise
- Yellow Mustard
- Hot Sauce
- Soy Sauce (or coconut aminos)
- Salt and Vinegar
- Lemon Juice
- Vinaigrettes (Watch nutrition labels)
- Reduced Sugar Ketchup (Watch nutrition labels)
- Reduced Sugar BBQ Sauce (Watch nutrition labels)

ALCOHOL

While alcohol is permitted and can be consumed on a ketogenic diet, it is recommended that you stay away from it for at least 1 month. Make sure that your weight loss is consistent before you even think about adding alcohol into your diet.

When you do drink, stay with spirits and liquor. Wine can be consumed in moderation as long as it's a dry wine. Be wary of beers (even the low-carb ones), most wines, any cocktails, pre-mixed drink packages, and mixers. There are many useful online tools that give nutrition counts for all types of alcohol – make sure you use them before consuming, so that you know what you are putting into yourself.



Keep in mind that alcohol can have many negative effects on your weight loss progress. Drinking 2 glasses of wine or 2 shots of liquor can:

- **Decrease fat burning.** Fat metabolism is reduced by as much as 70% while drinking. This is caused by the liver going directly after the alcohol to burn as energy.
- **Decrease metabolism.** BMR (Basal Metabolic Rate) can be reduced by as much as 30% when you are drinking. Alcohol dehydrates you and this will slow your body's metabolism down.
- **Reduce testosterone.** Drinking leads to a decrease in testosterone for 12-24 hours after you consume alcohol.
- **Increase estrogen.** Production of estrogen can be increased by up to 20% after long-term drinking. This can lead to the "beer-belly" that we all know.

THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR

There's always going to be foods that are sneaky when it comes to ketogenic dieting, so I've put together a list of things that you should be careful about.

- **Spices.** As mentioned above, spices do have carbs – but there are certain ones that have more carbs than others. These include onion powder, cinnamon, garlic powder, allspice, bay leaves, ginger and cardamom.
- **Fruit.** Most fruit is off the list because of the high sugar contents. You can still eat berries, but you have to control your portioning with these. Be careful about blueberries and cranberries especially.
- **Tomato Based Products.** I wanted to talk about these separately. Plenty of people use tomato sauces and canned diced tomatoes. They still have plenty of sugar in them! Watch your portion sizes on the nutrition labels – food companies are notoriously infamous for messing with serving sizes to make their foods seem “healthier”.
- **Diet Soda.** Yes, you can drink diet soda, but it's not preferred. If you choose to, just watch out with the amount you drink. Some people report being knocked out of ketosis after large consumption of artificial sweeteners. Studies also show a link between sugar cravings and artificial sweeteners – so these will make it harder for you to curb those cravings.
- **Medicine.** Cold medications, cough syrups, cough drops, flu remedies – these usually contain carbs, and a lot of them at that. Some of the generic over the counter cough medicines contain 20g of carbs PER serving! Be wary of these, as you can get low-sugar/sugar-free alternatives.
- **“Fat-free” and “Light”.** Fat is the center of our diet, and we need to take that into account when we purchase food items. Fat-free and light alternatives are something you want to keep away from, as these products will include low-fat fillers that bring the carb count up.



FOODS TO AVOID

It's probably no surprise on what we need to stay away from on keto. We need to really watch our carbohydrate intake, and doing so means watching out for foods that can raise our blood sugar and insulin levels greatly.

The main things you want to avoid on a ketogenic diet are listed below. Make sure you stay away from as many refined and added sugars as you can. There will be some natural sugars in the vegetables you eat, but as long as they are leafy vegetables, it will be minimal. Examples of the foods to avoid are:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| ■ Sugar (Brown, White, Refined) | ■ Maple Syrup |
| ■ Grains (Processed and Whole) | ■ Corn Syrup |
| ■ Fruits (except for berries in limitation) | ■ Milk |
| ■ Honey | ■ Juices |



SNACKING

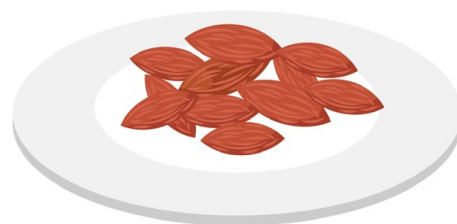
In general, we should avoid snacking. There have been multiple studies that show that snacking may not be the best thing for us to lose weight. Researchers from Drexel University recently published a study that showed that people who skip snacks before meals tend to eat the same amount as those who have eaten a snack beforehand.



Many believe that snacking will keep their metabolism on the top of its game. Many weight loss studies have shown that there is not much difference between snacking & not snacking (when calories remain the same) & the metabolic rates that are involved are also not affected. Snacking generally just increases insulin (even if it is by a small amount) & will be a cause for excess calories to be eaten.

If you find yourself hungry between meals, you are most likely suffering from a slight amount of dehydration. You can drink more water to remedy this, and you should notice your hunger levels go down. If you need to, try to flavor your water with a little bit of fresh lemon or lime to give a bit of variety into your water drinking routine.

All that said, if you absolutely must have a snack, try to stick with a small handful of nuts. Preferably, snack on almonds where you can take your time eating. Studies show that while snacking on almonds, if you chew about 30 times per almond eaten, your hunger level will be significantly reduced and will help keep you going until the next meal.

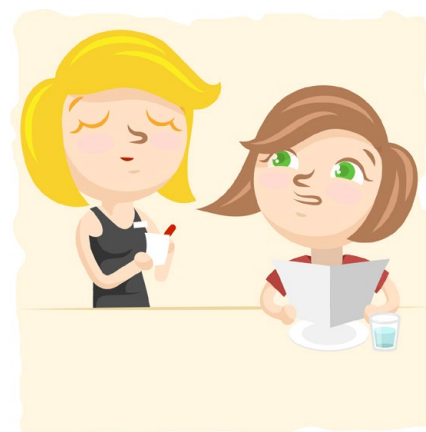


EATING OUT

Restaurants are great at hiding carbs in their food - from vinaigrettes to sauces that they put on almost everything. Avoiding eating out as much as you can and preparing all your meals yourself will give you control over the ingredients that go into your food.

If you do have to eat out though, don't be afraid to make special requests or ask for an ingredient list of what they use to make the dish. Normally when I eat out, I will keep it simple with a hamburger patty, extra broccoli, and make sure they bring extra butter with everything. If you're looking to keep your butter intake as healthy as possible, bring a little bit with you. Don't be ashamed by your diet - be proud of the changes you're making in your life.

Try to plan ahead if you eat out. Most large food chains will provide their menu and nutritional information on their website - use it. Make sure what you're eating will fit into your macros, or that you can make it fit into your macros. Be scrutinous with the menus and make sure you include the sides. This way, when you go in to order, you know exactly what you'll be having beforehand.



You can also find a great amount of keto-friendly foods in fast food restaurants. I've put together a growing list of different fast food chains that you're able to visit and find acceptable low-carb meals that are still packed with a good amount of fats. You can visit the website to read more on [Keto and Fast Food: On the Go](#), or you can read on to the next page.

KETO AND FAST FOOD

Whether you're out and about and need a quick meal, or you want to go out with family to have a sit-down dinner, you should be able to find low-carb and ketogenic friendly foods at most places.

We've all been there. You're out running errands on a Saturday afternoon and your tummy growls: it's 2pm and you haven't eaten yet! Or it's a Tuesday night at a friend's house, and they want to grab a meal.

What do you do? Luckily, you have plenty of keto fast food and sit-down restaurant options! We have happily eaten my way through the research for you – below you'll find a look at the most common fast food restaurants in the U.S. and their keto meal options.

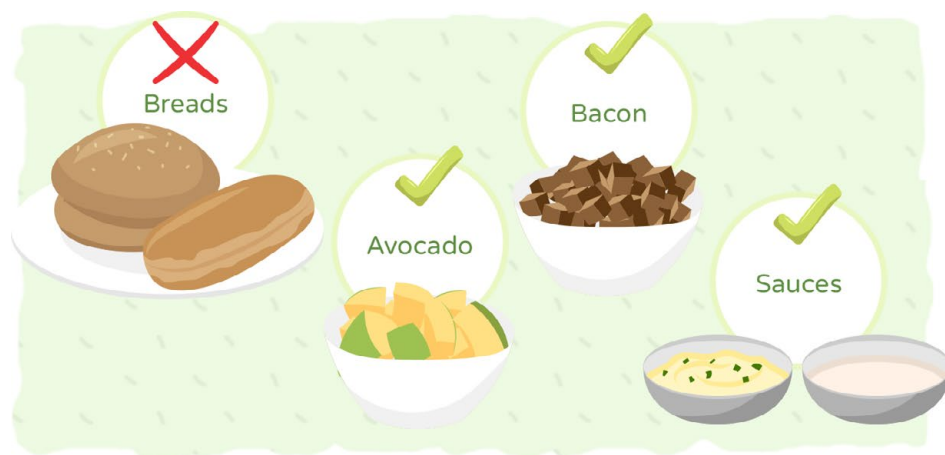
Here are a few general rules of thumb that you can apply to almost any fast food and sit-down restaurant:



- **Stick to meat, cheese, and vegetables.** Most fast food and restaurant places put excess sugar and carbs in their ingredients. It's worth sticking with the simplest ingredients you can find.
- **Avoid the bun.** Whether you're ordering a burger from a drive-thru or a table menu, you can opt out of the bun. Typically you can also add in extra sides like avocado, bacon, and sauces if you request it.
- **If you get a salad, read the ingredients.** Many salads have leafy greens and berries that are very high in carbs. It's better to stick with simpler salads that include meat and ask for dressing on the side. Many Greek places offer low-carb gyro salads (as long as their meat does not contain filler). Avoid croutons where possible and pick out excess items that are carbey from the salads.
- **If it's breaded, try to avoid it.** Typically chicken wings, mozzarella sticks, and other fried items will have a wheat flour-based breading. If you have no other choice, try to peel off as much of the breading as you possibly can. Pair the now naked meat with a fatty sauce. If you can, try to order your food with no breading. Many chicken wing restaurants usually offer naked (traditional) chicken wings as a choice, as an example.
- **Be careful of condiments.** While sauces and dressings are a fantastic way to get both fat and flavor into your food – they usually are filled with sugar. Be very careful with any sweet tasting sauces and try to opt for fattier salad dressings (that usually contain no sugar) like ranch, caesar, and bleu cheese. If you have the choice when it comes to sauces at a sit-down place, you can usually order an extra side of butter.
- **Special request.** While some people don't like to ask for particular food, you can certainly do so at higher quality restaurants. The menu will usually do a good job of breaking down what each dish has; you can request to the waiter that the meal be prepared in a certain way (gluten-free, low-carb, etc.)
- **If you're not sure, skip it.** Time and time again we get e-mails about people who are stalling on their weight loss goals. The most common reason: they're not tracking. There are so many hidden carbs and hidden sugars in the foods we eat that we truly do have to be careful with what we order. Just a few teaspoons of a sweet sauce can be 15-20g carbohydrates – almost all of your daily allowance.
- **Check online.** Many food establishments put their nutritional information online – some even offering a "build your own" style app where you can choose what ingredients you're eating. This is a perfect way to see how many carbs are in the meats and extra side dishes.

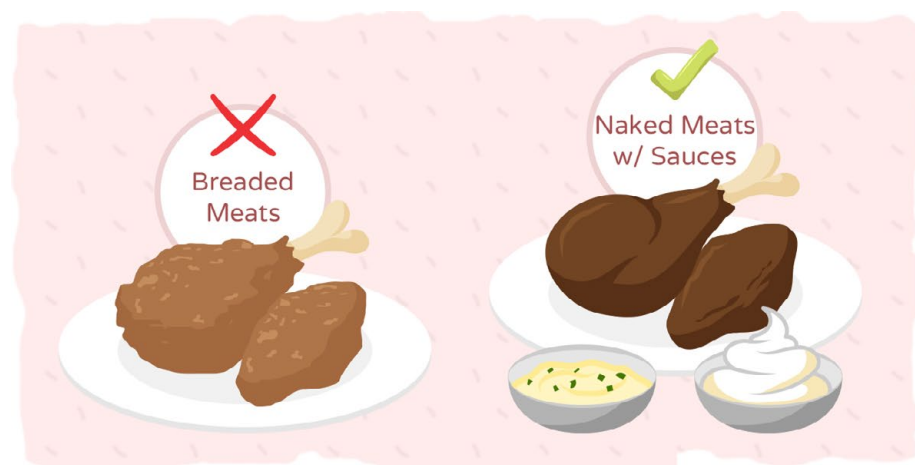
Use these simple rules of thumb to stay low-carb during any fast food or sit-down restaurant visit:

STICK TO MEAT, CHEESE, & VEGETABLES



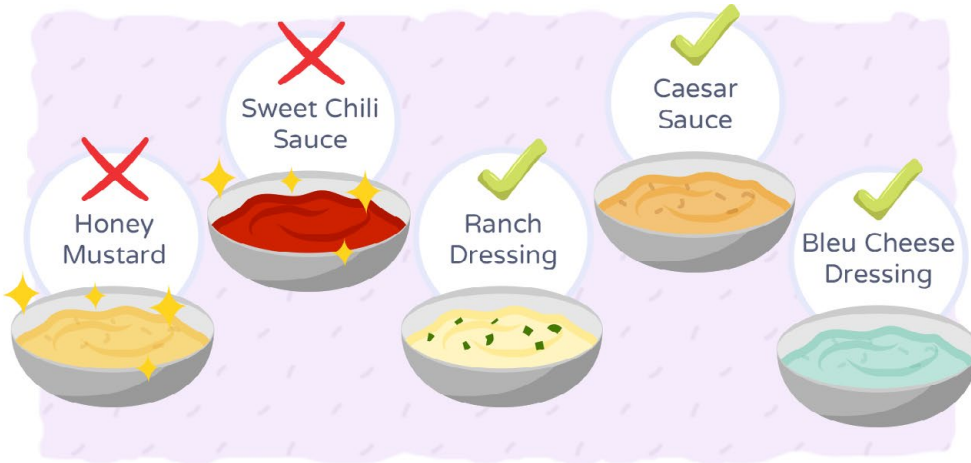
AVOID BUNS, USE FATTY & LOW-CARB SAUCES

REMOVE HIGH CARB ADD-ONS, READ INGREDIENTS

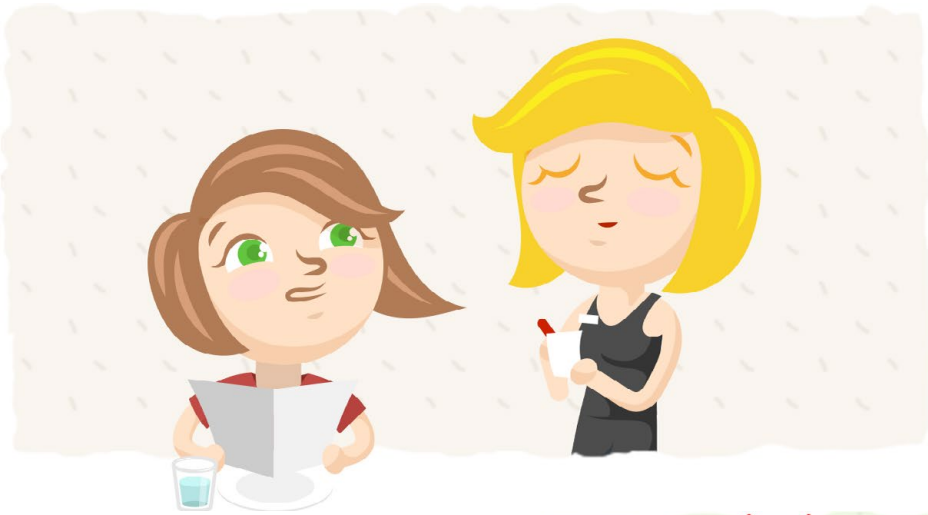


AVOID BREADED MEATS, USE SAUCES ON NAKED MEATS

CHOOSE CONDIMENTS CAREFULLY



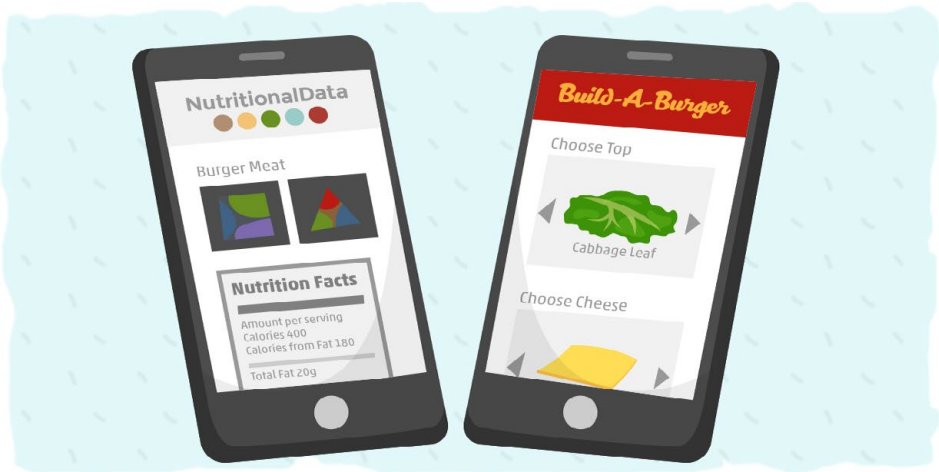
YOU CAN MAKE SPECIAL REQUESTS



IF YOU'RE NOT SURE, SKIP IT!



USE ONLINE RESOURCES



BEING PREPARED

Make sure that your pantry is prepared. There are some specialty ingredients that are used in this meal plan, and ordering them or shopping for them in advance is a good way to make sure you're not scrambling at the last minute. Take some time to go through the meal plan before you start, to see what you need and what kind of meals you'll be eating.

Almost all of the specialty ingredients I order and use are available on Amazon. I find that Amazon is much cheaper in comparison to food markets such as Whole Foods and Trader Joe's. For better keeping, store all specialty ingredients in a cool dark place and they will last for months to come.

VITAMINS AND MINERALS

While you should have a basic understanding of what macronutrients are, I haven't really talked too much about micronutrients. These are the vitamins and minerals that our body requires on a daily basis, and are vital to maintaining proper functions. Micronutrients are only needed in small quantities, which make it very easy to achieve your daily dose. Eating vegetables and proper amounts of meats will get you most of these vital nutrients your body craves, but I do suggest ordering a few supplements before diving into the world of keto.



WATER

We left an elephant in the room and didn't talk about water this whole time. You have to drink it! Water is essential to the body, as two-thirds of our weight is water. Without water, we would die in only a few days - if we starved ourselves we could last up to a month. Drink it when you are going to the bathroom, drink it when your bladder is cramping, drink it after you finish going to the bathroom, just drink it like it's going out of fashion.

Fill up a large water bottle and carry it around with you so you know how much you are drinking. Keep count of how many times you are filling it up and make sure you always have your eye on it. I recommend drinking at least 100 oz. of water a day.

A good way to keep track of how many water bottles you've drank a day is to place a hair tie over the water bottle for each bottle you have finished. This way you don't forget or lose track!



SLEEP AND REST

Ghrelin is a hormone that's produced in the stomach and is released when we are hungry. It increases our appetite and the need to eat. Leptin, on the other hand, is produced in fat cells and is released to tell our brain that we're full. This, conversely, decreases appetite and increases our satiation (fullness).

In a study conducted by Stanford, scientists recorded the amount of hours 1,000 volunteers reported sleeping and tested their ghrelin, leptin, and body fat percentage levels. They found that in people that slept less than 8 hours a night, their hormones were a little bit out of whack. In fact, the people that slept less than 8 hours a night had increased levels of ghrelin (which makes you hungry), decreased levels of leptin (which gives the fullness effect), and higher body fat percentages than the people that got a good night's rest.



Not only does sleep play a part in regulating our leptin and ghrelin levels, it also plays a role in the production of human growth hormone. HGH helps preserve muscle and keeps our metabolism strong - with a lack of it, we see a reduction in our BMR (which results in less calories burnt by the body on a daily basis). There's also been some studies that show a lowering in HGH if we eat 3 hours prior to going to sleep, so it is quite good practice to end your dinner-time at least 4 hours before you are planning to go to bed.

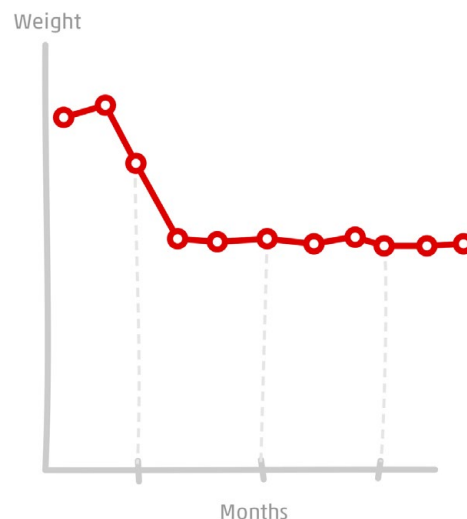
If you're the type of person that can't fall asleep easily or stay asleep, I suggest trying some of the following things:

- Avoid food before bedtime.
- Follow a regular sleep schedule.
- Darken your bedroom as much as possible.
- Try natural supplements. This includes valerian root, melatonin, and kava.

WEIGHT LOSS PLATEAUS

A plateau isn't just one week of not losing weight; it's a month or more of staying the same weight on the scale. Before thinking that you're stuck on the scales, make sure that you're actually in a weight loss plateau. Don't rely on your scale for this – use a tape measure, calipers, a tight pair of pants, or whatever tools you have available to you to make sure that you are actually not losing weight. There are times you may drop in size, but not drop any weight.

If you decide to take action on something, make sure you do it for an extended period of time. 3-4 weeks is a good time to test different methods of getting out the rut of a weight loss plateau. One week or less is just not enough time for the body and metabolism to adjust. Some things you can do to get over a weight loss plateau include:



- **Exercise.** We all know about it. Try to do a HIIT (high intensity interval training) routine – an endurance exercise routine that will improve glucose tolerance. It's not about burning extra calories here.
- **Fasting.** Give intermittent fasting a try. Go after something that's easy to introduce– 16 hours of fasting with an eating window of 8 hours. This doesn't mean restricting your calories; it just means redistributing your calories to a set time-frame.
- **Strictly Track.** Not all of us will track the small amounts of spices or foods we eat, but if you're in a weight loss plateau, it's important to know exactly what you're eating. Watch out for hidden carbs in just about everything – and make sure you're actually staying true to the ketogenic diet.
- **Re-calculate Macros.** If you've lost weight and it's been a while since you've done your macros, make sure you re-do them and update them accordingly. As you lose weight, you may need to adjust your food intake in order for the metabolism to stay at its peak.
- **Reduce Calories.** This should be a last resort. It took your cells a long time to build up a glucose tolerance, which normally meant excess calories. Reducing calories slightly can help set a new homeostatic point in your cells and metabolic regulation.

4 WEEK RULE: NO TREATS OR FRUIT

In the meal plan, you'll notice that the full 4 weeks don't include desserts or fruit of any kind.

The reason behind this is getting your cravings for carbs and sugar down. Recent studies show that there is such a thing as sugar addiction, and it uses the same receptors that are involved with opiate addiction. It's a serious thing to consider when you're switching from a standard high carbohydrate diet to a very low carbohydrate one.

To combat this, we don't use many sweeteners in the meal plan because of this. Studies on artificial sweeteners show a link between usage and cravings. Most people found themselves craving sweet foods when they were using sweeteners (artificial, or not) on a regular basis.



The one sweetener we do use, sparingly, is a natural sweetener called stevia. Typically to only sweeten coffee so it's not bitter. Not only have studies shown that it can reduce blood glucose levels, it is also one of the few plant based sweeteners that seem to have a positive effect on our health. We'll look this over in greater detail below.

Once finished with this meal plan, make sure that you treat desserts as exactly that - a treat. It's something that you can have occasionally if you feel the need or to treat yourself to at a special time. Overconsumption of sweeteners can also stall or decrease progress in weight loss over time. Make sure you keep that in mind when you go through the plan and eventually transition into making your own plan.

SWEETENERS

In general, there are a few classifications of sweeteners. There are **natural sweeteners**, **sugar alcohols**, and **synthetic sweeteners (or artificial sweeteners)**. There are a few others that aren't exactly classified in these categories (like glycerin based sweeteners) but they are quite uncommon and rarely used, so we'll skip going over them.

Below we'll look at the most common of all the different types of sweeteners we encounter, and which are the best to choose. This will leave you fully informed for when you finish with this meal plan and want to introduce a few treats into your diet on occasion.

Next to each sweetener's name, you will see "GI" and then a number. This refers to the Glycemic Index, which measures how much your blood sugar is raised by a certain food. Many sweeteners are 0 GI, meaning they don't raise blood sugar. The base-line is insulin, which measures up at 100. Typically you want to use the sweeteners that are lowest in GI, but may find it more beneficial (taste wise) to use a mixture.

I personally suggest sticking with erythritol and stevia (or a blend) because they are both naturally occurring, don't cause blood sugar or insulin spikes, and sweeten just perfectly. When used in combination, they seem to cancel out the aftertaste that each has, and work like a charm.

When you purchase sweeteners, make sure to **take a look at the ingredients on the packaging**. You normally want the pure sweetener, rather than having fillers such as maltodextrin, dextrose, or polydextrose which can cause spikes in blood sugars. Fillers can also add unnecessary carbs to your sweeteners, so it's best to stay away.



NATURAL SWEETENERS

Stevia – GI: 0

Stevia is an herb that is commonly known as the sugar leaf. The completely nutrient-free extract has grown tremendously in popularity over the last few years and is used very commonly now.

Stevia can be **quite good for us**. It has been shown to reduce blood pressure slightly, lower blood glucose and insulin levels in diabetics, and has had great results in animal testing for anti-inflammatory purposes.

When purchasing, go after liquid based stevia. Typically this is raw powdered stevia mixed with a solution that keeps it pure. If you purchase powdered stevia, it is commonly mixed with other sweeteners that can cause problems (like hidden carbs).

Recommendation: Use it! It's a great additive sweetener for many occasions and can even have a positive health impact. If using in cooking, pair with other sweeteners as in liquid form it won't give you the additional "bulking" you need.



Inulin – GI: 0

Not to be confused with insulin, inulin is a natural based sweetener that is commonly extracted from chicory root. According to studies, we can absorb some of the inulin we digest – so even though the packaging may tell you otherwise, it may not be true.

Inulin does a great job as a mixture with other sweeteners. It adds sweetness, can caramelize like sugar, and typically doesn't add any after-taste like you may find with others.

Even though this shouldn't cause any gastric distress within normal daily doses (studies show about 20 grams), it can have a laxative effect if overconsumed. Some studies have even shown it to have pre-biotic effects and can help our digestive systems in a normal manner.

Recommendation: Use sparingly to mix into other sweeteners (like erythritol) to reduce after-taste and to increase cooking ability.



Monk Fruit – GI: 0

Also known as Luo Han Guo, monk fruit is native to China. It's extremely sweet (about 300 times as sweet as sugar) and has been used as a traditional medicine to treat obesity and diabetes.

It's quite hard to find and can be quite expensive to purchase in its pure form. Usually in bulk, you are purchasing mixes with other sweeteners inside, many of which are high glycemic index and are not worth eating. In most cases, it's best to avoid this.

Recommendation: Skip it. Although it's a fantastic sweetener, it's very hard to come by in the raw form and can be quite costly when found. Many of the common branded monk fruit will contain carbs.



Tagatose – GI: 3

Tagatose is a monosaccharide (simple sugar) that naturally occurs in dairy, fruits, and cacao. It's got a different arrangement of atoms than sugar does, so it's metabolized differently than sugar. It does have a mild cooling effect, similar to erythritol but it does caramelize similarly to sugar (while erythritol does not). It's a smaller glycemic index than Xylitol and is not toxic to dogs, but it is a little bit harder to find.

Tagatose has a pretty low glycemic index, so it only has a small effect on blood sugar levels and can be used with other sweeteners in a low carb diet. It also has some health benefits attached to it like increased HDL cholesterol (read more about cholesterol) and a prebiotic health promoting healthy gut bacteria.

Recommendation: Use it sparingly with other sweeteners. It can pair well with lower glycemic index sweeteners in moderation but it does contain about 35g carbs per 100g so be careful with the amount that you use.



SUGAR ALCOHOLS

Erythritol – GI: 0

Erythritol is typically found in fruits and vegetables, and it commonly extracted from corn. The great thing about it is that it does not affect blood sugar and has very few calories.

We can consume a good amount of it, at about 1 gram of the sweetener for 2.2 pounds (1 kilogram) of bodyweight. Usually sugar alcohols can cause discomfort because our body does not have the enzymes to break them down, leaving the bacteria in the large intestine to excrete it. With erythritol, it only gets to the small intestine and is eventually **excreted mostly in urine**. That said, some studies have shown there to be slight stomach discomfort when consumed in large quantities. According to some recent studies, erythritol does not change blood sugar or insulin in healthy individuals. It has also been shown to not feed bacteria in the mouth, so is slowly becoming a good alternative to sugar for lack of cavities and tooth decay alone.

Recommendation: Use it! It's almost completely excreted through urine and causes very little gastric distress. Although it can have a slight cooling aftertaste, when combined with other sweeteners it is not very noticeable.



Xylitol - GI: 13

Xylitol is a naturally occurring sugar alcohol that is usually found in fruits & vegetables. It's not very nutrient dense (like stevia), and is relative low in glycemic index so it does not dramatically affect blood sugar levels. Many people enjoy this sweetener because it is very close to the sweetness of sugar and can easily be substituted.

Stomach discomfort is one of the biggest complaints from this sweetener, and has been shown that larger than 65 grams a day can cause diarrhea. Note: Xylitol is extremely toxic to dogs and can be lethal in just small doses. Make sure if you have animals and you are using this, be extremely careful to keep it out of reach.

Recommendation: Use sparingly. Although this is a great sweetener and can be used in almost an exact replacement of sugar, it can cause gastric distress when over-eaten. It is also extremely harmful to dogs, so if you're an animal lover, it may not be best to have around.



Maltitol – GI: 36

Maltitol is very commonly used in sugar free products as it is very similar to sugar. It cooks and tastes very much like the real thing, and is only half the calories of actual sugar. The downfall of this is that it has quite a large glycemic index – meaning it spikes blood sugars.

However, due to the current laws we have, many products are allowed to calculate these out of the net carb counts and many people are secretly consuming hidden carbs. This one is best to avoid.

Many also complain of the laxative effects maltitol has. It's commonly associated with stomach issues including bloating, diarrhea, and abdominal pain.

Recommendation: Skip it. Although it's one of the most commonly consumed sugar alcohol, it has quite a high glycemic index and can cause a lot of gastric distress.



Other Sugar Alcohols

There are many other sugar alcohols out there, but most of the others should be avoided. This includes sorbitol, lactitol, glycerol, and isomalt due to their effect on our blood sugar levels. You should always be aware of products that say they are zero carb or sugar free as they usually contain one of the higher GI sugar alcohols and will spike both insulin and blood sugars.

Note: Some sweeteners combine erythritol with oligosaccharides. These are a short-chain carbohydrate that is derived from fruits and vegetables like chicory root (similar to inulin). Oligosaccharides are an indigestible carb, so they're similar to dietary fiber. They do have a glycemic index but depends on which you use and how it's processed. A very common sweetener, Swerve, uses these in their formula to help provide some structure to the erythritol.

There are some health benefits, like the promotion of good gut bacteria. Some studies also showed a reduction in cholesterol and triglycerides when using oligosaccharides. You shouldn't have to avoid these, but it's always best to eat in moderation. Luckily, they are usually used in small quantities alongside a 0 glycemic impact sweetener, so together it will have little impact on blood sugars.

When on a ketogenic diet, you want to try to keep these blood sugar and insulin spikes to a minimum or you may see some weight loss stalls. Over-consumption of any sweetener can lead to cravings of regular sugar and make the transition to a low carb diet even harder than it is. Try to consume sweeteners in moderation to help control your cravings and progress.

Recommendation: Be very cautious of products touting to be low or zero carbs. They typically contain a sugar alcohol that has a high GI which should be avoided.

SYNTHETIC SWEETENERS

Sucralose – GI: Variable

Before we talk about sucralose, there is a slight controversy about the glycemic index. There's many sources claiming many different numbers, but on an average we see that it's about 80 in powdered form. The bad part about this is that it's higher than sugar and can cause big spikes in blood sugar.

The good part about it is that it typically can be found in liquid form too. This goes an extremely long way when it comes to sweetening things: it's 600 times sweeter than sugar. The glycemic index is unclear for the liquid version, but since you only have to use so little it shouldn't have much of an effect on blood sugars. The most commonly used brand of this product is Splenda (which is paired with other high GI sweeteners), and was extremely rampant in the low-carb communities in the early 2000's. Definitely avoid using any powdered forms of this sweetener.



Recommendation: Use sparingly (in liquid form) and in combination with others. For cooking, liquid doesn't do what you need it to do – add “bulk”. So add it to other sweeteners to spruce them up. If using by itself, it may be a better option to use stevia.

Aspartame – GI: 0

Aspartame is probably the most controversial sweetener of all. It's been behind many stories of multiple sclerosis, systemic lupus, methanol toxicity, and blindness among many other things. Even though this **hasn't been replicated** in studies over the last 40 years (it's one of the most thoroughly studied sweeteners), it may be best to stay away from this one as there are better alternatives.

At higher temperatures, aspartame can break down during baking and cause bitter and strange aftertastes.

Recommendation: Avoid it. Although there is much controversy around this (and nothing has definitively been proven), there are much better sources of sweet out there and it's always best to be safe than sorry.



Saccharin – GI: 0

First showcasing over 150 years ago, this synthetic sweetener is one of the oldest around. This is not very commonly found or used anymore, as the popularity for saccharin has gone down significantly. It is still in the top 3 synthetic sweeteners, which is why it is included, but is dwindling in usage.

In the 1970's, all saccharin products had to place a warning label that it may induce cancer in man or animals. This was then removed during 2000, when the animal based testing couldn't ethically be done on humans.

During the cooking process, it can cause an extremely bitter aftertaste that many would not enjoy.

Recommendation: Avoid it. Since its dwindling in popularity, it's much easier to find other commonly sourced sweeteners around.

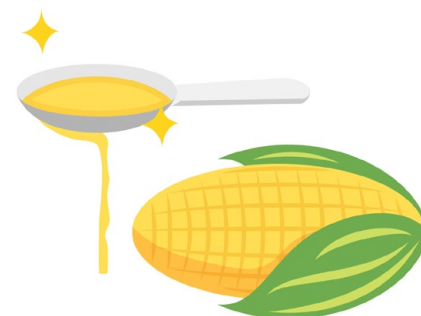


SWEETENERS TO AVOID ON A KETOGENIC DIET

High Fructose Corn Syrup

High fructose corn syrup is a sweetener that's highly processed and derived from corn. It became popular in the 70's when corn prices were low because of government subsidies. It contains simple sugar and fructose, which have been shown to have many negative health benefits.

Many studies have been done to compare HFCS and sugar, many of which show similar results. They're practically the same thing – both very bad for us and should be avoided completely. It's been linked to obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease.



Sugar

Sugar, as most of us know, should be avoided at all costs. It is linked to obesity, type 2 diabetes, bad cholesterol, sugar addiction, and metabolic syndrome. It has no real nutrients and consumption typically leads to fat storage. It is labeled as many different things on nutrition packaging but a good rule of thumb is if it ends in "ose", it's sugar and should be avoided.

Regular table sugar is broken down into fructose and glucose when it enters the bloodstream. Glucose is naturally occurring in our bodies, but fructose is not. Excess fructose from over consumption gets turned into glycogen but can also be stored as fat once overloaded. This can cause fatty liver disease (among other things).



Coconut Sugar

Coconut sugar is made from the flower of the coconut palm, where the sap is heated until the water is evaporated. The finished product is brownish in color. It retains some nutrients from the heating process and does contain some inulin, but is still not a good option for people on a low carb diet at 11g carbs per tablespoon.

It is made up of mostly sucrose (not to be confused with sucralose), which is half fructose and half glucose. Again, over-consumption of fructose leads to fatty liver disease and the storage of visceral fat surrounding the stomach. It has a GI of about 65, which is lower than expected mainly due to the insoluble fiber in it; but, it will definitely spike your blood sugar and insulin levels when consumed.



Fruit Juice

Raspberries and blackberries are the 2 best types of berries to consume on a low carb diet due to the lower amount of sugars in them. While they can be consumed in moderation, it's usually best to avoid fruit juices that are processed and used as a sweetener. Typically they contain fructose which has a very high glycemic index, resulting in both blood sugar and insulin spikes.

Most fruit juices will contain at least 20g carbs per serving, so they have no place in a low carb diet. If you want to learn more about fruits to eat and what to avoid, you can read a [full keto food list here >](#)



Honey

Honey is one of the most nutritionally dense sweeteners but is packed full of fructose and, like the other sweeteners to avoid in this list, lead to negative health effects. Most processed honey also has added sugars and is usually pasteurized, losing most of the nutritional benefits it has.

While honey is acceptable by some low carb dieters, it's normally far too carbohydrate filled to be considered keto. One tablespoon of honey typically contains 17g carbs which is well over half of our daily allotted amount. There are many other ways to sweeten your foods with a much less glycemic index.



Maple Syrup

While maple syrup and honey are widely accepted on lesser low-carb, paleo diets they are not allowed on ketogenic diets. Keto is a very carb-restricted diet so you have to be very strict with your consumption. Maple syrup typically has 13g carbs per tablespoon which means it's half of the usual daily consumption of carbs for a small amount.

Maple syrup is a pretty nutritionally dense sweetener, it contains a high amount of magnesium, zinc, and calcium. It's also rich in some vitamins and antioxidants but these can be found in many different forms of healthier food.



Agave Syrup

Typically a very highly processed sweetener even though it's marketed as a natural alternative. It can contain up to 80% fructose which has a very high impact on our blood sugar levels and is typically seen as one of the most damaging sources of sugar. It is made by pressing the agave plant until the sugars and fluid come out and then processed under heat (destroying fructans, a healthy compound) similarly to high fructose corn syrup.

Agave syrup is generally seen as a low GI sweetener due to their marketing efforts, but don't be fooled. While Agave Syrup is about a 9.6 GI due to low glucose content, it is mostly fructose and damaging to our liver. Long-term use has also been linked with insulin resistance and chronically elevated blood sugar levels. It should be avoided, even in its natural state.



MONEY SAVING TIPS

There are some specialty ingredients you can opt to purchase. Some are harder to find in certain regions of the US and outside of the US. You can use the list below to substitute out harder to find items with things that are readily available.



CHEESE

There are a few types of cheese that you can use. Among these are cheddar, mozzarella, goat cheese, parmesan, and cream cheese. There are many types of cheeses, but some are necessary while others can be replaced. The mozzarella and parmesan cheese can be substituted with cheddar completely.

This should help you buy in bulk and reduce costs. Always remember to buy in blocks and shred the cheese yourself. This is both cheaper and lower in carbs, as the pre-shredded cheese does have a starch coating.

Cream cheese can replace goat cheese, though it will not bring the same tang to the recipe that goat's cheese would. The pro to this is that it is much cheaper.



FROZEN VEGETABLES

Purchasing frozen vegetables can significantly save money, both in the short run and the long run. The great thing about them is that they last a very long time, so you don't have to worry about using a small amount and then wondering what to do with the rest. The national statistics also show that frozen vegetables are cheaper to buy than their fresh counterpart.

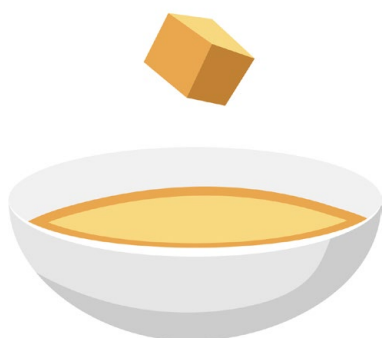
Frozen vegetables have other advantages too - including nutrient density. Some studies have shown that many frozen vegetables (especially greens) can have more nutrients than fresh vegetables.



CONDIMENTS

There's a myriad of condiments used throughout the meal plan, and they can get costly especially if you don't already have them on hand. You can usually get away with buying store-brand names when it comes to things like mustard or hot sauce (vinegar based sauces).

For specialty sauces like Sriracha, you can completely leave them out. Sriracha is just a spicy, slightly sweet sauce. You could use reduced sugar ketchup with cayenne pepper or just some hot sauce in its place.



CHICKEN/BEEF BROTH

Chicken and beef broth add up in costs quickly. It's much easier (and cheaper) to buy bouillon cubes in place of the broth. Typically, you get 6 cubes per package, which makes a total of 12 cups of broth. 3x more than the average container! The great thing is that the carb counts usually beat most other broths on the store shelf!



NUTS AND SEEDS

If you're the type of person that goes to multiple grocery stores for the best deals, then you probably know that some stores have a pick-it-yourself station. Picking and weighing exactly how much you need will keep costs and wastage down.

Make sure to take advantage of this when you can for smaller items like pumpkin seeds and macadamia nuts.



SPICES (FRESH/DRY)

Many recipes call for some type of herb or spice. Depending on where you live, many spices can be much cheaper if they're dried (or much more expensive). Make sure you check prices to take advantage of any money you could save. Plus, dried spices last much longer!



PREPARING FOR SHOPPING

Small errors add up in pricing when you're shopping. Make sure that you double and triple check what you have in your house to keep your wastage costs down.

Always make sure that you double check your shopping list and pantry before going shopping. Go through your inventory and check off any ingredients that you don't need to purchase at the store.

COMMON KETO SUBSTITUTES

When people are new to the ketogenic diet, they often wonder what type of foods they should and could eat while making the changes they need to make. While we do have an [in-depth ketogenic food list](#), it doesn't cover everything and doesn't include recipes or common foods people are always asking for.

Use our recommendations below to get an idea of what replacements you can use on the ketogenic diet and what type of foods you could replicate while going the low-carb route. Not only does this make your diet or way of eating viable for long term use, but it makes it feasible for enjoyment, too!

Below, you'll find a visual cheat sheet to meal and ingredient replacements on a ketogenic diet. If you want recipes or explanations behind each, scroll down to the bottom to read more!

Alternatively, you can make keto simple and easy by checking out our [30 Day Meal Plan](#). Get meal plans, shopping lists, and much more with our [Keto Academy Program](#).












Quick Tips To Enter Ketosis

1. Stop eating out at restaurants, cook your own food to control your carb counts
2. Track your foods to make sure you're not missing hidden carbs
3. Drink plenty of water, at least 1 gallon daily
4. Try your best to avoid processed foods and "low-carb" products

BREAKFAST



Replace Burger & Fries	with		Steak and Vegetables, Burger with no Bun, Burger w/ Bread Alternative
Replace Bread Dough Pizza	with		Mozzarella Cheese Dough Pizza, Pizza Casserole
Replace Bread Crust Fried Chicken	with		Pork Rind and Parmesan Crust
Replace Processed Soups	with		Pumpkin Soup, Enchilada Chicken Soup, and other Fresh Cream Based Soups
Replace Pasta	with		Zucchini Noodles, Shirataki Noodles
Replace Chinese Takeout	with		General Tso's Low-Carb Chicken, Low-Carb Sweet & Sour Chicken
Replace Rice	with		Cauliflower Rice
Replace Mashed Potatoes	with		Cauliflower Mashed Potatoes
Replace Burritos & Tacos	with		Flax Tortillas, Taco Salad, Psyllium Husk Tortillas

DINNER

SNACKS

Replace
Breads &
Sandwiches

with



Lettuce Wraps, Flax Seed Wraps, Psyllium Husk Wrap

Replace
Chips &
Cookies

with



Peanut Butter Cookies, Dehydrated Vegetables, Low-carb Cookies

Replace
Crackers &
Dippables

with



Chia Seed Crackers, Flaxseed Crackers

Replace
Sweets &
Treats

with



Mug Cakes, Fat Bombs, Chai Spice Mug Cake

Replace
Soda &
Fruit Juice

with



Smoothies, Water, Tea

Replace
Coffee &
Sugar

with



Coffee & Stevia

Replace
Cappuccino
& Frappe

with



Ketoproof Coffee

Replace
Cocktails

with



Dry Wine, Liquor

Replace
Mixers &
Chasers

with



Diet Soda, Water and Lemon

BEVERAGES

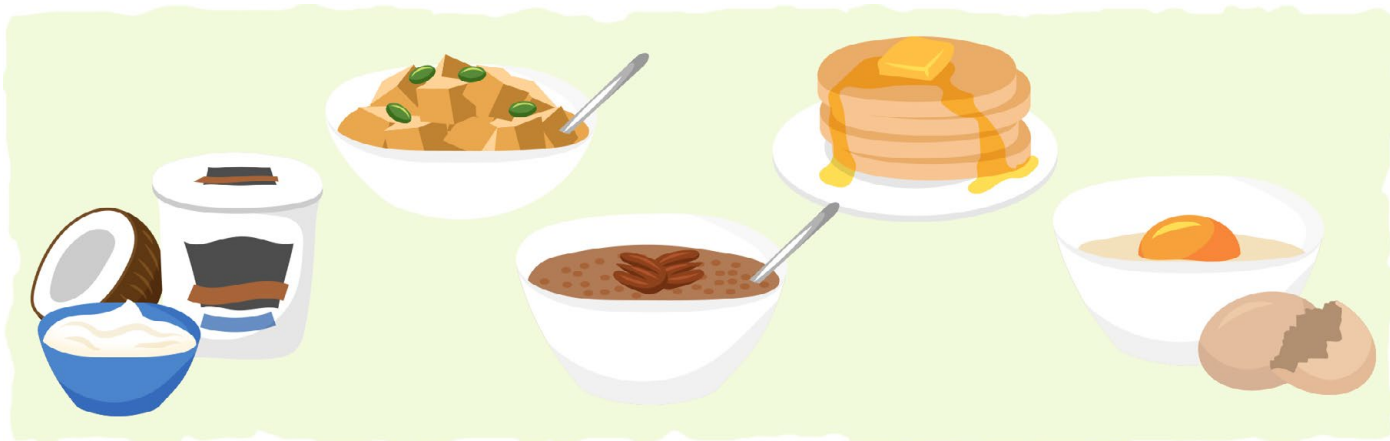
DESSERTS

Replace Ice Cream	with		Avocado Ice Cream, Low-Carb Sorbet
Replace Cake	with		Lemon Poppy Seed Cake, Low-Carb Cake, Cheesecake
Replace Brownies	with		Low-Carb Macadamia Nut Brownies, Avocado Brownies, Almond Flour Brownies
Replace Puddings	with		Flavored Avocado Pudding, Whipped Cream Pudding
Replace Pie Crust	with		Nut-based Crusts
Replace Custard	with		Pots de Crème



BAKING

LOW CARB BREAKFAST REPLACEMENTS



Typically when we talk about breakfast on a ketogenic diet, we think bacon and eggs. While this simple breakfast is a staple for many, it doesn't always hit the spot for cravings. If you're craving something a bit out of the ordinary, feel free to take a look at the list below!



Flavored Yogurt → Full-Fat Greek Yogurt, or Coconut Milk Yogurt

For a sugary yogurt replacement, you can sub in full-fat Greek yogurt, full-fat cottage cheese, sour cream, or you can even [make your own coconut milk yogurt](#). Get creative and add toasted nuts, a few fresh berries (raspberries and blackberries are the lowest carbs), or your favorite spices.



Cereals → Chia Pudding, Flax Granola, or Toasted Nuts

Instead of making your own cereal, you can always have a low-carb alternative. Try out chia seed pudding; flax granola sprinkled into coconut or almond milk, [salted caramel pork rind cereal](#), or just mixed toasted nuts that are crushed and crispy. It's quite easy to find a crunchy alternative to cereal (or just a replacement in general) so keep your eyes out and experiment for yourself to see which you like best.



Oatmeal → Cauliflower, Chia Seed, or Flaxmeal Oatmeal

Oatmeal is something we all miss when it starts to get cold outside. You can easily make your own oatmeal by following one of the many recipes online. Or, if you'd like a different twist on oatmeal, give our [Cinnamon Roll Oatmeal](#) a try. Using what you might think are strange ingredients (cue cauliflower), you get an absolutely delicious faux oatmeal.



Pancakes and Waffles → Cream Cheese Pancakes, or Almond Flour Waffles

Easily make yourself some [delicious, fluffy pancakes](#). You can do this with many different ingredients and methods. Our favorite though is the [Faux "Buckwheat" Pancakes](#) that are made with almond flour and flaxseed meal. A delicious and fluffy combination that tastes just like the real thing.

You could also choose from one of our many other pancake recipes below:

- [Blueberry Ricotta Pancakes](#)
- [Keto Pumpkin Pancakes](#)
- [Thai Style Peanut Pancakes](#)

Want a waffle? No problem – one of my favorites is this [Cinnamon Roll Waffle](#). Two perfectly crisp, fall flavored waffles with a bright and creamy “icing” tucked in the middle. This will be a hit for the kids! If you’re not in the mood for cinnamon waffles, take a look at our other [low-carb waffle options](#).



Egg Whites → Whole Eggs

Since on a ketogenic diet you have to keep your fat intake high, you want to be consuming whole eggs rather than egg whites. Protein consumption needs to be kept to a moderate amount, so making sure you aren't eating pure protein (egg whites) generally helps with this. Plus, all of the flavors comes from the yolk!

Top your burger with an egg, make [egg salad](#) or deviled eggs, or even keto eggs benedict! The possibilities and endless and eggs can be used in almost every dish, so don't be shy!

Don't care for eggs?

Eggs for breakfast are a staple for many on keto, but if you're not a fan (or if you're allergic) – you have other choices available. Get some extra ideas and creative inspirations under our [breakfast keto recipe section](#)!

LOW CARB DINNER REPLACEMENTS



An average dinner for someone on keto is a moderate portion of protein with some added fat and a side dish of green leafy vegetables with added fat. Though sometimes you might just want a heavy, comforting dish that gets rid of the cravings you have. It's definitely possible to do this on a low-carb diet. Read below for some of our ideas!



Burger and Fries → Buttered Steak and Salad or Broccoli

Instead of getting a huge burger with a pile of french fries on the side, try giving yourself a medium portion of steak that's slathered full of butter. Broccoli on the side with cheese if you'd like. Or, you could even do a **cheesy creamed spinach**. The protein will fill you up, and the fats will keep you full for a long time.

If you're looking to pinch some pennies and opt out of grabbing a steak, that's no problem either! Other options include bun-less burgers as a substitute that can replace even the crunchiest and softest bread out there. Some ideas include:

- **Inside-Out Bacon Burger**
- **Ultimate Cheeseburger Loaf**
- **BBQ Bacon Cheeseburger Waffles**
- **Bacon Cheeseburger Casserole**
- **Cheese Stuffed Bacon Cheeseburger**
- **Keto Cheeseburger Muffins**

Lastly, we do have some alternatives for those that just need the bun on there. You can get creative and use vegetables (**mainly portobello mushrooms**) as the buns, or we can even use a **low-carb hamburger bun** that's cooked in the microwave – easy peasy!



Pizza → Mozzarella Cheese Dough

Very closely relating to thin and crispy style pizza, a mozzarella and almond flour pizza crust will fool you into thinking you're eating the real thing. Though there's a ton of different pizza recipes out there, **this one is definitely the best** and most realistic.

If you want something a bit out of the ordinary, feel free to try one of our pizza recipes with a twist:

- [Cauliflower Pizza Casserole](#)
- [White Pizza Frittata](#)
- [BBQ Chicken Pizza](#)
- [Thai Chicken Flatbread](#)
- [Personal Pan Pizza Dip](#) (with keto breadsticks)

If you're not in the mood for something as labor intensive, feel free to make our [5-minute pizza](#), a hit with everyone that makes it!



Fried Chicken → Pork Rind and Parmesan Crust

You can still get a super crisp crust on chicken while keeping it moist and juicy on the inside. There are a few ways to do this, but the best method we've found is by grinding up pork rinds in the food processor and adding parmesan cheese to the mix. This will result in a fantastic crust all the way around your chicken, giving you [perfect fried chicken](#).

If you don't feel like grinding up pork rinds, you can also use the skin on your chicken thighs as a crispy element in your chicken. Check out the [Oven "Grilled" Asian Chicken](#) that we've done! If you want something a little bit different, check out our [Coconut Curry Chicken Tenders](#).



Processed Soups → Fresh Cream Based Soups

Stop eating foods from a can that are packed full of sugar, preservatives, and carbs. Start making soups yourself, in bulk, and have a meal for anytime you want. Soup freezes wonderfully and can be re-heated and eaten quickly. One of our favorite soups to make is this [Enchilada Chicken Soup](#). But, if you're more of a seasonal eater, take a look at this low-carb [Pumpkin Soup](#)!

If none of the recipes above sound appealing, feel free to make one of our other soups below:

- [Sausage and Kale Soup](#)
- [Hot Chili Soup](#)
- [5-Minute Egg Drop Soup](#)
- [BBQ Chicken Soup](#)
- [Crockpot Buffalo Chicken Soup](#)
- [Bacon Cheeseburger Soup](#)
- [Roasted Pepper and Cauliflower Soup](#)

Or, see our full list of soups [here](#) >



Pasta → Zucchini Noodles, or Shirataki Noodles

Also known as Zoodles, zucchini noodles are a great addition to any person's plate that's missing pasta as an entree. Smother with alfredo sauce or make your own cream sauce and you have yourself a perfect ketogenic meal! To make zucchini noodles, you can [get a spiralizer here](#).

If you're in the mood to try one of our recipes, we recommend:

- [Bolognese Zoodle Bake](#)
- [Thai Chicken Zoodles](#)
- [Creamy Crab Zucchini Casserole](#)

Shirataki noodles are also a well-known replacement for pasta. They have a slightly strange texture – usually, you love them or hate them. If you're curious, give a try to our [Keto Pad Thai](#) or [Pumpkin Carbonara](#)!

Alternatively, you can have super realistic pasta that almost mimics that of whole-wheat pasta. This recipe, however, is inside of my cookbook (along with tons of other awesome recipes) which you can find here: [Keto-fied! Comfort Foods Made Low Carb](#).



Chinese Takeout → General Tso's Low-carb Chicken, or Low-carb Sweet & Sour Chicken

Chinese takeout was our kryptonite previously to going keto. It's our all-time favorite food, to be honest, but we've experimented and made some great low-carb renditions of this delicious sweet and sticky food. Our two favorites are our [General Tso's Chicken](#) and [Mock Sweet and Sour Chicken](#).

We have some other options as well if these don't sound like they'll fit the bill:

- [Crispy Sesame Beef](#)
- [Kung Pao Chicken](#)
- [Creamy Butter Shrimp](#)



Rice → Cauliflower Rice

You probably wouldn't believe me if I told you that you could make fried rice with cauliflower, but you surely can. We will admit that it's not the same as the real thing, but it certainly gets the job done and fills that hole in your stomach that you were just itching to fill.

Give it a bit of soy sauce, bacon, egg, and a couple of vegetables thrown in there, and you have yourself an incredibly [low-carb version of fried rice](#). Perfect to serve up with those Chinese takeout replicas.

If you want something that isn't Asian inspired, feel free to give our [Cauliflower Mushroom Risotto](#) a try! On the denser side, you can also use hemp hearts as a rice replacement, as we have done in our [Mushroom Wild "Rice" Pilaf](#).



Mashed Potatoes → Cauliflower Mashed Potatoes

Not only can you make rice with cauliflower, but you can also make [faux mashed potatoes](#). They're super light and fluffy, can be mixed in with cheese, and hold up their own against the real thing. And guess what? You can even make low-carb shepherd's pie with it, too (for example, we use it in our southwestern inspired [Nacho Chicken Casserole](#) as a topping)!



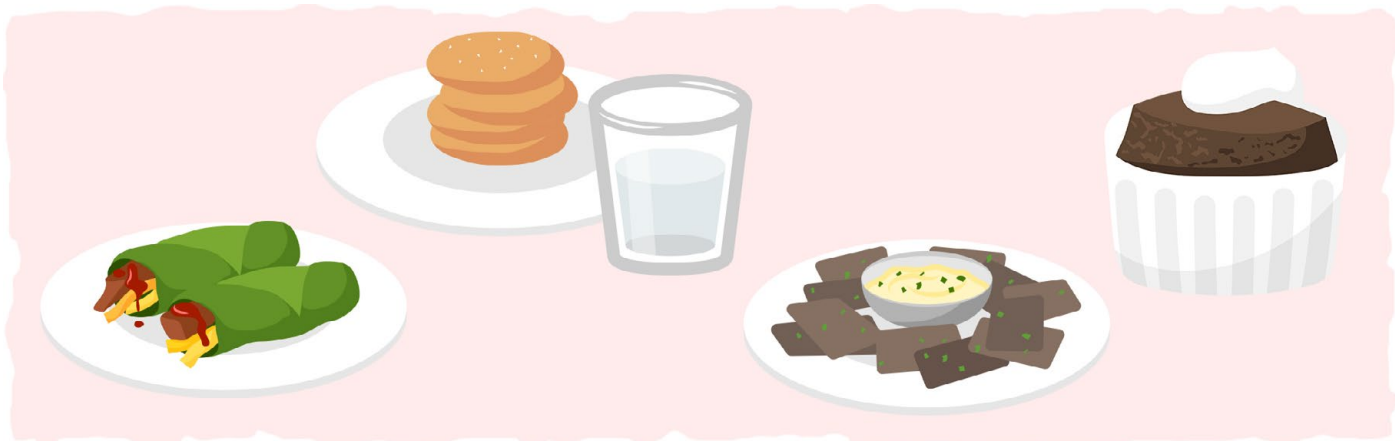
Burritos and Tacos → Flax Tortillas, or Taco Salad

Tortillas are something that plenty of us know about when we switch over to low carb. There's a lot of options for low-carb tortillas in the store, but they're generally packed full of gluten and may want to be avoided. If you're the type to make everything at home, you're in luck! Give a try to [these flax tortillas](#), or even [these psyllium husk tortillas](#). You won't be disappointed!

Need more dinner ideas?

If you're running short on time or just need some inspiration for your next dinner, we have hundreds of recipes to choose from. Make sure to see all the options in our [keto dinner recipe section](#) – check back as it's updated weekly!

LOW CARB SNACK & LUNCH REPLACEMENTS



Lunch on a ketogenic diet usually consists of something straightforward and easy. Whether it's leftovers from the night before or a simple salad with some meat and homemade dressing. Some people also prefer to put together the ingredients for a mug cake (or similar item) and take the ingredients to work to cook. See some examples of what you can replace for common lunch (and snack) recipes!

Note: We recommend keeping snacking to a minimum as it will slow weight loss down.



Bread and Sandwiches → Lettuce Wraps, or Flax Seed Wraps

Instead of cracking out that crusty rye bread to make a sandwich with, take the initiative to switch over to something that's a better (and keto-friendly) option. From [cabbage rolls](#) to [lettuce wraps](#), making wraps will be a simple process that you won't have to worry about.

If you're looking for a more realistic wrap, you can even try your hand at a [flaxseed wrap](#) or even a [psyllium husk wrap](#). Both are fantastic alternatives to the store-bought low-carb wraps, and both won't include any gluten!

Lastly, if you need a bread replacement, you can always go the easy route and make some [microwave bread](#). A simple, easy, and painless process will have you a hearty sandwich in no time at all. And, you can even grill it to make some delicious grilled cheese sandwiches.



Chips and Cookies → Dehydrated Vegetables, or Low-carb Cookies

If you're one of the lucky people that have a [dehydrator](#), you can take serious advantage of it by dehydrating thin slices of vegetables overnight (normally 12 hours) to get crisp, perfect vegetables that you can eat as snacks. Do this with zucchini, radish, or jicama. If you're not lucky enough to have a dehydrator (like me), then you can [easily make cheese chips](#) in the oven and flavor them with your own spices!

Cookies aren't a problem either. You can easily make your own almond flour cookies – or mix it up by using different mixtures of “flours.” From flaxseed to chia seed, there's always something that you can make! Some examples of different cookies you can have are:

- [Chocolate Chunk Cookies](#)
- [Buckeye Cookies](#)
- [Snickerdoodle Cookies](#)
- [Vanilla Latte Cookies](#)
- [Pumpkin Flax Cookies \(with Almond Butter Icing\)](#)
- [Peanut Butter Cookies](#)

Or, read our ever-growing low-carb cookie recipes on the site!



Crackers and Dippables → [Flaxseed Crackers](#), or [Chia Seed Crackers](#)

Looking for that hearty crunch that's packed full of flavor? Look no more. Instead of cracking open a box of Ritz or Cheez-Its, go ahead and make your own! You can make crackers from anything including flaxseed meal (featured in [The RULED Book](#)), chia seeds, or even [almond flour](#) to make your own homemade crunchy snacks with a delicious flavor of your own.

You can make crackers out of many keto-friendly ingredients out there. For some examples, we recommend:

- [Pesto Keto Crackers](#)
- [Chia Seed Crackers](#)
- [Keto Breadsticks](#)



Sweets and Treats → [Fat Bombs](#), or [Mug Cakes](#)

Give yourself something sweet that's still packed full of delicious and healthy fats. Fat bombs get their name because they're filled with fats – a delicious way to get those fats up in your diet and enjoy doing it instead of just eating oil off of the spoon.

Don't believe me? Just check out these [chia almond butter squares](#) (with browned butter) or [Neapolitan fat bombs](#). Even a [rich and tasty mug cake](#) for one. Get creative and make any flavor you'd like, too. Check out some of my other mug cake recipes here:

- [Chai Spice Mug Cake](#)
- [Maple Pecan Mug Cake](#)
- [Peanut Butter Chocolate Chunk Mug Cake](#)
- [Churro Mug Cake](#)
- [Coconut Chocolate Mocha Mug Cake](#)
- [Vanilla Whisky Mug Cake](#)
- [Bacon Cheddar Chive Mug Cake](#)
- [Green Chile White Cheddar Mug Cake](#)

Looking for more snack or lunch recipes?

You're not alone! Feel free to check out our growing list of [keto snacks](#). If you need some lunch ideas (especially quick ones that are accessible for work), see our list of [keto lunch recipes](#).

LOW CARB BEVERAGE REPLACEMENTS



Simple is usually key when it comes to beverages on keto. Water will be a go-to drink when needing to quench your thirst. Try to keep diet soda consumption to a minimum as it is commonly linked with blood sugar spikes and increased cravings. Read below for some ideas on other drinks that are frequently consumed.



Soda and Fruit Juice → Water, Smoothies, or Tea

Try to replace all soda and juice consumption with something that has no sugar or little sugar inside. Switch out fruit juices for low-carb smoothies and tea. Tea comes in a variety of flavors that can help you get through the day if you get tired of water. There's a variety of different smoothies you can make for a meal replacement or just as a snack.

You're welcome to try one of our own smoothie recipes, too:

- Tropical Smoothie
- Blueberry "Banana"
- Cucumber Spinach
- Peanut Butter & Caramel
- Strawberry Milkshake

Water should be your go-to replacement for soda, and I don't recommend drinking diet soda as it can bring back cravings for sweets. Stick to drinking at least 3 liters of water a day, but try to aim for a full gallon a day.



Coffee and Sugar → Coffee & Stevia

Instead of adding sugar to your coffee, you can put a **few drops of stevia** in there to sweeten it up. Stevia is a great sweetener and won't increase your blood sugar levels – so it's a perfect way to sweeten your morning coffee. If you're used to having a creamy body to your coffee, opt for heavy whipping cream, half and half, or unsweetened almond/coconut milk instead of milk or coffee creamer.



Cappuccino and Frappe → Ketoproof Coffee

Missing your lattes and frappes? That's not a problem! **Ketoproof coffee** is a fantastic mix of coconut oil and butter in your coffee instead of the generic cream or milk. You might think that it sounds disgusting at first, but if you think about what butter is made out of – it's pretty much just hardened cream. Once you melt it down and mix it all up using an immersion blender, you get a delicious coating of froth on the top of your mug o' joe.



Cocktails → Dry Wine, or Liquor

Instead of getting sugar filled cocktails, make a change to go after a low-carb alternative. Liquor is the best choice, being the lowest in carbs (most are 0 carbs, in fact). Dry wines are the second best choice, being 3-5g carbs per glass. Make sure you keep an eye on flavored liquors or mixed liquors as they may have carbs. For wines, it's best to stick with classic dry red and white wines.

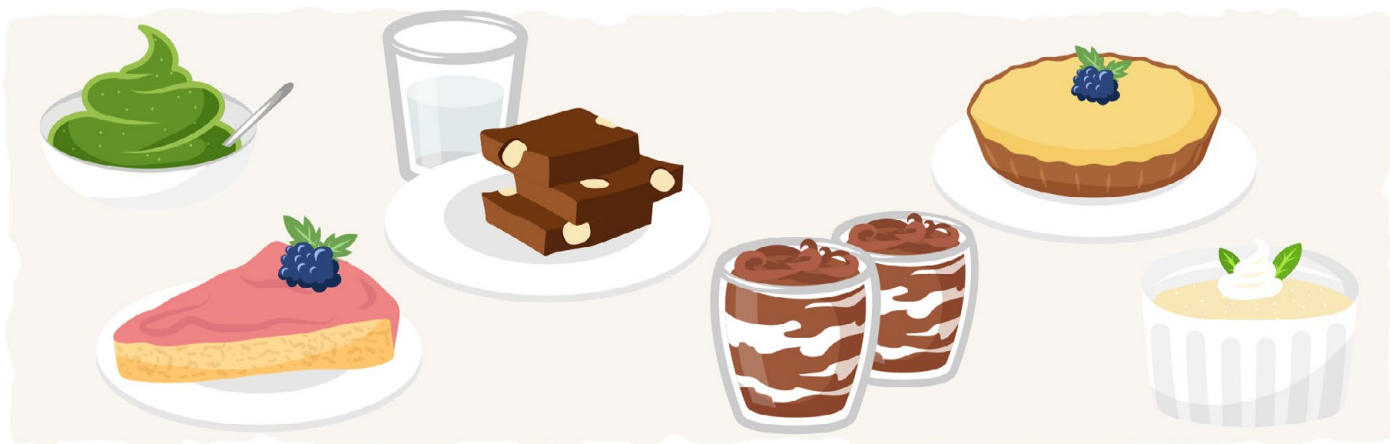
Read more about what alcohol you can have on a ketogenic diet in our in-depth article here: [The Ketogenic Diet and Alcohol](#)



Mixers and Chasers → Diet Soda, Water, and Lemon

Although I do suggest cutting out diet soda completely, you can make an exception to this rule for when you're drinking. This shouldn't be done on a regular basis but is a much better substitute than using full sugar soda or a fruit juice as a mixer. Be very careful with even reduced calorie mixers as often they'll be packed full of sugars.

LOW CARB DESSERT REPLACEMENTS



Sweet treats are a great way to give yourself a break when you're "dieting." On keto, we recommend that you keep desserts to an occasional meal – once every other day, or once every three days. It's best when starting out to skip desserts for 2-3 weeks to help with cravings. Below, you'll find some common desserts that are high-carb and their low-carb alternatives!



Ice Cream → Avocado Ice Cream, or Low-carb Sorbet

Ice cream can be made on a ketogenic diet, normally using eggs, cream, and some sweetener as the base of the custard. There are many different ways to make ice cream (with and without an ice cream maker), so feel free to see some of our recipes here:

- Cookies and Cream
- Pumpkin Pecan Pie
- Strawberry Swirl
- Brown Butter Pecan
- Butterscotch
- Mocha

If you want an "easy" version of an ice cream, you can also use avocado. Avocado has a fantastic creamy texture that's easily hidden or can even be accented to make your own delicious sorbet! Check out this [Avocado Chocolate Chunk Ice Cream](#). Or, if you want to get a bit more creative, check out this [Avocado and Lime Sorbet](#) – delicious!



Cake → Low-carb Cake, or Cheesecake

Cake is always something that people miss because it's so easy to come by and pick up in the grocery store. On keto, you can have your cake and eat it, too! Commonly made with almond flour (or some mixture of different flours) you can have a delicious and airy cake, a dense and flavorful cake, or even cupcakes. Take your pick and make it as you want. Some examples of my favorite cake are:

- Keto Chocolate Roll Cake
- Lemon Poppy Seed Cake
- Strawberry Shortcake
- Salted Caramel & Bacon Cake Pops
- Italian Lemon Sponge Cake
- Ultimate Coffee Cake

The other option you have (that is also high in fat and delicious) would be cheesecake. Using sugar substitutes, you can make some amazing flavored cheesecakes that will come out just as good, if not better, than regular cheesecake. Try your hand at these awesome [mini key lime cheesecakes](#) or even some [raspberry cheesecake bites](#).



Brownies → Avocado Brownies, or Almond Flour Brownies

Not in the mood for cake? Brownies definitely come second on that list of delicious treats that we want once we turn to a ketogenic diet. You can easily [make replacement brownies](#) that you enjoy and feel no cravings for more afterward. Besides using [almond flour and other mixtures of flours](#), you can make them out of avocado!

If you're curious, we also have other low-carb brownie (and blondie) recipes that you can see [here >](#)



Puddings → Flavored Avocado Pudding, or Whipped Cream Pudding

To this day, our childhood cravings for pudding come back with a vengeance. To combat this, we can make some excellent pudding at home from different things. From [avocado pudding](#) to whipped cream pudding, there are tons of ways you can replicate this delicious substance.

Even if you don't want to go that route, you can even make pudding out of cottage or ricotta cheese. Flavor it up with extracts and sweeteners, and you'll never know the difference.



Pie Crust → Nut-based Crusts

Pie crust is usually a tough one to recreate, especially since you won't be able to get that flaky and fluffy crust you might be used to with all-purpose flour. But, we can create thin and crispy, or thicker and softer crusts on keto. Using almond flour or a mixture of flours, we can now have our pumpkin, lemon curd, or even meat pies!

Recently I did experimentation with a new pie crust and found an absolutely delicious crust using both almond flour and psyllium husk. You can check that out on our [Keto Pie Crust recipe](#).

Looking to impress someone? Try our reader favorite – the [Keto Chocolate Silk Pie](#). It's a little bit more labor intensive, but well worth it in the end!



Custard → Pots de Crème

If you're a sucker for custard or crème brûlée, then you'll love [pots de crème](#). Originally made in France, these super rich custards will be the perfect set piece for a dessert. Impress your friends (even the non-ketogenic ones) and serve them something they're sure to love! They do take a bit of work and can be a bit finicky while cooking, but the result is an utterly delicious warm custard that is packed full of flavor.

Looking for More Desserts?

Feel free to check out our full list of [keto dessert recipes](#). We're constantly updating the website, so make sure to check back (or sign up for our e-mail list) to see new recipes every week!

LOW CARB BAKING REPLACEMENTS



Baking can seem like a challenge when it comes to a low-carb, ketogenic diet. Don't worry though; there are plenty of alternative flours and tricks to use to get the consistency you're looking for. You can create baked goods that are almost as good as the real thing – sometimes even better!



Flour → Almond Flour and Eggs

Although **almond flour** doesn't get the same texture and rising ability as normal all-purpose flour, it's a much healthier option and filled with delicious fats that can help us reach our nutrient goals for the day. **Almond flour** works extremely well as a replacement for all-purpose flour, giving us cakey textures and by using eggs, we can achieve the rising we're looking for.

Alternatives include coconut flour with added eggs, but keep in mind that the texture does change when you do this.

Chewiness → Flaxseed Meal, or Psyllium Husk



Chewiness is definitely something we look for when we make dense cakes, bread, or mostly anything that's a low-carb version of the real thing.

My absolute favorite way to add to that chewy texture is adding **psyllium husk** to the recipe. Keep in mind that psyllium is very absorptive, so extra liquids may be needed to combat this. Psyllium husk powder is what you'll need, and you can **find it on Amazon**.

Flaxseed Meal is also another example of an ingredient used to give a slightly chewy texture. Though I feel that it's not as good as psyllium (it gives a slightly gelled texture), many people have used it successfully in place of psyllium. **Make sure you grab a pack or 3 from Amazon**. It's super cheap and lasts a long time!

Breadcrumbs → Pork Rinds



As mentioned for the fried chicken, you can use ground up pork rinds to get a breadcrumb type of effect. Besides chicken, you can do it on any meat – like pork chops! Grinding pork rinds in the food processor is definitely the preferred method here, as they get to a finer consistency and will crunch up well.

If you'd like an example of a breadcrumb crust that I've used before, check out our [Keto Brussels Sprouts Au Gratin](#). Here, the pork rind crust crisps up and gives you a great change in texture as you're eating. Another example would be our [Easy Chicken Cordon Bleu](#).

Alternatively, you can also use pork rinds inside of meat as a filler instead of breadcrumbs. For example, in our [Keto Gyro](#) recipe, we sub pork rinds for the texture that bread lends to inside.



Margarine and Vegetable Oil → Butter, or Coconut Oil

Some of the studies over the last 20 years have shown us that margarine and vegetable oils are just plain bad for our health. But saturated fats like butter and coconut oil are beneficial and on a ketogenic diet can help reduce cholesterol and blood pressure. These fats are an absolute treat and can be used the same way margarine or vegetable oil would be utilized.

To get a good deal on coconut oil, check out [Coconut Oil on Amazon](#)



Frosting → Cream Cheese Frosting

Instead of getting that store-bought can of frosting that's filled with sugar, food coloring, and trans fats – make your own! Cream cheese and butter come together to create a rich and creamy frosting that makes all of your cakes taste better. If you want an example of a great cream cheese frosting (with added fruit compote) check out our [Low Carb Spice Cakes with Cream Cheese Frosting](#).

You can also see how we make our frosting with these [Vanilla Bean Cupcakes](#) or [Mini Vanilla Cloud Cakes](#). Alternatively, you can just make a drizzle or glaze like we did in our [Lemon Poppyseed Muffins](#).



Sugar → Stevia, or Erythritol

Sugar is definitely something we aim to get rid of on a ketogenic diet, but we do need those sweet treats every once in a while, so here's a replacement. While erythritol does have sugar alcohols, they are not processed in the body – erythritol does not pass the blood barrier in the intestine during digestion, and it passes through us mostly through urine. Neither of the two effect blood sugars and both has a glycemic index of 0. Not to mention, both are a natural sweetener.

Erythritol alone can have a "cooling" sensation that can be unpleasant, but when you combine both together, it seems to negate the "bad" tastes from both and create a delicious sweetener that is 0 GI, natural, and perfect for almost everything you'll need it for.

You can find [liquid stevia here on Amazon](#)

You can find [erythritol here on Amazon](#)

If you need some recipe examples, feel free to see our [Keto Dessert Recipes](#) page.



Chocolate → Baker's Chocolate, or Dark Chocolate

The normal store-bought chocolate bars will be loaded with added sugar to give them a consumerist's taste. Since we're trying to avoid sugars, we really want to make sure that we avoid these, too. There are some alternatives you can use – my two favorites are Baker's chocolate and dark chocolate.

With Baker's chocolate, you'll have to add a bit of extra sweetener to take away from the bitterness of the Baker's chocolate. With dark chocolate, you want to aim for a high cocoa percentage. We normally try to get anything above 86%. Additionally, there are some low-carb chocolate alternatives you can buy in the store or online, but they run a pretty penny and don't think it's worth it in the long term.

We can't forget about cocoa powder either. You want to go after the dark and unsweetened types where you can control the amount of sweetness the chocolate has (and control what type of sugar sub is going in). Cocoa powder is ideal for baked goods that you want to have an overall chocolate taste inside – cakes, cookies, or even puddings. If you're going with a higher quality (Dutch style) cocoa powder, make sure to keep in mind its strength. You won't need to use as much as the typical recipe calls for, as it's normally much stronger in taste.



Fruits → Extracts

Fruits taste great, plain and simple. Although we can usually have a few berries here and there on a ketogenic diet without much negative impact, it's usually best to avoid (especially in the beginning). Instead of using berries, we can get fruit extracts to use in our baked goods. Want some blueberry muffins? Not a problem!

You can even make smoothies using fruit extracts. For example, this [tropical smoothie](#) will taste just like you used fresh fruit juice to make, but you can keep it a secret that you didn't.



Cornstarch → Xanthan Gum

Xanthan gum is a very well-known thickener that's gaining popularity in cooking techniques such as molecular gastronomy. It's not unknown in the world of ketogenic diets, either. [Xanthan gum](#) can be used to thicken just about anything. From an ice cream custard base to your morning smoothie, and even to sauces, to get a thick and sticky consistency.

Just be careful when adding xanthan gum because a little goes a long way. To thicken sauces no more than ½ tsp. should be used (and that's for a large amount of sauce). If you add too much, it will turn into a jelly type of consistency, which can be quite unpleasant.

If you find that xanthan gum is a little bit hard to work with, you can choose to use Guar Gum instead. It is about half the "strength" of xanthan, so it's much more forgiving when you use them in sauces. As an example, here's our simple [10-minute sausage gravy](#) using it!



High Carb Vegetables → Dried Spices

Looking at that onion and deciding whether 14g of carbs is just too much for a single recipe? Fear no more – use the dried spice! Replacing higher carb vegetables like fennel, celery, and onion (not to mention a myriad of other vegetables) with their dried counterparts will be packed full of flavor and only require a small amount to bring a powerhouse of flavor to your dish.

Or, you can always replace higher carb vegetables with similar low-carb vegetables for texture. Feel free to take a look at our in-depth guide on [keto friendly vegetables](#) as well!

Looking for more recipes?

Feel free to check out our ever-growing [keto recipe page](#). We regularly update this page, so check back for more inspiration on a bi-weekly basis!

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