



The Be Fit Minute

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Starting a Low Carb Diet? Read This First.

Before you set off on a low carb way of life, think about how realistic the restrictions will be.

This chart breaks down four popular low carb diets, highlighting what you'll have to give up ... and what you'll have left to eat.

Diet	What You Can Eat	What You Can't Eat	Food For Thought	Look Forward To ...
Paleo Diet	Grass-fed meat Poultry Fish and shellfish Fresh fruit and vegetables Eggs Most nuts and seeds and their respective plant-based oils	Any grain (e.g. oatmeal, quinoa, wheat, rice, etc.) Peanut butter Hummus, falafel, or any other beans (including soy) Sushi (unless it's sashimi—and hold the soy sauce) Milk, yogurt, and cheese Corn Steak from The Capital Grille (most beef is corn-fed) Any processed food	This diet is very different from what our ancient ancestors likely really ate: Grubs, organ meat, bone marrow, and lichen would have been common protein sources of the Paleolithic. Modern day produce is nothing like the wild plants of the Paleolithic. (Plants have been bred to be more palatable.)	Angry kidneys. Dirty looks from your vegan or vegetarian friends at parties. All the spaghetti squash you can eat!!! Finally getting a chance to read War and Peace in the bathroom.
Diet	What You Can Eat	What You Can't Eat	Food For Thought	Look Forward To ...
Dukan Diet	Red meat, poultry, eggs Fish and shellfish Fat-free yogurt and milk Tofu Rhubarb, radish, tomato, beets, and eggplant Pumpkin and squash Most green vegetables	Cheese Beans White bread and most other starches Most fat sources, including avocado and nuts Fruit—eventually fruit is allowed (but no bananas, grapes, or cherries)	On this diet, some days you can only eat protein: Because your brain and muscles rely on carbs to function, you'll likely feel angry, tired, and confused.	"Pure protein Thursdays." 2 to 3 tbsp oat bran a day. Eating rhubarb without sugar. Steamed vegetables, ad nauseam. Peanut butter and banana sandwiches.

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Atkins Diet	Red meat, poultry, eggs Fish and shellfish Fats, e.g. butter and oil Cheese Vegetables	Grains (wheat, barley, rye, quinoa, etc.) Anything in the North End More than ¼ - ½ cup of corn, peas, potatoes, carrots, squash, and beans Fruit, nuts, and yogurt only in moderation (after "phase 1")	Be wary of water weight: Initial weight lost is typically water weight (your body sheds water when you stop eating carbs). If you make it to the Atkins "maintenance phase," 1 cup of pasta eats up about 50% of your daily carb budget.	Bad breath. Muscle cramps. Memory loss. Elevated cholesterol. Crying in public for no reason. All the deviled, fried, boiled, and scrambled eggs you can take.
Diet	What You Can Eat	What You Can't Eat	Food For Thought	Look Forward To ...
Wheat Belly Diet	Red meat, poultry, eggs Fish and shellfish Nut and seeds (plus nut and seed-based flours and oils) Cheese Vegetables (not canned) Avocado 70-85% dark chocolate Berries (in small quantities)	Anything with wheat Gluten-free snacks like cookies, brownies, and chips (gluten-free grains, such as quinoa, are also restricted) Pineapple, banana, and mango Milk and yogurt with abandon More than ½ cup of beans	Feel better? What else have you had to give up? It is possible that simply avoiding processed snacks might help you feel better and lose weight: without having to restrict fruit, dairy, whole grains, and beans.	Unlimited cheese (but no bread or crackers to put it on). Buying almond flour for \$8 a pound. Eating flaxseed as a breakfast "cereal" with hempseed milk ... and farting in public. Passing out at the gym.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Restrictive diets, such as these, can be nearly impossible to maintain. They can also put you at risk for nutrient deficiencies and make it hard to participate in social events that include food, like birthdays, barbecues, and holidays.

A common link with these diets is that they shun processed foods like crackers, chips, cookies, and candy.

Why not simply try to reduce or eliminate these foods? They offer little nutritional value and decreasing their consumption may help you lose weight and increase your energy.