



KICKSTART GUIDE

The Keto Diet
for Beginners

Discover the
delicious world of
keto—what it is, how
it works, and how to
easily reset your
body for optimal
health!



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Introduction

Congratulations! By opening this guide, you've taken an important step toward improving your health, energy, and happiness through a ketogenic lifestyle.

Why? Because the known health benefits of the ketogenic diet are mounting! Along with being an excellent diet for weight loss and managing type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome, the keto diet is being touted as a means to improve heart health, general metabolic health, and acne; protect brain functioning and act as a therapy for several brain disorders (including seizures and migraines); reduce risks of cancer; and improve the health of women with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). It's also being employed as an adjuvant cancer therapy.

We know it can seem daunting at first, especially when you don't know what to do or eat and have lots of questions. But in this guide, you'll find everything you need to ease into the rewarding world of keto.

We've organized the subjects based on what we think you'll want to know first. Don't worry if you don't understand all the nuances immediately. As long as you know and follow the keto fundamentals—and you'll learn them all here—you're on the path to your best and most delicious and healthful life.

So, get ready to gently wave off that carb-heavy side dish, sugary piece of pie, and seemingly innocent breath mint. Stick to these guidelines and you'll get and stay in ketosis (the key to keto), retrain your palate, master a new and entirely delicious lifestyle (complete with ways to truly satisfy your cravings), and be rewarded in ways you couldn't have imagined.

Now, Mojo On!



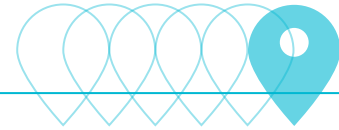
PART 1

Destination Ketosis

For people new to the ketogenic lifestyle, the diet can be intimidating. After all, unless you're surrounded by a keto community, you've probably never heard of ketosis or ketones, never mind learned how to get your body to produce and benefit from them. This section addresses what you need to know about ketosis—what it is, getting into and staying in it, side effects you might experience, and how and when to test your glucose and ketones to help you keep on track. After reading through this section, you'll know more than enough to confidently begin your keto journey.



Getting into Ketosis



There's only one critical element to a keto diet: getting into and being in ketosis. So, let's get clear on exactly what it means to get into ketosis, how long it takes to get there, and what you'll want to do in order to get into and stay in ketosis.

WHAT IS KETOSIS?

Simply put, *ketosis* is a natural metabolic process in which your body uses fat for fuel rather than *glucose* (carbohydrates/sugar). This only happens when the body is deprived of carbohydrates (sugars). Without access to carbs, your liver starts to convert fat (from your food and your body) into *ketones* (acidic molecules) and then uses those ketones for energy.

As you might expect, getting into ketosis and staying there has everything to do with what you do and don't eat. After you calculate your macros, or "macronutrients" (your daily calories broken down into optimal amounts of fat, protein, and carbs), you will know how many total calories you should consume per day and that you should get 70 to 75 percent of your calories from fats, 20 to 25 percent from protein, and 5 to 10 percent from carbohydrates/sugar—give or take depending on your lifestyle and other personal factors. We'll show you how to calculate your macros on page [11](#). But what you might not know is when you can expect to see and feel the benefits of your efforts.

GETTING INTO KETOSIS

If you're like most people who are just getting into the keto lifestyle, you're probably itching to see and feel immediate results. You may even be obsessively testing your blood ketone levels and wondering why the test results fluctuate so often and so dramatically. To that we say: Have patience! One of the biggest hurdles to success on a keto diet is a mind-set that you're "supposed to be" further along on achieving your goals or more in ketosis than you are. But every single person reacts differently, so there's no need to compare.

Getting into ketosis doesn't happen immediately. It takes your body anywhere from two to seven days to get into ketosis, depending on a variety of factors, including your unique body, health, activity level, and diet.

Why does it take so long? Because you're retraining your body! Ketosis is a natural metabolic process in which your body uses fat for fuel rather than glucose (carbohydrates/sugar). To activate this process, you need to deprive your body of its usual go-to fuel: carbohydrates and all forms of sugar. Then you need to give your body time to adjust and your liver time to convert fat from your food and your body (adipose tissue) into ketones for energy.

As long as you're eating within your optimal macros, you're on your way. So rather than pushing yourself to the result, focus on the journey. The first month or two on keto is a learning experience, where you're getting to know the diet, discovering how your body reacts to different foods (see page 24) and your pain points, and physically adjusting to burning fat rather than carbs for energy. If you don't see results as quickly as you'd like, don't be discouraged. Just remind yourself that you're embarking on a new, healthy lifestyle and keep on the path. In time, the results will come.

Practicing fasting or intermittent fasting may get you into ketosis in less time, but it's not necessary, and it may be a bit more than you want to take on right out of the gate. (Learn more about fasting on page 62.)

HOW TO KNOW YOU'RE IN KETOSIS

After you give the keto lifestyle a few days, the easiest way to see if you're in ketosis and know what level of ketosis you are in is to conduct a blood test. You may see your ketone levels start rising from 0.1 mmol/L to 0.2, then 0.4 or higher. You are officially in nutritional ketosis at 0.5 mmol/L! FYI, mmol/L stands for millimole per liter (a "mole" is a measure of quantity based on the number of molecules rather than on weight; it's used as a measure of a solution, for example, glucose in blood).

Testing is the only surefire way to know if you are in ketosis (and **blood testing** is way more accurate than urine or breath testing), but there are also telltale signs that you're on your way. Many people new to keto get symptoms related to something known as the keto flu, which we tell you more about on page 14.

Once you're solidly in ketosis, other common signs are a metallic taste in your mouth (from ketones), a much more manageable appetite, and the ability to go longer between meals without feeling hungry. Finally, one of the best telltale signs you're in ketosis: a massive and sustained increase in energy!

That said, these "signs" are subjective and are not experienced by everyone on the keto diet, so don't worry if you don't get the keto flu or have the metallic taste. Just keto on!

TIPS FOR STAYING IN KETOSIS

Once you get into ketosis, your next goal is to do your best to stay there. Following are some practices that help make the effort easier. Turn them into habits and before you know it, the keto lifestyle will be second nature.

- **Focus on whole, low-glycemic foods.** Now that the ketogenic diet is becoming popular, many companies are branding themselves "keto-friendly" in an effort to capitalize on the growing keto community. But don't let the hype fool you. Even foods that are touted as healthy are often carbohydrate-heavy and sugar-laden. Take granola bars, for example. Many people consider them a healthy snack choice. But many of the toasted oat bars contain more sugar than a candy bar!

In fact, sugar in its various forms is so integral to our foods that it's included even in products you wouldn't think would contain troublesome ingredients (carbs and sugars), like most flours and



HOW TO STAY IN KETOSIS

These simple practices help make the effort easier.

starches. Consequently, we recommend getting most of your nutrition from *whole foods* (natural, organic, unprocessed foods, such as good-quality meat, fish, dairy, and certain vegetables).

Besides, eating a diet of mostly whole foods makes things simple; you won't need to keep an eye out for hidden ingredients that could affect your ability to stay in ketosis.

When considering recipes to try and when shopping for groceries, aim for whole, low-glycemic foods and ingredients, such as those listed on pages [34](#) and [35](#).

- **Read food labels!** Mints, gum, candy, baked goods, and drinks labeled “low carb” may seem like great ideas, but if you look at their ingredient lists, you'll often find they contain problem ingredients (carbs and sugars) that can cause your ketone levels to drop or that can completely kick you out of ketosis!

The same goes for other food products that you may not expect to contain sugar or other high-carb ingredients; some broths, spices, condiments, and even sugar alternatives can sneak unexpected carbs into your diet and affect your ability to stay in ketosis.

Luckily, all packaged foods feature nutrition facts labels that tell you what you need to know, so be sure to read labels and factor any carbs in the foods you consume into your daily macro calculations. You can learn how to determine whether a food is keto-friendly to you on page [33](#).

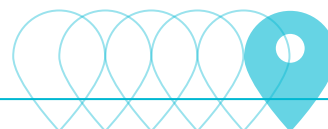
- **Clean out your cupboards.** One of the best ways to help yourself stay on your keto track is to eliminate temptation. This can be hard if you live in a household with family or friends who are not on a keto diet. But if you have the luxury, clean out your cupboards and remove all the foods that aren't keto-friendly, especially snack foods.
- **Keep a stash of keto-friendly snacks.** One of the greatest threats to staying in ketosis is eating your way off course, and you're far more likely to do that if you don't have keto-friendly foods around when you need them. We share a list of perfect items for the keto pantry on page 34. If you haven't already, now's a good time to review it and head to the store!
- **Test for food sensitivities.** There is a catch around figuring out keto-friendly foods: The nutrition label doesn't always tell the full story. Your body is unique, so keto-friendly foods and drinks that are perfectly suitable for others may adversely affect your level of ketosis or even kick you out of it if you are sensitive to them. Plus, some low-carb foods contain ingredients that are high-glycemic or can cause blood glucose spikes. For example, many protein powders that claim to be keto contain *maltitol* (a common sugar alternative that has a higher glycemic index). Some people have no trouble consuming it, while it kicks others out of ketosis. This is where testing your individual response to the foods you consume is critical when starting out. You can learn more about testing for food sensitivities on page 25.

MOJO ON!

Now you know what it means to get into ketosis. As you progress, remember that each body is different, and once in a groove, some people's ketones tend to test higher than others. We have a saying here at Keto-Mojo: "Don't go chasing ketones." Just remember that to be in ketosis, you need only to hit the 0.5 mmol/L mark, and you may have naturally lower ketone levels than someone else.



Before You Start: Helpful Tools



While you can go keto without any special equipment, there are some items you can collect or purchase to help you more easily transition to keto life, and there are also a few things you can do to help track and see your progress. So, consider grabbing the following items before you start your keto journey.

- **Keto-Mojo meter:** Yes, it's self-promotion, but our blood glucose and ketone tracking meter is an important tool. Tracking your blood glucose and ketones is the only way to ensure you're in ketosis and on the right track, and Keto-Mojo's meter has earned the praise of researchers, hospitals, clinics, doctors, and countless users. Find out more [here](#) and [here](#).
- **Macros-tracking app:** One of the biggest mistakes people make when starting a keto diet is exceeding your daily macros (calories broken down into fat, protein, and carbs), which can stop you from losing weight or getting into ketosis or both. With a macros-tracking app, you can record what you eat each day and better ensure you stay within your desired calories and portions of fat, protein, and carbs.
- **Measuring tape:** When you go keto, it's common to lose inches before pounds, especially if you're exercising and gaining muscle (muscle weighs more than fat). In order to truly track your progress, you may want to take measurements of your waist and other areas, such as your chest, hips, arms, and legs, before you begin and jot down the results in a journal. Then continue to measure and make notes as you go. It's a fun and often more telling way to learn about your progress, and it's also an ego boost if the scale isn't budging as much as you would like.
- **Benchmark outfit and photos:** Similar to the measuring tape, a good way to track your progress is to take a photo of yourself in a tight-fitting outfit (think a bathing suit or stretchy pants or underwear and a tank top or bra) before you start. Then continue to re-create the photo in the same clothes, perhaps once per week, to see how your body changes and how your outfit fits differently. If you stay on a keto diet for a few months, you'll likely see dramatic results. After a year, you'll be blown away.
- **Electrolyte powder:** Much of the *keto flu* (flu-like symptoms commonly experienced during your transition from burning carbohydrates for fuel to using fat for fuel) comes from inadequate amounts of electrolytes in your body. We'll tell you more about the keto flu and why you may experience a brief electrolyte deficit a little later in this guide. But it's worth noting that you can sidestep a lot of the symptoms by adding an electrolyte powder to your water. You can find some of our favorite brands [here](#).
- **Kitchen scale:** When cooking keto, the weight of ingredients becomes important because it helps you precisely portion what you eat and ensure your macros are as you intend them to be. That's why lots of ingredients in keto recipes are noted by weight. A kitchen scale is the only way to ensure you are using the right amount of the ingredients. They're also very affordable; check out the options [here](#).

- **Spiralizer:** As soon as you read this guide’s food section, you’ll know that an easy, delicious keto replacement for pasta is spiralized zucchini. While you can shave zucchini and get wider thin strips, you can get curly noodle-like shapes with a spiralizer. [Buy here.](#)
- **Keto-friendly foods:** What exactly are keto-friendly foods? We’ll tell you all about them on pages [34](#) and [35](#). But before you give yourself a keto kickoff, make sure you have plenty of keto food around to keep you from cheating out of desperation. To do that, make a shopping list, load up the cupboards, and get ready for a healthier new you.

MOJO ON!

The above tools definitely help as you embark on your ketogenic journey, but the most important essentials are interest, willingness, and knowledge. The fact that you are reading this guide shows you’ve got what it takes!



Macros & Calorie Counting



Follow #ketodiet on Instagram and you'll see jaw-dropping before-and-after weight-loss photos mingled with mouthwatering lasagna, burgers dripping with melted cheese, pizza, and more. But can indulgence and weight loss happily coexist in the real keto world? The answer is absolutely yes, provided you eat for your optimal macros.

WHAT ARE MACROS?

Macros (short for macronutrients) are your daily caloric intake for the keto diet, broken into categories for fat, carbohydrates, and protein. They are also your literal map for keto success.

The keto diet is based on eating good fats, drastically reducing your carbohydrate intake, and consuming moderate protein so that your body burns fat for energy instead of glucose. But along with eating more fat and fewer carbs, it's also about consuming the right amount of each based on your goal to lose, maintain, or gain weight or for therapeutic treatment of medical conditions. This is where macros come in.

HOW TO CALCULATE MACROS

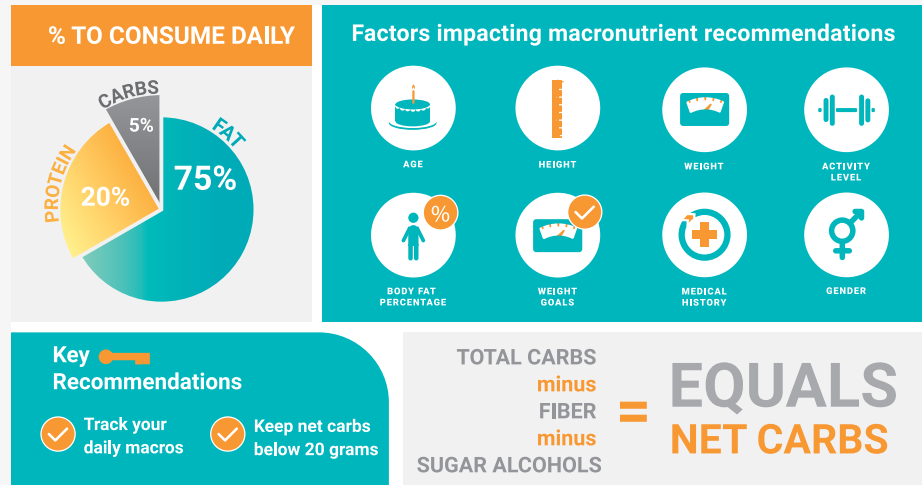
Optimal macros are different for each person, based on age, height, weight, activity level, body fat percentages (this is different from BMI), and weight goals. The easiest way to determine the correct macros for you is to use a macro calculator; you can find free versions online. Just input the requested information and it will estimate the number of calories, and how much protein, carbs, and fat you need to lose, gain, or maintain your weight, depending on the goals you set.

There's a consensus among experts that most people can stay solidly in ketosis (blood ketone levels of 0.5 mmol/L or more) if they consume no more than 20 grams of net carbs per day. However, people following a ketogenic diet for medically therapeutic reasons, such as cancer or epilepsy, may need to limit their carb intake to 15 grams of net carbs per day or keep their net carb intake even lower, in some cases.

So, what are net carbs? We'll tell you all about them very soon. But first: Factors such as age, gender, activity level, family history, personal medical history, and genetics influence how your body responds to specific macronutrients and the amounts that you need to achieve and remain in ketosis. For this reason, we recommend you discuss your intended diet with a medical provider who knows your health history, has an understanding of the ketogenic diet, and can help you make choices that are best for you.

MACROS & CALORIE COUNTING ON KETO

Macros are your daily caloric intake for the keto diet broken into categories of optimal fats, carbohydrates, and proteins. They are also your literal map for keto success.



HOW TO TRACK YOUR MACROS

Once you know your macros, you should count (track) them to give yourself the best chance to get and keep your body in a ketogenic state.

Calculating your macros means knowing the total amount of calories, fat, protein, and “net carbs” (described later in this section) for everything you eat and drink and keeping track of them each day to ensure you don’t surpass your daily goals.

Yes, it’s a bit of work, and yes, everyone gets off track now and then. But don’t be discouraged. It’s all part of the journey, and after a while, it really does become second nature.

Still, we know from experience that it’s easy to fool yourself into thinking you’re eating within your macros when you’re actually exceeding them. We also know that once you start keeping track and eating to your macros, you’ll find you’re less and less hungry over time and have far better overall success. Plus, tracking is kind of fun, and it is definitely empowering to see the cool charts and graphs of your daily food intake that macros calculators provide.

You can manually track your daily macros intake or calculate your totals using an app, such as [Cronometer](#), [MyFitnessPal](#), or [Carb Manager](#) (see our review on keto apps [here](#)) or an online recipe analyzer like the one at [Happy Forks](#). (Note: If you purchase the [Keto-Mojo Promo Bundle](#), you’ll receive a 20 percent discount off the Cronometer Gold subscription.)

WHAT ARE NET CARBS?

Plainly put, net carbs are the total grams of carbohydrates in any given food minus its grams of erythritol (a sugar alcohol) and fiber. Here's the basic formula:

Net carbohydrates = total carbohydrates - fiber - erythritol (if applicable)

If you're not familiar with erythritol and other sugar alcohols, we tell you all about them on page [53](#).

Here's an example of the net carb calculation, using a medium avocado (which does not contain sugar alcohols):

One medium avocado contains 17.1 grams of total carbs and 13.5 grams of fiber. So, to get its net carbs, you subtract the fiber (13.5 grams) from the total carbs (17.1 grams), which leaves you with 3.6 grams net carbs (17.1 grams carbs - 13.5 grams fiber = 3.6 grams net carbs). Talk about a reason to enjoy guacamole!

Find out more about net carbs here: [What's the Difference Between Total Carbs and Net Carbs?](#)

MOJO ON!

Phew! You got all that? The information in this section may be a lot to digest, but don't worry. You can revisit it anytime, and once you master your macros, you'll be well on your way to an effortless keto lifestyle.



The Keto Flu: Facts & Remedies



“I feel miserable.”

Sound familiar? In the first couple weeks of your keto journey, you may feel pretty lousy.

Don’t despair! This is actually a good thing because general malaise is an indication that what you’re doing is working and your body is making the bumpy transition to burning fat for energy instead of burning glucose (sugar)! In fact, the unpleasant symptoms associated with the keto transition are so common that there’s a name for them: “keto flu” or “low-carb flu.”

The keto flu can feel similar to withdrawing from an addictive substance, which is essentially what you’re doing (goodbye, sugar!). The good news is that the symptoms are short-lived. Even better, they can be mitigated as you go through this rite of passage, if you know what to do.

So, instead of suffering in low-carb silence, read through the information here and stick with your new keto diet. The energizing, fat-burning rewards from your perseverance are coming! (And if you’re not feeling crappy, don’t worry—while the keto flu is common, not everyone suffers from it.)

KETO FLU SYMPTOMS

It’s not just your mind that’s working hard to transition into a keto lifestyle. If you’ve been living on mostly carbs—as many people do—your body is figuring out what to do now that it can no longer depend on glucose for energy. Following are some common indicators that your body is sorting itself out and you’re experiencing the keto flu:

- *Brain fog*
- *Body aches*
- *Constipation*
- *Diarrhea*
- *Dizziness*
- *Drowsiness*
- *Irritability*
- *Muscle cramps*
- *Nausea*
- *Sugar cravings*

FLU TIMING & DURATION

For the average person, keto flu symptoms may begin within the first day or two of eliminating carbs from your diet, especially if you’ve been enjoying a diet high in refined sugar and processed foods. If your diet is already relatively low in processed sugars and starches, you may encounter only mild keto flu symptoms or no symptoms at all. As with everything in the keto lifestyle and life in general, everybody’s experience is different, and that’s OK. Even if you have a particularly intolerable case of the keto flu, the symptoms tend to last a week or less; only on very rare occasions do they persist for longer, perhaps up to a month. If you’re suffering for an extended amount of time, it’s a good idea to consult your healthcare provider.

KETO FLU

Am I really sick? The keto flu is a group of symptoms that **MAY** occur as your body becomes keto-adapted.

SYMPTOMS OF KETO FLU

BRAIN FOG »

« DIZZINESS

« IRRITABILITY

NAUSEA »

« CONSTIPATION

DIARRHEA »

« BODY ACHES

MUSCLE »
CRAMPS

TIPS

STAY HYDRATED

INCREASE SALT & ELECTROLYTES

EAT MORE FAT

EXERCISE LESS

REST MORE

WAYS TO WARD OFF THE KETO FLU

Following are things you can do to lessen the physical unpleasantness as your body adjusts to fat as its new fuel source:

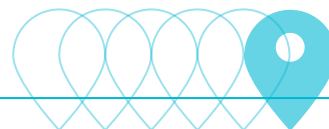
- **Drink plenty of water.** The keto diet is diuretic, so dehydration is common and can worsen all of the keto flu symptoms listed above because it is tied to the loss of electrolytes (see below). Luckily, it's also the easiest thing to remedy: Make sure to drink plenty of water regularly throughout the day.
- **Replenish electrolytes.** The most common cause of keto flu is a deficit in electrolytes; if yours get low, you'll feel tired and may experience flu-like symptoms. To solve the problem, add more sodium and potassium to your diet, perhaps through [bone broth](#), avocados, or a sprinkling of [Himalayan sea salt](#) to your beverages or food.
- **Eat more fat.** (When was the last time you heard that?!) Another common cause of keto flu is not eating enough fat to maintain good energy levels. So, if you're dragging, eat a healthy, fat-centric snack, like celery with salted nut butter or some fresh, salted avocado.
- **Exercise a little less.** Light activities such as walking, yoga, and non-strenuous biking can help ward off flu symptoms, but you should avoid strenuous workouts with intense running or lifting weights as your body adapts. So, get out there and move your body a little, but don't overdo it.
- **Rest more.** Get plenty of sleep nightly and rest when you feel tired. Shifting metabolic gears is hard work, so give your engine plenty of idle time!

MOJO ON!

Feeling better yet? If not, grab yourself a tall glass of water, season it with a little sea salt, and raise it in a toast to you for self-care and for pushing through in the name of better health!



When to Test Your Glucose & Ketones



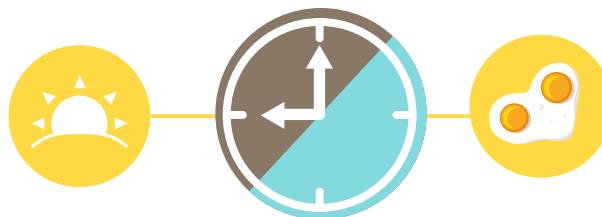
To know whether you are in ketosis or what level of ketosis you are in, you need to test. Testing is the only way to really know. And while there are various methods of testing, blood ketone monitors, such as your Keto-Mojo meter, are considered the **gold standard** for determining if you are in ketosis, at what level, and what your blood glucose level is. Glucose testing is commonly conducted to help with diabetes management, but it's also useful for ketonians because it can reveal trigger foods (foods that spike your glucose and thus may adversely affect your ketone levels). But when is the best time to test?

BEST TIMES TO TEST YOUR KETONES & GLUCOSE

Testing ketones and glucose at roughly the same time each day is important for tracking your progress. So, the very best time to test is when it is convenient for you on a regular basis. When you choose a time that's convenient for you to test daily, you'll be more likely to continue testing on time and be able to compare your results to prior days at the same time. However, since sleep and meals can skew test results, certain times are better than others.

Here's when we like to test:

TEST IN THE MORNING WHILE FASTED



Testing before you ingest anything but after you've been awake for a while helps you avoid the dawn effect (an early-morning increase in blood sugar/glucose caused by a natural rise in cortisol before you wake). In the morning, glucose will generally be higher and ketones are generally at their lowest. You can learn more about the dawn effect on page [23](#).

A fasted test result will give you a good baseline to compare over time. But just how long to wait after you've risen may depend on your metabolic state or condition. For someone without insulin resistance, testing an hour after waking will generally provide a good fasted baseline. But for someone who is insulin resistant, which causes elevated levels of glucose in the blood, it may be better to wait two to three hours to test your fasted baseline, giving your body more time to adjust to the cortisol spike. The best way to determine the ideal time for you is by testing your glucose on consecutive days at the same intervals: one hour, two hours, and three hours after waking. This will help you understand how long it takes for your glucose to level out.

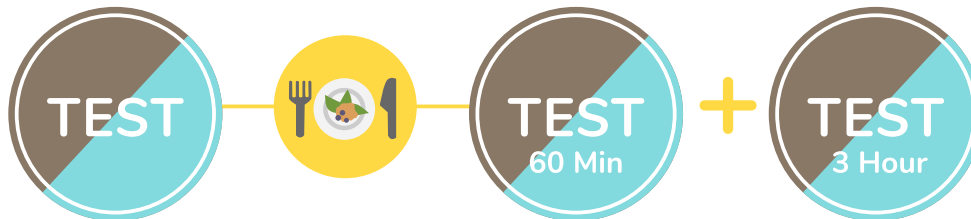
If your ketones are 1 mmol/L or higher during your anticipated lowest levels of the day, that's good news—it means you are most likely in a deep state of ketosis!

TEST BEFORE LUNCH OR DINNER



For the most insightful ketone readings, test right before lunch or dinner, at least two to three hours after you've eaten any food or drink other than water. It's important to wait two to three hours after eating because consumption of almost any food, keto-friendly or otherwise, will cause your glucose to go up and your ketone levels to fall a bit. Thus, testing well between meals ensures you get a truer reading of your progress.

TESTING BEFORE & AFTER MEALS TO DETERMINE FOOD SENSITIVITIES



Although we just recommended that you do not test after you've eaten, there is one reason you may want to: Testing just before a meal or particular food and then again 60 minutes and three hours afterward is a great way to find out how your body responds to various foods, snacks, and drinks you have consumed. Advanced users may want to add additional tests at 30 minutes and two hours after eating or drinking. You can learn more about testing for food sensitivities on page [25](#).

Note: When testing for food sensitivities, glucose strips are a better indication of food reactions because glucose fluctuates faster than ketones. For example, glucose reaches its peak one hour after eating, while ketones take much longer to respond.

WHEN TO TEST

- In the morning while fasted
- Before lunch or dinner

The only way to know if you are in ketosis, or what level of ketosis you are in, is to test.

But what is the best time of day to test?

In the morning while fasted

Before lunch or dinner, 2-3 hours after eating anything

Check before and after meals to test food sensitivities

Test Ketones & Glucose

before eating 60 min 3 hrs

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I TEST MY KETONES & GLUCOSE?

When you first embark on a ketogenic diet, we recommend testing often, perhaps twice a day, and also testing for food sensitivities. But generally, the number of times you test each day depends on what you want to achieve. If you just want to verify that you're in ketosis and are in a rhythm with your new diet, once a day is adequate.

If you're turning to the ketogenic diet for therapeutic benefits for medical conditions, you may want to test before each meal to see how your day is going and, if necessary, make adjustments prior to eating to ensure you make the proper choices to maintain your desired levels of ketosis.

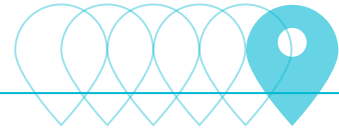
After several months of keto living, you should have a good sense of what you need to do to stay in ketosis, so you may not need to test as often—although it's a good idea to check in with yourself periodically, as most of us tend to get a little more lax when we're not kept in check by test results. Several months into the lifestyle is also a good time to see if you can add [more carbohydrates](#) or protein in your diet and remain in ketosis by trying out the changes and testing your results.

MOJO ON!

One of the best things about testing your ketones and glucose is that positive results encourage you to keep going. It's fun to see the progress, especially because you can usually see it before you can feel it.



What Should Your Ketone Levels Be?



When starting a keto diet, pretty much everyone gets focused on their ketone levels. It makes sense. They are concrete measurements of progress and most of us are goal oriented. But we can't tell you how many people we've spoken to who wanted to give up because they weren't where they thought they "should be" early on. So, let's not get ahead of ourselves. Instead, let's explore levels of ketosis with an eye to learning what they are and what they mean so you can understand what your optimal levels are based on your goals.

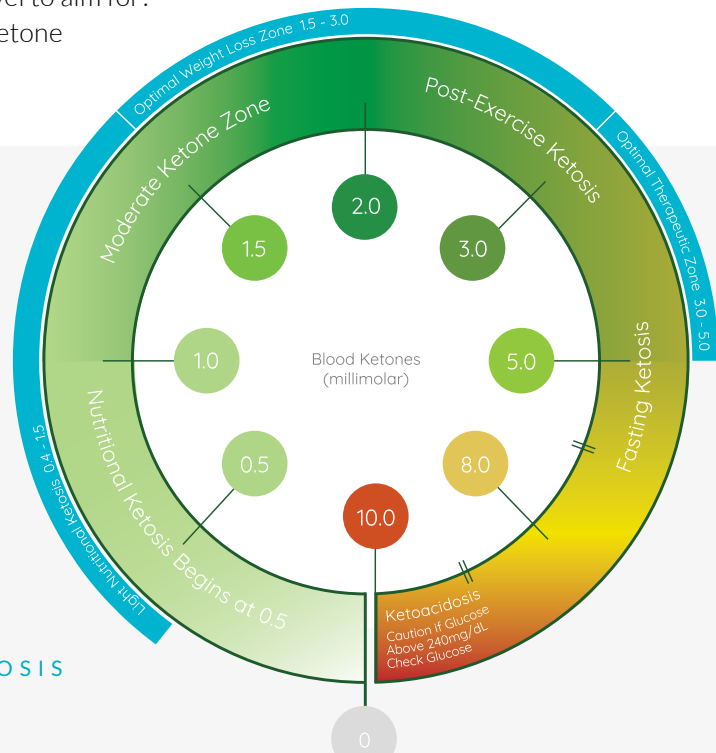
But first, a brief public service announcement: The information in this section is not meant to be substituted for medical advice, and it does not apply if you have type 1 diabetes. If you have type 1 diabetes or other serious medical conditions, you should work with your healthcare provider to determine your goals.

UNDERSTANDING THE KETONE SPECTRUM

When discussing ketone levels and levels of ketosis, keto experts often cite [The Art and Science of Low Carbohydrate Living](#) by Dr. Stephen Phinney, MD, PhD, and Jeff Volek, PhD, RD. It suggests that nutritional ketosis begins at molecular concentration levels of 0.5 mmol/L. That means that the minute you cross that 0.5 threshold, you're "in ketosis." From there, nutritional ketosis is considered "light" through 1.0 mmol/L (light is still good!), then becomes "optimal" in the 1.0 mmol/L through 3.0 mmol/L range. But if you look at the graph below, you can see that there is nuance within these ketone zones.

So, how do you know what ketone level to aim for?

It depends on your goals. View our Ketone Zone Chart below.



KETONE LEVEL SWEET SPOTS

If your primary goal for trying the ketogenic diet is weight loss, achieving “light nutritional ketosis,” between 0.5 mmol/L and 1.0 mmol/L, is a good starting point. From there, aim for “optimal ketosis,” when your ketone levels are between 1.0 mmol/L and 3.0 mmol/L.

People looking to use the ketogenic diet for therapeutic benefits for medical conditions such as epilepsy, cancer, or endocrine and metabolic disorders are generally directed to aim for much higher ketone levels: in the 3.0 mmol/L to 5.0 mmol/L range.

People who are fasting or eating a much higher fat-to-protein ratio may experience levels in the 3.0 mmol/L to 8.0 mmol/L range. But you don’t need to go there. The optimal ketosis range (between 1.0 mmol/L and 3.0 mmol/L) is called “optimal” for a reason—it’s exactly where you want to be for weight loss and general health purposes. You’ll get there in time if you practice patience, follow your macros, and test regularly to make individualized adjustments.

KETONES & EXERCISE

Does exercise affect ketone levels? Yes, but the effects differ from one person to the next. With aerobic exercise, such as swimming, walking, jogging, and cycling, you’ll generally notice an increase in circulating ketones. Generally, anaerobic exercise (usually short duration and high intensity, like heavy weight training, sprinting, or jumping) will decrease circulating ketones, cause blood glucose to go up slightly, and cause ketones to temporarily go down. Does this mean you should avoid anaerobic exercise while on a ketogenic diet? Absolutely not! Watching your ketone levels will help you understand how your body responds to various foods and activities, and knowing how your body responds will help you adjust your nutrition and food choices to properly fuel your body and maintain optimal ketone levels.

A WORD OF WARNING

No matter the goal, no one should aim for the orange or red zones. They’re nearly impossible to achieve and don’t increase the diet’s benefits. The only people who should be concerned about the possibility of approaching those zones are people with type 1 diabetes because they face the risk of a complication called diabetic **ketoacidosis** (a serious condition of extremely heightened ketone and blood sugar levels that requires urgent medical attention). Additionally, in rare cases, people with type 2 diabetes who take medications known as SGLT2 inhibitors may develop ketoacidosis. For this reason, it’s very important for anyone on this type of medication to be closely monitored by their prescribing healthcare provider, and for the provider to be aware that their patient is following a ketogenic diet, so that the medication can be discontinued or reduced in dosage.

WHAT SHOULD YOUR GLUCOSE LEVELS BE?

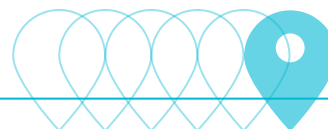
In a fasted state, normal blood sugar levels are between 70 to 100 mg/dL (and sometimes as low as 60 mg/dL). Generally speaking, it’s good to avoid foods that either cause your blood -glucose levels to remain increased by 30 mg/dL or more 60 minutes after eating or that don’t return close to your baseline (preprandial) results after 3 hours. If you have diabetes or prediabetes, your norms will be slightly higher and should be discussed with your primary care physician. Learn more [here](#).

MOJO ON!

Your level of ketosis is not meant to be yet another thing in your life to stress over. Instead, consider it a tool to help you evaluate and adjust your eating habits as you follow your keto journey. Everyone has a different “norm” for their level of ketosis, and some are higher than others. As long as you are in the optimal zone (between 1.0 mmol/L and 3.0 mmol/L), don’t feel like you have to chase higher ketone levels.



The Glucose Ketone Index (GKI)



Whenever you test your blood glucose and ketones from a relatively fasted state (three hours after eating), you can further confirm your ketosis status by testing your ketones and glucose and then by calculating what's called your glucose ketone index (GKI).

You may have stumbled across the term GKI in various keto forums, social media, or even some research studies and wondered what it is. Plainly put, the *glucose ketone index* is a simple formula that tracks the ratio of blood glucose to ketones as a single value. But more important, it's a biomarker for tracking your metabolic health as well as your level of ketosis, and it's easily tracked if you have a [blood glucose and ketones testing meter](#) like Keto-Mojo.

WHY IS THE GKI IMPORTANT TO YOU?

On their own, glucose or ketone readings give you a snapshot of where you are at this exact moment, which means they can be independently influenced by immediate variables such as stress (which heightens blood glucose) or a fat-rich meal (which heightens ketones).

The GKI, on the other hand, gives you a better overall view of your metabolic status and state of ketosis because its calculation takes into account the variables and normalizes them, resulting in a more accurate, stable picture of your metabolic status.

It's an easy calculation once you've taken your glucose and ketone readings:

[Your Glucose Reading (mg/dL) ÷ 18] ÷ Your Ketone Reading = Your Glucose Ketone Index*

*Dividing your glucose test results by 18 converts your blood glucose reading from mg/dL to mmol/L (skip this step if you live outside the US and in countries that already measure glucose in mmol/L).

But you can forget messing with the math with the handy GKI calculator we provide [here](#).

WHAT DO YOUR GKI RESULTS MEAN?

Once you have your GKI, you can see where you land within the established GKI levels. The lower your GKI, the greater your level of therapeutic ketosis and general metabolic health.

GKI Level	Degree of Ketosis	Applications
<1	You're in a therapeutic level of ketosis.	Generally sought after by those using keto therapeutically for cancer and epilepsy
1-3	You're in a high level of ketosis.	Generally sought after by those using keto for type 2 diabetes, obesity, other medical conditions, and disease prevention
3-6	You're in a moderate level of ketosis.	Generally sought after by those with metabolic or endocrine disorders looking for therapeutic benefits from the ketogenic diet
6-9	You're in a low level of ketosis.	Generally sought after if you're using keto for weight loss and weight management
>9	Your body is not in a fat-burning state, so you may need to adjust your diet or macros or give yourself more time if you're new to keto.	

HOW TO LOWER YOUR GKI READING

The longer you lead a clean ketogenic lifestyle with a diet rich in whole foods, the better your GKI reading will be. You can also improve your numbers through intermittent fasting (see page 62), reducing stress, and getting adequate sleep (stress and exhaustion can inspire the body to release cortisol, which can spike blood-glucose levels). Identifying and eliminating trigger foods, through blood testing, also helps refine your GKI. If using the GKI for therapeutic purposes, you can consult your doctor.

WHEN & HOW OFTEN TO TEST YOUR GKI

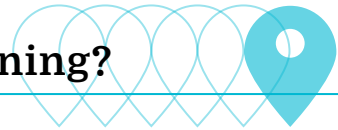
Blood glucose and ketone tests should be conducted two to three hours postprandial (after a meal), twice a day, if possible. We recommend testing your GKI twice a day: after waking and before lunch or dinner; testing twice a day allows you to recognize if and how your dietary intake is affecting your GKI.

MOJO ON!

Now that you know your GKI, you can use it as a tool to help track your ketosis levels and general metabolic status. It was initially created to measure therapeutic ketosis as a metabolic therapy for treating brain cancer. But it's becoming an increasingly important measure of therapeutic ketosis for managing other chronic health conditions as well, including certain types of cancer, type 2 diabetes, obesity, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, chronic inflammatory diseases, epilepsy, insulin resistance, and traumatic brain injury.



Why Are Ketone Levels Lower in the Morning?



You get up, stretch, reach for your meter and strips, and excitedly conduct your first test of the day—only to find your ketone levels are surprisingly low, even though you ate well the night before and have fasted ever since. Why?

Don't worry. It has nothing to do with what you have or haven't done.

THE DAWN PHENOMENON

What you're likely experiencing is called the *dawn phenomenon* or *dawn effect*, which is a naturally occurring, early-morning increase in blood sugar (glucose) that occurs for pretty much all humans. It's not associated with food consumption. It has to do with biological processes called gluconeogenesis (making glucose from non-carbohydrate sources) and glycolysis (breaking down glycogen into glucose). It's believed that the release of other hormones, such as cortisol, during the wee hours of the morning helps prepare the body for waking up.

For some people, the morning blood-sugar elevation is significant. For others, it's barely noticeable. Regardless, it's a normal response by the body as it prepares to face the day. It's not dangerous to people with diabetes or anyone else. There's nothing you can or should do about it, other than take it into consideration if you test yourself for ketones and glucose first thing in the morning. In fact, the dawn phenomenon is the reason we recommend you wait until you've been awake for an hour or two before testing.

THE DAWN PHENOMENON & DIABETES

People with prediabetes or type 2 diabetes are more insulin resistant and may or may not secrete enough insulin to optimally counter the dawn phenomenon. Those who don't secrete enough will see their blood glucose rise more than others during the early morning hours.

WHAT IS THE Dawn Effect?

Early morning release of hormones, primarily cortisol to prepare our body for waking

A natural part of our circadian rhythms

WHAT IT MEANS

Morning glucose reading may be high

Morning ketone reading may be low

MOJO TIP

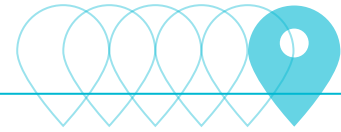
Wait at least an hour after waking to test

MOJO ON!

Want more details on the dawn phenomenon? Watch our [video](#) or read about the science behind the dawn effect.



How to Test for Bio-Individuality and Food Sensitivities



Bio-individuality—or the idea that every body is different and consequently has unique nutritional requirements and reactions to various foods—is a buzzword these days. But it’s an important factor in your keto plan because the key to ketosis is not only eating the right types of food in the right portions, but also learning which specific foods adversely affect you and then avoiding them.

TRIGGER FOODS

If you’re following a clean keto diet (you’ll soon learn all about this in the Food and Drink section) and staying in ketosis, you may not have to worry about trigger foods. But if you find you’re not getting in ketosis, you’re getting kicked out of ketosis, or you would like to be in a higher state of ketosis for therapeutic benefits, then consider testing after ingesting some foods you’re eating to see if they are suppressing your ketone levels.

There are lots of foods that can trigger ketone dips or glucose spikes for some people, but not others. Following are common ones: dairy, alternative sweeteners, alcohol, and prepackaged foods.

HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR TRIGGER FOODS

The only way to tell if you’re reacting to any specific food is to test your ketones and glucose before and after you eat the food in question. It’s a three-test process, but it’s worth the effort because once you know what foods are getting in your way, you can eliminate them from your diet.

TRIGGER FOODS

Trigger foods may be preventing you from getting or staying in ketosis.

MOST COMMON TRIGGER FOODS

- DAIRY
- PREPACKAGED FOODS
- ALCOHOL
- ALTERNATIVE SWEETENERS

HOW TO KNOW: TEST GLUCOSE & KETONES

- BEFORE EATING
- 60 MINUTES AFTER EATING
- 3 HOURS AFTER EATING

MOJO TIPS

- 1 Avoid foods that increase blood glucose more than 30mg/dL
- 2 Avoid foods that decrease ketones more than 0.5 mmol/L

BIO-INDIVIDUALITY & TESTING FOR TRIGGER FOODS IN 3 EASY TESTS

To discover trigger foods that may kick you out of ketosis, you conduct three ketone and three glucose tests in one day. The purpose of these tests is to see if the food you eat the day of the tests adversely affects your ketone and glucose levels and thus impedes your ability to reach optimal ketosis (between 1.0 mmol/L and 3.0 mmol/L).

Required Tools

- *Keto-Mojo meter*
- *3 Keto-Mojo ketone strips*
- *3 Keto-Mojo glucose strips*
- *3 lancets*

Test 1: Your Preprandial Baselines for Ketones & Glucose

The purpose of this first test is to get your preprandial (before eating) or baseline ketone and glucose readings. You need this so you can compare them to the results you get after you eat the food in question. The best time to conduct this test is when you are fasted: before breakfast or at least three hours after any food or your last meal. For a step-by-step guide to testing, [click here](#). After testing, record your readings.

Test 2: The Postprandial Test for Hints of Your Reaction to a Particular Food

The purpose of this second test is to introduce a food to your diet and get your ketone and glucose levels 60 minutes later. It is best to eat only the food in question (the more ingredients mixed with it, the more variables in the equation). We suggest eating the recommended or typical portion size for that food. If you are trying out a keto snack, eat the portion size on the package. After testing, record your readings.

Test 3: The Postprandial Test for What You Need to Know About the Particular Food

Take this test at least two but ideally three hours after eating the food in question. This is the test that allows you to see how quickly your ketones and glucose recover (or don't recover) after you ate the food. After testing, record your readings.

Assess the Results

Generally, it's good to avoid foods that cause your blood glucose levels to increase by more than 30mg/dL (1.7 mmol) between your preprandial/baseline test and the 60-minute test or don't get you close to your preprandial/baseline results by the third test at the three-hour mark.

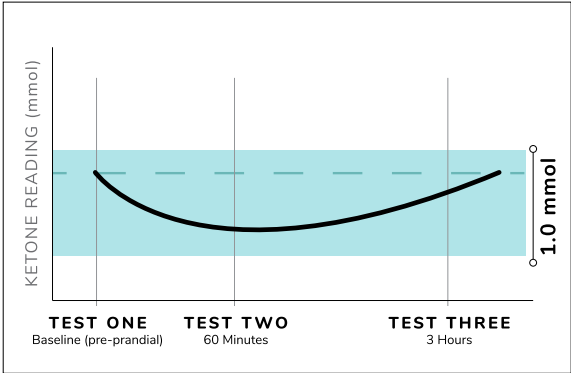
As for ketone levels, you generally don't want them to drop more than 0.5 to 1 mmol/L after eating and want to return to baseline by the three-hour mark. There are some foods that may cause an increase in ketone levels due to their high fat content like MCT (medium-chain triglyceride) oil, heavy cream, and coconut oil; this is OK.

If your results are outside of the acceptable range but the food you are testing is important to you, you can retest with a smaller portion to see if your body responds better. Or you can just decide that the food is off the menu to ensure you maintain ketosis.

You can allow a bit of leniency on the ketone drop if your blood glucose doesn't rise more than 30mg/dL and comes close to baseline after three hours. In any case, you're likely to encounter trigger foods here and there along your journey, and they may be very different from other people's trigger foods. Testing your ketones and glucose gives you the information you need to optimize and individualize your keto lifestyle.

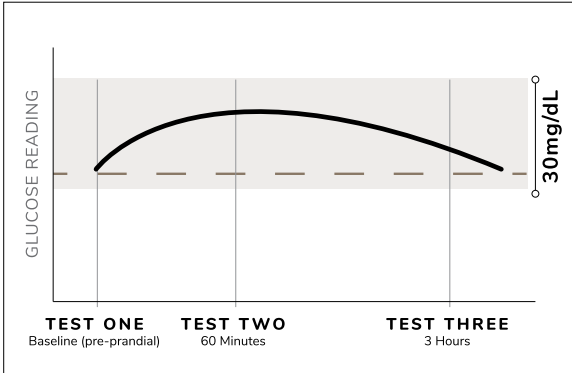
YOUR KETONE READINGS

Your ketones should not drop more than 0.5 to 1.0 mmol/L and should return to baseline in three hours.



YOUR GLUCOSE READINGS

Your glucose should not increase more than 30mg/dL and should return to baseline in three hours.

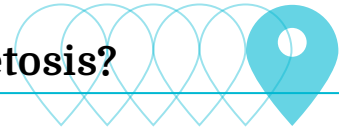


MOJO ON!

It takes time to refine your eating habits to exactly what works for your body, so don't sweat it if you don't become a diet detective overnight. As keto living becomes more familiar to you, it will become easier and more exciting to turn your attention to the small stuff.



Can Too Much Protein Kick You Out of Ketosis?



Eliminating all but 20 grams or so of net carbs per day isn't the only requirement for getting into ketosis. Equally important is eating just enough—but not too much—protein.

Most people will tell you that protein is key to a healthy diet. It fills you up, is converted and used to build and maintain muscle, and is a good source of vitamins and minerals. All of this is true. But when eating a well-formulated ketogenic diet, you not only intentionally deprive yourself of glucose (carbs) to force your body to rely on fat for energy, you not only keep your carb intake low enough to ensure that your body uses fat as its main fuel source but also keep protein intake moderate in order to ensure that you remain in ketosis.

ADEQUATE VS EXCESSIVE PROTEIN

After a meal, your body breaks down protein into amino acids, which are known as the building blocks of protein. These amino acids are used for various functions in the body, such as maintaining muscle mass and creating enzymes and hormones. It's very important to get adequate protein, including on a ketogenic diet. However, if your protein intake is much higher than your body needs, your pancreas will release more insulin to help your muscles take up the excess essential amino acids. The increase in insulin can reduce ketone production in the liver. Additionally, some amino acids are considered glucogenic, meaning they can be converted into glucose, particularly when consumed in excess.

This means that depending on how your unique body reacts to eating more protein than your body requires, you may experience noticeably lower ketone levels and perhaps even discover that you are no longer in ketosis.

HOW MUCH PROTEIN DO YOU NEED?

To best understand how much protein you should eat, you need to know your optimal daily macronutrients or macros (see how to calculate them on page 11). Once you know your recommended macros, you'll want to stick close to the daily maximums to ensure you stay in ketosis. However, you may need more protein if you regularly elevate your heart rate through exercise for at least 30 consecutive minutes.

It's also important to make sure that you're not skimping on healthy fat. If you fall short on your fat intake while eating higher amounts of protein, you may find that you are no longer in ketosis.

Some people are able to tolerate more protein than others. In the same way that some people can eat more carbs and stay in ketosis (yes, that's true), some people can tolerate more protein than others. The only way to find out if you're one of those people is to test your blood.

TESTING TO GET CLARITY

Conducting ketone and glucose blood tests allows you a clear picture of how your body is responding to what you're eating. If you're eating excess protein every day and you remain in ketosis, then your body can handle it. If you're edging over the recommended allowance and are falling out of ketosis, it's time to rein in your diet.

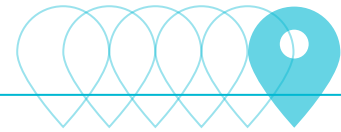
When testing for protein tolerance, gradually introduce higher levels of protein and monitor your test results.

MOJO ON!

Now you know that protein remains a good and important part of the keto diet, and while it's best to eat to your macros, some people can tolerate more protein than others. With a little time and investigation, you'll figure out how much is right for you.



What Is Fat Adapted and How Long Does It Take to Get Fat Adapted?



The ultimate goal on a ketogenic diet is to become fat adapted. If you're not sure what that means or how to do it, allow us to explain.

Fat adapted is the metabolic state your body is in once you've been in ketosis long enough that your body has efficiently transitioned from burning carbs/sugar for energy to burning fats for energy from your food, body-generated fats, and your stored body-fat reserves.

When you first start the keto diet and vastly reduce your carb intake, your body kicks into high gear to burn off all your remaining carbs and glycogen stores. Then, when carbs are no longer available, it begins tapping into your excess fat stores for energy. After four weeks or more in a state of ketosis, your body gets used to living off of fat—becoming fat adapted.

In this state, you'll pretty much lose your cravings for carbs, feel full faster at mealtimes, and feel full longer, which inspires you to eat less and still feel great. You'll also find that once fat adapted, if you happen to have a little higher carb intake one day, it won't affect you or your blood ketone and glucose numbers as much as it did while you were transitioning from a high-carb diet.

FAT ADAPTED

The metabolic state where your body is efficiently burning fats from food and stored body fat.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?	SIGNS YOU ARE FAT ADAPTED
 30 DAYS	 LACK OF HUNGER
TO	
 12 WEEKS	MORE ENERGY
	 BETTER EXERCISE ENDURANCE & PERFORMANCE

MOJO INSIGHT:
Becoming fat adapted will take longer for someone who is insulin resistant.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO REACH FAT ADAPTATION?

It generally takes 30 days to 12 weeks of sticking to a keto diet to become fat adapted. During this time, you want to focus on clean whole foods and stick to a ketogenic diet without cheats or deviations.

First, you'll experience the initial phase: carb withdrawal, which lasts anywhere from three to 14 days and is characterized by cravings, hunger, and perhaps the keto flu (see page 14).

Then you'll roll right into the second phase: Your body is getting used to using fat for energy instead of glucose, which can last six to eight weeks. Finally, after several weeks, you'll hit the third phase, when your body is on fat-burning autopilot, and that's where you'll stay as long as you maintain a keto lifestyle!

SOME SIGNS THAT YOU'RE FAT ADAPTED

How will you know when you've made the final transformation from traditional sugar burner to keto fat burner? When you:

- *Can go four to six hours between meals without getting hungry.*
- *Feel consistently energetic throughout the day, without energy slumps or a rumbling tummy.*
- *Can easily work out while remaining on a keto diet.*

Want to know more? Discover 7 Signs You're Fat Adapted [here](#).

MOJO ON!

Now that you know what it takes to get where you want to be, relax and enjoy the process. And remember: You are a unique being, and each body transitions differently and in its own time. Trust the process and you'll be fat adapted in no time.



More Resources



Ready to digest more information about the keto diet and ketosis? Check out these helpful articles on Keto-Mojo.com:

Keto Side Effects

- [The Keto Diet and Heart Palpitations](#)
- [What is Keto Rash and How Can You Prevent It?](#)
- [Why am I Getting Leg Cramps on a Keto Diet?](#)

Testing Ketones

- [Testing for Ketosis: The Difference Between Blood, Breath, and Urine](#)

Carbs and You

- [How Many Carbs Does Your Body Really Need to Function?](#)
- [What is Your Individual Carb Limit on a Keto Diet?](#)

Weight Loss

- [If I Stop Keto, Will I Gain the Weight I Lost?](#)

Nutrition

- [Do I Need to Take Supplements on a Keto Diet?](#)
- [Not All Fats Create Ketones at the Same Rate](#)



PART 2

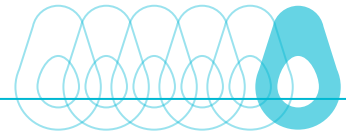
Food and Drink

The only critical element to maintaining a ketogenic lifestyle is following a ketogenic diet. Sounds simple, right? Well, it kind of is. But first you have to get past the challenge of change. Changing your diet can be hard. We're all used to reaching for our longstanding comfort foods, whether for convenience, familiarity, or emotional support. So, if you have been living on a carb-heavy diet and are now feeling lost since you can no longer eat everything you're familiar with, you're not alone.

The biggest intimidation factor in starting a keto diet is food. The thought of rethinking everything you put into your mouth can seem overwhelming. But here's the thing: It's only overwhelming if you don't know or have access to what you can eat. This section tells you all that and more. It'll help ease the transition, with information on what to eat and avoid and how to tell if your body is adversely reacting to foods you consume. Read through it and you'll find that you cannot only eat well, but you can eat an incredible variety of foods, including delicious keto versions of foods you already know and love.



What to Eat on a Keto Diet



The biggest learning curve when starting a keto diet is around food. First, you need to understand what you can't eat: high-glycemic, sugary foods; bready products; and other carb-heavy items—in other words, essentially everything most of us regularly reach for in the standard American diet. This begs the next question: What can you eat?

Contrary to popular belief, the ketogenic diet is not all bacon and bulletproof coffee (a popular good-fats-heavy coffee drink)! Yes, it's a high-fat, moderately- protein, and very low-carb diet, and yes, bacon and the rich coffee drink are on the menu. But the diet can include a wide variety of foods, including plenty of vegetables and moderate amounts of berries, and you can follow it whether you eat vegetarian or dairy-free diets, too.

Once you know what snacks to stock up on, ingredients to cook with, and recipes to turn to, you'll begin to realize that keto cuisine is actually quite approachable, and it even includes iterations of many of your favorite foods (Hello, [lasagna](#), [mashed "fauxtatoes,"](#) [fried chicken](#), and [chocolate chip cookies!](#)).

So, cast away any notions of deprivation or hunger. On the keto diet, you'll feel full and satisfied, not to mention more energized than ever!

As you get started, don't think you have to master the nuances of keto cooking or eating all at once. First, stock up on and work with your favorite foods from the following lists, then broaden your horizons as you get more comfortable with the diet. You can even lean on repetitive, familiar meals while you settle in (for example, eggs and bacon for breakfast; a Cobb-style salad for lunch; and a protein and broccoli with cream sauce for dinner). Soon, you'll discover that you actually can have your cake and eat it, too, without getting kicked out of ketosis or blowing your maximum daily macros!

KETO-FRIENDLY FOODS

We recommend eating a mostly whole-foods diet for several reasons. First, it's easier to know what's in your food and to avoid unintentionally consuming hidden ingredients that may kick you out of ketosis. Second, cooking with whole ingredients rather than consuming processed foods can be less expensive. And you can make meals in bulk and refrigerate or freeze leftovers for easy, wholesome meals down the road. Finally, whole foods are loaded with important nutrients and they taste great, especially when you have good recipes to follow!

To get you started, we share several recipes in this guide. But you can also get going by grabbing and cooking with the following keto-friendly ingredients, making sure to mind your daily macros when determining portion sizes.

THE KETO PANTRY

Keto-friendly foods for your home pantry.



INGREDIENTS TO COOK AND EAT

Following is a starter list to get you going. Cook and eat to your macros with these items and you're on your way!

- **Almond flour** (great for baking and breading)
- Asparagus
- Avocado
- Bacon
- Berries (in moderation)
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cauliflower and cauliflower rice
- Celery
- **Chia seeds** (great for baking and puddings)
- **Coconut flour** (good for baking)
- Cucumber
- Dairy (full-fat: heavy cream, cheese, butter, cream cheese, sour cream, Greek yogurt)
- Dark leafy greens
- Eggs
- **Flaxseeds** (great for baking and smoothies)
- **Hemp hearts** (rich in good fat, protein and minerals; good for breading and baking)
- Meat (beef, pork, poultry with skin), preferably hormone-free and grass-fed
- Nuts (almonds, Brazil nuts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, walnuts)
- Oils/fats (olive oil, avocado oil, ghee, **MCT oil**, coconut oil)
- Seafood (fish and shellfish)
- Sweeteners (**erythritol**, **monk fruit**, and **stevia**)
- **Xanthan gum** (a binder for baked goods and a thickener for sauces and soups)
- Zucchini

SNACKS

Be sure to have some of these on hand. Readily available, keto-friendly snacks are lifesavers when you're hungry and don't have immediate access to a keto-friendly meal.

- *Beef jerky (without added sugar)*
- *Bone broth*
- *Cacao nibs*
- *Cheese*
- *Chicharrones or pork rinds*
- *Hard-boiled eggs*
- *High-fat yogurt (we love triple cream)*
- *Mascarpone cheese mixed with a little erythritol*
- *Nori or seaweed snacks*
- *Nuts (almonds, Brazil nuts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, walnuts)*
- *Olives*
- *Pickles*
- *Sardines*
- *Soft cheese with celery*
- *Veggies with blue-cheese dressing/dip*

Want more snacks info? See our video on [5 Best Foods to Keep You in Ketosis When You're on the Road](#)

BEVERAGES

Because the ketogenic diet is a natural diuretic, it's very important to replenish the water and electrolytes you are losing on an ongoing basis. Staying hydrated helps combat keto flu and avoid early keto symptoms of muscle cramps, headaches, and fatigue—signs of suffering from electrolyte imbalances. Zero-calorie soda is not included in the list below because many artificial sweeteners aren't good for you, and some diet drinks contain sugar alternatives that can kick you out of ketosis (learn more on that on page [51](#)); plus, all of them perpetuate the craving for sugar, which is something you will otherwise joyfully lose on a keto diet. The one exception is Zevia soda, which is sweetened with stevia and keto-friendly.

- *Bone broth*
- *Bulletproof coffee (coffee, unsalted grass-fed butter, and MCT oil)*
- *Coffee*
- *Sparkling water*
- *Tea*
- *Water*

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Can you drink alcohol on a keto diet? Yes, if you drink in moderation, stick with keto-friendly libations, and factor them into your macros. Generally, hard alcohol is OK (clear alcohols like vodka and gin are best), very-low-carb beer is fine, and you can even raise a glass of dry red or white wine or dry sparkling wine (brut). Your best bet for mixed alcoholic drinks is sparkling water and a squeeze or two of lime or lemon. Just be sure you don't overdo it. Moderation really is key here.

If you do indulge in an adult beverage, make sure you use caution, as it tends to lower your resolve to not do destructive things, like eat pizza at midnight, and people tend to have lower tolerances for alcohol on the ketogenic diet.

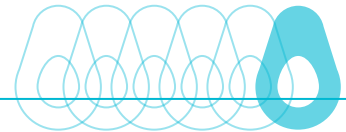
Want to know more about alcohol and keto? Go to page [55](#).

MOJO ON!

It's much easier to go keto when you have food you love to eat that's easy to make. Fortunately, there are tons of great keto recipes on Keto-Mojo.com. Check them out [here](#).



“Dirty” Keto Versus “Clean” Keto



Generally, there are two ways to eat keto: dirty and clean. The difference between dirty and clean keto is straightforward: Dirty keto refers to a diet of less wholesome and more processed or factory-farmed keto-friendly foods and ingredients. Clean keto is focused on whole, natural foods.

DIRTY KETO

Proponents of dirty keto (aka the lazy person’s keto) suggest that as long as you’re hitting your macros you can eat whatever you want, including processed foods, factory-farmed meats, diet drinks, and more. While it’s true that you may be able to achieve ketosis and weight loss on a dirty keto diet, dirty keto does not have the same overarching health benefits of clean keto because dirty keto foods tend to be calorie dense and less nutritious, which could also make you vulnerable to keto flu symptoms.

Dirty keto can also pertain to people who occasionally eat high-carb foods like corn chips or French fries, yet are still able to stay in ketosis. People with high metabolic rates can sometimes get away with this. To find out what your carb threshold is, you need to test for bio-individuality (see page 24).

CLEAN KETO

Clean keto focuses on a diet of whole, natural foods—ideally organic and sustainably raised. Yes, it requires more cooking and food preparing at home. But it makes nutrient density and health a priority and is consequently a more sustainable long-term diet because it emphasizes foods made from scratch from the likes of organic dairy products, grass-fed meats, organic above-ground vegetables, and organic eggs. Clean keto foods also tend to be anti-inflammatory, while many processed keto foods can cause inflammation.

6 REASONS TO EAT WHOLE FOODS WHILE ON A KETO DIET

We recommend eating a mostly whole-foods diet for several reasons

01	02	03	04	05	06
KNOW WHAT'S IN YOUR FOOD	EFFICIENT MEAL PREP	BETTER FOR YOUR HEALTH	AVOID HIDDEN INGREDIENTS	LESS EXPENSIVE	BETTER TASTE

WHY IS DIRTY KETO POPULAR?

We live in the age of convenience. We want our food prepared, fast to access, and effortless to consume, and we often eat on the run. We're also addicted to sugary and starchy products and want emotional satisfaction from the types of comfort foods we're used to eating, even—and perhaps especially—when starting a keto diet. This have-your-cake-and-eat-it-too mentality is exactly what food companies tune into and cater to. They know that if they create products that taste good, satisfy our cravings, and can qualify as keto, people will buy them, regardless of the quality of the ingredients, amount of processing, or additives used to create them. So, like any growing food trend, food manufacturers are producing keto foods that meet our demands. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean they're truly good for you.

While processed or prepackaged dirty keto foods like snack bars, cookies, drinks, etcetera, taste good and are convenient, they aren't generally great for you. In fact, eating primarily dirty keto foods—such as fast food, junk food (like keto chips and cookies), and highly processed meats and snacks—contributes to inflammation and nutritional deficiencies. These can lead to poor recovery from exercise, chronic pain, inflamed joints, autoimmune issues, metabolic issues, and even depression. As with the typical American diet, when we eat a dirty keto diet, our cells are not being properly fueled.

CLEAN VERSUS DIRTY: THE CHEESEBURGER EXAMPLE

If you're unclear on why food differentiators like organic and grass-fed are important in your food choices, consider this: A bunless double cheeseburger from McDonald's would probably fit into your keto macros, as it has 21 grams of fat and only 3 grams of net carbs. But the meat is factory farmed, which means it is likely to contain antibiotics, hormones, and steroids. It's also not as nutrient dense as grass-fed beef, which has a completely different fatty-acid profile than grain-fed beef. (Grass-fed beef contains up to five times more omega-3 fatty acids than grain fed beef and twice as much CLA (conjugated linoleic acid) as grain-fed beef; CLA is known to be protective against cancer, obesity, and diabetes.) Plus the processed cheese on the burger contains added colors. So, while you may be getting your macros, you're getting limited nutrition, plus unknown food additives that may impact your health.

WHY KETO SWEETENERS AREN'T ALWAYS KETO

Then there's the issue of alternative sweeteners. Many keto-friendly packaged goods rely on alternative sweeteners to enhance flavor. But not all keto-friendly sweeteners are created equal; some of them are known to trigger blood-glucose spikes, others contain some carbs, and everyone reacts differently to the varying low- or zero-carb sweeteners on the market. While that packaged keto cookie may be within your macros, it may also kick you out of ketosis without your knowing it. See page [51](#) for information on keto sweeteners.

QUESTIONABLE KETO PACKAGED GOODS

Finally, there's no government regulation on what can be labeled "keto." A product can easily have more carbs than what works for your macros, or it can contain enough carbs to take up all your macros for the day in one small treat. On top of products that aren't great for you, dirty keto opens the door to you mistakenly eating too many carbs, which can also kick you out of ketosis.

WHAT FOODS AND INGREDIENTS MIGHT BE DIRTY KETO?

Dirty keto foods aren't strictly packaged foods. In fact, their being dirty keto has a lot to do with ingredients. Even if you cook at home, you may be using dirty keto ingredients. Following is a list of foods that might qualify as dirty keto foods and some "cleaner" alternatives:

- **Processed oils, such as canola oil, safflower oil, soybean oil, vegetable oil, hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils, and trans fats:** The oils listed here are sometimes used in home and restaurant cooking, fast food, and prepackaged snacks. Avoid cooking with these oils, and if you purchase keto-friendly snacks, be sure to read the labels and avoid those with partially hydrogenated oils and trans fats. Instead, look for snacks prepared with quality oil, like coconut oil.
- **Processed meats like deli meats, bacon, and hot dogs:** Often very high in sodium, factory-farmed processed meats also often contain nitrates. You'll want to avoid these. Instead, reach for brands that are grass-fed, organic, and don't contain nitrates and fillers, such as Applegate Farms, [Butcher Box](#), US Wellness Meats, and Pederson's.
- **Fast foods:** They usually contain highly-processed oils, factory-farmed meats, and unknown added ingredients and are void of nutrition.
- **Diet soft drinks:** They don't contain sugar, but they do contain artificial sweeteners, food dye, and other questionable ingredients.
- **Ultra-factory-farmed dairy:** Some people react to dairy and some don't. Even if you don't have a problem digesting dairy, quality matters. For example, grass-fed, cultured, full-fat cottage cheese is a cleaner option than traditional full-fat cottage cheese, which often comes from cows that are given antibiotics and fed diets containing genetically modified corn and soy. The cultured variety gives you probiotics, which are good for your gut health.
- **Keto "Doritos" and other "keto" chips cooked in poor-quality oils and loaded with sodium**
- **Roasted, salted nuts:** They're often roasted in poor-quality oil and loaded with sodium and other unknown ingredients. Be sure to check the nutritional information on labels for dirty ingredients.

CAN DIRTY KETO BE OK SOMETIMES?

The primary focus of a ketogenic diet should be on whole foods. However, there is a place for dirty keto foods, such as when you are traveling, rushed, or just in need of some convenience. It isn't helpful to your efforts to get down on yourself for eating dirty every now and then. Just be sure not to fully rely on dirty keto for your daily macros, and try to find keto-friendly foods that are made with more natural, real-food ingredients. Place the emphasis on food quality as much as possible and your body will get more nutrients, even when eating dirty. You can find reviews of products we like [here](#).

WHAT KETO FOODS & INGREDIENTS ARE CLEAN?

A clean keto diet is more sustainable and nutrient-rich. It's also quite simple to follow compared to a dirty keto diet. Following is a list of some clean keto foods:

- *Grass-fed beef and pasture-raised poultry and dairy*
- *Wild-caught or sustainably raised fish*
- *Organic eggs*
- *Healthy fats, such as coconut oil, grass-fed butter, ghee, olive oil, avocado oil, lard, tallow, and pasture-raised bacon fat*
- *Low-starch vegetables*
- *Berries, such as blueberries, blackberries, and strawberries (in moderation)*

THE KEY TO EATING CLEAN KETO

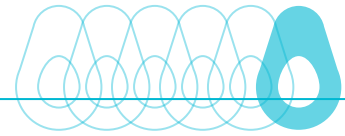
Of course, it's not just convenience that makes people reach for packaged foods. It's also habit. If you're new to keto and have subsisted on mostly packaged foods, it's easier to reach for ready-made items than to learn both how to eat keto and how to cook from scratch (a requirement for eating clean keto). Plus, everyone wants a cookie now and then. However, educating yourself on quality and unhealthy ingredients and foods and learning how to prepare simple, healthful meals is one of the most important investments in the future of your health.

MOJO ON!

So now you know it's best not to cheat yourself out of quality nutrients with a dirty keto diet and risk inflammation and poor health. Instead, aim for a mostly clean diet, which will nourish your cells with healthy fats and nutrient-dense whole foods. Plus, you'll have more energy and feel amazing.



How to Swap Carb-Heavy Foods for Keto-Friendly Foods



You know what makes it a lot easier to enjoy the keto diet? Knowing simple, satisfying swaps for your favorite carb-heavy ingredients and dishes that you aren't eating while on keto! Here's a heaping helping of options to get you going in the kitchen, whether you crave pasta, pizza, or cookies.

KETO-CARB SWAP

Simple, satisfying swaps for your favorite carb-heavy ingredients make it easy to eat what you like.



EASY SWAPS FOR CARB-HEAVY FOODS YOU LOVE

- **Bread Crumbs > Ground Pork Rinds:** Seriously, try grinding pork rinds in a food processor until they're fine (or buy them ready-made). Then dip chicken, pork, or fish in beaten egg followed by the ground rinds and sauté in coconut, avocado, or extra-virgin olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and serve with a side of lemon—and be amazed.
- **Buns > Portobello Mushrooms, Lettuce Leaves, or Napa Cabbage Leaves:** Bolster the nutrition of your sandwiches or burgers between two nearly zero-carb and very low-cal meaty mushrooms or two big leaves of lettuce or cabbage! You can also look for the ever-growing selection of no- and low-carb bread.
- **Cookies > Keto Cookies:** You'll be blown away at how many recipes there are for delicious, totally keto cookies. Start with the Chocolate Chip Cookie recipe [here](#) to see what we mean.

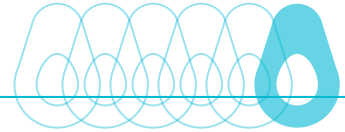
- **Lasagna > Cabbage Instead of Pasta Noodles and Low-Sugar Sauce Instead of High-Sugar Sauce:** Yes, layers of cheese, ricotta, and sauce can be yours if you swap cabbage for the noodles and use a low-carb sauce. Get the recipe [here](#).
- **Lemon Cake > Keto Lemon Cake:** Another shocker: You can have your lemon cake and eat it too. The best part? It takes seconds to make. Get the recipe [here](#).
- **Mac & Cheese > Cauliflower “Mac” & Cheese:** Substitute chopped and steamed cauliflower florets for the pasta and cream for the milk in your favorite mac and cheese recipe and you win! (Or try this [recipe](#).) Take it over the top by finishing with a sprinkling of ground pork rinds for a crispy crust.
- **Mashed Potatoes > Mashed Cauliflower:** You’ll be amazed at how delicious mashed steamed cauliflower is, especially when you add butter and salt or even a bit of cream cheese, cream, or sour cream (or all of the above!) and Parmesan cheese. Try this [recipe](#).
- **Rice > Cauliflower Rice:** Cauliflower florets processed in a food processor into rice-size bits perfectly mimic the consistency of white rice. You can buy cauliflower rice fresh or frozen in grocery stores or make your own by pulsing cauliflower florets (heads only, not the stems) in a food processor. To serve, briefly sauté in a little avocado oil to your desired doneness and enjoy!
- **Pancakes > Keto Pancakes:** Get the almond flour-based recipe [here](#)!
- **Pasta > Zoodles:** In moderation, peeled, spiralized zucchini (“zoodles”) can sub for spaghetti. Don’t have a spiralizer? Make long, wide “fettuccine” strips using a vegetable peeler. Microwave your zoodles for 30 seconds to warm but not entirely cook them, then add your keto-friendly sauce of choice and *mangia!* Taste for yourself with our [Keto Vodka Pasta with Sausage](#).
- **Pizza Crust > Cauliflower Crust:** Ever-popular cauliflower crusts are available at grocery stores nationwide or you can [make your own](#).
- **Sugar > Alternative Sugar:** While you’ll kick the sugar cravings on the keto diet, it’s still nice to know you can stir a little sweetness into your tea or cupcakes if you want. Do this with a variety of keto-friendly sugar substitutes highlighted on page [51](#).
- **Syrups > Alternative Syrups:** Believe it or not, you can have [chocolate](#), [caramel](#), and even [maple-flavored](#) syrup, if you buy zero-carb brands.
- **Wheat Flour > Coconut or Almond Flour:** These two flours have different properties, but each is keto and delicious. Find out more about flours on page [48](#).

MOJO ON!

See? There are so many keto hacks! Put even a couple of them in your apron pocket and you’re on the road to keto-cooking satisfaction!



Vegetables to Eat on a Ketogenic Diet



It's a common misconception that you can't eat a lot of vegetables while on a keto diet. In fact, you can and should eat plenty of vegetables! But not just any vegetables. Some are high-carb and high-sugar. Most root vegetables—like carrots, beets, yams, parsnips, and turnips—are high in carbs. Avoid those veggies and focus on the keto-friendly selections listed below. Just remember, carbs add up fast. You want to stick to about 20 grams of net carbs per day or more if you're regularly athletic or can stay in ketosis with more carbs (just test to figure that out), so mind your macros while enjoying vegetables.

LOW-CARB VEGETABLES (3 or fewer net carbs per ½ cup)

- *Arugula*
- *Asparagus*
- *Avocados*
- *Bell peppers*
- *Bok choy*
- *Broccoli*
- *Broccoli rabe*
- *Cabbage*
- *Cauliflower*
- *Celery*
- *Cucumbers*
- *Radishes*
- *Spinach*
- *Sugar snap peas*
- *Summer squash*
- *Swiss chard*
- *Tomatoes*
- *Watercress*
- *Zucchini*

HIGHER-CARB VEGETABLES (6 or fewer net carbs per ½ cup, raw)

- *Carrots*
- *Onions*

HIGHEST-CARB VEGETABLES (more than 7 net carbs per ½ cup, raw)

- *Beets*
- *Corn*
- *Parsnips*
- *Peas*
- *Potatoes*
- *Sweet potatoes*
- *Yams*
- *Yucca*

MOJO ON!

Not too savvy on how to cook vegetables? Now's a great time to learn! You can steam them, then finish them with butter and spices, or toss in coconut oil and spices and roast them, or even cut them up and serve them as a salad with your favorite keto-friendly dressing or a simple mix of olive oil, vinegar, Dijon mustard, and salt. You can get started on your newfound enjoyment of vegetables anytime by sprinkling some salt or a little keto-friendly vinaigrette (vinaigrette made with keto-friendly oil) on ripe avocado slices. It's pure, simple pleasure!



The Best and Worst Butters & Oils for the Keto Diet



Rejoice! Now that you're on a high-fat diet, you can emphatically say, "Pass the butter" or "Extra salad dressing, please!" In fact, butters and oils—both of which are predominantly fat—are an important part of keto cuisine. But not all oils are created equal: Some oils you'll want to make a regular part of your diet and others you'll want to avoid. Here we share basics on what you need to know about these ingredients and condiments.

It's not hard to transition from using all kinds of cooking fats to just those that are keto-friendly. In fact, if you cook at all, you probably already have some perfect options in your kitchen. Take a look at the following keto-friendly choices, and reach for them when you need to cook, make a dressing, or finish a dish with a drizzle of oil or a smear of butter.



BUTTER

It's a big thumbs-up for butter, especially grass-fed butter as it contains only trace amounts of carbs per serving. Like other fatty dairy products, butter is rich in conjugated linoleic acid (CLA)—the fatty acid that may promote fat loss. Grass-fed butter contains five times more CLA than butter from grain-fed cows and is much higher in health-protecting omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin K2. Use it for cooking or baking, or spread it generously on food when you need more fat. The classic French snack of radishes with butter and flaky salt? Totally keto and delicious!

Nutritional Information: 1 Tbsp: 102 Calories, 12g Fat, 0g Carbs, 0.1g Protein

CLARIFIED BUTTER & GHEE

Clarified butter and ghee are essentially butter with the milk solids removed; they're almost exclusively fat, most of which is saturated fat.

Clarified butter is made by heating butter, removing it from the heat after the butterfat and milk solids separate, then skimming away and discarding the milk solids. *Ghee* (the Hindi word for "fat") is butter that's been cooked a bit longer to allow the milk solids to caramelize and produce a deeper golden color and distinctive nutty flavor before they're skimmed and discarded. In both instances, what's left is pure butterfat, which can be enjoyed and used the same way you'd use butter. Because ghee separates milk from fat, this butter substitute is better than butter if you have allergies or sensitivities to dairy products.

Since both clarified butter and ghee don't contain liquid and milk components that spoil easily, they have longer shelf lives, which is part of the reason they're staples in hot countries. Plus, they have much higher smoke points than butter, which makes them awesome for cooking.

Store-bought ghee can be expensive and is less common in grocery stores, so many ketonians make it at home. The recipe is easy. You can easily find one online.

Nutritional Information: 1 Tbsp: 112 Calories, 13g Fat, 0g Net Carbs, 0g Protein

COCONUT OIL

Coconut oil has unique properties that make it a rock star for keto cooking. Specifically, it's rich in medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs) at about 50 percent, which can increase ketone production and may increase metabolic rate and promote the loss of weight and belly fat. It's solid at room temperature like other mostly saturated fats (like butter), and it can be substituted in equal amounts for any nut, seed, or vegetable oil. However, when substituting coconut oil for a solid fat, such as butter or lard, use 25 percent less coconut oil than the recipe calls for. Want to try a recipe using coconut oil for frying? Try our tasty recipe for Keto Coconut Chicken Tenders on page [85](#)!

Nutritional Information: 1 Tbsp: 121 Calories, 13g Fat, 0g Net Carbs, 0g Protein

AVOCADO OIL

Avocado oil is simply oil pressed from avocados. High in monounsaturated fats, it's very healthy, as 70 percent of it is oleic acid, which is anti-inflammatory. Add that it has mild flavor and a high smoke point (the point at which the oil begins to burn and its smell and flavor are altered) and you can understand why it's a staple in keto cooking. Use this versatile oil in dressings, marinades, and sautés, as well as in recipes for homemade mayonnaise.

Nutritional Information: 1 Tbsp: 124 Calories, 14g Fat, 0g Net Carbs, 0g Protein

MCT OIL

MCTs (medium-chain triglycerides or medium-chain fatty acids) are fats most often derived from coconut oil, palm oil, or a mixture of the two. They come in liquid form and are colorless and odorless, and stay liquid at room temperature, making them the perfect fat to add to food, smoothies, and coffee for extra energy. Because the oil is quickly and easily converted by the liver into ketones it's a darling of keto cooking. But use it sparingly and gradually increase it over time as it may cause a stomachache and diarrhea.

With a relatively low smoke point, [MCT oil](#) is ideal for use in salad dressings and in relatively low-temperature baking. With its neutral flavor, it can be paired with a wide range of ingredients and flavors. Chocolate Peanut Butter Fat Bombs (page [95](#)) use MCT oil and are awesome, so give 'em a try!

Nutritional Information: 1 Tbsp: 121 Calories, 13g Fat, 0g Net Carbs, 0g Protein

EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

Versatile and multifunctional, extra-virgin olive oil (EVOO) is a cold-pressed, heart-healthy oil that contains oleic acid along with many antioxidants. Cooking with EVOO has never been easier or tastier—try drizzling it over salad or vegetables, stirring it into a hearty stew or soup for added flavor, or lightly pouring it onto a sliced avocado, sliced tomato, or other keto snacks.

Nutritional Information: 1 Tbsp: 120 Calories, 14g Fat, 0g Net Carbs, 0g Protein

LARD

It may be less commonly used in today's everyday cooking, but lard (rendered pork fat) is a great choice on the keto diet. It functions similarly to butter, providing flavor, crispness, flakiness, and tenderness to baked goods—but it has a much stronger flavor. Lard can also be used for sautéing and making sauces such as [Béarnaise](#).

Nutritional Information: 1 Tbsp: 115 Calories, 13g Fat, 0g Net Carbs, 0g Protein

TALLOW

Tallow (rendered animal fat, usually from beef) is 50 percent saturated fat, 42 percent monounsaturated fat, and only 4% polyunsaturated fat and is great for high-heat cooking. Store-bought tallow can be expensive and is often hydrogenated, so if you're inclined, you can easily make your own—there are lots of recipes available online. If you buy it, seek tallow made from grass-fed cows; it contains 300 to 500 percent more conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) than that of corn-fed animals, and CLA has awesome anti-inflammatory, autoimmune-boosting properties!

Nutritional Information: 1 Tbsp: 115 Calories, 13g Fat, 0g Net Carbs, 0g Protein

DUCK FAT

When you hear the term “duck fat” you may think it's a gourmet ingredient used only in fancy French restaurants. But duck fat doesn't have to be reserved for special occasions or elegant preparations. Made from only the natural fat from ducks, it's usually rendered and filtered to make sure the fat is pure, providing outstanding flavor to just about any dish—from green vegetables to grass-fed steaks.

Nutritional Information: 1 Tbsp: 113 Calories, 13g Fat, 0g Net Carbs, 0g Protein

OILS TO AVOID

Oils that go through intense processing generally include processed trans fats that may be damaging to overall health. Thus, we recommend avoiding the following oils:

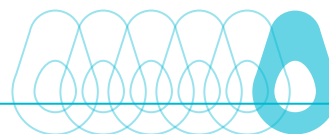
- *Canola*
- *Corn*
- *Grapeseed*
- *Cottonseed*
- *Peanut*
- *Safflower*
- *Sesame*
- *Soybean*
- *Sunflower*

MOJO ON!

Now that you're armed with better knowledge of which fats to cook with, try using them when you sauté, fry, or bake. Before you know it, you'll be easily cooking keto!



All About Flours & Binding Agents



Did you know that one cup of all-purpose flour contains nearly 100 grams of carbs? So much for diving into a donut when you crave something sweet! But this doesn't mean you'll never be able to enjoy a fried or baked dessert or even a sandwich while you're on a super-low-carb diet. There's a whole world of delicious keto baking waiting for you—if you understand the best low-carb substitutes for traditional, high-carb, all-purpose flour.

KETO-FRIENDLY FLOURS

Yes, you can have your cake and eat it, too — if you stock up on and use these keto-friendly flours when baking or breading foods at home. The following flours are the most commonly used and most versatile for keto recipes. Just make sure you just keep an eye on your carbohydrate intake; while keto-friendly flours open many doors to you for baking and cooking, their carbs can add up quickly!

- **Almond Flour: Keto's All-Purpose Flour Alternative**

Almond flour is simply finely ground blanched almonds. A must-have for the keto kitchen, it is a good source of vitamin E and is rich in magnesium, iron, manganese, calcium, and potassium. It lends a nutty flavor and moist, slightly dense character to baked goods. Even if you haven't baked with almond flour in the past, you've probably enjoyed it: You know those colorful, fancy French sandwich cookies called macarons? They're made with almond flour!

Cooking Tips: Almond flour is great for cakes, cookies, and quick breads. Try these recipes on the Keto-Mojo website to become familiar with almond flour: [Lemon Bars](#) (see page 97) and [Keto Vanilla Donuts with Keto Chocolate Glaze](#).

Nutritional Information: Optimal brands (we like Trader Joe's and Whole Foods Market bulk section):
¼ Cup (28g): 162 Calories, 14g Fat, 2.5g Net Carbs, 6g Protein

Note: The macros in almond flour vary by brand, so look for brands that contain 10 or fewer net carbs per cup.

- **Almond Meal**

Like almond flour, **almond meal** is made from ground almonds. However, the almond skins are not removed before grinding, so the texture is coarser and more grainy than almond flour.

Cooking Tips: Almond meal is commonly used in baked goods like cookies and quick breads but with denser results than if you use almond flour. Because of its texture, it can also be used instead of bread crumbs to coat meats, chicken, or fish (like [Crispy Baked Fish with Herb Sauce](#)) or to top vegetables and casseroles.

*Nutritional Information: Optimal brands (we like Trader Joe's and Whole Foods Market bulk section):
¼ Cup (28g): 162 Calories, 14g Fat, 2.5g Net Carbs, 6g Protein*

Note: Macros vary from brand to brand, so be sure to check the label of the brand you're using to get the most accurate totals.

- **Coconut Flour**

Light and extra fine with barely there coconut flavor and a low score on the glycemic index, [coconut flour](#) is made from ground, dried coconut meat. It's lower in calories and higher in fiber than almond flour. It's also rich in protein and fat, which makes it exceptionally filling. Coconut flour is versatile, too—you can use it in both savory and sweet recipes.

Cooking Tips: This versatile flour can be used for baked goods and coatings and to thicken soups. Coconut flour is absorbent, so expect to use more liquid than normal when baking with it. And batters made with coconut flour take a little more time to thicken. Give it a try with this awesome recipe for [Keto Coconut Shrimp with Spicy Aioli Dipping Sauce](#) or [Maple Pecan Pie!](#)

Nutritional Information: ¼ Cup (24g): 120 Calories, 4g Fat, 6g Net Carbs, 4g Protein

Note: Coconut flour macros vary (though not as dramatically as almond flour); be sure to check the label of the brand you're using to get the most accurate totals.

- **Ground Flaxseed or Flax Meal**

[Flaxseed](#) (aka linseed or flax) is best consumed in milled or ground form because whole flaxseed is difficult for the body to digest and absorb. Nutritionally, flaxseed is high in fat, fiber, and triglyceride-lowering omega-3 fatty acids. It's also very low in digestible carbs.

Cooking Tips: Expect baked items to brown more quickly when they contain flaxseed meal, so consider lowering the oven temperature a bit or decreasing the cooking time. Flax's high oil content makes it a good substitute for eggs in baking recipes; for each egg you want to replace, mix 1 Tbsp ground flax meal with 3 Tbsp water, and let the mixture gel for 10 minutes. Want to give flax meal a try? Start with a keto [Slicing Bread recipe!](#)

Nutritional Information: 1 Tbsp: 37 Calories, 3g Fat, 0g Net Carbs, 1.3g Protein

OTHER STYLES TO EXPLORE

Once you get the hang of these key keto flours, you may want to explore the following flours:

- **Chia Seed Flour**
- **Nut Flours**

Walnut flour, hazelnut flour, pecan flour (you'll most likely need to make some of these yourself, but you can find recipes online)

BINDING AGENTS

Binding agents help your alternative flour mimic wheat flour’s desirable structure by binding with other ingredients; they also add structure and texture to the final product.

- **Xanthan Gum**

A gluten-free food additive that’s made from bacteria-fermented sugar, **xanthan gum** is a powdered binding agent that lends structure to baked goods and thickness to soups and stews. It’s often used as a substitute for cornstarch and contains minimal carbs, making it a favorite source among keto cooks. You’ll find a chance to use xanthan gum in our **Keto Cheddar-Spinach Soufflés** recipe.

Cooking Tips: Use xanthan gum to thicken soups and sauces or give structure to baked goods. You don’t need a lot—a teaspoon or less to a large pot of soup will usually do the trick!

Nutritional Information: 1 Tbsp: 30 Calories, 0g Fat, 0g Net Carbs, 0g Protein

- **Psyllium Husks**

Psyllium is a seed that is produced commercially mostly for use as a dietary fiber, and its small husk is known for being an excellent, fiber-rich binding agent. When combined with liquid, psyllium husks become thick and gluey and expand to 10 times their original size! You can find them in well-stocked grocery stores and health food stores.

Cooking Tips: Psyllium husk is also an inexpensive binding agent. A half teaspoon of **psyllium husk** per serving is enough to thicken your favorite recipes.

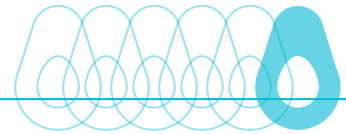
Nutritional Information: 1 Tbsp (9g): 30 Calories, 0g Fat, 0g Net Carbs, 0g Protein

MOJO ON!

Ready to get cooking? Your tool kit for clean keto cooking is growing by the day! Keep up the good work, and don’t forget to post your success stories on Instagram and tag #ketomojo.



Sugar Substitutes for a Sweet Keto Life



It's no surprise that kicking the sugar habit is one of the toughest keto hurdles to clear. Over the past 40 years, added sugar has become so ingrained in the American diet, it's tucked into practically all processed foods (even spaghetti sauce and salad dressing!). Worse, it inspires our bodies to release dopamine, creating genuine addiction-like cravings that are hard to deny.

Some would argue that you could eat some sugar, if it falls within your daily macros. But to follow a clean, health-minded path, you'll want to save the day's allotted carbs for more nutritious options, such as the keto-friendly vegetables we highlight on page 43. Eating more nutritious options will make you feel healthier and more satisfied, not to mention help you break your sugar addiction, which will in turn stop you from craving more sugar.

ARE SUGAR ALCOHOLS KETO?

What are they?

An alternative sweetener to sugar. They contain carbs, but our bodies don't absorb all of the carbs they contain. That means they don't raise your blood sugar levels like regular sugar does.

HIGHER EFFECT ON BLOOD SUGAR
Sorbitol Maltitol Isomalt

MODEST EFFECT ON BLOOD SUGAR
Xylitol Mannitol Lactitol

LITTLE TO NO EFFECT ON BLOOD SUGAR
Erythritol

WHICH SWEETENERS ARE BEST FOR KETO?

Sweetener	Effect on Blood Sugar	Digestive Issues
Erythritol	Little to no effect	Causes the least digestive issues, almost no effect on blood sugar, works in a similar way to regular sugar.
Stevia	Little to no effect	Zero carbs or calories, has a slight bitter aftertaste, doesn't cause any digestive issues.
Monk Fruit	Little to no effect	Very low calorie, no impact on blood sugar and doesn't cause digestive problems.

BREAKING THE SUGAR HABIT

Yes, one of the great benefits of the keto diet is ridding yourself of sugar reliance. But it doesn't have to be a white-knuckle experience. There are wonderful noncaloric sugar substitutes that allow you to enjoy sweet rewards without carbs, glucose spikes, addiction, or other adverse reactions—at least for most people. Like everything else, your reaction to sugar substitutes is individual. We highly recommend you test some of the alternatives mentioned below by following our food-sensitivity guidelines on page 24 to make sure you're not having adverse glucose reactions to them.

COMMON SUGARS TO AVOID

Sugar in any form is off limits on the keto diet. That means it's time to say goodbye to these sweeteners, as well as any packaged foods that contain them:

- *Agave syrup*
- *Cane sugar*
- *High-fructose corn syrup*
- *Honey*
- *Maple syrup*
- *Raw sugar*
- *Sugar*
- *Turbinado sugar*

So, what can you enjoy instead?

ALTERNATIVE SWEETENERS

Alternative sweeteners lend all the sweetness to foods without all the calories and carbs. But they're not all created equal in flavor or benefits. Most of them fall into three categories: natural sweeteners, sugar alcohols, and artificial sweeteners. We've broken them down here so you know the difference, but if you just want to know what sweeteners we recommend, skip this section and go straight to our recommendations, which you'll find on page 56.

NATURAL SWEETENERS

Natural sweeteners are made from concentrated components of edible plants.

- **Allulose:** **Allulose** is a popular sugar-like low-calorie sweetener. It's made up of a monosaccharide (a simple sugar) that is found in small quantities in wheat and certain fruits, such as jackfruit, figs, and raisins. The reason that allulose has no glycemic index or net carb content is that the body doesn't metabolize it. In addition, research suggests that it may lower blood sugar levels and help you feel full by increasing the release of the satiety hormone GLP-1. We like the **RxSugar** brand of allulose sweeteners and syrups.
- **Monk Fruit:** **Monk fruit**, known in China as *lo han guo*, has been used as a natural sweetener for thousands of years. It has zero calories, zero carbs, and is about 200 times sweeter than sugar. In powder form, it dissolves quickly in liquids (perfect for tea or coffee!). Don't use the granular form for marinades or other liquid recipes because it dissolves when heated and then reconstructs when it cools. Want to try a monk fruit sweetener? We like **Lakanto brand**, which makes substitutes for granulated sugar, brown sugar, and even maple syrup.

- **Stevia:** Often called “sugar leaf” and made from the plant *Stevia rebaudiana*, **stevia** is more than 150 times sweeter than regular sugar. It’s easy to find at grocers and even restaurants. If you’ve tried it, you already know it may have a unique aftertaste. You can find it in powder form and liquid concentrate (great for sweetening beverages). If you use it in baking, you’ll want to slowly add up to half as much stevia as sugar, tasting along the way to ensure you don’t add too much.

SUGAR ALCOHOLS

Ever heard of sugar alcohols? We hadn’t either before going keto. But they’re your new best friends for baking, morning coffee, and more, and they come in forms similar to the types of sugars you’re used to enjoying.

Several sugar alcohols are found naturally in fruits and vegetables. However, some are processed from other sugars, such as the glucose in cornstarch. Some are nearly carb-free and others contain about half the carbs of regular sugar. Available in granular, powdered, brown-sugar style, and even liquid form, all can be bought online, in specialty grocery stores, or on Amazon. They’re what usually sweetens sugar-free or low-carb packaged foods. Regardless, they tend to be extra sweet, so use them judiciously when learning to bake with them. We’ve separated the zero-carb from the lower-carb options below. You’ll want to stick with the zero-carb sweeteners.

Sugar Alcohols with Nearly Zero Net Carb Count (When Used in Moderation)

- **Erythritol:** Great tasting; 70% as sweet as sugar and contains essentially zero carbs because the majority is excreted unchanged in the urine; does not raise blood glucose; has the fewest digestive side effects (such as bloating, flatulence, and diarrhea) of all sugar alcohols; is one of the ingredients in popular sweeteners such as **Truvia**, **Swerve**, and **stevia**, among others, and is used in many keto and low-carb commercially available desserts.
- **Lactitol:** Used as a replacement bulk sweetener for low-calorie foods with approximately 40 percent of the sweetness of sugar, it is popular for baking.
- **Mannitol:** Generally not sold as a standalone sweetener because it isn’t very sweet; often included as an ingredient in candies and chewing gum and has a pleasant taste and mouthfeel.
- **Xylitol:** Commonly found in sugar-free chewing gum, mints, and toothpaste, this sweetener has a similar sweetness to sugar with 60 percent of the calories; may slightly raise blood sugar and cause digestive symptoms such as gas, bloating, and diarrhea when consumed in large amounts.

Sugar Alcohols with Some Carb Count (Not Recommended)

- **Isomalt**
- **Maltitol**
- **Sorbitol**

ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS (NOT RECOMMENDED)

Artificial sweeteners, made from plants or even sugar, are exponentially sweeter than regular sugar and are generally combined with maltodextrin or dextrose (sugar) as a carrying agent. They're controversial in the keto community because of concerns that they stall weight loss or can adversely affect ketosis for some people. The following artificial sweeteners are popular, but not recommended:

- *Aspartame*
- *Sucralose*
- *Saccharin*
- *Acesulfame K*

SWEETENERS WE RECOMMEND

Ideally, you want to use sweeteners that have little effect on insulin levels and blood sugar; contain virtually no calories, net carbs, or fillers with hidden carbs; are high quality with proven track records; and have the least bitter flavor or aftertaste. For those reasons, we are partial to the following sweeteners:

- *Allulose*
- *Erythritol*
- *Monk fruit*
- *Stevia* (or a blend of Stevia and one of the above)

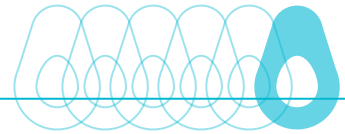
Bonus: When used in combination, they seem to cancel out any adverse aftertaste.

MOJO ON!

Now that you've got a better sense of what sweeteners you can use, consider heading to our recipe section on page [71](#) and trying them out!



Alcohol & the Keto Diet



Now that you're settling into the diet, it's time to get more alcohol savvy, especially if you're treating this journey as a new, healthier, long-term lifestyle.

CUSTOMIZED MODERATION

Plainly put, alcohol is very much like sweets on the ketogenic diet—in moderation and within your macros, you should be able to enjoy it without negatively affecting your ketone levels or weight loss.

If you choose to introduce alcohol to your keto diet, go slow. Its effects may be more intense while on the keto diet, and drinking can lower your guard and may inspire you to overeat.

Most adults can consume one to three alcoholic beverages per week without hindering ketosis and/or weight loss.

But even then, “moderation” is relative. Depending on the alcohol and the mixer, drinks have varying levels of calories and carbs (sugars), and each body reacts to alcohol differently. Your best bet is to steer toward the keto-friendly alcohols listed below and remember to choose booze and mixers that won't kick you out of ketosis.

Then, if you want to truly know your limits for enjoying beer, wine, or spirits and staying in ketosis, you'll need to consume the libation in question and test your ketones and glucose to see how they react. To do this, test your ketones and blood glucose before one glass of wine or spirits, then 30 minutes after, and again three

ALCOHOL & KETO

Alcohol is very much like sweets on the ketogenic diet; in moderation and within your macros, you should be able to enjoy it without negatively affecting your ketone levels or weight loss.

HARD ALCOHOL
Most non-flavored hard liquors contain 0g carbs
ZERO CARBS DOES NOT MEAN ZERO CALORIES

BEER
All beer contains carbs, with the lowest net carbs beers contains 2-5g
LIMIT YOUR BEER INTAKE TO A GLASS

WINE
Most wines contain 2-4g net carbs per glass
DRINK WINE 13% ALC OR LESS TO AVOID SUGARS

Test your glucose & ketones to make sure you can tolerate alcohol without getting kicked out of ketosis
THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL MAY BE MORE INTENSE ON KETO, START SLOWLY

hours after you drink the entire beverage to see if your glucose spikes or your ketones drop and don't return to pre-beverage levels. If all goes well, try another day with two glasses of the same beverage and see what that gets you.

MOST KETO-FRIENDLY HARD ALCOHOLS

The following non-flavored hard liquors are all 0 grams of carbs:

- *Vodka*
- *Rum*
- *Gin*
- *Tequila*
- *Whiskey*
- *Some brandies*

But before you start mixing martinis with abandon, remember that 0 grams of carbs does not equal 0 calories: A 1-ounce serving of the spirits listed above is about 65 calories. If you're going to drink and want to stay on track, calculate your macros to account for your planned martini (or two).

KETO-FRIENDLY MIXERS

We probably don't need to tell you that the sweet and sour mix is off the menu due to its high sugar content. But there are mixers that support your new lifestyle as well as cocktail creativity! Try any of the following:

- *Seltzer water*
- *Zevia (many flavors sweetened with stevia)*
- *Fresh lemon or lime juice (about 11 calories and 4 grams net carbs for both)*
- *Berries (keep an eye on the carbs)*
- **Homemade Keto Simple Syrup:** In a small heatproof bowl, combine 2 Tbsp erythritol-based granulated sweetener (like Swerve or Lakanto 1:1) and 2 Tbsp boiling water, stir until dissolved, then stir in 1 Tbsp lemon juice (get a delicious recipe that uses it here).

WORDS OF WINE WISDOM

Who doesn't love to relax over a nice glass of wine? It's even more enjoyable when you can clink glasses knowing you're going to stay in ketosis. While sweet wines (with a lot of added sugar—hello, white zinfandel and some dessert wines) are high carb due to their sugar content, even wines with no added sugar have carbohydrates from the fermented grapes! On average, you'll throw back 2 to 4 grams of net carbs and 90 to 120 calories per 5-ounce pour.

Unfortunately, wine labels don't include nutritional information, so it can be tricky to figure out which wines are lower in carbs, but there is one trick that helps: Look for lower-alcohol wines (under 13 percent alcohol). There are many of them and all wine labels are required to state the alcohol percentage. In general, the lower the alcohol, the lower the carbohydrates and sugar. Also, white wines tend to have lower alcohol content than red wines. But be careful with wines like Riesling and certain sparkling wines, as they can taste dry but contain residual sugar.

GOOD WINE CHOICES

Whites

- **Austria/Germany:** Riesling (Look for “trocken” (dry) selections; if testing shows you’re sensitive to carbs/sugars, Riesling may not be best for you.)
- **Burgundy, France:** Chablis, dry Champagne (brut, brut nature); dry Riesling from Alsace, Australia, or Rheingau
- **Italy:** Pinot Grigio, Soave
- **Loire, France:** Sancerre, Pouilly Fumé (both sauvignon blanc), Muscadet (Melon de Bourgogne)
- **Spain:** Albariño

Reds

- **Burgundy, France:** Pinot Noir; Beaujolais; Gamay–Cru Beaujolais
- **California:** Sonoma and North Coast Pinot Noir
- **Italy:** Chianti (Sangiovese), Barolo (Nebbiolo)
- **Loire, France:** Chinon (Cabernet Franc)

Rosés

- **Napa Valley, California** (check alcohol levels)
- **Provence, France**

KETO-FRIENDLY BEER

There’s no such thing as a carb-free beer. Even low-carb options will cost you 2 to 5 grams of net carbs per bottle, so we recommend you limit the times you choose to crack a cold one while on a keto diet.

MOJO ON!

Whether it’s shaken or stirred, learn more about safely imbibing on the ketogenic diet in this [video](#).



More Resources



Now that you have a taste of the delicious keto life, here's your chance to learn more by clicking any of the links below:

- [Can Vegans & Vegetarians Do Keto?](#)
- [What is MCT Oil and How Can It Help with My Keto Diet?](#)
- [Not All Fats Create Ketones at the Same Rate](#)
- [What's the Difference Between Grass-Fed Beef and Grain-Fed Beef?](#)
- [How To Do Keto Dairy-Free](#)
- [More recipes!](#)
- [More on the ketogenic diet and nutrition!](#)

Also, explore the recipe section beginning on page [71](#).



PART 3

The Keto Lifestyle

Once you're familiar with the essentials of the keto diet, you'll be able to start pondering the nuances, like if and how exercise fits into the lifestyle, whether you should introduce fasting, or how to manage going out to dinner while keto. This section covers the bases and sends you on your way with lots of resources to help you successfully continue on your keto journey.



What You Need to Know About Exercise on the Keto Diet



As your body is making the metabolic switch into ketosis, it's best to take it easy at the gym. You may feel fatigued, and you'll want to listen to your body. It takes time to become fat adapted, so be patient. Your body is going through a lot of changes during your first month. After about a week of being in ketosis, some people feel they can get back to their old workout routines. By your fourth week, you'll for sure feel energized and ready to reinstate old exercise habits or initiate new ones. Here, we'll tell you what you need to know to ensure your body has the fuel it needs to hit the gym, pool, TRX class, or yoga mat.

CONFIRM YOUR MACROS

The key to energized exercise on the ketogenic diet is making sure you are eating enough calories, fat, and protein. In fact, you'll want to eat a bit more protein if you exercise regularly and vigorously. The amount of protein you need depends on the type of activity you're doing, the duration, frequency, and level of exertion. But a general recommendation for a nonprofessional athlete (someone who exercises three or more days per week and achieves an elevated heart rate for 30 or more minutes) is a total of 0.6 to 1 gram of protein multiplied by your weight in pounds per day or 1.2 to 2 grams of protein multiplied by your weight in kilograms per day.

To know the exact amount of protein to add, reconfigure your macros by factoring your exercise into the equation with a macro calculator, which is easy to find online, free to use, and essential for figuring out your body's needs based on many factors, including your activity level.

ENERGY LOAD

Having a pre-workout meal or high-fat drink will help give you energy to complete your workouts. Some people like to mix a flavored MCT powder with unsweetened almond milk, while others enjoy a bulletproof coffee (a classic keto coffee drink); a low-protein, high-fat shake; some spinach; or a hard-boiled egg.

HYDRATE

Make sure you're adequately hydrated and keeping up on your electrolytes as well. You can do this by consuming foods high in magnesium, potassium, and sodium (think pumpkin seeds, avocados, leafy greens, or an electrolyte powder).

TIME YOUR EXERCISE RIGHT

It's important to time your nutrition for your workouts. While some enjoy working out in a fasted state, others prefer to eat prior to exercise. You'll need to try both options to see what works best for you. If

you want to eat before exercise, try timing your meal to no more than two to three hours before your exercise and include plenty of good fats and some protein. If you prefer to eat after a workout, eat within two hours after (you can still have a bit of extra protein during this time frame without affecting ketosis, but as always, test your ketone levels to find your sweet spot).

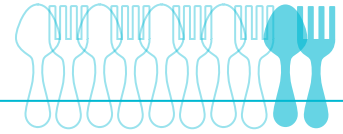
Watch this [video](#) by celebrity health and fitness coach Thomas DeLauer explaining how testing your ketones before and after a workout can help you find your metabolic edge.

MOJO ON!

Now you know there's no need to be afraid to crush it in the gym. The ketogenic diet won't hold you back! In fact, if done properly, your keto status can help you reach new fitness levels!



What Is Intermittent Fasting & Should You Do It?



There's a buzz about intermittent fasting in the news in magazines, on Instagram, and on blogs. It seems everyone is doing it. But what is it exactly? Is it safe? Does it speed up keto progress? Is it worth doing? Let's demystify the practice so you can confidently answer these questions and determine whether intermittent fasting is right for you.

INTERMITTENT FASTING DEFINED

Fundamentally, fasting is voluntary prolonged abstinence from food, beverage, or both, for a specific amount of time, ranging from hours to weeks with the intention of helping jumpstart your body toward optimal health. *Intermittent fasting* is alternating cycles of fasting and eating.

Intermittent fasting is great for anyone interested in weight loss, blood glucose control, or therapeutic benefits in relation to cancer, autoimmune disorders, and inflammation.

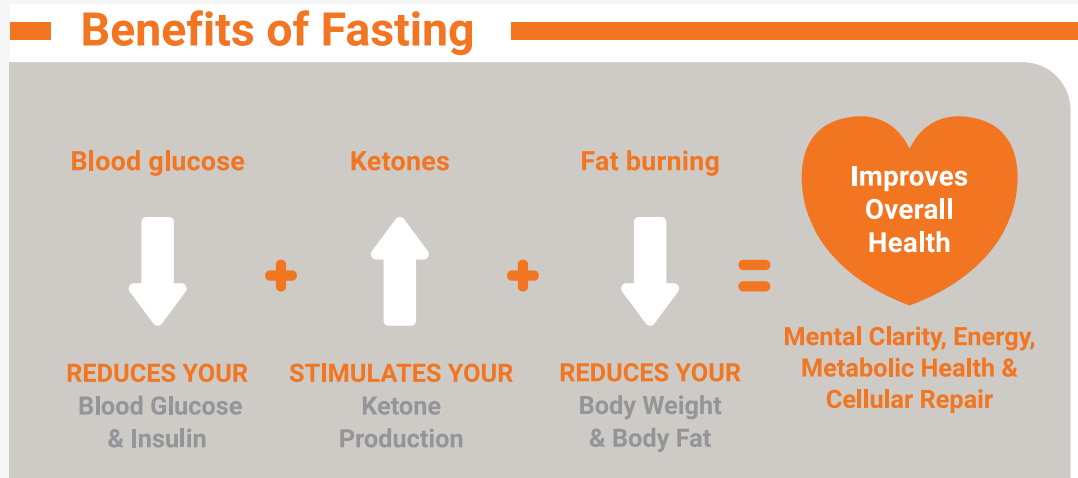
Though intermittent fasting is a white-hot trend in the health and fitness world, it's not a new concept. In fact, fasting has been practiced for thousands of years in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, native tribal religions/spirituality, and beyond as a ritual to heal the body and soul, as a form of penance/sacrifice, and to purify. (Think Ramadan for Muslims, Yom Kippur for Jews, Uposatha for Buddhists, and Ash Wednesday and Good Friday for Roman Catholics.) But fasting has also always had clinical health-related appeal for physicians and philosophers dating as far back as the times of Hippocrates, Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle.

Hippocrates, generally regarded as the father of medicine, asserted that “Everyone has a doctor in him or her; we just have to help it in its work. The natural healing force within each one of us is the greatest force in getting well. Our food should be our medicine. Our medicine should be our food. But to eat when you are sick, is to feed your sickness.” This quote embodies the core philosophy of the keto diet—feed your body food that promotes health. It also nods to the role of fasting, or refraining from eating to help fight sickness and promote wellness.

Intermittent fasting is a way of making fasting an ongoing part of a health-minded lifestyle. We'll discuss how and for how long below, but first let's explore the benefits.

THE POWER OF INTERMITTENT FASTING

What is fasting? Restricted eating between 14-16 hours for several days.



THE BENEFITS OF INTERMITTENT FASTING

Following are the benefits of intermittent fasting. You'll see they're similar to those of a keto diet. If used in conjunction with a keto lifestyle, fasting heightens the benefits you're already getting.

- *Mental clarity*
- *Increased energy*
- *Weight loss*
- *Reduced body fat percentage*
- *Increased ketosis level* (While fasting, your body depletes your glucose stores and uses fats for fuel, pushing most people who aren't even following a ketogenic diet into ketosis for at least a brief period of time—plus the decrease in insulin is setting up your body for optimal ketosis.)

HOW TO INTERMITTENT FAST

Here are some of the more popular intermittent fasting methods/schedules.

Stay hydrated! Black tea, coffee, and water are allowed

16:8 Daily
Fasting for 16 hours day
Meal at 11am
Meal at 2pm
Meal at 7pm (optional)

14:10 Daily
Fasting for 14 hours a day
Meal at 9am
Meal at 2pm
Meal at 7pm

OMAD Daily
One meal a day
One meal at any time, usually late lunch or dinner

5:2 Weekly
Normal eating for 5 days. Eat 500 calories for 2 days.
Eat as you normally do, but need to fast 2 days a week

HOW TO INTERMITTENT FAST

Some of the more popular intermittent fasting methods and schedules are the following:

- **16:8** (16 hours of fasting per day followed by eating during an eight-hour period)
- **14:10** (14 hours of fasting per day followed by eating during a ten-hour period)
- **One meal a day (OMAD)**
- **5:2** (eating 5 days per week and partial fasting for 2 days)

Let's break those down.

The 16:8 method of intermittent fasting works by fasting for 16 hours, then consuming your meals/macros/calories during an eight-hour period. Regardless of diet preference, it is suggested to eat low-glycemic foods such as vegetables, fruits, meats, nuts, some dairy, and plenty of fiber. The same format is true for the 14:10 schedule (14 hours without eating, then eating your meals/calories during a 10-hour period). During both the 16:8 and 14:10 schedules, you should be able to fit in two or three meals, while maintaining proper hydration and electrolytes.

For the one meal a day (OMAD) method of fasting, you eat only one meal and fast until the same time the next day. This means you are getting all or most of your calories, vitamins, and minerals at that one daily meal.

With the 5:2 intermittent fasting schedule, you eat regularly for five days of the week and do a partial fast of 500 to 600 calories for the remaining two days.

With each of these options, you are still allowed to drink black tea, coffee, and water during the fast. This helps you keep hydrated and, in some cases, wards off hunger. It's also thought in many circles that you can add additions to your water, coffee, or tea, such as a splash of cream or milk, and not break your fast as long as those additions are under 50 calories.

See the timelines on page 64 for example fasting schedules, but fasting is very personal, and you need to take your own bio-individuality into consideration to determine what works for you.

TIPS FOR INTERMITTENT FASTING

If you're considering fasting, we recommend the following advice:

- *Consult your healthcare provider before making any dietary changes, including fasting.*
- *Make sure to stay properly hydrated.*
- *Ensure you get the appropriate amounts of electrolytes each day regardless of how long you fast.*
- *Experiment with different fasting periods to see what works best for you.*
- *Start slowly! Try intermittent fasting one day a week and gradually work up to the number of days a week you would like to implement intermittent fasting.*
- *When you are in the eating cycle, choose low-glycemic and nutritious foods that are high in fiber, minerals, and vitamins to maintain optimal health.*
- *For optimal results, pair intermittent fasting with your low-carb or ketogenic lifestyle, which naturally uses fat for fuel in a similar way that fasting does.*

HOW LONG TO INTERMITTENT FAST

The duration of any intermittent fast is based on your individual desires, needs, and body. It can be done for one day or a few days per week or for as long as you like and as long as it feels right for you.

Within the first week, you're likely to experience heightened appetite control (i.e. feeling less hungry) and improved blood-glucose control, with additional benefits following shortly thereafter. For those new to intermittent fasting, start out fasting 14 to 16 hours two days a week to see how you feel. Depending on your goals, you may want to step this up to five days a week or even seven days a week.

EXTENDED FASTING

Extended fasting is going for 24 hours or more on a wet fast (liquids only). While it may have therapeutic benefits to address cancer and obesity, and neuroprotective properties, the research is still in its infancy, and this type of fasting is not for the newbie. Dr. Jason Fung, one of the most cited physicians on the

subject of fasting and the author of *The Complete Guide to Fasting*, explains why: “Instead of undertaking shorter fasts and gradually extending it, [people new to fasting] immediately opt for a full on water-only extended fast. This is like a rookie mountaineer that decides that he/she will tackle Mount Everest, without oxygen and push on to the summit irregardless of weather.”

Extended fasts should be done only under medical supervision with monitoring through blood tests, urinalysis, physician physical exams, and supplementation of vitamins and minerals and hydration.

WHO SHOULD NOT FAST

Fasting isn't for everyone, especially people who are any of the following:

- *Underweight with a BMI of 18.5 or less*
- *Malnourished*
- *Children*
- *Pregnant*
- *Breastfeeding*
- *Hypoglycemic*
- *Experiencing eating disorders*

Note: While intermittent fasting can be quite beneficial for people with diabetes, it's best to work closely with your healthcare provider to ensure that fasting is implemented in a safe and healthy way.

INSPIRATION FOR YOU IF YOU WANT TO FAST

Are you worried you can't handle extended periods without food? You may want to reframe your thinking. In his book, Dr. Fung makes a great point: “We talk a lot about what you should eat and what you shouldn't eat. But people never talk about meal timing—making sure you have long periods where you're not eating. Look at the word 'breakfast' in English. That's break fast. That's the meal that breaks your fast. This implies that fasting is a part of everyday life. We've forgotten that. We think it's some sort of Herculean effort, but it's not. We should be fasting every day.”

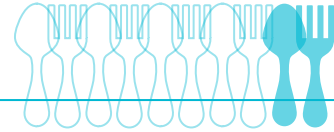
MOJO ON!

Now that you know about intermittent fasting, you have another health-inducing tool in your toolbox, and it's useful whether or not you're on a keto diet!



Want more info? Watch this quick [video](#) explaining ketosis and fasting.

Tips for Dining Out on a Keto Diet



There are many reasons for dining out—a special occasion, business meal, date night, simply no time to cook, or a quick meal with friends or family. Whatever the reason, eating out brings some challenges but also some opportunities to strengthen your resolve and have fun exploring the world of keto cuisine!

The challenging part: Just one piece of sushi or one bite of cake can be enough to kick you out of ketosis, especially when you're first starting out. When you are at the mercy of others for your meal, it's easy to slip off the keto wagon and into "carb loading," so it's important to have a mind-set that is open to adaptation and creative solutions.

Now, let's talk about how to navigate this new dining territory.

RESTAURANT DINING CHEAT SHEET

In general avoid carbs: starches and sugar, such as bread, potatoes, pasta, fruits, and sweets.

Mojo Tip: It's always best to ask your server for ingredients information; often restaurants will add starch or sugar to sauces and dressings.



CUISINE	MEXICAN	JAPANESE	INDIAN	ITALIAN	THAI
AVOID	Rice • Beans Tortillas • Chips	Sushi • Teriyaki Rice • Noodles	Rice • Naan Potatoes	Pasta • Breaded Dishes • Bread (Focaccia, Breadsticks)	Pad Thai • Fried Rice Salads with Sweet Dressings • Sweetened Peanut Sauce
TRY INSTEAD	Fajitas (skip the tortillas) Carnitas Carne Asada Salad Bowl Ceviche Grilled Peppers & Onions Guacamole Salsa Sour Cream	Sashimi Yakitori Shirataki Noodles Seaweed Bean Sprouts Grilled Veggies	Broccoli Spinach Curry Tikka Masala Saag Paneer Kebabs Raiata (yogurt dip)	The components of the pasta dishes served over vegetables Carpaccio Meats Fish Extra Olive Oil Parmesan	Coconut Curries (sans rice) Beef Chicken Pork Larb (beef salad; basil chicken) Chicken Satay (skip the sugary peanut sauce) Soups (ask which don't include sugar)

RESTAURANT DINING

Before You Go

- **Find a keto-friendly spot:** If you get to choose the restaurant, do some advance sleuthing. Find a place that's keto-friendly by checking websites like Yelp and chat rooms or searching online for the city or town you're going to dine in and the words "restaurant" and "keto." If you can, choose a place that cooks from fresh ingredients because the staff is more likely to know what's in your sauce or dressing!
- **Read online menus to see which seem most accommodating.** You can also call in advance to ask about options, which is especially helpful if you don't get to choose the restaurant.
- **Check out our alcohol guidelines on page 55.**

When You're at the Restaurant

- **Ask questions.** Don't be afraid to inquire what's in a dish. Servers these days are more aware of allergies and other dietary restrictions, so they should be able to tell you if there's something to avoid.
- **Ask for substitutions.** Just because the burger automatically comes with fries doesn't mean the restaurant won't happily hold the bun and fries and sub a salad. Don't be afraid to ask for the rice bowl without the rice, the eggs Benedict without the English muffin, or the curry with veggies in place of the side of rice.
- **Pay attention to your alcohol intake, as it can loosen your resolve.** If you're going to have a drink, it's best to stick to wine and clear liquors: vodka, gin, or tequila. Have spirits with soda, on the rocks, or neat, and you can add a lemon twist or olives. Avoid sweet cocktails.

During and After Dinner

- **Remember, success is not only about low carb but also high fat, so ask for extra butter or olive oil if needed** (and make sure it's not margarine or vegetable oil).
- **Spread the word.** If you have a great experience, make sure to share the news via social media. The ketonian community will be grateful, and the restaurant will be encouraged to keep up the good work.

Fast Food

From McDonald's to Starbucks, many chains are coming up with really good no-carb alternatives. In general, no matter where you're eating, skip the bun, breading, ketchup, sweet sauces, condiments, and fries. Some places will do a lettuce wrap or offer a side salad, and it's common to find cheese and vegetable snack packs (ditch the crackers and carrots).

Pizza Joints

Some pizza parlors are now offering cauliflower or cheese-only crusts. If you can't find one, see if they will do the pizza without the crust (literally cheese and toppings on a pizza tray). Otherwise, just eat the toppings and toss the “carbage” crust.

DINING AT SOMEONE'S HOME

Sometimes family and friends can make it especially challenging to maintain your keto diet. It's very hard to reject the suggestions of people who have cooked for you and perhaps say, “Just have one bite,” “It's your favorite,” or “It's Grandma's special pie.” It's important to be prepared for this, and it's OK to say you're on a special diet. It can be tough, but friends and family can become your biggest supporters, so if it feels right, put it out there that you are keto. Who knows, they may even make something just for you or become inspired to join you on the keto journey.

PARTIES & EVENTS

When attending an event, especially something like a Super Bowl party, where keto choices tend to be limited, it is best to eat something before you go or volunteer to bring something keto (a platter of crudités, cheese, salami, and nuts). Monitor alcohol intake. Avoid grazing. Use a chip as a disposable (inedible!) spoon, so you can enjoy the dip and not the carbs. If a slider is presented to you, think of the bread base as a disposable plate.

MOJO ON!

You'll soon learn how to easily navigate menus, and dining out will become a fun adventure. Just remember, it's not about moderation—bring on the fat! It's truly about finding the most scrumptious keto things to eat and drink and enjoying them fully. Happy dining!



More Resources



You probably know by now that the ketogenic diet is more than a way of eating—it's a lifestyle. You can learn more about how to make the most of it through the following links:

- [What Type of Exercise Helps You Create Ketones Faster?](#)
- [What Type of Workout is Best on a Low-Carb or Keto Diet?](#)
- [What to Eat Before and After a Workout on a Keto Diet](#)



PART 4

Recipes

One of the best ways to ensure success on a keto diet is to take your dining destiny into your own hands—by cooking!

When you make your own food, you know exactly what you're eating and can accurately calculate and manage your macros. But more importantly, you empower yourself with the knowledge and skills to prepare and enjoy foods you love, which makes it much easier to happily stay keto. This section offers some delicious options that give you a taste of just how good keto cuisine can be.



KILLER KETO FRITTATA
WITH SAUSAGE & KALE
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KILLER KETO FRITTATA WITH SAUSAGE & KALE

This perfect one-pan brunch is hearty and satisfying. Top it with a salad and you have lunch or dinner!

SERVES 6
371 CALORIES
30g FAT
19g PROTEIN
10g TOTAL CARBS
5g FIBER
5g NET CARBS

- 2 Tbsp olive oil**
- 8 oz (227 g) Italian sausage**
- ½ green pepper, finely chopped**
- ½ red pepper, finely chopped**
- ¼ cup (40 g) finely chopped yellow onion**
- 1 tsp garlic powder**
- 3 large kale leaves, ribs removed and leaves coarsely chopped (2 oz total; 57 g)**
- 6 large eggs**
- ¼ cup (60 g) heavy cream**
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper**
- 1 cup (4 oz / 113 g) shredded aged cheddar or Gruyère cheese**

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C). In a 10-inch ovenproof skillet over medium heat, warm the olive oil. Add the sausage and cook until browned, breaking it up into small chunks as it cooks, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the green and red peppers and the onion and garlic powder. Cook, stirring often, until the vegetables are soft, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the kale and cook, stirring occasionally, until it wilts and softens, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat.
2. Meanwhile, in a bowl, whisk together the eggs, heavy cream, 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper. Stir in the cheese.
3. Add the egg mixture to the pan of vegetables, then briefly stir with a wooden spoon to gently mix everything together and evenly distribute it in the pan. Let the frittata set over the heat without touching it for 3 to 4 minutes, then transfer it to the oven and bake until it puffs up and is set when you jiggle it, about 15 minutes. To serve, let the frittata sit for a few minutes so the edges pull away from the sides of the pan, making the frittata easier to remove from the skillet and serve.



**EGGS BENEDICT WITH
BLENDER HOLLANDAISE**

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EGGS BENEDICT WITH BLENDER HOLLANDAISE

The only non-keto item about eggs Benedict is the classic English muffin, so use keto-friendly bread instead (such as [Julian Bakery Paleo Thin coconut bread](#)) with our easy blender hollandaise and you've got the perfect breakfast or brunch dish.

SERVES 4
584 CALORIES
50g FAT
23g PROTEIN
4g TOTAL CARBS
1g FIBER
3g NET CARBS

For the Eggs

2 Tbsp butter, divided

**4 slices (1 oz / 28 g each)
Canadian bacon**

Sea salt

4 large eggs

For the Hollandaise Sauce

3 large egg yolks

1 Tbsp lemon juice

Sea salt

8 Tbsp (4 oz / 113 g) butter, melted

1 Tbsp hot water

Pinch of cayenne pepper (optional)

4 slices keto bread (see headnote)


4 slices tomato, ½ inch thick

Pinch of paprika, for garnish (optional)

1 Tbsp minced chives, for garnish (optional)

1. In a medium skillet over medium-high heat, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter. Add the Canadian bacon and cook until golden on both sides, about 6 minutes total, flipping halfway through. Set aside.
2. Prepare the eggs: Fill a large, nonstick skillet with 1 inch of water. Add 1 teaspoon salt and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Crack 1 egg at a time into a small ramekin, then gently pour it into the simmering water without allowing the eggs to touch. Remove the pan from the heat, cover, and let the eggs poach undisturbed for 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the eggs to a shallow bowl and reserve.
3. Make the hollandaise sauce: Combine the egg yolks, lemon juice, and ½ teaspoon salt in a blender, pulse a few times to combine, then with the blender running, slowly pour in the melted butter and blend until smooth. Blend in the 1 tablespoon hot water. Season to taste with cayenne pepper and salt.
4. Toast and butter the bread slices, using the remaining 1 tablespoon butter.
5. To serve, divide the toasted, buttered bread among 4 plates. Top each bread slice with a tomato slice, a slice of Canadian bacon, and a poached egg. Pour one-quarter of the hollandaise sauce over each egg, garnish with paprika and chives, and serve immediately.





LOW-CARB LOADED
"FAUXTATO" SKINS
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LOW-CARB LOADED “FAUXTATO” SKINS

Game time, snack time, lunchtime, anytime is the right time for the soul-satisfying goodness of these loaded, totally keto bite-size potato skins-like appetizers. Want a spicier version? Swap out the cheddar cheese for pepper jack cheese and add some sliced chiles to the toppings, making sure to recalculate the macros, of course. Note: This recipe calls for cooked bacon, so plan accordingly.

SERVES 6
1 SERVING: 3 SKINS
214 CALORIES
18g FAT
9g PROTEIN
6g TOTAL CARBS
1g FIBER
5g NET CARBS

3 medium zucchini (18 oz / 510 g total), ends trimmed

1½ Tbsp olive oil

½ tsp smoked paprika

½ tsp ground cumin

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

1 cup (4 oz / 113 g) shredded cheddar cheese

4 slices thick-cut crispy-cooked bacon, chopped

⅔ cup (153 g) sour cream

2 Tbsp thinly sliced green onions, green parts only

1 Roma or plum tomato, cored, seeded, and finely diced

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C). Line a baking pan with parchment paper.
2. Halve the zucchini lengthwise. Use a small metal spoon to scrape out the seeds from each zucchini half, then cut each half crosswise into three pieces, each 1½ to 2 inches long. Place the zucchini, skin side down, in one layer on the prepared baking sheet. Generously brush the zucchini with the olive oil.
3. In a small bowl, mix together the smoked paprika and cumin with ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Season the insides of the zucchini with the spice mixture. Roast the zucchini until just tender but still firm when pierced with the tip of a paring knife, 12 to 15 minutes. Reduce the heat to 350°F (177°C).
4. Divide the cheese and bacon evenly among the zucchini bites, then stuff the cheese in the zucchini bites so it isn't falling out. Return the zucchini to the oven and bake until the cheese is bubbly and the zucchini is tender, 6 to 8 minutes.
5. Garnish the zucchini bites with sour cream, the green parts of the green onion, diced tomato, and pepper. Serve immediately.



HERBY KETO CHICKEN WINGS

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HERBY KETO CHICKEN WINGS

The hands-down perfect party appetizer, these tender, juicy chicken drumettes and wings develop an amazingly crispy outer skin in the oven, and they take less than 45 minutes to make from start to finish. Serve them solo or with a fantastic creamy Keto Lemon-Ranch Dip (use the recipe below and remember to add the dip macros).

SERVES 8

1 SERVING: 4 WINGS

209 CALORIES

18g FAT

10g PROTEIN

2g TOTAL CARBS

0g FIBER

2g NET CARBS

32 chicken drumettes/wingettes

3 Tbsp plus 2 tsp olive oil, divided

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

1½ tsp garlic powder, divided

4 tsp mixed dried herbs (such as basil, thyme, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, and parsley)

2 Tbsp butter, melted



1. Preheat the oven to 450°F (230°C). Line two baking sheets with foil and place them in the oven while it preheats to get them hot.
2. Pat the chicken dry with paper towels and place in a large mixing bowl. Add 3 tablespoons of the olive oil, 1 teaspoon salt and ¾ teaspoon pepper, the garlic powder, and the herbs. Toss until the chicken parts are evenly coated with the seasoning.
3. Carefully remove the hot pans from the oven, brush each pan with a teaspoon of the remaining olive oil, and evenly distribute the chicken across both baking sheets. Bake, turning the wings occasionally, until golden brown and crispy, about 30 minutes.
4. Remove from the oven and drizzle the melted butter over the chicken. Toss to coat and return to the oven for 5 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a platter, sprinkle with salt, and serve.

KETO LEMON-RANCH DIP

½ cup (112 g) mayonnaise

½ cup (115 g) sour cream

¼ cup (60 g) heavy cream

Zest and juice from 1 lemon

2 Tbsp chopped fresh chives

2 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley

1 tsp onion powder

¼ tsp cayenne pepper

½ tsp garlic powder

¾ tsp sea salt

¼ tsp freshly ground pepper

In a medium bowl, combine all of the ingredients. Whisk to combine, transfer to a serving bowl, cover, and chill in the refrigerator until ready to use.

SERVES 8

1 SERVING: 3 TBSP

152 CALORIES

16g FAT

1g PROTEIN

2g TOTAL CARBS

0g FIBER

2g NET CARBS

**GRILLED-VEGETABLE CHOPPED SALAD
WITH CREAMY AVOCADO DRESSING**

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GRILLED-VEGETABLE CHOPPED SALAD WITH CREAMY AVOCADO DRESSING

Charred vegetables lend smoky, earthy contrast to cool, crunchy lettuce and creamy avocado-mayonnaise dressing in this luscious main course or side dish.

SERVES 2
509 CALORIES
50g FAT
5g PROTEIN
15g TOTAL CARBS
8g FIBER
7g NET CARBS

1 medium (5 oz / 142 g) zucchini, sliced lengthwise into ½-inch-thick strips

3 radishes, sliced into ½-inch-thick slices (if grilling on a grill, place in a vegetable basket or thread on skewers)

About 12 medium (4 oz / 113 g total) asparagus spears, woody ends trimmed

¼ cup (32.5 g) olive oil, divided

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

1 avocado

2 Tbsp lime juice

2 Tbsp good-quality mayonnaise (such as Sir Kensington's Avocado Oil Mayonnaise or Primal Kitchen Avocado Oil Mayonnaise)

1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar

¼ cup packed fresh cilantro leaves or Italian parsley leaves

1 (4 oz / 113 g) Romaine lettuce heart, chopped into bite-size pieces

1 Tbsp sunflower seeds

1. Preheat a grill or grill pan over medium-high heat. In a bowl, combine the zucchini, radishes, and asparagus with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Season with ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper.
2. Place the vegetables on the hot grill and cook, uncovered, for 3 minutes. Turn the vegetables and cook 3 minutes longer. Continue cooking, turning every 3 minutes, until the vegetables are tender throughout (if they are browning too quickly, move them to the edge of the grill or grill pan). Transfer the vegetables to a cutting board.
3. Meanwhile, make the dressing: In a food processor or blender, combine 1 tablespoon of the olive oil, the avocado, lime juice, mayonnaise, vinegar, and cilantro. Process until the mixture is smooth and creamy. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. To serve the salad, place the lettuce in a serving bowl, add the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil, ¼ teaspoon salt, and a few grinds of pepper. Chop the grilled vegetables into bite-size pieces (asparagus on the bias, zucchini into chunks, radishes diced) and add them to the bowl. Toss and divide between two dinner plates. Sprinkle each with half of the sunflower seeds and serve with the dressing on the side.



**AHI SALAD WITH
CITRUS DRESSING**

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AHI SALAD WITH CITRUS DRESSING

Sexy, healthy, and simple? That's our kind of meal! Inspired by the flavors of Hawaii, this poke and seared ahi combo is finished with a savory-sweet citrus dressing that flat-out rocks.

SERVES 2
296 CALORIES
13g FAT
29g PROTEIN
15g TOTAL CARBS
9g FIBER
6g NET CARBS

1 (8 oz / 227 g) piece sashimi-grade ahi tuna

¼ tsp gluten-free Sriracha or other gluten-free hot pepper sauce

2 tsp chopped green onion

¼ tsp toasted sesame oil

1 Tbsp tamari

1½ tsp rice vinegar

Juice of ½ lemon

Juice of ½ lime

¾ tsp powdered erythritol-based sweetener, such as Swerve

4 lightly packed cups mixed baby lettuce

1 avocado, sliced

Sesame seeds, for garnish (optional)

1. Cut off one-quarter of the tuna and cut it into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cubes. Reserve the rest of the tuna.
2. In a bowl, combine the cubed tuna with the Sriracha, green onion, and sesame oil. Mix thoroughly and refrigerate if not serving right away.
3. In another bowl, combine the tamari, vinegar, citrus juices, and sweetener.
4. Preheat a nonstick pan over high heat, then sear the reserved block of tuna on all six sides until the edges are white but the center is still translucent, around 15 seconds per side. Slice the tuna against the grain into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch strips. (You can prep in advance to this point and refrigerate the tuna until you're ready to serve.)
5. Divide the lettuce between two dinner plates. Top each with half of the spicy tuna, seared tuna strips, and avocado slices. Drizzle half of the dressing over each dish, sprinkle with sesame seeds, and serve.



KETO KOCONUT CHICKEN TENDERS

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KETO KOCONUT CHICKEN TENDERS

If you crave crispy, crunchy fried food and think it's behind you on the keto diet, guess again! The following recipe gives you the green light for enjoying finger-lickin', sauce-dippin' chicken tenders. Eat them with your favorite keto dip or pair them with the recipe for [Sweet Asian Chili Sauce](#) and recalculate your macros. Bonus: You can use the coconut-flake "breading" for fish, too.

SERVES 5
1 SERVING: 3 TENDERS
317 CALORIES
18g FAT
30g PROTEIN
7.5g TOTAL CARBS
1.5g FIBER
6g NET CARBS

Ghee or coconut oil, for frying

2 Tbsp baking powder

1 tsp sea salt

⅛ tsp freshly ground black pepper

1 tsp cayenne pepper (optional)

2 eggs

**⅔ cup (57 g) unsweetened
coconut flakes**

⅓ cup (37 g) almond flour

**About 15 (24 oz / 43 g total)
chicken tenderloins**

1. In a medium sauté pan over medium heat, warm enough ghee to coat the bottom by ¼ inch until hot (about 365°F / 185°C if you have a thermometer or hot enough to make a coconut flake sizzle but not quickly burn).
2. In a bowl, mix together the baking powder, salt, black pepper, and cayenne pepper. Set aside.
3. In another bowl, lightly beat the eggs.
4. In a third bowl, combine the coconut flakes and almond flour.
5. Roll one chicken tender at a time in the baking powder mixture to coat. Then dip into the eggs to coat. Finally, dip in the coconut mixture and set aside on a plate. Repeat for each tender.
6. Line another plate with paper towels. Cooking in batches if necessary to avoid overcrowding, gently add one piece of chicken at a time to the hot ghee and cook for 4 minutes. Flip and cook the other side until cooked through and golden, about 4 minutes longer.



BUTTER-BASTED FILET MIGNON
WITH HORSERADISH CREAM & ZUCCHINI
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BUTTER-BASTED FILET MIGNON WITH HORSERADISH CREAM & ZUCCHINI

Perfectly crusted fillet with browned butter sauce is paired with a vibrant light side of zucchini ribbons and a perky horseradish cream sauce round to create a steakhouse-quality keto meal.

SERVES 2
577 CALORIES
43g FAT
41g PROTEIN
8g TOTAL CARBS
2g FIBER
6g NET CARBS

**2 (4-oz / 113 g) petite filet mignons,
or 1 (8-oz) fillet, ¾ to 1 inch thick**

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

¼ cup (57.5 g) sour cream

**1 Tbsp grated peeled freshly
grated horseradish, or
prepared horseradish**

1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice, divided

2 tsp chopped fresh chives, divided

4 tsp olive oil, divided

2 Tbsp butter

**1 medium (5 oz) zucchini, shaved into
ribbons using a vegetable peeler**

¼ cup (21.75 g) shaved fresh fennel

**¼ cup (28.25 g) shaved Pecorino
Romano or Parmesan cheese**



1. Season the steaks generously with salt and pepper and let sit at room temperature for 1 hour.
2. Meanwhile, make the sauce: In a small bowl, combine the sour cream, horseradish, 1½ teaspoons of the lemon juice, and ½ teaspoon of the chives. Season with ⅛ teaspoon pepper.
3. Heat a dry medium skillet, preferably cast-iron, over medium-high, then add 1 teaspoon of the oil. As soon as the oil is smoking, cook the steaks, turning every 1½ to 2 minutes, until a deep brown crust forms, 8 to 10 minutes. Lower the heat to medium and add the butter. Tilt the pan toward you so the butter pools on one side, then use a large spoon to continually baste the steaks with the butter. Continue until the butter is no longer bubbling and it smells nutty and is beginning to brown, about 1 minute. Transfer the meat to a cutting board and let it rest 10 minutes. (A medium-rare steak should reach an internal temperature of 120°F / 49°C to 125°F / 52°C.) Add any collected juices from the meat to the brown butter, then keep the butter warm.
4. In a medium bowl, combine the zucchini, fennel, and Pecorino with the remaining 1½ teaspoons lemon juice, the remaining 3 teaspoons olive oil, the remaining 1½ teaspoons chives, and ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Toss to combine.
5. Transfer the steaks to dinner plates, spoon the browned butter over the steaks, and sprinkle the dish with salt and pepper. Add the zucchini and the horseradish cream sauce on the side and enjoy.

**CREAMY KETO “PASTA” WITH
SHRIMP, BACON & BROCCOLI**
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CREAMY KETO “PASTA” WITH SHRIMP, BACON & BROCCOLI

For this super-satisfying, easy dinner, lemony-garlicky cream sauce is paired with keto-friendly shirataki noodles (carb-free, dairy-free, and extremely low-cal; find in the refrigerated section at most major grocers).

SERVES 2
530 CALORIES
42g FAT
31g PROTEIN
12g TOTAL CARBS
6g FIBER
6g NET CARBS

½ lb (8 oz / 227 g) large shrimp (8 to 10 shrimp), peeled, deveined, and patted dry with paper towels

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

2 Tbsp olive oil, divided

2 slices (1 oz / 28 g each) bacon, chopped

1½ cups (5 oz / 142 g) broccoli florets

2 garlic cloves, minced

3 Tbsp butter

½ tsp onion powder

6 Tbsp (87 g) heavy cream

Zest and juice of ½ lemon

1 (8 oz / 227 g) package shirataki noodles



1. Season the shrimp with ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper.
2. Heat a large nonstick frying pan over medium-high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Add the bacon and cook, stirring often, until crispy, about 4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to a plate. Lower the heat to medium, add the shrimp and cook until pink and opaque without overcooking, 1½ minutes per side. Transfer the shrimp to the plate with the bacon.
3. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil to the pan. Add the broccoli and garlic and cook, stirring often, until the garlic is fragrant and just beginning to brown, about 2 minutes. Add ¼ cup water, bring to a boil, then lower the heat to medium, cover the pan, and steam until bright green and tender-crisp, about 5 minutes. Add the butter and onion powder and stir until the butter has melted. Return the shrimp and bacon to the pan and add the cream. Raise the heat to medium-high and bring the cream to a boil. Lower the heat to medium and stir until everything is coated and the sauce has thickened, about 2 minutes. Stir in the lemon zest and juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Drain and thoroughly rinse the shirataki noodles with cold water.
5. Fill a medium saucepan halfway with water, bring to a boil, then lower the heat to a steady simmer. Add the rinsed noodles and cook, stirring occasionally, for 2 minutes. Drain the noodles, then return them to the saucepan over medium heat and cook, tossing often, about 1 minute. Add the shrimp sauce mixture, toss to coat, and serve.



MAPLE-BACON
BRUSSELS SPROUTS
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MAPLE-BACON BRUSSELS SPROUTS

These brussels sprouts get a deliciously crisp and caramelized sear in smoky bacon fat. Finished with a salty-sweet maple-balsamic sauce and crispy bacon bits, they're so irresistible that it's hard not to eat them before you serve them!

SERVES 6
134 CALORIES
9g FAT
7g PROTEIN
5g TOTAL CARBS
2g FIBER
3g NET CARBS

2 Tbsp olive oil, divided

4 slices (3 oz / 85 g total) thick-cut bacon, cut into ½-inch pieces

1 lb (16 oz / 454 g) brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved through the core

1 small shallot, minced

2 Tbsp sugar-free maple-flavored syrup (we used Lakanto brand)

2 tsp Dijon mustard

2 tsp balsamic vinegar

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

1. Line a plate with paper towels. In a large cast-iron or stainless-steel skillet over medium heat, warm 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Add the bacon and cook, stirring occasionally, until the bacon is crispy and browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to the prepared plate to drain.
2. Keep the skillet on medium heat and add half of the brussels sprouts cut side down in a single layer and cook until the cut sides develop a brown sear, about 5 minutes. Transfer them to a plate. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil and repeat with the remaining brussels sprouts.
3. When all of the sprouts are seared, add them back to the skillet along with the shallot, syrup, mustard, vinegar, 1 teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon pepper, and 2 tablespoons water. Stir to combine, lower the heat to low, and simmer, covered and stirring occasionally, until the sprouts are tender when pierced with the tip of a paring knife, about 10 minutes. Stir in the bacon, cook uncovered for 5 minutes, and serve.





KETO "POTATO SALAD"

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KETO “POTATO SALAD”

This perfect side for grilled meat and fried chicken served at barbecues and picnics has the creamy, savory, vinegar-kissed flavor of classic potato salad—minus the carbs! If time allows, make it the day before and store it in the fridge to let the flavors meld.

SERVES 8
197 CALORIES
18g FAT
4g PROTEIN
6g TOTAL CARBS
2g FIBER
4g NET CARBS

**1 large (24 oz / 680 g) cauliflower,
cut into small florets (about 5 cups)**

**¾ cup (6 oz / 170 g) good-
quality mayonnaise (such as Sir
Kensington’s Avocado Oil
Mayonnaise or Primal Kitchen
Avocado Oil Mayonnaise)**

1 Tbsp whole-grain mustard

1 tsp Worcestershire sauce

1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

**4 slices cooked thick-cut bacon,
chopped**

1 small shallot, minced

1 stalk celery, finely chopped

3 green onions, thinly sliced

2 Tbsp chopped parsley, divided

1. In a heavy pot with a lid, bring 1½ inches of water to a boil. Add the cauliflower. Lower the heat to simmer, cover, and steam until tender and easily pierced with a fork but not soggy, about 10 minutes. Drain the cauliflower and let cool.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, and vinegar. Season with 1 teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Stir in the bacon, shallot, celery, green onions, and 1 tablespoon of the parsley. Add the cauliflower. Season to taste. Cover and refrigerate until serving.
3. Garnish with the remaining 1 tablespoon parsley and serve.



CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER

FAT BOMBS

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CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER FAT BOMBS

What are fat bombs, you ask? Only the tastiest, keto-friendly, no-bake, grab-and-go treats you can imagine! They include lots of fat and very few carbs, so they satisfy sweet cravings yet won't kick you out of ketosis. Small but mighty, they're filling, too, so they're great pick-me-ups if you hit an energy low or need to add a few fat macros to your day. The best part? You can make them in bulk (it takes fewer than 10 minutes!) and keep them refrigerated or frozen so you can enjoy a fat bomb anytime.

SERVES 15

1 SERVING: 1 BOMB

66 CALORIES

6g FAT

2g PROTEIN

3g TOTAL CARBS

2g FIBER

1g NET CARBS

For the Fat Bombs

¼ cup (28 g) almond flour

**¼ cup (65 g) unsweetened
peanut butter**

2 oz cream cheese

4 Tbsp powdered erythritol

For the Chocolate Dip

2 tsp MCT oil

**1 oz (4 pieces) unsweetened
100% cacao baking chocolate**

1½ Tbsp powdered erythritol

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Make the fat bombs: In a bowl, combine all of the fat bomb ingredients and mix using a hand or stand mixer. Use a tablespoon or your hands to scoop and roll tablespoon-size balls onto the prepared baking sheet. Freeze for 30 minutes to harden.
3. Make the chocolate dip: In a microwave-safe bowl, combine the MCT oil and chocolate, microwave on high 30 seconds at a time until melted. Gradually stir in the erythritol, adding more or less based on your taste preference. Let cool for 1 minute.
4. One at a time, dip the fat bombs into the chocolate, roll to coat, and return the chocolate-covered balls to the baking sheet. Freeze for at least 30 minutes.





LEMON BARS

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LEMON BARS

Are you looking for a delicious dessert crowd-pleaser that even your non-keto family and friends will love? Whip up a batch of these delightfully rich and tart lemon bars! They are the perfect ketogenic dessert to bring to all of your summer parties! If you want to make them extra fancy, drizzle with melted no-sugar white chocolate.

SERVES 8
274 CALORIES
27g FAT
5g PROTEIN
3g TOTAL CARBS
1g FIBER
2g NET CARBS

For the Crust

- 3 Tbsp (1½ oz) butter**
- 1 cup (112 g) almond flour**
- 1 cup (182 g) erythritol-based granulated sweetener (like Swerve)**
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract**

For the Filling

- ½ cup (4 oz / 113 g) butter**
- ¾ cup (137 g) erythritol-based granulated sweetener (like Swerve)**
- ½ cup (4 oz) fresh lemon juice**
- ¼ cup (24 g) lemon zest**
- 6 egg yolks**
- 1 tsp xanthan gum**

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C).
2. Make the crust: Line an 8-inch square pan with parchment paper. Melt the butter in a microwave or a small saucepan. Add the almond flour, erythritol sweetener, and vanilla. Stir until fully combined. Press the dough evenly along the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake until lightly golden, about 15 minutes. Let cool.
3. Make the filling: Melt the butter in a small saucepan on low heat. Remove from the heat and whisk in the erythritol sweetener, lemon juice, and lemon zest until the sweetener is dissolved. Whisk in the egg yolks one at a time, then return the saucepan to the stove over medium heat for 2 minutes, stirring continuously. Whisk in the xanthan gum until smooth.
4. Pour the filling over the prebaked and cooled crust and spread evenly. Bake for 20 minutes. Remove and let cool completely before slicing and serving.





**CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES
WITH BUTTERCREAM FROSTING**
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CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES WITH BUTTERCREAM FROSTING

Delicious, chocolaty cupcakes topped with fluffy, luscious buttercream frosting are perfect anytime treats, especially with their killer keto status. Dye the frosting any color you wish. Store the cupcakes refrigerated in an airtight container up to four days; let them come to room temperature before serving.

MAKES 12

1 SERVING: 1 CUPCAKE

283 CALORIES

27g FAT

10g PROTEIN

5g TOTAL CARBS

2g FIBER

3g NET CARBS

For the Cupcakes

⅓ cup (40 g) coconut flour

⅓ cup (37 g) almond flour

⅔ cup (121 g) erythritol-based granulated sweetener (like Swerve)

½ cup (43 g) unsweetened cocoa powder

2 tsp baking powder

1½ tsp instant coffee granules

Sea salt

6 large eggs, at room temperature

½ cup (4 oz / 113 g) butter, melted

1½ tsp vanilla extract

½ cup (4 oz / 120 g) half-and-half

For the Frosting

2 sticks (8 oz / 226 g total) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1¾ cups erythritol-based powdered sweetener (like Lakanto)

1 Tbsp heavy cream

1 tsp pure vanilla extract

2 to 4 drops orange or other color food coloring (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C). Line a 12-cup muffin pan with paper or silicone liners.
2. Make the cupcakes: In a medium bowl, sift together the coconut flour, almond flour, granulated sweetener, cocoa powder, baking powder, coffee granules, and ¼ teaspoon sea salt.
3. In a large bowl, add the eggs, melted butter, and vanilla, then beat with a mixer or by hand until well combined. Gently mix in the dry ingredients just until smooth (avoid overmixing). Add the half-and-half and quickly stir until it is a thick, scoopable batter.
4. Divide the batter among the prepared muffin pan cups and bake in the center of the oven until the tops are set and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, 20 to 22 minutes. Cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then transfer the cupcakes to a wire rack to cool completely.
5. Make the frosting: Place the butter and sweetener in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment or in a mixing bowl. Beat with the mixer until white and fluffy, 40 to 50 seconds, or by hand. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the cream, vanilla extract, and food coloring. Beat just until incorporated and very fluffy (avoid overbeating or the frosting might separate).
6. Frost the cupcakes immediately spreading about 3 tablespoons frosting onto each cupcake with a knife or decorative tip and piping bag.

**FLOURLESS CHOCOLATE CAKE
WITH CHOCOLATE GLAZE**

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FLOURLESS CHOCOLATE CAKE WITH CHOCOLATE GLAZE

This is a truly decadent, rich, fudge brownie-like cake. It comes together easily yet results in an elegant presentation featuring a chic, shiny glaze.

SERVES 12
215 CALORIES
16g FAT
3g PROTEIN
6g TOTAL CARBS
3g FIBER
3g NET CARBS

**½ cup (4 oz / 113 g) plus 3 tsp
unsalted butter, divided**

**⅔ cup plus 1 tsp cocoa powder, sifted,
plus more for sprinkling**

**¾ cup granulated Lakanto monk fruit
sweetener or erythritol-based
granulated sweetener**

Sea salt

**1 cup sugar-free dark chocolate chips
(such as Lily's)**

3 large eggs, at room temperature

1½ tsp pure vanilla extract

**3 oz sugar-free bittersweet baking
chocolate, chopped**

6 Tbsp heavy cream

1. Grease an 8-inch round pan with 2 teaspoons of the butter. Cut a piece of parchment paper to fit into the bottom of the cake pan and place the parchment in the bottom of the greased pan. Grease the paper with 1 more teaspoon of the butter. Dust the inside of the pan with 1 teaspoon of the cocoa powder, tapping any excess around to cover.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the granulated sweetener and ¼ teaspoon salt. Set aside.
3. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Position a rack to the middle of the oven.
4. Fill a medium pot (or a double boiler) with 2 inches of water, then bring the water to a simmer. Put the chocolate chips and the remaining 8 tablespoons of butter in a stainless steel or glass bowl large enough to fit over the pot of water, then place the bowl over the water to create a double boiler. Stir until the chips and butter melt and the mixture is smooth and shiny. Transfer the chocolate mixture to the mixing bowl with the sweetener and salt and stir to combine with a wooden spoon. Add the eggs one at a time, beating briefly to incorporate each one before adding the next. Mix until smooth. Stir in the vanilla and the ⅔ cup cocoa powder and mix just until combined and thick, like brownie batter. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and gently smooth the top.



Continued on next page

TIP *If desired, serve each piece garnished with one or two raspberries or blackberries—just be sure to adjust your macros. Though this cake is best the day it's made, leftovers keep at room temperature for one day or refrigerated for longer. However, the texture gets more solid over time. Bring refrigerated cake to room temperature before serving.*

5. Place the cake pan on a baking sheet and bake on the center rack for 25 minutes. Let cool in the pan for 5 minutes.
6. Using a butter knife, loosen the edges of the thin-crust-topped cake from the pan, then invert the cake onto a serving plate, so the top is now the bottom. Let cool completely, about 1 hour.
7. Place the baking chocolate in a heatproof bowl. Heat the heavy cream in a small skillet over medium heat, until it begins to produce fine bubbles around the edges and develops a skin on the surface. Pour the warm cream over the chocolate, stir briefly with a rubber spatula to combine, then let rest for a few minutes. Stir again, starting slowly, then continuing more vigorously, until the chocolate is completely melted and the glaze is smooth and shiny. If any bits of chocolate remain, reheat briefly over a pot of simmering water, then stir until smooth. Pour the glaze over the cake and spread it so it drips over the sides. Let the glaze set for 2 hours.
8. To serve, slice the cake, transfer to dessert plates, and sprinkle with a little cocoa powder, if desired.



PART 5

Keto-Mojo Resources



Keto-Mojo Resources



You're coming into this brave new world at a great time. There are more resources than ever to help foster the happiest, healthiest keto life. Check out any of the following articles on [Keto-Mojo.com](https://keto-mojo.com) and keep coming back to see what's new. We're always adding more information and recipes to help you make the most of your keto life and life in general. Now, mojo on! You've got this!

GENERAL KETO INFORMATION

Still have burning questions about keto? Check out our [Keto Basics](#) section on Keto-Mojo.com. Here you'll find information about:

- [Health Benefits](#)
- [Side Effects](#)
- [Ketosis for Beginners](#)
- [Macros & Calorie Counting](#)
- [Fasting](#)
- *and more*

GLUCOSE & KETONE TESTING INFORMATION

From how and when to test to what's the best way to ensure the most accurate results, we've got you covered within the [Testing Basics](#) section at Keto-Mojo.com. Click the following links for more information:

- [How-to Videos](#)
- [Infographics](#)
- [Ketone/Glucose Testing](#)
- [Testing Protocols](#)
- [GKI Calculator](#)

FOOD

There's an astounding variety of tasty keto food and recipes on Keto-Mojo.com. Following are sources for nutritional and recipe information to help you live your best keto life:

- [Keto-Mojo Recipes](#)
- [Nutritional Information](#)

MEDICAL

There's a wealth of information about the keto diet as a therapy for illnesses, ailments, and healing. If any of the below topics apply to you, you'll enjoy learning more:

- [Weight Loss](#)
- [Diabetes](#)
- [Neurological](#)
- [Cancer](#)
- [Heart Health](#)
- [Women's Health](#)
- [Men's Health](#)
- [Research](#)

KETO LIFE

Want to know more about enhancing your [keto lifestyle](#)? Check out these sections on Keto-Mojo.com:

- [Fitness](#)
- [Book & Movie Reviews](#)
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VIDEOS

Learn more about the science and research of keto and keto living:

- [Mojo Academy](#)
- [LowCarbUSA Speaker Series](#)

MOJO ON!

Thanks so much for allowing us to help you embark on your keto journey. Of course, it's not over. It's only just begun. Feel free to visit [Keto-Mojo.com](#) often for tips, information, recipes, and more via the helpful links above. Now, go on enjoying the awesome, empowering world of keto.



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Keto Kokonut Chicken Tenders, Chocolate Peanut Butter Fat Bombs, Lemon Bars recipes and photography by [Keto4Karboholics](#); all other recipes by [Eric Lundy](#) and photography by [Erin Ng](#)

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- [Keto-Mojo Customer Support](#)

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