

Crockpot / Slow Cooker

Low Carb Recipes

Lisa Shea

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Introduction

The trees that are slow to grow

Bear the best fruit.

-- Moliere

I love slow cooking. You do a bit of work at the beginning, and then you simply let it go. Your home fills with delicious smells as the crockpot does its magic. When meal time comes around, not only does your world resonate with delicious aromas, but the meal itself is melded and tasty. It's ideal.

Best of all, once you master a few basic skills, the sky is the limit. You can mix up ingredients, spices, and styles in near-infinite abandon.

Also, it often means you can cook once and then be set for several days. It ends up saving you time in a multitude of ways.

Learn to master the art of slow cooking!

Version Note:

This is an early version of this slow-cook crockpot book. It currently has a starting set of 7 recipes in it. We slow cook all the time, so the question is what versions of recipes to put in here, out of those many options. Let us know what combinations you'd like to see! We'll test it out, send you the recipe we develop personally for you, and then update the book.

If you get this in ebook form, you'll automatically get the updated version available for free! If you have a print version, you get free access to that updating ebook.

Crockpot Basics

If you're slow cooking a recipe in a crockpot, here are basics to keep in mind for pretty much any recipe you use.

Have a Meat Thermometer

Having the meat cook fully is critical for health reasons. You want that meat, within 2 hours, to reach its safe temperature. You don't want meat sitting on your counter for more than 2 hours at a low temperature. At the same time, once the meat reaches that temperature, you don't want it to go beneath that again. So for example if you're cooking beef, you want it to get to 145°F within 2 hours. And during the entire length of the cooking, you don't want it to drop below 145°F after that.

Fat Side Up

If there is fat on any meat you're cooking, put that part up. That way as the fat melts it self-bastes the food.

Stir Occasionally

In general slow cooking is a hands-off process, but it's good to pour the liquids over the top every once in a while, and to stir it up. This helps to keep things moist.

Watch the Wires

Put the crockpot on a sturdy counter where the wire is completely tucked in. You don't want it out on a table where someone might accidentally hit or tug the wire. Crockpots are full of hot liquid. They can hurt someone quite severely.

Have a Fire Extinguisher

This is true for all cooking methods, but I'll mention it here too. Always have a fire extinguisher around if you're cooking. You never know what random issue can happen. Have first aid gear on hand too.

Set a Timer

Don't rely on the crockpot itself to do what it should. Units have failures. Set a separate timer in your phone, on your PC, or however else you want to do it. You don't want the food to boil dry.

Test your Crock Pot

Every once in a while, run a test with your crockpot to make sure it's reaching the temperatures you think it should be. Even if it was great last year, its thermometer could have failed in the middle and it might not be quite warming enough. It's easy enough to run a trial with water and a thermometer every year or so and make sure the unit is still safe.

Safe Meat Cooking Temperatures

No matter how you choose to cook your meat – slow cooking, grilling, roasting, baking, or microwaving - make sure you cook it safely to its minimum temperature.

I want to note that I am not a doctor. This information is sourced from the US Government, from the US Department of Health and Human Services. This is what their research has found.

Eggs

If you are cooking with mixed-in eggs, be sure to cook to a temperature of 160°F. If you're using raw eggs that you can see, you want both the yolk and white area to be firm.

Pork / Ham / Pig

If you're reheating pork products, you want to get it to 140°F. However, if you're starting from raw pork or ham, make sure you bring it up to 145°F and then rest post-cooking for at least 3 minutes.

Whole Beef, Veal, and Lamb

For steaks, chops, and roasts, make sure you reach 145°F. Then make sure the meat rests post-cooking for at least 3 minutes.

For ground mixtures of these, you'll want to go higher - a temperature of 160°F. You don't have to let that rest, though.

Chicken / Turkey / Poultry

For solid pieces like thighs, legs, and wings, you want the meat to get to at least 165°F before serving.

For ground versions, you also want to aim for the same 165°F temperature.

Fin Fish

I love sushi, I admit it. So I'll eat it raw. However, the government

recommends you cook it until 145°F when the flesh separates with a fork.

Shrimp / Lobster / Crab

Cook until the flesh is pearly and opaque.

Clams / Oysters / Mussels

Make sure the shells are closed when you start. Cook until they open up.

Scallops

Cook until the scallops become opaque and firm.

Leftovers

In general, cook everything until 165°F. That way you know, no matter what's in it, that you're safe.

The color of a meat doesn't necessarily indicate if it's safe or non-safe. Depending on how you cook, a meat can be pink and quite safe - or it can be a darker color and unsafe. Be sure to go with a thermometer reading to know for sure.

It's better to cook well and stay healthy, vs testing how quickly your local medical teams react to phone calls!

Beef / Pork Recipes

The magic of slow cooking is that you can do pretty much anything with it. Explore your imagination. Add in different spices. Change out the meat. You never know what new favorite you'll develop!

Burrito Beef

We love burritos on low carb tortillas, they're delicious and quite healthy. Here's a slow cook recipe for the burrito meat that is easy and inexpensive.

2 lbs stew beef
2 cans tomato paste
1/2 onion
1/2 red bell pepper
4 cloves garlic
2 Tbsp "Mexican spices"
1 tsp cocoa powder
1 packet Splenda
1 cup water

Mix together all ingredients. If you don't have a Mexican spice blend, first blend together cumin and chili powder in equal parts. Then sprinkle in cayenne pepper until the heat level seems good to you. Cook on high for 4-6 hours or until meat falls apart easily.

Makes an inexpensive meat perfect for Mexican dishes!

Servings: 6
Net Carbs per serving: 8g

Most of the carbs come from the tomato paste, so shop wisely on that item!

Corned Beef and Cabbage

Talk about the perfect low carb recipe! You have corned beef for protein, cabbage for veggies, and it's delicious. Perfect for any Celtic events!

Note that Corned Beef is *not* an authentic Irish dish! In Ireland, they had "bacon" (i.e. pork rump) as a Sunday dinner with the family. They would never eat corned beef. When the Irish came over to the US, they were quite poor. They got the poorest cuts of beef from the markets - and at the time, this was the corned beef.



There are all sorts of combinations to make with corned beef. For example the image shows one with carrots, celery, cabbage, and rutabaga. The recipe below is a basic format that you can then add anything you wish to.

- 1 brisket of corned beef
- 6 cloves of garlic
- 2 bay leaves
- 10 peppercorns
- 1 stalk celery
- 1 head cabbage

Begin with the corned beef. Cut Xs in its side and insert the cloves of garlic. Garlic is healthy for you! Put the brisket into a large pot and add enough water to cover it fully. Add in the bay leaves, peppercorns, and celery - sliced up. Simmer this for 2 hours.

Now chop the cabbage up into large chunks. Add them into the water, then cook for another 1/2 hour.

Serve with mustard, and enjoy!

Corned beef and cabbage is one of my favorite dishes on the planet, and I have it regularly, not just on St. Patrick's Day. Make it a normal part of your routine! It is very tasty, and very easy to make. It pretty much cooks itself, and your home fills with delicious smells all day long.

How about potatoes? Surely we've all heard of the potato famine. Over 1 million people died in only 6 years (out of 8 million population total) starting in 1845. Most Irish were poor farmers, working land they didn't own. They were required to grow potatoes and only were able to keep a small amount for themselves. When that potato crop failed for a few years, they simply starved to death.

Believe me, if the Irish were allowed to own their land and grow a wider variety of crops, they would have! It was only the strict orders of their "masters" which forced them to stick with the potato crop. Move beyond the potato to some of the more healthy choices – turnips and rutabagas!

Pork Apple Bourbon

We love slow cooking! It's easy and lets you come home to a delicious-smelling home. This one uses an Apple Bourbon Slow Cook seasoning.

Ingredients:

4 lb boneless pork spareribs

1 lg vidalia onion

2 lg bell peppers

salt

pepper

Campbell's apple bourbon BBQ mix

Start by cutting the boneless pork spareribs into 1" chunks. Coat it well with the Campbell's apple bourbon BBQ mix. Let that sit in the fridge overnight to absorb the flavors.

The next day, put that pork into your crockpot. Cut the onion into slices and add those in. Cut the bell peppers into slices and add those in. We like using one yellow and one orange to add flavor to the dish.

Now salt and pepper to taste.

Run the crockpot for 2 hours on high, then go for 6-8 hours on low to give it that rich, falling-apart texture.

The USDA recommends cooking pork to a temperature of at least 145F. So make sure you test inside the pork pieces when you are thinking of calling it done, to make sure the temperature is that high. It's important to have a meat thermometer for slow cooking, for safety reasons.

Makes 6 servings.

Carbs:

A whole vidalia onion has about 8g net carbs, so that's 1.3g per serving.

Each pepper is about 4g each, so that's also 1.3g per serving.

The Campbell's Apple Bourbon BBQ mix is 15g, so that adds on 2.5g per serving.

So you've got about 5.1g total per serving. Not bad at all for a main dish!

Tips:

What we do when we're chopping up Vidalia onions is to start by cutting it across its equator. Lay one half down on its flat side and quarter it by cutting an X into it. Now cut each of those quarters in half. That's quick, easy, and makes manageable pieces. Repeat on the other half.

Pork Roast

We love slow cooking with our crockpot. This pork roast recipe uses mushrooms, garlic, onion, and other delicious ingredients to create a wonderful meal.

Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp peanut oil
- 5lb pork butt roast
- 1lb dried black beans
- 1 onion
- 6 cloves garlic
- 1 lb white mushrooms
- 1/2 lb assorted mushrooms (oyster, shiitake, bella)
- 1/2 celery heart
- 1/2 tsp lemon juice
- 1/2 cup waters

Spices:

- 2 Tbsp cumin
- 2 Tbsp chili powder
- 2 Tbsp oregano
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- 1/8 tsp ground cayenne pepper

A day before, follow the bean instructions to soak the beans overnight, then drain and rinse them. If you start with canned beans you don't need this step. If you're aiming for super-low carb you can exclude the beans altogether.

When you're ready to slow cook, start by putting the peanut oil into the crockpot and spreading it around. In a bowl mix together the spices - the cumin, chili powder, oregano, salt, black pepper, and cayenne pepper. Sprinkle a third over the top of the pork roast and rub it in. Flip over the roast and sprinkle another third over the bottom and rub it in.

Put the roast into the unit fat side up so it self bastes as it cooks.

Crush and mince the garlic - not too fine, you want some texture. Slice the onion thin. Put these over the top of the roast. Cut the celery into 1 1/2 inch lengths and add that in with the carrots to the roast. Add in all mushrooms. Over the top add the soaked, drained, rinsed beans.

Now add on the lemon juice and water. If you rinsed out the beans you can use water from that rinse. Sprinkle over all remaining spice.

As it's cooking you might want to add on a dash more cumin and chili powder to the mix.

With our crockpot we do 3 hours on high, then 4 hours on low. Always use a meat thermometer to make sure your meat has reached the safe temperature for it. With pork that will be 145F.

The carb count will depend if you use beans or not, and how much you tend to eat. If you drop out the beans the value is fairly low. If you add in the beans, look at the beans package to see the value for the ones you are using.

Pot Roast

Pot Roast is a great food that you can prepare in the morning and enjoy in the evening! Not only does it taste delicious, but it fills the house with scrumptious aromas that really are quite nice. This recipe uses a crock pot for super easy cooking.

4 lbs beef in a roast cut
1 tsp sea salt
1 tsp coarse ground black pepper
pinch ground cloves
1/2 tsp mustard powder
1 large yellow onion
2 carrots
2 sticks celery
12oz Bordeaux wine
2 lb baby red potatoes
12oz baby bella mushrooms
1 Tbsp chopped garlic
dash garlic powder
thickener (low carb if you can find it)
12oz sliced mushrooms

Crank the crock pot on high with nothing in it, then drop the meat into the already hot crockpot to brown it. In our case we used two 2-pound pieces so they fit nicely into our crock pot.

Let the meat cook for about 5 minutes. Sprinkle on 1 tsp sea salt. If you choose to use table salt instead, cut back a bit on how much you use. Add 1 tsp black pepper. Rub these both into the meat. Sprinkle on the cloves and mustard.

Cut the onion so that some pieces are finely slivered and others are diced. Add this to the pot. Cut the carrot into 1" strips and add that in. Finely chop the celery and in it goes. Pour in half of the Bordeaux.

Let the mixture cook for about an hour. Slice the potatoes in half, add those in. Cook for another 4 hours on high. Add in the mushrooms and the other half of the wine. Sprinkle on the chopped garlic and the garlic powder.

An hour later, pull out all of the solids with a slotted spoon. Don't worry if you miss a few onions or carrot bits. Add in some thickener and the sliced mushrooms. Cook this for another 2 hours to create a mushroom gravy. Note that you can sauté the mushrooms and then do the gravy for much less time, if you don't want to wait the extra 2 hours for this part to be done. We happened to have had the time and wanted the mushrooms and gravy to have a nice, rich flavor.

Note that if you need more volume to your gravy, you can always add in a can of beef broth to increase the volume.

For real low carbers, leave out the potatoes, since they provide 99% of the carbs - or adjust the potato volume to match how many carbs you can consume. Other than that, really the only carbs come from however many carrots you eat. Celery is only 0.8g for a half cup - which I doubt you'd get in a serving - and carrots are 5.1g for a half cup. The mushrooms are 1g per half cup. I happen to dodge carrots myself, so I would probably only get say .5g for a whole serving. If you ate nothing but carrots and beef, you'd be on the 5g for a whole serving. It all depends how you personally tend to eat :)

Chicken / Poultry Recipes

Chicken becomes delicious when cooked in a slow cooker. It becomes tender, juicy, and fall-off-the-bone tasty.

Be sure to experiment with different spices to see which you like the best!

Chicken Vegetable

A crockpot has got to be a low carb dieter's best friend. These electronic cooking pots can be set for a delayed start, and to cook for hours while you are away at work or doing chores. You can make dishes quite easily that are low carb and delicious, and have great leftovers for days.

1/2 onion
8 cloves garlic
1 plum tomato
1/2 cup water
3 pounds boneless chicken breasts
1 bay leaf
dash pepper
tsp minced garlic
1/4 cup olive oil
1 Tbsp basil
1 zucchini
2 lb bag of broccoli / cauliflower / carrots

Cut up the onion, cloves and tomato into bite sized pieces. Mix them and the water in the bottom of the pot. Cut the chicken into quarters and add in. Mix in a bay leaf, dash of pepper, minced garlic and olive oil. Let sit for 4 hours on high.

Add in zucchini, broccoli, cauliflower and carrots as desired. Salt and pepper to taste. Cook another 90 minutes. Note that if you want, you can add water and cream of chicken soup at the end to make it more of a 'rich chicken soup' than a stew!

Makes 8 servings

Carbs per serving: 5-6g depending on veggie blend used

Hawaiian Chicken

This Hawaiian Chicken Slow Cooker Recipe involves onions, bell peppers, and the Campbell's slow cooker mix. Add some delicious flavors into tonight's meal!

Ingredients:

- 5 lb boneless chicken breast
- 1 large vidalia onion
- 2 large bell peppers
- onion flakes
- paprika
- cayenne
- ginger
- salt
- pepper
- 1 pkt Campbell's Hawaiian luau flavoring

Start by cutting the chicken breast into 1" cubes. Roll it around in the flavoring to thoroughly coat it. Put this into the crock pot.

Chop the Vidalia onion into chunks. Next chunk up the 2 large bell peppers. We like using one orange and one yellow to add color to the dish.

The spices are all to taste. You can add lots of cayenne if you want it hot, or just a little if you prefer it mild. Some people adore ginger and would want lots. Others would just want a hint. You can start with just a dash of everything and then add in more as you go if you want more of a given flavor.

Start this out at 2 hours on high, then drop for 6-8 hours on low.

The USDA recommends cooking all poultry - including chicken - to an internal temperature of 165F for safety reasons. Use a meat thermometer and put it into the inside of one of the pieces to ensure it's cooked all the way through.

Serve and enjoy!

Carbs:

A whole vidalia onion has about 8g net carbs, so that's 1.3g per serving.

Each pepper is about 4g each, so that's also 1.3g per serving.

The Campbell's Hawaiian luau mix is 24g, so that adds on 4g per serving.

So you've got about 6.6g total per serving. This should be fine for a meal for all levels of low carb eating.

If you don't have access to Campbell's flavoring, you can always try going with sugar-free apricot preserves or something like that instead. It'll add the sweet flavor without much added sugar.

Summary

Slow cooking adds a wonderful set of recipes into your toolkit. It's easy to make them, they cook all by themselves, and the food is ready when you get home. Be sure to learn more about slow cooking, and try a few recipes!

We are eager to add more recipes to this, based on your requests. Please write me and let me know what type of ingredients you enjoy. I will create you a batch of custom recipes. That's your treat for getting an early copy of this book 😊.

If you enjoyed this book, please leave a review on Amazon, GoodReads, and whatever other sites you participate in. Together we can bring low carb goodness to those who treasure good health and delicious food!

Appendices

It's good to read these appendices when you first get the book, so you get a grounding in how to eat and cook in a healthy manner. After that, refer to these sections whenever you need a refresher on how these systems work!

About Carbohydrates

No matter what sort of healthy eating system you are on, it is important to understand what you are eating. Just what are carbohydrates, and how do they affect your body?

Carbohydrates are one of the four main types of energy that your body is physically able to burn for fuel. The other three energy types are fats, proteins, and alcohols. This is basic human construction and biology.

The Carbohydrate is the easiest thing for your body to burn, so if your body has the choice of burning through that Ring Ding you ate or the fat on your thighs it'll burn the Ring Ding - and probably add more extra fat to your thighs afterwards, too. On the other hand, if you eat fats or proteins, your body has to first convert those things into carbohydrates, and then use the carbohydrates for energy. So even if you eat more *calories* on a fat-rich diet, you still lose more weight, because your body is doing extra work to use those fats.

Living on an alcohol diet is not recommended for many reasons :)

There are three types of carbohydrates:

Simple Carbohydrates - Sugars

Sugars include the white table sugar stuff (sucrose) as well as fruit sugars (fructose), milk sugars (lactose) and so on. Sugar is *very* easy for your body to use, so your body doesn't have to do much work in order to take in sugar and turn it into fat.

Sugar spikes your body's blood sugar levels, causing large mood swings. When the sugar rush is gone (and all the excess sugar is

packed into your tummy for storage as fat) then your body gets hungry immediately and craves more food. It is these swings and the easy-to-fat cycle that low carb diets are trying to break.

When Man was evolving, he did not have Yodels and chocolate-covered donuts hanging on his trees. The amount of sugar modern man eats - in everything from breakfast cereals to breads and TV dinners - is staggering. No matter what style of healthy eating you choose to follow, it undoubtedly recommends cutting out soda, junk food, and excess sugar.

Complex Carbohydrates - Starches

Starches are those rich carbohydrates found in bread, potatoes, pasta, and french fries. Starches cause the exact same problems that sugars do. They spike your blood sugar levels, giving you a quick boost of energy, but setting you up for a big *loss* of energy once the spike is gone. You also feel hungry again after the spike because the blood sugar levels drop so drastically.

Many foods such as Chinese food are cooked in very starch-rich sauces, which cause the hungry-shortly-afterwards issues.

Dietary Fiber

If you look at a nutrition panel on processed food, you'll see that Dietary Fiber is listed under the total carbohydrate listing. Fiber is a *very* healthy thing to eat and helps keep your digestion system regular. Eating fiber daily is very important to your health. Better yet - fiber does *not* impact your weight situation at all.

Fiber doesn't turn into fat or energy - it just goes through your stomach and intestines, helping to keep it clean. So in short, fiber does *not* count as a carb. Technically it is part of the carbohydrate family, but in terms of impact on your body, fiber is not processed at all.

It's important to be clear about a key issue involving carbohydrates. Participating in a low carb lifestyle is **not** about avoiding vegetables. It is about avoiding *foods that are high in junk carbohydrates*. So that means staying away from things like white bread, potatoes, pasta, candied yams, and the like. I'm not sure there is any dietician that would tell you that eating white bread *is* healthy for you.

It might be true that high-energy foods like potatoes were necessary for farmers in the 1700s who were out in the field working hard. These intrepid souls needed a supply of high-powered energy to get through the day. But for the typical person in the modern developed world, that high powered energy simply equates to thick thighs and a round stomach.

Effective Carbs vs Total Carbs

When you look at the back nutrition panel of a processed food, it lists Total Carbohydrates. But then it lists dietary fiber and sugars. What is the final, effective carb count?

First, carbs are the white sugars, the starchy pastas and potatoes in life. To reiterate an important point, avoiding carbs is **not** about avoid avoiding vegetables. You should eat large amounts of healthy vegetables on a low carb diet. Avoiding carbs is really about avoiding unhealthy sugars and starches.

The point of counting carbs is to figure out how many carbs in a given dish will have an impact on your blood sugar levels and your potential fat gain or loss. You want to keep your blood sugar levels even, so you do not have hunger cravings or interrupt your fat loss. You normally want to keep your carb intake below a certain number that for you represents the amount of carbs your body needs to get energy for the day. That way the remaining energy will come from your fat cells that you are trying to get rid of.

Because of that aim, the only carbs you count are the ones that can **turn into fat**. Any carb that just goes in one end and out the other end doesn't count towards your Effective Carbs, because those carbs will not effect at all how your body gets energy or burns fat.

Dietary Fiber

One of the values listed on a nutrition panel is dietary fiber. While fiber is a carb, it is **not** used by the body for energy and is not processed. Fiber is *critical* to keeping your digestive system clean and working smoothly. Luckily for us, it doesn't get turned into energy or fat, so it is non-impactful as far as your weight loss goes.

So if for example the zucchini chips bag has 8g of carbohydrates - but 4g of those are dietary fiber - it actually only has 4g (8-4) of

meaningful or effective carbs. If you ate a serving of chips, you would only count that you had ingested 4g of carbs.

Sugar Alcohols

Sugar Alcohols are often not counted by low carb dieters. This is because sugar alcohols flow through your system without being processed. Your body doesn't recognize them as sugar. It should be noted that some people are sensitive to sugar alcohols, and have 'gastric distress' when eating them. It's always wise to start with a very small portion of a food containing sugar alcohols, to see how your body reacts to them.

Glycemic Index

The glycemic index of a food is in essence how quickly the body absorbs the sugars found in food. Examples of foods with high glycemic indexes are white potatoes and white bread.

While many different types of foods contain sugars in them, in some cases the sugars are very slow to be absorbed. Your body might not even absorb those sugars before they pass through your system. In other cases, however, the sugars get into your body with amazing speed and get stored away in the fat cells for later use.

If you eat foods with high glycemic indexes, the “easily available” sugar in them triggers your body to release insulin. Insulin tells your fat cells to start absorbing all the sugar to get it out of your blood system. Once the wave of sugar is gone, your body goes down into a ‘trough’, with low insulin and blood sugar levels - and you get hungry again. The binge-eating then continues.

A good example of high glycemic index food is Chinese Food, in the traditional US take-out way. I have to note here that *authentic* traditional Chinese food is quite healthy, with fresh fish stock and vegetables. However, the way US people tend to eat Chinese food, they eat piles of white rice, chicken soaked in a sugar-sauce and breaded dumplings filled with sugar-mix. All of that food has an incredibly high glycemic index. The body is overwhelmed with sugar. It releases massive amounts of insulin and all of that sugar goes straight into fat cells. And then the body reacts to the subsequent “sharp lowering” of blood sugar levels as a danger sign and becomes hungry again.

While low carb diets were among the first to point out the hazards of high glycemic foods, most other diet systems have now followed suit and recognize that foods such as white bread and white rice have lots of sugar and very few nutrients. Every diet plan I’ve studied is now recommending that people switch to the healthier varieties of whole wheat bread and brown rice.

In a “shorthand” way, foods with high carb counts usually have high glycemic index counts as well. But to understand more *why* you are avoiding high carb counts, it’s important to learn about the glycemic index, and to begin to look for that information on the foods you eat. Hopefully soon this information will be printed on every label you pick up and read!

Low Carb Food List

Here is an overview of the types of foods you can expect to be eating on a low carb diet. It will give you a general idea of the lifestyle that many of us enjoy, day in and day out, as our healthy way of eating.

Meats/Fish

Just about every meat and fish has 0g of carbs. The exception is processed deli meats which often have not only carbs but nitrates. Liver is also carb-rich. In general, though, every meal should have a serving of meat, fish, or some other form of protein in it. Protein is critical for healthy body functioning.

Vegetables

It is extremely important to eat your vegetables! They are chock-full of nutrients. Some of the lowest carb veggies are broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, asparagus, celery, cucumber, lettuce, radishes, and spinach. You can eat all vegetables in moderation, but stay away from corn, peas, and potatoes! All are full of carbs. Save those for treats later on.

Fruits

While an Apple a Day might keep the doctor away, it's also very sugary. That is true for many fruits. Yes, enjoy those berries that are full of antioxidants, but don't build your menus around fruits. There are far better ways to get most of your nutrients. Fruits are best as an occasional dessert.

Milk, Dairy, and Eggs

Many people become lactose-intolerant as they age. The enzymes that babies possess to digest milk often fades away in adults. It's good to cut down your milk consumption for the first two weeks, and see how your body likes it. You might very well feel far better without it! An egg or two a day is a great way to get protein into you.

Nuts and Seeds

What tasty treats! Instead of pretzels and chips, pour out a handful of nuts and enjoy. They are healthy for you.

Healthy humans should drink a *lot* of water - at least 8 glasses a day. Many times when you think you are hungry you may actually be thirsty. Keep a glass of water by your side, and you'll find that you reach for it often ... far more often than you might have guessed!

Preparing to Start

Any lifestyle change requires some preparation. If your home is full of sugary soda and chocolate, and you work in a donut bakery, you could find it exceedingly difficult to work on a low carb diet. The environment you're in will not support you in your goal.

So take a week before you begin your diet to prepare your house, your pantry, your fridge. These tips will help you build a world around you that supports healthy eating. Tell your family and friends that you are planning on eating more healthy foods, and ask for their support.

If your kids only drink sugary soda, it might be time to get them out of that habit while you're changing your own lifestyle! The incidence of childhood obesity is at an all time high. With the plethora of sugar-free products on the market nowadays, there is little excuse to be ruining your teeth and health with the sugar-filled ones.

Stocking a Low Carb Pantry

You're getting ready to go with a low carb diet. Here's how to stock your pantry and your fridge to give your diet the best possible chance of success.

First, *clear out the junk food!!* Get rid of the candy, chocolate, ice cream, and other unhealthy food items. No matter *what* method you want to use to lose some weight, that junk food has to go.

Now, to get some better options in the house.

Water

Water is the most important thing on *any* diet, a low carb diet included. You should drink at least eight glasses of water a day. This may seem like a lot, but if you keep a glass of water by you, you'd be surprised just how much you drink as a matter of course!

Whether it's a fridge that gives fresh water, a pitcher on your desk, a Brita water filter in the fridge, or bottled water, get that water into you.

Lots of Cheese

Whatever types of cheese you enjoy, get a variety of blocks of cheese into the house. Cheese is a great, tasty treat. It provides calcium which is important for strong bones and teeth.

Greens and Broccoli

We have found bag-o-broccoli and bag-o-baby-spinach to be greatly useful. The more quick-and-easy veggies you have around, the more likely you are to eat some.

Snacking Veggies

Whether it's carrot sticks, celery sticks, cucumber slices, zucchini slices, cauliflower in dip, get a variety of veggie snacks in the house. You don't have to eat these things plain - there are a wide variety of cheeses, sauces, and combos that will make these items taste delicious.

Fresh Meats

Avoid processed sandwich meats - they're full of nitrates. Think like a European, and swing by the market on the way home. Is the fresh, preservative-free roast beef on sale? How about some preservative-free turkey breast? Grab some shrimp for a cocktail and get smoked salmon for breakfast.

Tuna Fish

Tuna fish is very good for you, to help you stock up on the important omega-3 oils. Just make sure not to eat it daily – you have to balance the good of the tuna with the variety offered by other food items.

Eat those Vitamins

No matter how you eat nowadays, you need your vitamins. Very few human beings in this life get all the nutrients they need from what they eat. There was a report of a college student in California

getting scurvy because all he ate was a ‘normal American diet’!
Get those vitamins into you.

You’ll find very quickly on a low carb diet that you will rarely be hungry - your body will find enough ‘fuel’ within its own fat cells. However, when you begin any change of lifestyle, much of the challenge is in your mind. This is definitely true with an eating change. You don’t want to *feel* like you have little to eat. So the more healthy, yummy food you have around you, the “safer” you will feel.

Quick Cooking Low Carb Food List

It's time to get shopping. Print this out and bring it with you to the grocery store! Choose your favorites, plus add one or two "new things" each time you shop too, to explore new foods. You might be surprised how tasty it can be to eat fresh food!

Meats/Fish

Just about every meat and fish has 0g of carbs. Do not eat processed meats, hot dogs, or liver. Get protein into each meal. It is necessary for your body to thrive.

- ☐ Hard boiled eggs
- ☐ Pre-cooked Chicken Wings (deserves special mention, these are *perfect* snacks)
- ☐ Nitrate-free luncheon meats (turkey, roast beef, etc.)
- ☐ Cans of tunafish (get the chunk lite, not the white/albacore)
- ☐ Smoked Salmon

Cheese

Cheese is full of calcium and other good nutrients.

- ☐ Cheddar Cheese (great for sprinkling over salads)
- ☐ Swiss
- ☐ Mozzarella (make an eggplant pizza)
- ☐ Gouda

Vegetables

It is extremely important to eat your vegetables! They are chock-full of important nutrients. Try to have a veggie or two at each meal, and extra veggies for snacks. Learn new, fun veggies recipes!

- ___ Alfalfa Sprouts
- ___ Bamboo Shoots
- ___ Bean Sprouts
- ___ Broccoli
- ___ Cabbage
- ___ Cauliflower
- ___ Celery
- ___ Collard Greens
- ___ Cucumber
- ___ Lettuce
- ___ Mushrooms (try all sorts of varieties!)
- ___ Radishes
- ___ Sauerkraut
- ___ Spinach
- ___ Tomato
- ___ Water Chestnuts
- ___ Zucchini

Other Food Items

These items will help ensure you can make a variety of recipes, to keep your menu interesting and tasty.

- ☐ Olive Oil
- ☐ Vinegar
- ☐ Butter
- ☐ Splenda sweetener
- ☐ Sour Cream
- ☐ Diet soda (with Splenda), bottled water, low carb iced teas
- ☐ Olives

- ☐ Nuts

- ☐ Berries

I'll note here that ideally you will want to ease soda out of your life – but as you get started it's OK to take that process gradually.

Herbs

Make sure your spice cabinet is up to date! You will find it amazing how flavorful your food can be when it's made fresh and flavored with delicious spices.

Must Have Low Carb Basic Ingredients

If you're on a low carb diet, there are certain items that you simply **MUST** have in your kitchen to be able to whip up quick and easy recipes. Here's the list.

Oils

Butter

Mayonnaise

Olive Oil

Spices

Garlic Powder

Minced Garlic

Mustard

Onion Powder

Pepper

Salt

Canned Things

Mushrooms

Water Chestnuts

In addition, I recommend keeping a pack or two of low carb tortillas around. They are perfect for making wraps for lunch, breakfast rolls in the morning, and all sorts of other recipes. They're the one "prepared" low carb item that I use almost daily!

Must Have Low Carb Spice List

Spices can turn a bland dish into a delicious favorite. Be sure to keep these herbs and spices in the fridge - you'll be using them quite a bit!

Note that herbs and spices have an effective life of six months but are only harvested yearly. So keep them in the door of your fridge and date them, but don't bother buying them until a year later even though they'll be past their prime by then. Chances are that the stuff you see in the supermarket is from the same year as yours is!

Basil

Known to the Greeks, Basil came to Europe by way of India. It has a rich aroma and is used in vegetable, fish, and salad dishes.

Dill

Dill is an ancient herb used in preserving many types of foods. It's perfect for fish, egg, and cheese dishes.

Garlic Powder

Garlic is incredibly healthy for you and is used in just about every cuisine on the planet. Some people would say that you can use garlic in just about any dish you make :)

Ginger

Ginger has been used in the far east for thousands of years. It has been proven to help with upset stomachs. It goes wonderfully with vegetable and meat dishes.

Oregano

The classic Italian herb adds an aromatic flavor to any dish. Oregano is great with veggies, cheese, and salads.

Go light on the salt and pepper - and invest in a pepper mill that grinds the peppercorns up when you need them. Fill it with one of

those four-color or five-color peppercorn blends, and see just how much more flavor is added to your recipes!

Tips and Tricks

Our entire modern day culture is geared around stuffing as much food into your face as possible, supersizing your meals, and eating foods that are high in sugar and low in nutrients. This, as you can imagine, is not a healthy way to live.

Part of what you're doing on a low carb diet is eating more healthy foods. The other thing you're doing is learning to eat in a more healthy manner. You get the best results when combining both of these concepts together.

Here are tips and tricks to help you eat more healthily, and lose weight more easily.

Clearing your Plate Leads to Obesity

In an amazing study done by the American Institute for Cancer Research, people would mindlessly clear their entire plate of food - even if it held far more than they actually wanted to eat. Studies show that people eat up to 56% more calories than they normally would, just because it's sitting on the plate before them.

In the study, the researchers fed their patients varying plate sizes of macaroni and cheese. The patients would tend to eat the entire plate worth - no matter how much was on it. While they would report feeling "full" from the small plate, when given the large plate on another day they would eat it all up as well - and over half of them didn't even realize they had eaten almost 50% additional food. They had simply been trained by our culture to eat "whatever was on the plate" and not think about whether they were full or hungry.

This "eat everything regardless of how full I am" mindset has become a huge health problem at restaurants, especially fast food restaurants. With large portions and "biggy sized" meals, consumers go right past being "full" and fill themselves with hundreds, if not thousands, of extra calories and carbs.

It can be equally bad at home. Many families are brought up with the "more food is good" mentality, especially those who remember back to days when food was scarce. So they pile up the plates with food, actively push family members to eat more and then insist people not leave any food behind on the plate. All of these activities drive people not only to overeat on that one occasion - but actively alter their bodies to cause them to overeat in the future.

The stomach is an amazingly adaptable organ and stretches to accommodate the extra food. This means that the stomach now needs more food to feel "full" the next time the person eats, and the problem gets worse and worse.

As consumers get more overweight, they demand larger portions from restaurants, which respond in order to please their customers. A 2002 study in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association found that the average order of fries weighs 7.1oz today. In 1955, a person ordering fries would receive 2.4oz. It's not that restaurants were *stingy* before. It's that we as consumers expect "lots of food" - and then gobble it down whether we feel that hungry or not.

Many studies show that it is this trend of constant overeating that has contributed to current weight problems. Research shows that in countries where people eat slowly and stop when they are full, the population maintains a healthy weight even when eating "unhealthy" and fattening items. They might eat that chocolate cake, but they just have a little of it and stop when they are full.

So in short, use small plates, take small portions, and eat slowly. You can *always go back for more*. Low carb dieting insists you eat until you are full. You should never be hungry. But do not *stuff* yourself. Give yourself time to notice you are full, and when you are, stop. The remains on the plate can go in the fridge for later.

Slow Music Reduces your Appetite

It is amazing how our body is tied into the signals it hears. Try playing slow music while you eat - it can reduce your intake by up to 40%!

Many people tend to eat quickly in our fast-paced society. It can take a while for the stomach's "I'm Full" message to reach the brain. If you are eating too quickly, you may eat another half a meal before you realize that you were actually full a while ago. The extra calories you packed in go right to your hips as fat.

Be sure to keep a full glass of water by your plate, even if you're drinking something else with your meal. Reach for a drink often. Taking the drink will add breaks into your eating and help slow the pace of the meal.

By listening to gentle music while you eat, you lower your stress levels and eat more slowly. You actually hear your body's message of "I'm full now" instead of continuing to push more food into your mouth. The result? Less calories in, the same amount of fullness, and your weight becomes more healthy!

Slow Music Suggestions:

CLASSICAL

- * Sleeper's Wake - Bach
- * Pachelbel's Canon - Pachelbel
- * Fall 2 / Adagio molto - Vivaldi

OLDIES

- * Surfer Girl - Beach Boys
- * Summertime - Billie Holiday
- * Something so Right - Paul Simon

MODERN

- * More than Words - Extreme
- * One Man's Dream - Yanni
- * May it Be - Enya
- * You Belong to Me - Jason Wade

Of course, go with whatever style of music you enjoy the most! Create a dinnertime play list, and cut your calorie intake by 40% without even trying.

Reduce Stress to Reduce Carb Cravings

Often your body craves sugar and carbs when it's feeling stressed out or worn down. Your body does this even though it knows the post-carb crash will be worse than what you began with!

Studies have shown that just about any person who takes time to unwind after a long day, or even takes a nap, will eat fewer carbs when they sit down to dinner. Their body does not crave that sugar-rush to pick them up - they have already unwound naturally. The fewer carbs and sugar equate to less pounds packed on the hips and stomach as a result!

Our bodies are genetically trained to hold onto weight when under stress. In order to lose weight, you also have to remove that stress, so your body releases the fat.

The main culprit is a substance known as *cortisol*. When you are feeling stressed your body releases cortisol into your system. The cortisol gives you a boost of energy to deal with that stress. However, since our bodies were developed to think stress = running top speed from an attacking wolf, the cortisol also boosts your hunger levels, assuming that you'll need to replenish your energy stores before the next attack.

Of course, in modern times most of our stress comes when we are sitting at our desk. So we get the stress induced hormones, but then also the stress induced hunger cravings. So we eat - and get heavy.

Note that lack of sleep also causes an increase in levels of cortisol - so if you skimp on sleep, you make this problem worse.

If you are looking to change your weight situation, a *key* ingredient could be to lower your stress levels. You can't control the outside world, but you *can* control your reactions to it. Set aside time for ample sleep. Set aside time for relaxation, whether it's fifteen minute meditations before breakfast or a half hour fun TV show in

the evening. Make this a critical part of every day. You and your health are worth it.

Be sure to pay attention to your body's energy levels during the day. Drink eight glasses of water, take your vitamins, and be sure to snack on healthy foods so that you never go more than 3-4 hours between meals. That should keep your energy levels up so that when you approach the main meals you eat what is healthy for you - and not to satisfy short term cravings!

Dedication

To Bob, who supports me in all my dreams.

To Ruth, whose knowledge of biology is invaluable in proofing my books.

To the Boston Mensa Writing Group, for all their support and encouragement for my projects.

About the Author

Thank you so much for sharing a part of your life's journey with me! Bob and I have followed a low carb lifestyle since June 2003. We have enjoyed every day of it. Bob does the cooking, and I do the writing.

Low carb is a way of life which tantalizes the taste buds and provides an infinite supply of options. You can feast on filet mignon with asparagus. You can delight your exotic side with sashimi and a fresh seaweed salad. Delve into comfort food with a rich ratatouille. Take a virtual vacation to Alaska with smoked salmon for breakfast.



I am online daily to answer questions and provide support. Join whichever community best complements your lifestyle!

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I look forward to talking with you!

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