
STAYING KETO WHILE EATING OUT

RESTAURANTS, FAST FOOD,
AND VACATIONS



It's possible to stay keto when enjoying a meal at a nice restaurant, a fast-food joint, or while going on a holiday.

To do so successfully, you'll need to have a plan and stick to it while being mindful of a few simple rules. In this mini-book, we'll explore the different things you need to consider when following a ketogenic diet and eating out.

DO'S AND DON'TS WHEN EATING OUT

DO:

Prepare in advance.

Review the restaurant menu where you'll be going, to give you an idea of the keto-friendly dishes they offer and a sense of any menu modifications you might request. If you're unsure whether they'd be willing to accommodate your requests, call them in advance to check with them.

Order simple meals - meat and veggies are your best bet.

Simple meals will allow you to guess which ingredients have been used easily; this will lower the probability of eating excess carbs. Meat with low-carb veggies is usually a safe menu selection, and available at most places. Eggs and egg-based dishes are also a great choice. If you are unsure which foods are keto-friendly, see the list on the last page of this book.

Opt for grilled meat instead of fried.

When available, choose grilled meat instead of fried. Avoid anything that's fried in batter. The batter used for frying is typically carb-heavy. Cooking oil used for frying will increase your calorie intake. If you can, stick to grilled meat that hasn't been marinated in sugar, honey, or other sweet marinades.

Ask for your dressing and sauce to be on the side.

Ask to have your sauces and dressings on the side. Many sauces and dressings will be too high in carbs for keto, either avoid them or limit the amount you use. Avoid curries or menu items that have glazings.

Track your food as well as you can.

Of course, when you're tracking meals that you haven't prepared yourself, you will be making estimates. Log each observable ingredient and overestimate its amount by about 15% to make up for the eventual errors. Do your best to log less prominent ingredients, such as oil, broth, thickeners, dressings, etc.

The best type of tracking app is the one you'll use. Below are popular apps that have a good database of foods:

- FatSecret.
- MyFitnessPal.
- Carb Manager.
- CRON-O-meter.

Clearly communicate your preferences.

Communicate your requests to your server — in most cases, they'd be happy to accommodate your needs. In many restaurants, they'll be able to prepare grilled meat and steamed vegetables or a salad for you, even if it's not on the menu. Call them in advance to check if they can accommodate such requests.

Do as well as you can with the options you have, and move on.

If there are no keto-friendly options available, do as low-carb as you can and go back to keto at the first possible occasion.

If you kick yourself out of ketosis, don't beat yourself up for it, and don't punish yourself with prolonged fasting or a grueling workout — this will be counterproductive in the long run, as it creates a negative mindset around food and eating. Instead of that, accept your experience, learn from it, and move on.

DON'T:

Don't order soups and sauces.

Avoid gravies, sauces, and dressings, as they'll often contain sugar, flour, and other ingredients that aren't keto-friendly.

Don't order dishes with high-carb sides.

Avoid rice, pasta, noodles, dumplings, bread, French fries, tortillas, and desserts — all of these are high in carbs and incompatible with a ketogenic diet. Ask to substitute high-carb side dishes with vegetables or salad.

Don't go too heavy on the fat.

Although fat is an important part of your diet, it will increase your calorie intake. Also, most restaurants use highly processed oils, and their Omega-3 to Omega-6 ratios are less than ideal. Ask the restaurant staff to use butter, or use coconut oil if you're at an Asian restaurant.

Don't use eating out as an excuse to cheat on your diet.

Although it might be tempting to have that delicious pizza with your friends, it will have a negative impact on your diet, and it's probably not worth it. It will kick you out of ketosis, and depending on the number of carbs consumed, the time needed to get back into ketosis varies from a few hours up to one or two days. It will make you feel bloated and heavy. With the extra carbs, your appetite will likely increase, too, making it more challenging to go back to dieting afterward.

Don't let yourself get extremely hungry beforehand.

Going to a restaurant famished will make it more challenging to stick to keto-friendly options. To make it easier for yourself, have a small keto-friendly snack beforehand.

Don't let a cheat meal transform into a cheat day and then into a cheat week.

Don't fall victim to the logic "I ate a cookie; I might as well eat a few more". While one cookie won't undo your progress, ten will put a dent in it. Don't use a carb-heavy meal or snack as an excuse to take an unplanned break from keto. If you eat too many carbs, get back on track as soon as you can.

WHAT TO EAT AND DRINK

Sushi Restaurant

You can have sashimi (sliced raw fish), tuna tartar, or beef and chicken skewers as a main. As a side dish, you could order a salad. Take note, a seaweed salad can be high in carbs.

Chinese Restaurant

Even if you don't eat rice and noodles, most menu items will contain high-carb sauces. Some restaurants offer a healthy choice section with grilled meat and low-carb steamed vegetables, such as broccoli and cauliflower. If not, you could call in advance to see if they can accommodate your needs.

Italian Restaurant

Traditional Italian restaurants may have some low-carb options to choose from. Look for the secondi on the menu, i.e. the main courses; most of them will be meat-based. And some Italian restaurants will have a steak on the menu. Almost any Italian restaurant will have a salad option.

Alternatively, an antipasto is also a good option. It's a platter with different sorts of vegetables, cheese, and dried meats. Usually, it's a starter, but you could ask to have it as a main dish (i.e., in a bigger size).

Unfortunately, pizza restaurants might not have a secondi section or offer salads. If you're at a pizza place and don't have any other options, you could order a pizza and only eat the toppings.

Indian Restaurant

At an Indian restaurant, you can have tandoori (grilled meat) and ask for a side of steamed vegetables or a salad. Skip the rice and naan bread, and avoid dishes with sauces. Roasted eggplant (without breading) is usually a tasty keto-friendly option.

Thai Restaurant

Ask whether the curries contain flour or sugar; if they don't, they'll likely be safe to eat. Alternatively, coconut soup could be a good option. Avoid rice and noodles.

Pad Thai, Som Tam, and anything with rice won't be keto-friendly.

Vietnamese Restaurant

You could order a Pho soup without the noodles; it contains broth, meat, and sometimes tripe or meatballs.

Pub or Fast-food

Fast food is usually very high in carbs, but there are a few simple tricks that you can use to make almost any fast food meal into a low-carb one.

Here are some tips on how to achieve that:

- If you're at a burger place, swap the burger bun with lettuce, or order a bunless burger — most places will not have an issue accommodating such a request. If you get a burger with the buns, do not eat them.

- Be mindful of sauces; they will probably contain too many carbs. Ask for the ingredients of the sauce you plan to order and have it on the side. Sugar-free ketchup contains some carbs but fewer than regular ketchup, so if you're careful with the amount you're having, you could have some. Regular mustard and Dijon mustard are sufficiently low in carbs, but honey mustard is not keto-friendly.
- Skip the fries or any other high-carb sides. French fries are very high in carbs and calories and they are usually fried in highly refined vegetable oil. Skip them altogether.
- Have a salad with the dressing on the side.
- Order eggs & bacon for breakfast. Most fast-food joints will have some sort of egg-based breakfast with bacon; order it without bread.
- Instead of burrito, have a burrito bowl. To keep it low-carb, you need to leave out beans, rice, and corn.
- If you order buffalo wings, skip the sauces.
- Have a salad instead of a sandwich at Subway.

Beverages

Coffee can be enjoyed black, with heavy cream, or with unsweetened almond milk.

Pure forms of alcohol like whiskey, gin, tequila, rum, and vodka are all entirely free of carbs. These beverages can be drunk straight or combined with low-carb no sugar mixers like diet soda, sugar-free tonic water or sparkling water.

Some wines are relatively low in carbs; dry wines usually contain 3 - 4 grams net carbs per 5 oz glass. We recommend that you opt for dry to very dry red or white wines, and limit your intake. Some dry wine options are Bordeaux, Chianti, Montepulciano, Beaujolais, Burgundy, Cabernet, Franc Sangiovese, and Valpolicella (for red wines), or, Sauvignon Blanc or Chardonnay (for white wines).

Remember, overindulging in alcohol can increase your risk of nutritional deficiencies over time. It may also contribute to gradual weight gain, or be the reason behind weight loss stalls.

Snacks

Here are some examples of keto snacks that are easy to carry with you while on the go.

- Boiled eggs
- Sugar-free beef jerky or biltong
- Pork rinds
- Cucumber slices
- Celery
- Cheese
- Nuts
- A piece of 90% chocolate
- Olives
- Avocados
- Deli meat, e.g., a few slices of dried ham or pepperoni
- Low-carb protein bars

STAYING KETO ON A VACATION

Staying keto while going on a vacation might sound like an impossible task, but it isn't. First, you'll need to consider your priorities — staying in ketosis most or all of the time, or trying some new cuisine. Of course, it's much better to stick to your diet in terms of weight loss progress, and if you stick to a few simple rules, it's certainly doable. Alternatively, you could go low carb for your holiday and go back to keto as soon as you arrive home.

Whatever you choose, if you eat mindfully and stick to moderate amounts of food, i.e., if you don't use your vacation as an excuse to overeat and, if you track to the best of your abilities, you won't undo all of your progress.

TIPS:

Research your destination.

In advance, check what you can expect from your destination in terms of cuisine. It might be worth searching for specific things like "doing keto in ..." or "eating low carb in ...", to get an idea of what is available.

Opt for accommodation with access to a kitchen when possible.

Having access to a kitchen to prepare food yourself will, of course, make staying keto much easier. It's not always possible, but do check your options when booking your accommodation.

Invest in a portable kitchen scale.

If preparing your meals during a part of your vacation, having a portable kitchen scale will make a world of difference in how precise you are in measuring and tracking your macros.

Have simple meals that you can easily guess the ingredients of.

Sticking to simple options is your best bet, especially if there's a language barrier. Meat, egg-based dishes, and vegetables are usually safe options.

Avoid any high-carb ingredients.

Side dishes often tend to be high in carbs, so avoid these altogether — rice, pasta, bread, noodles, and all potato-based dishes are high in carbs.

Remember, there are many ways to enjoy yourself apart from food.

Food is ingrained in our culture and sharing precious moments with our friends and family often involves food; however, there are plenty of things to do on holiday that do not include dining. Outdoor activities are an excellent way to spend your free time — hiking, kayaking, swimming, skiing, and exploring where you are on foot. If the weather doesn't allow for spending time outside, visiting museums, galleries, bookstores is an excellent way to spend time on vacation.

Do as well as you can and move on.

If you don't manage to stay keto throughout your vacation, don't panic — make the best choices you can with the options you have available and go back to your diet when you get home.

UNDERSTANDING AND TRACKING MACROS

There are two ways to calculate your macros — as ratios and as grams, based on your stats.

Macros is short for macronutrients — these are carbs, fats, and protein. The term ratios refers to the percentage of total calories that you'll be getting from each macronutrient. For the ketogenic diet, nutrient ratios will typically look something like this:

- 5-10% of total calories coming from carbs.
- 15-35% of total calories coming from protein.
- 55-80% of total calories coming from fat.

To be able to calculate and track your macros while on holidays, you need to know (or be able to estimate) a few things, your body weight, approximate body fat percentage, lean body mass, activity levels and goals as well as your maintenance calories and desired calorie deficit. These will help you determine your macro targets.

You will also need to know the number of calories in 1 gram of each macronutrient:

- 4 calories in 1 gram of carbohydrates.
- 4 calories in 1 gram of protein.
- 9 calories in 1 gram of fat.

Calculating Macros as Ratios

If your daily weight loss calorie target is, for example, 1680, and you calculate your macros based on set ratios within the standard keto diet range, your macros might look like this:

- 5% of 1680 is 84 calories. Divided by 4, this means your net carbs would be 21 g.
- 20% of 1680 is 336 calories. Divided by 4, this means your protein would be 84 g.
- 75% of 1680 is 1260 calories. Divided by 9, this means your fats would be 140 g.

Calculating Macros as Grams

To calculate your macros as grams, it's important to understand:

- Carb intake should be between 20-25 g net carbs per day.
- Protein needs will depend on your activity levels, goals, and dietary preferences. Protein should be proportional to your lean body mass (LBM) and activity levels — the more muscle and other lean tissue you need to sustain, and the more physically active you are, the more protein you'll need. The recommended range is 0.68-1.2 g protein per pound of lean body mass.
- Fat intake will be based on your daily weight loss calorie target minus the calories from carbs and protein.

If your weight loss calorie target is 1680, and you've decided to calculate protein as 1 g of protein per lb of lean body mass. Your protein target will be 105 grams daily (420 calories). You've set your net carb target at 25 grams daily (100 calories). Based on your carb and protein targets, you can determine your fat target will be 129 grams daily (1,160 calories).

If you convert those to ratios, you'd have the following numbers based on 1680 calories:

- 25 g net carbs is 100 calories, or approximately 6%.
- 105 g protein is 420 calories, or approximately 25%.
- 129 g fat is 1,160 calories, or approximately 69%.

Ingredient Macronutrients

Macronutrients are based on the food item's nutritional value, not the weight of the item. For example, 57 grams of lox salmon has 0 grams of carbohydrates, 2.5 grams of fat, and 10 grams of protein. The best way to keep track of your macros is to use a tracking app.

Keto Diet Food List

Unprocessed Natural Meat

Beef Veal Lamb Pork	Fowl Turkey Chicken Duck Goose Hen Quail	Organ Meats Brains Tongue Liver Heart Kidneys	Game Meats Venison Bison Caribou Elk	Exotic Meats Ostrich Emu	Unprocessed Fresh Seafood  Cod Flounder Sole Haddock Halibut Sardine	Swordfish Tuna Trout Salmon Catfish Bass	Seasoning  Salt and Pepper Vinegar Ground Cinnamon Most Hot Sauces Yellow Mustard Dill weed, Chives, Basil, Oregano, Rosemary, Thyme, etc.
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Oils and Fats

Olive oil	Walnut Oil	Fish oil
Coconut oil	MCT oil	Animal Fats (including lard)
Grass-fed butter	Avocado oil	

Beverages

Water	Coffee
Sparkling Water	Tea
Club Soda	Diet Soda (check labels, watch for sweeteners)

Net Carbs Per 100g Cheese

Asiago [3.6 g]	Fontina [1.6 g]	Muenster [1.1 g]
Blue [2.3 g]	Goats [0.1 g]	Parmesan [4.1 g]
Brie [0.5 g]	Gouda [2.2 g]	Provolone [2.1 g]
Camembert [0.5 g]	Gruyère [0.4 g]	Ricotta [3 g]
Cheddar [1.3 g]	Havarti [3.6 g]	
Colby [2.6 g]	Monterey [0.7 g]	
Edam [1.4 g]	Mozzarella [3.1 g]	

Net Carbs Per Tbsp. Cream

Heavy Cream [0.4 g]
Half-and-Half [0.2 to 1]

Net Carbs Per Egg Eggs

Eggs [0.2 to .7 g] (check the carton)
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Net Carbs Per 100g Vegetables

Broccoli Rabe, Rapini [0 g]	Iceberg Lettuce [1.6 g]	Cauliflower [3 g]	Nori [4.7 g]
Escarole, Curly Endive [0 g]	Radish [1.8 g]	Eggplant [3 g]	Cress [4.9 g]
Baby Beet Greens [0 g]	Asparagus [1.8 g]	Mushroom, Brown [3 g]	Fennel [4.9 g]
Endive [0 g]	Chard [2 g]	Cucumber [3.1 g]	Broccolini [5 g]
Tung Ho [0 g]	Arugula [2 g]	Bitter Melon [3.2 g]	Sugar Snap Peas (Snowpeas) [5 g]
Alfalfa sprout [0 g]	Spinach [2 g]	Cabbage [3.5 g]	Bell Peppers, Yellow [5.1 g]
Sin Qua [0.1 g]	Mushroom, White (Button) [2 g]	Yu Choy Sum [3.5 g]	Brussels Sprout [5.2 g]
Bean sprout (Mung Bean) [0.2 g]	Avocado [2 g]	Green Beans [3.6 g]	Snake Bean (Yardlong) [5.2 g]
Chi Qua [0.3 g]	Banana Pepper [2 g]	Okra [3.8 g]	Spaghetti Squash [5.5 g]
Olives [0.54 g]	Zucchini (Courgette) [2.1 g]	Tomatoes, Green [3.9 g]	Artichoke [6 g]
Collard Greens [1 g]	Summer Squash [2.3 g]	Bell Peppers, Red [3.9 g]	Pumpkin [6.5 g]
Water Spinach [1 g]	Tomatoes, Yellow [2.3 g]	Mushroom, Portabella [4 g]	Rutabaga [6.7 g]
Romaine [1 g]	Gai Choy [2.3 g]	Yellow Wax Beans [4 g]	Carrots [7.2 g]
Butterhead Lettuce [1 g]	Kohlrabi [2.4 g]	Jicama [4.1 g]	Celery Root (Celeriac) [7.2 g]
Chicory greens [1 g]	White Radish (Daikon) [2.5 g]	Tomatillos [4.1 g]	Beet [7.2 g]
Bok Choy (Pak Choi) [1.2 g]	Tomatoes, Red [2.7 g]	Turnips [4.2 g]	Onion [7.3 g]
Gai Lan (Chinese Broccoli) [1.3 g]	Bamboo Shoots [2.8 g]	Jalapeno Pepper [4.2 g]	Kale [8 g]
Celery [1.4 g]	Chayote [2.8 g]	Scallion (Green Onion) [4.4 g]	Acorn Squash [8.5 g]
Mustard Greens [1.5]	Bell Peppers, Green [2.9 g]	Broccoli [4.4 g]	Butternut Squash [10 g]
Choy Sum [1.5 g]	Tomatoes, Cherry [3 g]	Poblano Pepper [4.6 g]	Mushroom, Shiitake [12 g]

Net Carbs Per 100g Fruit and Berries

Rhubarb, raw [2.74 g]	Pears, asian, raw [7.05 g]	Nectarines, raw [8.85 g]	Cherries, sour, red, raw [10.58 g]
Starfruit, raw [3.93 g]	Watermelon, raw [7.15 g]	Guavas, common, raw [8.92 g]	Apples, raw, granny smith, with skin [10.81 g]
Blackberries, raw [4.31 g]	Cantaloupe, raw [7.26 g]	Grapefruit, raw, pink [9.06 g]	Apples, raw, golden delicious, with skin [11.2 g]
Raspberries, raw [5.44 g]	Limes, raw [7.74 g]	Apricots, raw [9.12 g]	Elderberries, raw [11.4 g]
Strawberries, raw [5.68 g]	Peaches, yellow, raw [8.04 g]	Papayas, raw [9.12 g]	Kiwifruit, green, raw [11.66 g]
Gooseberries, raw [5.88 g]	Mulberries, raw [8.1 g]	Oranges, raw [9.35 g]	Pineapple, raw, all varieties [11.72 g]
Prickly pears, raw [5.97 g]	Honeydew, raw [8.29 g]	Plums, raw [10.02 g]	
Lemons without peel [6.52 g]	Cranberries, raw [8.37 g]	Grapes, muscadine, raw [10.03 g]	