

THE
self-care keto
RESTAURANT GUIDE



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My Story

Hey, friend! I'm glad you're here to check out my story, because I love to tell it! After losing 50 lbs. on a ketogenic diet, I've maintained my weight loss with a low carb lifestyle (including during pregnancy and postpartum) since 2013, and I've been a weight loss and life coach since 2017.

I struggled my entire life with my weight, but particularly after reaching my peak weight after a long season of depression, I decided to try a low carb diet. I planned for it to be a short-term solution, but once I felt the freedom from food compulsion, increased energy, clearer thoughts, eliminated digestive issues, and more, I knew that even once I reached my goal weight, I would want to make it a forever lifestyle!

I always say keto's not the only way to lose weight, but it's definitely the most satisfying! I've tried it all – counting calories, points, food journals, apps, and I've even spent a few years as a vegetarian and then vegan. Keto made weight loss easy and enjoyable for me because I could stop being hungry and stop the dang counting! Man, I look back and grieve the wasted brain space and self-focus all of that counting took up when I could've been present with the people I love.

One of the most phenomenal benefits for me of eating keto is how it changed my brain! Our brains can run on either glucose (carbs) for fuel or on ketones (fat) for fuel, and when your brain switches over to running on ketones, the experience is unimaginable! You don't know how good you can feel until you know how good you can feel! It improves your mood, your sleep, your focus, your mental clarity, your energy, and your creativity. There are biohackers in Silicon Valley who are at a healthy weight, but they are eating keto just because it helps them become even more amazing geniuses!

The brain benefits of keto, along with finally feeling food freedom for the first time in my life, gave me the mental energy that I needed to do the mindset work of changing my beliefs around food, weight, and body image. I like to compare it to how sometimes people are in so much pain or brain chemistry disorder that they need to take an anti-depressant or another mental health medication. This changes their brain chemistry and gives them the mental boost that they need to then do the work in therapy of changing beliefs. We need BOTH.

In this book, I'm going to take you through a plan to navigate the food opportunities of eating out at restaurants from a mindset of self-care.

Once I realized the power of the 1-2-punch of keto + mindset work, I knew I had to create something to share this with other women. I made it my mission to go get the formal training I needed to make my idea a reality.

I have 15+ years of experience and education in counseling and coaching. I earned my master's degree in life coaching from Regent University, I completed my ketogenic nutrition training through the American Nutrition Association, and I'm an Associate Certified Coach through the International Coaching Federation, the most reputable coaching organization in the world.

But more than that, I'm a real person, just like you! I'm a wife and a mama, and I wear a size 6/8. I'm still working toward becoming the best version of myself too, but it's out of love for myself – no longer self-hatred or shame – and I'm healthy, grateful, and content.

I can't wait to help you find the same freedom and better health I have found through eating keto and changing my beliefs.

I'm cheering for you!

Jess

What Is Self-Care Keto?

What you eat is a form of self-care. In fact, it is the most basic form of self-care. When we hear the term *self-care*, we tend to think about bubble baths and face masks, but as simple as it sounds, **self-care is quite literally taking care of yourself. It's meeting your own needs.**

When I first became a mom, I remember that intense reality-check going home from the hospital with a newborn and realizing the weight of this responsibility that I had to keep another human alive. I had to take care of her, and how did I start? It was by meeting her most basic needs, her physiological needs: food, water, shelter, sleep, clothing, being at a comfortable temperature, getting fresh air, etc.

We need to start there with ourselves! Of course, we have a lot of other higher-level needs like safety and stability, employment, friendships, intimacy, self-esteem, and ultimately, self-actualization, or “finding our purpose.” So many of us are focusing on these higher-level needs though while neglecting one of our most basic needs, nutrition. We need to start there, with our health, because it is the foundation for everything else in our lives.

What makes keto such a special self-caring way to eat?

It all has to do with hormones.

I was taught, and you've probably heard the same, that losing weight or maintaining your weight is all about calories. We need to make sure that we don't eat more calories than we burn in a day. If we eat more than we burn, we gain weight. If we burn more than we eat, we lose weight. This is called the *calories in, calories out* theory of weight loss.

It's actually much more interesting than that! (I use the word *interesting* here on purpose, instead of the word *complicated*, because learning is fun and empowering!)

I was never taught about what happens inside our bodies with the foods we eat, but every single piece of food that we put in our body produces a chemical and hormonal response. This impacts our gut, and this impacts our brain. Have you heard of the gut-brain connection? It's crazy! Literally your gut and your brain are formed out of the same fetal tissue in utero. They even kind of look similar!

When you eat an excess of carbohydrates, it spikes your blood sugar. Carbohydrates are glucose, or sugars. Even if the food you ate was a starch, it's all the same inside of your body. Then we have glucose flowing through our blood stream to send energy to our cells, but if it's more than the energy that we need in the moment, our insulin hormone kicks in to move it out of the blood stream and to store it as fat. We can store fuel for later in the form of fat cells, and *insulin is our fat-storage hormone*.

When our body is working to convert the excess glucose into fat, we feel tired, lethargic, brain-fog, etc. This explains the post-lunch 3 PM slump, or the **carb-coma after a huge restaurant meal**. When our blood sugar dips back down, our brain compels us through intense cravings to get more energy to over-correct the slump, and we repeat the same roller coaster.

Before I started eating keto, I would eat a high-carb dinner every night, and about an hour later, I would want a snack. I would want something sweet, then salty, then sweet, then salty, until finally I reached a point where I felt bloated and ashamed and went to bed, vowing to be different the next day but repeating the same crazy cycle night after night.

When I started eating keto, I realized it wasn't my fault! It wasn't that I was weak or lacked willpower. It was the food, the chemistry, the hormones, and my brain compelling me like an addiction. It was basically like *this is your brain on carbs*.

When I started restricting carbs and focusing on eating protein and fat, my body was finally getting the real nutrition it needed. I felt FULL. I felt satisfied. I ate less, naturally. I tapped into burning my stored body fat for fuel. The weight fell off.

Keto set me free from the blood sugar roller coaster and gave me food freedom. This is why even after I reached my weight loss goal, I have maintained a keto lifestyle since 2013 and never looked back. Keto is a form of self-care for me. Why would I want to go back once I learned how good I could feel?

But that's just me as an Abstainer.

Abstainers vs. Moderators

I first learned about the concept of Abstainers vs. Moderators from researcher and author, Gretchen Rubin. It applies perfectly when understanding how people approach eating, but it also helps us understand really any kind of habit change.

Abstainers would rather abstain entirely from something than to try to moderate it. It's easier to make the decision once and never think about it again than to try to make a small form of the same decision day after day. It's so difficult for Abstainers to try to moderate something that it feels like hell on earth to try to only eat $\frac{1}{4}$ of a pint of ice cream, or to only eat it on Friday night and ignore it every other day of the week even though it's sitting in the freezer. It's easier for an Abstainer to decide they will never eat pasta again than to try to trust themselves to decide when to eat it and when not to eat it. They really can just do that and stick with it!

These are the people who one day decide to go keto or Paleo or vegan and just do it and never look back.

Rigidity helps them succeed.

Moderators would rather give themselves permission to have something on occasion, or in moderation, than to never have it again. In fact, it feels like hell on earth to them to think about never eating tortilla chips again! They really can decide to have a planned deviation* and then get right back on track.

These are the people who would like to make keto their "home base" and deviate when they choose to, and they may be more likely to practice carb cycling*, diet breaks, or the 80/20 philosophy.

Flexibility helps them succeed.

Which one are you? Write it out below.

I am a(n) _____.

Planned and Unplanned Deviations

Our language is powerful because it creates our reality. **I don't like using the word "cheats" or "cheat days,"** because the word *cheat* has a moral connotation to it. It feels illicit or bad or wrong. **I also don't like using the word "treat" or "treat days,"** because it implies that we're treating ourselves better or having more fun or pleasure when we deviate than when we don't.

I use the word "deviation" because it is neutral. We have a plan, and we plan to stick to the plan, but we decide to deviate from the plan.

Planned deviations are when we are thoughtful and intentional about it. We plan it out ahead of time. Usually this removes any guilt or shame afterwards, because we did what we said we would do! We simply changed the plan and then stuck with the new plan. Planned deviations are more ideal than unplanned deviations, but life happens.

Restaurants can be the perfect time for a planned deviation. In fact, most of my clients say they prefer to have a planned deviation OUTSIDE of their house, that way they don't bring any trigger foods into their house and struggle to moderate them.

Unplanned deviations are when you planned to eat keto at your friend's house or at the restaurant, but at the last second you changed your mind. I find that we only feel guilt or shame afterwards when we deviated to please others instead of ourselves. Fear of missing out, or FOMO, is another common reason for unplanned deviations, but at least it was your real desire to deviate and have that special recipe that mom makes only once a year, for example.

Whether it was a planned or an unplanned deviation, it's great to check in with yourself afterwards.

- How did you feel physically and mentally afterwards? Was it worth it? (It's ok for the answer to be yes!)
- Did it influence the scale? Was that worth it? (It's ok for the answer to be yes!)
- What did you learn from the experience?
- Do you want to do anything different next time?
- What actions do you need to take ahead of time to actually do it differently next time?

Abstainers and Moderators alike can have planned or unplanned deviations. For Abstainers though, it will feel a lot easier not to deviate at all. Abstainers are more likely to be perfectionistic and beat themselves up a lot more after an unplanned deviation. Abstainers can still do well with planned deviations, but it must feel like they are still "following their own rules." Moderators prefer to feel free to follow their own rules or break their own rules, depending on the circumstances.

Cyclical Keto and Carb-Ups

A carb-up is just what it sounds like, eating more carbs than usual. Preferably it would be intentional and planned out ahead of time, and preferably it would be whole foods based, not a whole sleeve of Oreos. If you normally eat 50 total carbs in a day, you might go up to 90-130 on a carb-up day.

Cyclical keto is when you practice carb-ups intentionally. You might cycle in carb-ups surrounding your workout days, or according to your menstrual cycle, **or just according to your social plans, like a going out to eat.**

An example of cyclical keto surrounding workouts is to time your carb-up meal prior to your workout. You will burn through the extra glucose during your workout, and it can improve your performance. Maybe you'd eat a cup of brown rice with your chicken and veggies, or maybe you'd put a banana in your usual keto collagen shake.

An example of cyclical keto surrounding your menstrual cycle would be to practice carb-ups on Days 1-2 of your cycle (the first two days of bleeding) and days 19-20 of your cycle (right after ovulation.) This can help to reset your hunger and satiety hormones, leptin and ghrelin, and to replenish your body after it's been doing some extra work on the internal processes of menstruation and ovulation. Maybe you'd eat some higher glycemic fruit like an apple with almond butter, or have a sweet potato with your steak for dinner.

An example of cyclical keto surrounding your social plans would be to plan to eat the tortilla chips with guacamole when you're going out for Mexican, or to enjoy some gluten-free thin crust pizza when you're getting takeout with the family, or to **thoughtfully plan out which carb-laden dishes or desserts you'd like to enjoy on a special occasion at a restaurant.**

If you're not timing your carb-up around a workout, I find the best way to do it in a self-care way is to have your carb-up meal at night. Instead of feeling cravings the whole rest of the day, you will sleep through the cravings and get right back to your bacon and eggs the next morning.

Abstainers and Moderators alike can use cyclical keto and carb-ups as tools. For Abstainers though, it will feel a lot more aligned to plan it out very intentionally and well ahead of time. If you notice you're having a hard time getting "back to home base" after a carb-up, that's great data to have when deciding if you want to do it again or not. It's worth trying and finding out what works best for you.

Abstainers will feel better being more rigid with their carb-ups; it must have a justifiable explanation and intentional purpose, such as timing around workouts or the menstrual cycle, or maybe even a special social occasion. **They will feel better having an exact plan for what they are going to eat differently on the special occasion. Maybe they will just pick one specific food item that's worth it to them, like one slice of their favorite dessert, but everything else they eat that day will be keto.**

Moderators will feel just as fine being more flexible with their carb-ups, such as around regular life social plans. Moderators will want to go to Taco Bell and eat 300 carbs on a carb-up day if they want to, and that's totally fine! **They may decide that a deviation is literally just a free-for-all day, and they will**

feel great about that. The point is that having that flexibility helps them adhere to their home base plan the rest of the time.

So for both Abstainers AND Moderators, it's okay to have a planned deviation. It's all about your mindset going into it.

3 Steps to a Successful Planned Deviation

After eating keto for 9 years and working with clients for the past 5 years, I've noticed some patterns about what makes for a successful planned deviation. By this I mean that you feel no shame and no regrets afterwards. Instead, you feel great, because you did what you said you were going to do, and there's no drama, and we move right back on with life to our regularly scheduled programming.

Here are the 3 things I've noticed are crucial to feeling that way.

1. Plan it out intentionally ahead of time.

It could be the exact same food, but if you plan for it ahead of time, it has the energy of giving it to yourself instead of taking it for yourself.

2. Make it something that you truly love, desire, and enjoy...

NOT just eating what's easiest or most convenient for you, or especially not to please other people.

3. Enjoy it consciously and presently...

Especially with people you love over a great experience, NOT just holed up alone in your room numbing out in front of the TV.

Alcohol on Keto

With going out to eat, not only is there an abundance of sugar, but an abundance of alcohol! One of the most commonly asked questions I get is -

Can you drink alcohol on keto?

And my answer is always - YES BUT, your mileage may vary.

Alcohol is considered a FUEL SOURCE for the body, and because it is poisonous to the body in large amounts, your body burns it FIRST.

☆ When all 3 fuel sources are available, your body burns ALCOHOL FIRST, carbs second, and fat last.

The goal of a keto diet is that we want our body to burn FAT, particularly our stored body fat...

So even though consuming zero carb or low carb alcohol may not kick your out of ketosis...

It WILL slow down your body's fat-burning and therefore slow down your weight loss.

Remember how alcohol is poisonous to your body?

This causes your immune system to switch into high gear to try to reduce inflammation. It does this by kicking up your stress hormone CORTISOL.

☆ Cortisol and insulin are linked. When cortisol goes up, insulin goes up. Insulin tells your body to STORE FAT.

The goal of a keto diet is we want to keep carbs low to keep our blood sugar stable to keep our insulin low, so that instead of storing fat, we BURN FAT.

Alcohol will:

- 👉 Slow down your fat burning
- 👉 Increase inflammation and stress
- 👉 Weaken your immune system
- 👉 Throw off your gut bacteria
- 👉 Cause dehydration
- 👉 Worsen your sleep
- 👉 Help you relax

👉 Make social time more fun

😏 I had to throw in some benefits there at the end.

One last very important thing: since your liver metabolizes alcohol, and now your liver is busy metabolizing ketones, you will find that **you might be way less tolerant to alcohol.**

I have clients who find that now one beer gets them buzzed. I have other clients who didn't notice any difference at all, but I still always bring it up to help you have self-awareness.

I don't drink often, and I remember the first time I drank after keto. I had one mojito, and the room was spinning, and I was very, very LOUD. It was funny, but it could also have been a bit unsafe if I were the one driving or wasn't with people I felt safe with.

Drink responsibly and ask yourself if it's worth it for you ?

How To Eat Keto at Restaurants

It's easy to eat out on keto! I've never found a place I couldn't eat keto, and it's been over 8 years of going out to eat A LOT! 🌈

Unless you're planning to have a deviation, just focus on **protein, low carb vegetables** (salads and vegetable sides), **and fat**.

Here are examples of what you can order to eat low carb at many popular restaurants.

Even if you don't have this restaurant near you, *still read through all of them*, because you will glean great info on examples of what and how to order.

Alfredo's Mediterranean Cafe



- Appetizers – sauteed mushrooms, shrimp ceviche, caprese salad
- Salads – any of them, but without cranberries
- Kabobs – any, but with a side salad instead of rice
- Entrees – steak, salmon, or sauteed shrimp with 2 low carb friendly sides

American Fare

- Bunless burgers (no ketchup)
- Sandwiches (like Philly cheesesteak, Reuben, etc.) on a bed of lettuce, no bread
- Any meat entrée (no sugary sauces) with side salads or low carb vegetables
- Chef Salad, Cobb Salad, or Grilled Chicken Salad with full fat salad dressings like Ranch, Blue Cheese, Caesar, oil & vinegar, etc., no croutons)

Arby's



- Any sandwich without the bun (except for breaded chicken) with a side salad
- Roast Chicken Salad – no cheese, no croutons
- Creamy Mediterranean chicken wrap but no wrap – just the fillings

A&W



- Bunless burgers or hot dogs (no ketchup)
- No sides

Boston Pizza



- Oven-roasted wings with buffalo sauce, garlic parmesan, or any dry rub. Enjoy with celery and ranch or bleu cheese.
- Spinach artichoke dip – ask for celery instead of chips/bread
- Burger, grilled chicken, or Boston Brute without the bun
- NY strip steak or ribs without sauce
- Sides: seasonal vegetables, grilled chicken breast or cajun chicken breast
- Sauces: cactus dip, alfredo, Bolognese, Rose, marinara, or pizza sauce, salsa, sour cream, guacamole, bleu cheese, ranch, Caesar
- Chicken Pecan Salad – no pecans (they are glazed)
- Chicken Caesar Salad – no croutons
- Side Garden Salad or Side Caesar Salad (no croutons)

Buffalo Wild Wings

- Any wings with dry rub, or if you do a sauce, mild or garlic parmesan (definitely no BBQ, teriyaki, etc. which would have lots of sugar)
- celery, side salad

Burger King



- Any burger without the bun, no ketchup, add mayo and bacon!
- Side salad, no croutons

Cheddar's

- Any burger without the bun, no ketchup, add mayo and bacon!
- Grilled chicken sandwich, no bun
- Side house or Caesar salad, no croutons
- Grilled chicken pecan salad, no cheese, no pecans (they are glazed)
- Lemon Pepper Chicken, or any Steak, Ribs if you could get them with no sauce
- Southern green beans or broccoli as sides

Chick-fil-A



- Grilled chicken sandwich, no bun, add cheese & mayo!
- Grilled nuggets
- Side salad – no croutons
- Dressings – Ranch, Avocado Ranch, Creamy Salsa
- Grilled Market Salad – no granola or nut blend, sub dressing – this is a bit higher carb for the berries

- Cobb Salad with grilled chicken – no corn, no crispy bell peppers – add pepitas!
- Spicy Southwest Salad – no corn, no beans, no tortilla strips, EXTRA pepitas!

Chinese

- Egg drop soup
- Steamed meat and vegetables (i.e. beef and broccoli) with no sauces (look at Diet or Delite menu) – add soy sauce or hot mustard. You can also add your own keto sweetener or use your own low carb Asian salad dressing once you take it home.

Chipotle



BOWL

- Bowl with no rice or beans, add lots of guac, sour cream, and cheese for healthy fats!
- Salad with no shell, no dressing (use guac, sour cream, salsa as dressing)
- You can pay an upcharge for double meat as well!

Culver's

- Any burger without the bun, no ketchup, add mayo and bacon!
- Steamed broccoli
- Side salad, no croutons
- Chopped Steak Dinner with double broccoli
- Reuben with no bread
- Chicken cashew salad or Garden Fresco salad with no croutons

Del Frisco's Grille



- Appetizers – deviled eggs, shrimp cocktail, chicken wings, crispy artichokes, charcuterie board (avoid crackers, breads, and sugary jams), crab cakes (there's breading in here, but they are likely about 7-9 carbs each)
- Salads – Iceberg Lettuce Wedge, The Grille salad with no croutons, Heirloom Tomato & Burrata, Steakhouse salad, Caesar with no croutons
- Knife and Fork: any animal protein as long as it's not breaded/fried or has a sugary sauce (dry rub is okay). Stick to low carb vegetable sides. Avoid rice, risotto, potatoes, etc.
- Hand Helds – burger or prime steak sandwich with no bun and a side salad
- Sides – side salad, asparagus, mushrooms, broccoli, brussel sprouts

Del Taco



- Avoid the fried fish
- Fresh guac (no chips)
- Bunless burger (no ketchup)
- Pollo asado with avocado bowl – no rice or beans
- Chicken Bacon Avocado salad, no chips
- Signature Taco Salad, no beans, no chips
- Order tacos (beef or chicken) with no shells – ask them to put the fillings in a bowl.
- Order a bunch of sides! Beef, tomato, guac – this is much cheaper and you get more food. Ask for a large bowl on the side and dump it all together. You can also bring your own store-bought low carb tortillas or bring the sides home to enjoy.

Five Guys Burgers & Fries

FIVE GUYS®

BURGERS and FRIES

- Bunless burger! They will wrap it in lettuce for you or just throw in a container.
- Any toppings except for ketchup
- ½ cup shelled peanuts as a side

Glory Days Grill



- Appetizers – Buffalo chicken dip or crab dip (ask for celery instead of chips/bread)
- Wings – bone-in or boneless with buffalo ranch dry rub, regular old bay (not honey), mild, medium, hot, or garlic buffalo
- Salads – any salad, make sure the meat is grilled not fried, no tortilla strips or croutons, with low carb dressing (Caesar, parmesan peppercorn, blue cheese, ranch, bacon ranch, southwest ranch, or oil & vinegar)
- Sandwiches & burgers – get the fillings on a plate without the bread. Avoid the veggie/impossible burgers, crab cakes (breading in there) and any fried/breaded. Get a side salad instead of fries. shrimp with 2 low carb friendly sides
- Entrees – see if you can get the ribs without sauce? Any steak, smothered chicken, grilled shrimp. Avoid fries and coleslaw (hidden sugar.) Ask what the seasonal veggies are and get those if they are low carb, otherwise order a side salad.

Greek Taverna

- Salads – Horiatiki, Maroulosalata
- Cold appetizers – Tzatziki, Melitzanosalata, Hummus with veggies (no chips, and go easy on this, as chickpeas are higher carb),
- Hot appetizers - Loukaniko Sharas, Haloumi on the Grill, Greek Taverna Saganaki, Grilled Portobello Mushroom, Taverna Grilled Vegetables, Kalamarakia Sharas, Shrimp Saganaki, Htapodi Sta Karvouna, Sautéed Mussels
- Traditional Greek dishes - Arnaki Tis Gastras (ask for no potatoes), Lamb Giovetsi (ask for no pasta)
- Fish and Seafood – anything grilled, choose a low carb side
- From The Grill – any grilled animal protein, avoid fries and rice, choose low carb side(s)

- Small Plates – any grilled animal protein, avoid rice, ask for extra salad
- Sides – side salad, Horta

Hardee's



- Bunless burgers (no ketchup), grilled chicken (no BBQ), roast beef, hot ham n cheese, hot dog (no chili) – add bacon and cheese to any of these
- Side salad
- Bunless breakfast sandwich
- No fried meats or gravy
- Chicken or beef taco salad, no shell, no beans

Indian

- Butter chicken, chicken tikki masala, chicken korma, tandoori chicken
- Paneer, palak paneer, butter paneer
- Raita or chopped salad
- Chicken on bone with veggies
- Most sauces are okay, but watch out for higher carb veggies like peas, carrots, corn in dishes

In & Out Burger



- Any burger with no ketchup, add mayo, and eat it protein style or animal style

KFC

- Grilled chicken!
- None of the sides are good, even the coleslaw has tons of added sugar

McDonald's



- Bunless burger, no ketchup
- Side salad – no croutons
- Grilled Chicken Caesar salad – no croutons
- Breakfast sandwich with no bread
- Sausage burrito but ask for just the filling in a bowl and no tortilla

Melting Pot



- Filet mignon and cold water lobster tail cooked fondue style in cort bouillon with asparagus on the side.
- Meats - All-natural chicken breast, Filet mignon, Bacon, Shrimp, Cold water lobster tail, Garlic pepper sirloin, Atlantic salmon, Egg
- Cheeses - Gorgonzola cheese, Parmesan cheese
- Vegetables - Baby spinach, Scallions, Mini sweet peppers, Asparagus, Cilantro, Red onion, Mixed greens, Zucchini, Mushrooms, Artichoke hearts, Romaine lettuce, Tomato
- Sauces - Lime wedges, Lemon wedges, Olive oil, Vinegar

Mexican



- Fajitas - no rice, no beans, no tortillas, extra guacamole or crema salad

No Frill Grill



- Salads: Classic Greek, Caesar, Field Green (no mushrooms), Funky Chicken (no pita wedges, London Broil (no salsa), Grilled Salmon (no oranges or pita, sub dressing)
- Dressings: Parmesan Pepper, Blue Cheese, Chipotle-Buttermilk Ranch, Caesar
- Any pita – (except teriyaki) on a plate without the bread, with a side salad
- Reuben - no bread, no thousand island (has sugar in it)
- Other sandwiches (no bread) – French Dip, Philly Cheesesteak, Turkey, Tuna melt, Tuna salad, Chicken salad, Club
- Sides: Crisp pickle spear, House Salad, Sauteed String Beans, Spinach, or Broccoli

Olive Garden (or other Italian)



- Chicken Margherita entrée is perfect as is
- Pasta entrees: substitute a bed of broccoli or zucchini noodles instead of pasta – Chicken Piccata, Chicken Alfredo or Carbonara, Chicken Marsala is a little higher in carbs but you can get it if you are lower in your carbs the rest of the day!
- Get the salad (no soups) with Ranch dressing instead of their Italian, no croutons

Original Joe's

- Starters - Greek ribs, brussel sprouts
- Salads: Chicken Caesar (no croutons), California Cobb
- Fish tacos – no shells
- Steak sandwich – no bread, add mushrooms and onions, add shrimp
- Steak & shrimp
- NY striploin
- Sides: Caesar salad, garden salad, broccolini
- Burger, grilled chicken, turkey club, beef dip – no bread

Panera Bread



- Green Goddess Salad
- Southwest Chili Lime Ranch Salad with Chicken- no quinoa, no corn, no masa crisps
- Modern Greek Salad, without the Quinoa – add chicken
- Chicken Caesar Salad, no croutons
- Greek or Seasonal Greens Salad – add chicken salad or tuna salad
- Dressings: Caesar, Ranch, Oil and Vinegar (no vinaigrettes)
- Cucumber & tomato salad as a side (I just dump it on top of my big salad and mix!)

P.F. Chang's



- Edamame (12 net carbs)
- Northern style spare ribs (11 net carbs)
- Asian Caesar salad (17 net carbs) – add shrimp, chicken, or salmon
- Wok'd Spinach with Garlic (6 net carbs)
- Egg drop soup cup (6 net carbs)
- Hot and sour soup cup (9 net carbs)
- Singapore Black Pepper Chicken entree (24 net carbs)
- Shishito Steak entrée (24 net carbs)
- Buddha's Feast Steamed entrée (23 net carbs)
- Oolong Chilean Sea Bass entrée (25 net carbs)

- Shrimp with Lobster Sauce entrée (17 net carbs)
- GF Ginger Chicken with Broccoli (no rice, 22 net carbs)

Pizza Hut (or any pizza)

- Unbreaded wings
- Salad
- Eat the toppings only off the pizza crust (may make sense if you go to a pizza buffet)

Q'doba



- Get a bowl or a salad with no shells/tortillas, no rice or beans
- Get double or triple meat
- Add salsa, fajita veggies, sour cream, guac, cheese

Red Lobster

- Create your own platter with oven-broiled fish or shrimp – basically just nothing fried or with sauces, but melted butter is great!
- Sides: broccoli, salad

Ruby Tuesday



- Texas dusted dry rub wings
- Chicken Bella
- Double Decker Chicken
- Chicken Fresco
- Any steak entrée
- Salad bar
- Sides: salad bar, Caesar salad (no croutons), fresh grilled zucchini, fresh green beans, fresh

steamed broccoli, white cheddar roasted Brussel sprouts

Steakhouse



- Steak (or other protein) with broccoli and/or green beans and side salad (full fat dressing like Ranch, Blue Cheese, Caesar, oil & vinegar, etc., no croutons)

Subway



- Turn any sub into a salad or a protein bowl (except the sweet onion chicken teriyaki, it has quite a lot of carbs!)
- Turkey and veggie sub but no bread – get it as a salad or as a protein bowl

Sushi

- Miso soup and/or edamame appetizer
- Sashimi and/or Negamaki

Taco Bell



SEASONED BEEF

- Power bowl with no rice or beans

- Order a bunch of sides! Beef, cheese, tomato, sour cream, guac – this is much cheaper and you get more food. Ask for a large bowl on the side and dump it all together. You can also bring your own store-bought low carb tortillas or bring the sides home to enjoy.

Thai

- Spring rolls: Order these with pork and low-carb veggies. Hold the rice and ask for a lettuce or cabbage wrap instead of a dough wrap if possible. Otherwise, avoid this dish.
- Wings: Some Thai restaurants will offer chicken wings. Remember that these tend to be breaded, so ask to have your wings naked without any breading or sweet sauce.
- Satay: Chicken satay is a great low-carb dish because it contains grilled, marinated chicken on a skewer served with sauce. Make sure to order this without the sauce and hold any rice or noodles that come with it. Ask for extra low carb vegetables instead.
- Pad prik or pad pak: This is a stir-fry meat-based dish with green peppers, basil and onions served with garlic sauce. Order this without rice or noodles.
- Pad bai gra prow: This is a meat-based stir-fry dish with green peppers, green onion, and white onion in basil and garlic sauce. Again, order this without rice or noodles.
- Pad cashew nut or pad almond: This dish includes your choice of meat, ginger, roasted cashews, bamboo shoots and chestnut in sauce. Hold the sauce and corn.
- Pad khing: This dish features a meat stir-fry with ginger, mushrooms, chestnut, carrots, and onion. Hold the sauce (and carrots if you're strict keto).
- Gai kheew mow: This dish is also known as drunken chicken. Order it without the sauce and any rice or noodles that comes with it.
- Pad K rati em: This dish contains stir-fried meat, garlic, chestnut, onions, and peppers served on a bed of lettuce with fried garlic.
- Pad bell: Choice of meat with broccoli, peppers, and onions. Hold the brown sauce.
- Pra ram long song: This dish includes steamed chicken, broccoli, carrots and cabbage with peanut sauce. Hold the peanut sauce.
- Flame roasted duck: Order this without the sauce. Hold any starchy veggies and rice or noodles.
- Gang pha: This dish contains no curry or coconut milk. It comes with your choice of meat and vegetables. If you're strict keto, you'll need to hold the carrots and eggplant.
- Pad broccoli: This dish features chicken and broccoli. Make sure the broccoli is steamed and not fried. Also, hold the sauce.

Wendy's



- Any burger without the bun, no ketchup, add mayo, cheese, and bacon!
- Grilled chicken sandwich – same way

- Side salads – Garden or Caesar, no croutons, with Ranch, Blue Cheese, or Caesar dressing
- Spicy Caesar chicken salad - no croutons, extra dressing
- Fresh mozzarella chicken salad – no croutons, sub the dressing

Zaxby's

- Traditional wings with tongue torch sauce (avoid the boneless since they are breaded!)
- Cobb, House, or Caesar salad with grilled chicken, no croutons

Zoe's Kitchen

- Chicken or steak kabobs
- Traditional Greek salad or side Greek salad (no potato salad or pasta salad, no pita)
- Cauliflower Rice Bowl
- Any of the sauces are fine!

Getting Back on Track After a Deviation

I know the day after a deviation, planned or unplanned, can be such a hard day for so many of us who have struggled with disordered eating.

You did not gain 3 lbs. of fat in 1 day. Read it again.

That would be a physical impossibility.

There are 3,500 calories in one lb. of fat. If you are up by 3 lbs. after a deviation, in order for those 3 lbs. to be fat, you would have had to have consumed an extra 10,500 calories.

Let's just say you normally eat 2,000 calories per day, and you just maybe just ate 4,000 calories on a deviation day (which even that is unlikely!) That's still only an extra 2,000 calories, which might be 1/2 lb. of fat or less, but like I said, even that is highly unlikely that you consumed that many extra calories.

So if it's not true fat gain, what is it? It's just water weight!

Your body holds onto 4 grams of water for every 1 gram of carbohydrates. It's water weight.

As you get back into ketosis within 24-72 hours, your body will release that weight. Promise! If you're freaking out on Monday, by Friday it will be gone! As long as you just get back to your regularly scheduled programming. Promise. I see it with my clients ALL. THE. TIME.

You can apply this to weekend weight gain too if you deviated over the weekend. The problem is when deviating every weekend and losing the same 5 lbs. over and over again is slowing down your progress to your goals.

But if you intentionally (or unintentionally) deviated when going out to eat, it's okay. Really, it's okay.

Please do not withhold love from yourself. Life is too short to beat yourself up for something you ate.

Please resist the urge to compensate. I know you're thinking that fasting for a full day or two will help. It won't. **Do not fast or restrict calories.** It will only reinforce what feels like being punished or doing penance for something wrong, and it won't take long until you rebel against that and end up bingeing, only making things worse.

Compensating comes from a scarcity mindset, and it's our way of trying to undo or erase what we did.

That's actually a form of denial, and if we try to erase it, then we can't actually learn from it. And if we don't learn from it, we are doomed to keep repeating it.

When your hunger kicks in, just eat foods that bless your body.

It's normal to feel extra hunger the day after a carb up. It's normal. Just eat extra of foods that are full of **protein and fat**. Allow yourself to "go over" on your macros or calories, as long as it's coming from protein and fat. Higher hunger is normal and as soon as you get back into ketosis, it'll go away again.

Treat yourself with love. You're worthy of feeling satiated by your food, every single day.

Extra electrolytes can really help too. They help reset your body after extra carbs or extra alcohol. It helps eliminate dehydration, which we can confuse with hunger. They help suppress cravings.

Please resist the urge to hide. Turn the Zoom camera on. Keep the plans. Don't reschedule plans for a day that you think your lower weight would make you worthy of them. Your people love you. Let love win.

Again, the number going up on the scale is **just water weight**. It'll go back down in a couple of days with you just getting back to normal keto. You don't have to do anything more extreme than that.

How to Reduce Emotional Eating

"I deserve to eat this."

Whenever my clients deviate from their plan, I ask them, "What was the thought you had right before eating that thing?"

One of the most common is, "I deserve this."

What do you deserve? What were you wanting to get out of that?

"I wanted to feel good."

And you DO deserve to feel good!

But emotional eating doesn't actually feel GOOD. It feels FAMILIAR.

When we are stuck in a negative emotion, our nervous system is in a sympathetic (fight, flight, freeze, or fawn) state instead of a parasympathetic (rest and digest) state.

We want to change our state, and one of the most effective ways to switch into the parasympathetic IS TO EAT. We need to be in the parasympathetic to digest, so subconsciously we are pulled toward it when really, we just want to calm down, to get back to familiar.

We deserve MORE than to feel familiar. We deserve to feel GOOD.

Here are some things that have helped me...

1. Break the connection between emotional eating and eating in front of the TV.

- If it's truly enjoyable, then enjoy the heck of it consciously.
- I can still eat if I want to, but doing it with "presence" usually snaps me right out of it, because it's not really that good. It's just familiar.

2. Ask myself, would I feed this to my baby?

- This helped me to at least eat foods that bless my body (and taste good) when I emotionally eat.
- Even though eating keto didn't instantly help me to overcome emotional eating, it helped me to change WHAT I was eating when I emotionally eat, and that is a HUGE WIN!
- Try to treat yourself with the same love that you give to your kids.
- If it's hard to believe that deserve to feel GOOD, try at least believing that you deserve to have your basic needs met, and that includes your food and nutrition.

3. Develop compassion that I'm self-soothing in the best way I know how.

- Literally every single person in the world emotionally eats sometimes. There's a spectrum of how maladaptive it is to our lives.
- We learned how to self-soothe with food literally right out of the womb. Breastfeeding provides both comfort and nutrition. We have been conditioned to link them together and this is NOT WRONG. It's for our survival.
- Before we learned other ways to self-regulate our emotions as children (if we were ever even taught), for most of us, food was a present resource, and it got the job done. It served us, and that's why we kept turning to it as a coping resource.
- **Emotional eating is not the real problem; it's only a symptom.** We never get far when we only treat the symptom. We must get to the root of the problem.

A Metaphor for Emotional Eating

Imagine that every day you walk through your front door and step on a giant NAIL that's sticking out.

You're in pain so you go to the medicine cabinet, grab your disinfectant and band-aids and treat the wound.

You do this day after day until you realize you're completely blowing your budget on disinfectant and band-aids.

"I know," you think, "I will just stop using these band-aids and suck it up. It's fine. I can't afford to keep spending all this money on this. It's taking away from things I'd rather spend my money on, like that big vacation I want to take. I can just deal with the pain."

NOOOO. The band-aids are not the problem. The NAIL is the problem.

You SHOULD totally use the band-aids and self-soothe and take care of yourself when you're in pain.

That's what we are doing with emotional eating. It's the part of us that is TRYING to take care of us.

So, what's the problem with emotional eating?

Well, it's simply holding us back from our goals, isn't it?

It's "blowing the budget." That's the reason it's maladaptive to our lives.

Otherwise, it's a valid coping mechanism.

But we wouldn't need to use it so much if not for that dang nail.

The nail represents either an UNMET need or an UNSET boundary.

The only way to reduce the emotional eating is to practice true self-care. Set the boundaries you need. Go deep with yourself to discover the unmet need and give it to yourself.

Keto helped me so much in changing WHAT I eat when I emotionally eat. Instead of a bunch of garbage that only made me feel physically worse, I switched to eating foods that actually BLESS my body when I feel the need to soothe with food.

But even though I switched to healthier food choices when emotionally eating, I still found myself soothing with keto foods. Anybody else?

I made a pact with myself that anytime I realized that I used food to cope, I would find some time within the next 24 hours to sit with myself and reflect.

4 Bounceback Steps After Emotional Eating

Have you heard the phrase, “You have to feel it to heal it?”

Or how about, “What you don’t repair, you’ll repeat?”

While these sound cliché, boy are they true!

Most of us, after emotional eating, find ourselves feeling worse. Now, not only do we still have the negative emotion we were trying to soothe, but now we have guilt and shame and physical discomfort added to the mix.

We feel tempted to hurry up and figure out how to feel better, and we feel tempted to compensate. Maybe some of us do feel tempted to purge, or to over-exercise, or we tell ourselves we are going to not eat at all the next day.

What we DON’T do is process and reflect on the REAL issue, and of course then we repeat it again and again.

It wasn’t until I committed to myself that I would practice these questions after EVERY episode of emotional eating that I truly reduced it. These really helped me, and my clients, and I hope they help you too.

1) What emotion was I feeling and trying to soothe or numb?

Anger, frustration, resentment, guilt, shame, embarrassment, fear, anxiety, sadness, exhaustion... What exactly was it? Sometimes we really struggle with identifying the emotion. Google a list of emotions and read over them. Find the one that best describes what you were feeling.

2) What did I truly need in that moment (instead of substituting with food)? How can I give myself what I truly needed?

Obviously if you were not truly hungry, then food was just a substitute for a true unmet need that you had. What did you really need, and then you settled for food instead?

Did you need validation? A hug? Someone to listen to you vent? A nap? A vacation day? An extension on the deadline? Did you need to speak up for yourself, to say how you really felt, or just to say no?

Whatever it is that you felt like you truly needed, the temptation is to feel stuck or resentful that somebody else didn't give it to you. Try to take ownership though. What was the part that you could have played differently to take care of yourself, to advocate for yourself to get those needs met?

Maybe you wish your spouse or friend or boss or mom would have validated you in how you felt, and you didn't get that. Can you validate yourself? YES. Take out a journal and write it out. "It's okay for me to feel this way. It makes sense that I would feel this way because ____ was wrong, or hurtful, or inappropriate."

If you're still struggling, it helps to pretend it's not you and someone else, to get some perspective. What advice would you have given to a friend or to your child that they could have done differently to practice true self-care?

Practice the affirmation, "I give myself what I need."

When we don't give to ourselves out of an abundance mindset, we wind up taking things for ourselves out of a scarcity mindset.

3) Can I do anything to prevent feeling this way again?

Now that you have identified the actual emotion, ask yourself, how *often* do I feel this way? Are there any specific patterns or triggers surrounding it? Do you notice that you're continually feeling the same negative emotions triggered by the same kind of situation?

Examples:

- *After every time I talk to my mom on the phone, I wind up emotionally eating.*
- *After every time I have a weekly check-in meeting with my boss, I wind up emotionally eating.*

Maybe you need to set a boundary to protect yourself from this constant emotional pain. If emotional eating is just soothing an emotional wound, what if you didn't have that wound anymore? Setting a boundary would stop ripping open that same scab over and over.

For some fantastic resources on boundaries, check out Dr. Henry McCloud, Nedra Tawab, or Teri Cole. They have great books and social media resources about what boundaries are, how to know if you need one, how to set them, and how to maintain them.

4) What can I do differently the next time I feel this way?

Last part, what are you going to do the next time you want to emotionally eat? Make a plan.

Public service announcement: it can still be to eat!

Yes, there are walks and baths and listening to music and calling a friend, and I'm all for trying those things! But you will still feel that compulsion to eat, because that's been the coping mechanism that has served you your whole life.

You will get to the point where you have built up your emotional toolkit with new coping resources other than food. In the meantime, though, let's celebrate progress over perfection.

Changing the foods you eat is HUGE progress. What foods would actually make you feel GOOD instead of just FAMILIAR (and then later, WORSE?)

Just having a plan for next time and following it transforms the entire experience. You will have done what you intended to do and cared for yourself, instead of feeling like you betrayed yourself or self-sabotaged.

Remember it's okay and normal to self-soothe with food. If it's holding you back from your goals, you can change it with self-awareness, self-compassion, and self-care.

Now it's your turn to practice. Think about your most recent episode of emotional eating and practice answering these questions in the space below.

1. What emotion was I feeling and trying to soothe or numb?

2. What did I truly need in that moment (instead of substituting with food)? How can I give myself what I truly needed?

3. Can I do anything to prevent feeling this way again?

4. What can I do differently the next time I feel this way?

If you enjoyed this mindset activity, this is just 1 out of 10 different mindset exercises in [The Self-Care Keto Guided Mindset Journal](#).

What Now?

Are you sad it's over? I am too!

You might be wondering, where do I go from here?

If you have done the reflection exercises in the book, there is so much opportunity to keep reusing them! Just take out a journal and handwrite the questions to use them again or reprint a fresh copy from your download. For example, use the [4 Bounceback Steps After Emotional Eating](#) every time you emotionally eat.

If you liked the mindset tips in this holiday guide, then you will LOVE [The Self-Care Keto Holiday Guide](#) and [The Self-Care Keto Guided Mindset Journal](#).

If you want to explore new ways to work with me, I would love to work with you! I have a variety of options including custom meal plans with email support, a self-coaching online course, and one-on-one coaching, so please reach out to me at theketofit@gmail.com or on Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn [@theketofit](#) so that we can connect! You can also text me at 757-797-4201.

I offer a completely free curiosity call, where we spend about 30-60 minutes getting to know each other, hearing your story and your struggles, and talking through ways we can work together. Whether you want to move forward or not, you'll get some **completely free custom keto recommendations** from me. I know it can feel overwhelming and confusing, and I'd love to bless you with some free tips.

I'm looking forward to connecting with you soon, and I'm cheering you on!

Jess

Disclaimers

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