

The Freshwell **ORIGINAL** **LOW CARB** **MEAL PLANNER**

—— DR KIM ANDREWS ——




With bonus
Christmas
Recipes
included!


Freshwell





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She graduated from Liverpool University with an honours degree in Medicine in 2000 and completed her medical training in Merseyside and Essex before settling into rural general practice and specialising in diabetes.

She discovered Low Carb lifestyle medicine in late 2018 and has been promoting this method ever since.

Hello!

Welcome to the rehash of my very first low carb 4 week rotating meal planner! This was originally written in early 2020 when Covid had just hit. I started it as my gym instructor at the time was struggling with back pain, hypertension and asthma and I really wanted her to give this way of eating a try. She was happy to give it a go but had no idea of where to start - “Just tell me what to eat and I’ll do it” was the challenge and thus The Freshwell Low Carb Project was born.

And fast forward over 4 years and here we are. The Freshwell Low Carb Project has gone from strength to strength with another 3 recipe books (Manual, Vegetarian and Budget) plus our website www.lowcarbfreshwell.com, and the Freshwell app which has now been downloaded over 120,000 times. More recently, the Freshwell Food Scanner app is now available which allows any barcode to be scanned to give a traffic light system as to whether this food aligns with the Freshwell Low Carb Project – a real benefit and support to those starting out on their low carb journey. And everything (including this book) can be accessed for free.

The Freshwell Low Carb Community (FLCC) has also been born. A Facebook support page with over 3200 members all eating the Freshwell way. I love lurking on the page, getting new recipe ideas and seeing the very sensible questions and informative answers that are posed. It really is such a lovely, supportive platform and I would highly recommend you joining the page if you don’t have a low carb support group near you – just remember to answer the three questions to gain access!

If you live locally in Essex – there are multiple face to face drop-ins that occur every week where “low carbers” get together for a good chat, pass on recipe ideas and support each other for the journey ahead. The group have full low carb menus put on at various restaurants throughout the patch which are always delicious. If you don’t live locally, do not despair – you can still tap into the patient experts via Teams meetings that run on weekday evenings – there really is no excuse not to get involved.

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So, this meal planner includes all the original recipes, but I have added a few extra for good measure. I have also included a bonus Christmas section as this can be a tricky time to navigate and I don't want anyone to feel that they are missing out. With a bit of forward preparation, you can enjoy a full 3 course Christmas menu including Xmas pud and chocolate Yule log, if that is what you desire.

Obviously you can go off-piste for a day if that is your preference, but before doing this, do stop for a moment to think about the person you are – can you have a blow out and get back to low carb eating after 24 hours, or is going off-piste likely to send you in to a tailspin that will involve “falling off the low carb wagon”? – only you can make this decision but I think it is fair to say that for some people with more complicated relationships with food – abstinence may be the only way (think cigarettes and alcohol....you wouldn't have the odd one if you were previously addicted).

So, I hope you enjoy this meal planner and that it gives you some ideas on how to get started on your new way of eating – all stories of health improvement are gladly welcomed so feel free to get in touch if you have news to share!

Here's to feeling brighter and healthier for 2025 – Good Luck!

Dr Kim Andrews

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As with any adjustment to your diet or exercise regime, please consult your doctor before implementing significant changes, particularly if you take medication for diabetes or high blood pressure, as these may need to be altered or reduced. This book should not be considered medical advice – if you have a medical issue that you are concerned about, please consult with your GP.



Hello there!

You will have decided to pick up this meal planner if you are considering trialling a low carbohydrate lifestyle. I'm therefore going to assume you are already aware of some of the health benefits low carb eating can bring.



This is a meal planner designed to help those people starting a low carb lifestyle. I decided to produce it as I find that many people give up after a few weeks as they aren't sure what to eat or they start to find "meat and veg" boring.

Comments I've heard include: "I caved on day 3 as I just didn't know what to eat so I had some bread" or "I am so sick of yoghurt or eggs for breakfast" – the second one always makes me smile a little, as in my experience, most people have spent almost their entire life eating cereal or toast at breakfast time...

This meal planner is not supposed to be taken as gospel – it is here to provide people with some tasty ideas and options that I have discovered along the way - when they are stuck in a rut, or when they don't know where to start. By all means, have soy spaghetti every day or make larger amounts so the same meal can be eaten two nights running. Or if you can't get away from sandwiches for lunch then make a large batch of Fat Head Dough rolls on a Sunday and keep them in an airtight container to use for lunches throughout the week. Or if you have meals you already enjoy, make a few swaps to remove the carbs and fill up on the good stuff!

I have only included recipes that are not commonly made or that need 'low carb' adjustments. For example, I have assumed that most people can make a basic Bolognese sauce or chilli con carne, and are able to cook a steak or roast a piece of meat. Even if you can't – have a look on Google as these dishes are inherently low carb in themselves so any preferred recipe will suffice.

If you're low on time, you can make quick and easy store-bought substitutions, e.g. use ready-made falafel, use chopped up high quality sausages instead of meatballs, buy ready-made meatballs, buy already grated cheese. Every little helps when you are making most meals from scratch. Just aim to pick items with the smallest list of ingredients and avoid added ingredients that you have never heard of!

For some lunch options my meal planner suggests home-made soup. I haven't included any particular recipes as you are free to make your favourites. Options might include broccoli and stilton, cream of chicken, cream of vegetable, roast cauliflower and parmesan, cream of mushroom or tomato and feta. Wherever possible try to avoid canned soups as they tend to include sugar amongst a dearth of other ingredients. If you do need something quick, then some of the bought fresh soups would be a better option – just check the ingredients for sugar and keep the carbohydrate content low (aim for under 10g total carbohydrate per 100g whenever you can!).

All recipes can be served with vegetables of your choice. Root vegetables such as swede, turnip, squashes and parsnips are quite starchy and consequently contain more carbohydrate so limit these when possible and only have a small portion. Try and stick to vegetables grown over ground – brassicas are a good choice and include cauliflower, cabbage, kale, broccoli and brussels sprouts. Bell peppers, asparagus, mushrooms, courgette, spinach, green beans, cucumber and salad greens are also excellent options.

On Sundays you will notice that I have only suggested two meal options. I have presumed that people may get up a bit later on Sunday, so a late breakfast/brunch, followed by an evening meal should suffice. This will also help you see that three meals a day isn't always necessary and it's ok to skip breakfast if you are not hungry.

If you have diabetes and are looking to improve your control or attain remission, you may want to avoid the chickpea based recipes in this planner. Although grain free and less processed than usual flours, chickpeas are still moderately high in carbohydrates so could send up blood sugars higher than desired. In these cases, use fat head dough to make pizza instead of a soca base. Give the nachos a miss and try the seed crackers instead.

I am not vegan or vegetarian, but I am sure that a lot of these recipes can be substituted with fish or possibly meat free alternatives such as tofu or Quorn – there are also plenty of vegetarian meal options to be found in the Freshwell Low Carb Vegetarian Meal Planner – so check it out if these types of recipes are of interest.

I have included 4 weeks of meal planning. Of course, any day can be substituted with another if you are too busy to prep meals on certain days of the week. On some days, the following days lunch revolves around leftovers from dinner the night before (specifically the fat head dough rolls and soca pizza) so take that into account if moving days around.

I would suggest you plan your meals for the week ahead and then shop accordingly. Initially when starting out on low carb you definitely have to plan ahead as often you will need ingredients that you won't usually stock in your fridge or cupboards.....and that's a danger point for caving in and grabbing the carbs....

Whenever possible, start by clearing your cupboards of carbs like pasta, rice and bread, and remove the old treats like milk chocolate, sweets, crisps and biscuits. That helps to prevent temptation and falling at the first hurdle....

Some people experience “keto flu” when they first start low carb. This usually happens to people who have been previously eating a pretty high carb diet. Symptoms may include nausea, constipation, headaches, fatigue and sugar cravings. These symptoms usually start after 24-48 hours of reducing carbs and are over within a few days to two weeks - up to a month at most. To an extent, these symptoms show how carb laden your diet was previously and should spur you on. If you can get through this stage, you will be rewarded with a new mental clarity and high energy levels. In turn your taste buds will change and you will stop craving carbs and get off the rollercoaster of sugar peaks and troughs.

You do not need to measure out portions or count calories when following a low carb lifestyle. I would generally recommend that you eat until you are satisfied and then stop. DO NOT EAT if you are not hungry, even if it is a mealtime. Ultimately, longer term, most low carbers find that two meals a day works well for them and they tend to skip breakfast as they are still full of protein and fat from the night before. Intermittent Fasting (IF) or Time Restricted Eating (TRE) are proven ways to lose weight and allow your liver to detoxify – if you can try to stick to an 8-hour window of eating e.g. 11am to 7pm and then fast for 16 hours, you will be doing well.

I was lucky enough not to be overweight, take any medications or suffer any illnesses when I decided to try a low carb lifestyle. However, when I learnt how much sugar my body was converting starchy carbohydrates into and the inflammatory effect of sugar on my body, I knew I had to make the change. I have never looked back. My young children eat the same meals as us and my husband no longer needs antacid and allergy medications (which he previously took daily). My own father is 4 stone lighter and no longer has high blood pressure or prediabetes.

Don't let anyone tell you that carbs are needed or necessary. They are not. Cutting carbohydrates will not harm you and will not cause diabetes or any other disease process. Cutting carbs will make you lighter, healthier and more energetic – you don't have to take my word for this – try it.

If you do suffer with any illnesses and/or take any prescribed medications, please ensure you talk to your doctor before making any major lifestyle changes including a low carb approach, as you may quickly need to reduce medications, particularly those taken for diabetes or high blood pressure.

Unfortunately, I am unable to give medical advice to anyone who is not a patient at Freshwell Health Centre.

Please do let me know your success stories and any recipes that you have tried and tested and would recommend to others.

Good Luck and Enjoy!
Dr Kim Andrews

Low Carb Pantry Essentials

A low carb diet in most cases will involve you using a few ingredients that you haven't used previously. In this section I am listing those items which you should aim to have in your cupboards when you start this new way of eating – some of which you may already have.

In most of the recipes, herbs and spices can be omitted without causing any major issues but these tend to be quite cheap and last some time, so they may be a good pantry item to invest in to make your meals extra tasty!

Please only use the following fats – extra virgin olive oil, butter, lard, dripping/tallow or coconut oil. Do not use vegetable oils including margarine, corn oil, sunflower oil or rapeseed oil (virgin cold pressed rapeseed oil may be used in salads if preferred over olive oil).

Use full fat milk and full fat Greek or natural yoghurt. If weight loss is your main aim or you have fears about cholesterol then you can switch to a lower fat alternative as long as your blood glucose is not an issue (remember lower fat equals more sugar when it comes to dairy).

Most large supermarkets will stock these items but I find it easier to buy some items like erythritol and almond flour online.

If you live in the Braintree area there is an excellent Asian cook shop on Fairfield Road in Braintree town opposite the Wetherspoons pub. It is a real treasure trove of ingredients and they sell almond flour, chickpea flour, psyllium husk and coconut oil/flour as stock items. You may have to ask when inside as the ingredient whereabouts isn't always obvious! If you are not local, then Asian supermarkets are generally a good place to source some of the less mainstream ingredients.

I think Aldi sells the best bean pasta alternatives. They sell soybean spaghetti, mung bean fettuccini and black bean spaghetti in boxes. They usually sit with the dried pasta or in a special health section. They were previously a stock item but unfortunately are now "special" and can only be found 2-3 times a year – I usually grab all I can find when its available! Sainsbury's and Waitrose also regularly stock pasta alternatives.

Many of my patients really struggle to give up bread as it is so easy and convenient. However, bread is high in carbs and these days often contains a dearth of other ingredients including various additives and oils. Holland and Barrett stock a multi-seed loaf that is stored in the fridge, only has 0.5g carbs per slice and is well loved by many members of the Freshwell Low Carb Community – it is only stocked in stores that have a fridge though and cannot be ordered online, so it might be a bit of a bun fight (no pun intended!) to get your hands on some. Alternatively, Heylo bread is available online and comes in multiple varieties of bread, bagels,

rolls, pizza bases etc. It is not cheap but can be frozen so you could store it in the freezer and take out a few slices every now and then as needed. Some of the low carb bread varieties are more highly processed than others so do keep an eye on the ingredients label – the shorter the better!

Pantry essentials

- **Full fat Greek or natural yoghurt** (unflavoured)
- **Crème Fraiche**
- **Grated cheese** – mozzarella, cheddar
- **Almond flour** (online, Holland and Barrett, Grapetree, Asian supermarkets)
- **Almond meal/ground almonds** (in baking section of most supermarkets)
- **Erythritol or Xylitol** (Truvia can be found in large supermarkets, Amazon)
- **Coconut flour** (Lidl, Aldi)
- **Coconut oil** (Lidl, Aldi)
- **Soybean Spaghetti** (Aldi, Sainsbury's, Waitrose)
- **Mung Bean Fettuccini** (Aldi, Sainsbury's, Waitrose)
- **Dark chocolate** – minimum 85% cocoa solids
- **Cacao or Cocoa powder**
- **Chickpea flour**- also known as Besan or Gram flour (in most large supermarkets in the Asian or International section)
- **Apple Cider Vinegar** – preferably with The Mother (Aldi, Lidl, Home Bargains, Holland and Barrett)
- **Extra Virgin Olive Oil**
- **Pumpkin seeds**
- **Sunflower seeds**
- **Flaxseed** (I usually get this ground/milled so I don't have to do it myself, most supermarkets)
- **Psyllium husk** (online or Asian supermarket)



My 10 Low Carb Mottos

- 1 Only eat when hungry** – not when a mealtime dictates it.
- 2 Breakfast is not the most important meal of the day** – only Mr Kellogg said that (and I think he had an ulterior motive!)
- 3 Don't snack** - it's unnecessary and probably means you didn't eat enough fat and protein at your last meal.
- 4 If you are not hungry when you wake, skip breakfast and try to have a brunch followed by an evening meal.**
- 5 When in doubt eat eggs, fish or meat** (aim to limit meat preserved with nitrites such as cured sandwich meats, salami and bacon).
- 6 Eat large amounts less often.**
- 7 If it has a long list of ingredients, don't eat it** (especially if the ingredients listed would not be found in your cupboard at home!).
- 8 Avoid low fat diet options whenever possible** – such as yoghurts, mayonnaise, cream cheese, cottage cheese. Always pick full fat (people often struggle with this one as it goes against everything they have previously been told about healthy eating).
- 9 Avoid processed snack products claiming to be low carb** such as protein bars, smoothies or shakes – they have a ridiculously large ingredients list, are ultra-processed and are often still quite high in “natural sugars”. Again – it is so important to read the ingredient labels.
- 10 Eat food that you buy as it was originally produced/as nature intended it** - and you can't go far wrong!

Eat. Real. Food.

Drinks

You can have unlimited tea and coffee. Limit milky drinks like lattes and cappuccinos to a maximum one a day and use full fat milk. If you can't drink tea or coffee unsweetened, use erythritol, xylitol or stevia.

- **Water** – still or sparkling (sugar free squash is acceptable, or add a dash of lemon/lime)
- **Wine** – enjoy a few glasses per week – champagne and sparkling wine has the lowest carb count!
- **Spirits with diet/slimline mixers** – ensure you keep to the recommended safe limits of up to 14 units per week.
- **AVOID fruit juice, smoothies, cider, beer, bitter, fizzy soda** (even diet sodas are full of chemicals and are not real food).
- **When having milk, try to choose full fat milk** as it contains less sugar and will keep you fuller for longer. The odd glass of milk is fine but I would not generally recommend multiple glasses per day as the sugar content will add up and it may be harder for you to lose weight or have good diabetes control.



Snacks and Desserts

Wherever possible try not to snack. Snacking is something modern society has invented – it is not necessary if you are eating nutritious meals containing protein and fat. If you are hungry then think about the meal you had last – what could you do next time to bump up the protein/fat content and stave off hunger?

Before you reach for a snack, stop to consider if you really are hungry – could you actually be bored or thirsty instead? If you decide you are peckish then choose one of these snacks as opposed to carb laden treats.



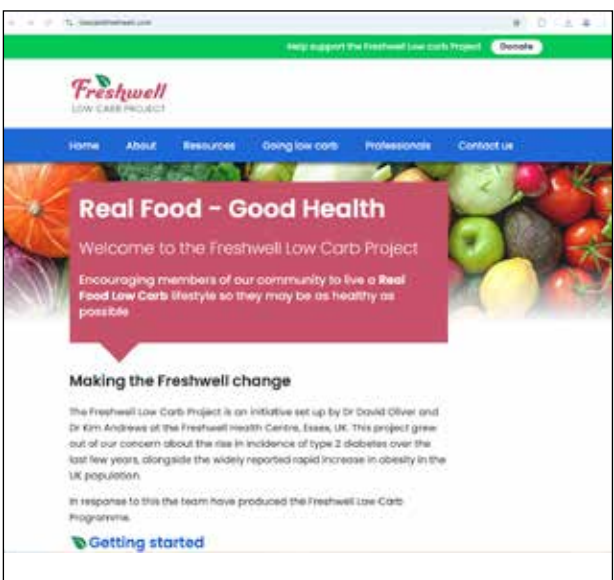
It is nice to be able to have a dessert after dinner with family or friends every now and then. But for some it does appear abstinence is the only way. Pick wisely!

- **2-3 squares dark chocolate** – minimum 85% cocoa solids
- **Small handful of nuts** – Brazil, almond, pistachio, walnut, macadamia, pecan
- **Small bowl of berries** – strawberries, blackberries, blueberries, raspberries
- **Small bowl of full fat Greek yoghurt**
- **Sugar free jelly** (made from a packet) – can serve with cream or yoghurt if you wish
- **Slices of apple or pear with cheese or peanut butter**
- **Small bowl of olives**
- **Keto crackers** (see recipe) with hummus, guacamole or peanut butter
- **Shortbread biscuit** (see recipe)
- **Chocolate mousse** (combine melted dark chocolate with double cream or coconut cream and refrigerate)

Freshwell Digital Resources

www.lowcarbfreshwell.com

Our website contains all the information needed to start your low carb journey. It includes 6 video educational modules explaining the science behind low carb and why it works differently to the weight loss diets you may have tried before. I think once you understand the science, it makes it easier to make better food choices. If you have recently been diagnosed with pre-diabetes or type 2 diabetes, there are also sections to help explain why a low carb approach may be the way forward for you. All 4 of my meal planners are available for free download containing hundreds of recipes to hopefully inspire you and help you on your way.



The Freshwell App

The original Freshwell app is free to download on both Apple and Android. This encompasses much of the information on our website in a more interactive and accessible way. It has now been downloaded over 120,000 times and we get weekly feedback from people who have made amazing improvements to their lives by following Freshwell advice. On the app, the 6 educational modules are still available but are written instead of visual. There is also an excellent "Sugraphics" section which is an interactive way of showing the amount of sugar in commonly eaten starchy foods – it is based on Dr David Unwin's Sugar Infographics and is a jaw drop moment for many! The section "What should I eat" encompasses simple low carb swaps, alongside our Red, Amber, Green traffic light system for foods and of course lots of delicious recipes which can be bookmarked. There is also a progress tracker for those who like to keep an eye on their weight and waist circumference. Oh, and did I mention it was free? Download it today if you haven't already!



The Freshwell Food Scanner App

Our second app was released in October 2024 and is also free. This app is very simple (not to code unfortunately, but thankfully to use!) and essentially turns your mobile phone or tablet in to a barcode scanner. You can then scan any food that has a barcode and will be presented with a Red, Amber or Green rating that aligns with Freshwell dietary recommendations. Red meaning "do not eat", amber means "occasional" – around 2-3 times per week, and Green "eat freely". The results are based on the Open Food Facts database which comprises over 3 million food items from all over the world added by individuals. Please note, as our information is gleaned from a database we cannot control, some ratings are not always exact and some items are not available when scanned. If you get a result you think is incorrect – do report it via the app so we can have a look and correct it if we agree. Although not necessary for long term low carbers, it is definitely a useful tool for those starting their journey as food companies are very skilled at trying to trick you - "heart healthy" or "healthy wholegrains" claims are often screaming at you from the shelves, making it very easy to hijack your choices. Some people also fall into the trap of "convenient" low carb snacks like keto granola bars or protein shakes/yoghurts etc – these are often highly processed and contain a dearth of other ingredients including vegetable oils and additives which we certainly recommend you avoid, and we hope this app will make this clearer for all.

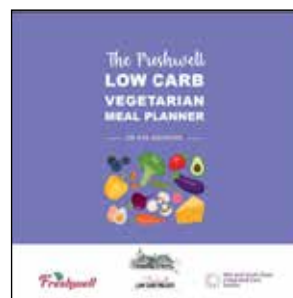
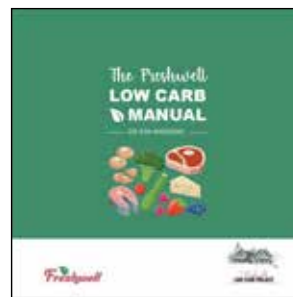


Other Resources

Meal Planners

Check out my other low carb books if you haven't already! These can all be downloaded for free from our website or if you prefer a hard copy for use in the kitchen – you can order a printed and bound book from our online shop at www.lowcarbfreshwell.com. If you are local, please feel free to visit reception at Freshwell Health Centre to purchase a book without any postal charges. We try to keep the cost of the books down as low as possible and any profit is put back into furthering the project.

- **The Freshwell Low Carb Manual**
- **The Freshwell Low Carb Budget Meal Planner**
- **The Freshwell Low Carb Vegetarian Meal Planner**



Red Amber Green (RAG) List

The Freshwell RAG list is one of my favourite resources and it is difficult for a patient to leave my office without clutching one in their hands! Essentially it is a document that concentrates on the foods that should and shouldn't be eaten whilst eating the Freshwell way. We encourage people to pick a protein and some low carb vegetables and then add some natural fat to aid satiety and vitamin absorption.

Green foods are items that you can have as much of as you like – including meat, fish, eggs, above ground vegetables and some fruit that grows in the UK. The Amber foods are foods that can be eaten in moderation and include more starchy veg like parsnips, peas and carrots, some other British fruit, certain nuts and dark chocolate etc. Finally, the Red foods are those to avoid as much as possible. This includes the obvious naughty foods which would not be a surprise to most of us, like biscuits, cakes and crisps etc but also includes tropical fruits, potatoes, vegetable oils and spreads, fizzy drinks, beer and also starchy carbohydrates like bread, cereal, pasta, cous cous and rice etc.

Many people feel they need to measure macros and portions sizes but essentially if you only eat from the green list, any form of counting is generally unnecessary. This often brings “freedom” for many when changing to such an approach. If you are

keen to follow your calories and carb intake, then using a free app such as MyFitnessPal or Carb Manager may work for you.

And what is “in moderation”? Well, that is a jolly good question and something we often ponder ourselves. In general, we find the term “moderation” unhelpful as what would seem reasonable to one, may not be to another. I generally tell patients that they should avoid foods on the red list but feel free to pick something from the amber list 3 times per week or so – certainly not every day.

If weight loss is your aim first and foremost – then although you can eat freely from the green list – you may wish to keep nuts and dairy in smaller portions as they are very calorific and can thwart weight loss if eaten in large amounts. If reducing your blood glucose is more important, then nuts and dairy should for the most part have minimal impact.

If you would like a RAG list to share with friends or stick to your fridge, please do download a free copy from our website www.lowcarbfreshwell.com found on the “Going Low Carb” page.

These resources have been taken from the Freshwell App, details available at www.lowcarbfreshwell.com. The food list overleaf gives you a rough guide as to what types of food you can eat with a low carb lifestyle. Safety information: Before embarking on a low carb lifestyle, please speak to a doctor or nurse if you suffer with any significant health conditions. This is especially important if you are on any medication, particularly for diabetes or high blood pressure, because you may find very quickly that you no longer need this medication and may need to stop taking it or reduce the dose. You should not do this without medical supervision.

Use the guide below, alongside our low carb food list on the next page, to help you plan your meals.

Pick a Protein (including dairy and substitutes):

for building muscle, feeling full, and micronutrients

Meat
All types of meat including beef, pork, lamb, duck.

Poultry
Chicken, turkey

Fish
All types of fish including fresh, frozen and canned.

Eggs
Cook them the way you like them.

Dairy
Full fat milk, yogurt, cheese

Plant based protein
Beans and pulses
Tofu
Quorn
Nuts and seeds

Pick some low carb Veggies (and a little bit of fruit):

for fibre, feeling full, and micronutrients

Fill up on vegetables from the green zone. Add in additional veggies from the amber zone to eat instead of higher carb foods.

AVOID potatoes and sweet potatoes where possible.

Note: Some plant-based protein foods such as beans, nuts and seeds also provide a good source of fibre.

Add some natural Fat

a source of essential fatty acids and helps the body absorb vitamin A, vitamin D and vitamin E

Add fats from the green zone, including olive oil, butter, coconut oil and cream.

And/or include protein foods that are also good sources of natural fat including oily fish, nuts and seeds, dairy foods such as yogurt milk and cheese, eggs, meat as well as avocado pears.

Include non-sugary dressings and sauces such as mayonnaise and pesto.

AVOID margarine and vegetable seed oils.



Red, Amber and Green foods & drinks



Green foods are things that you can have as much of as you like

Vegetables

- Asparagus
- Aubergine
- Avocado
- Baby corn
- Bean sprouts
- Broad beans
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Celeriac
- Celery
- Courgettes
- Cucumber
- Green beans
- Green leaves (any type)
- Lettuce
- Mange tout
- Mushrooms
- Olives
- Onion
- Pak Choi
- Pepper
- Radish
- Spinach
- Swede
- Swiss chard
- Tomatoes
- Turnip
- Watercress



Fruit

- Berries: blueberries, raspberries, cranberries, strawberries, blackberries
- Blackcurrants and redcurrants
- Coconut
- Grapefruit
- Rhubarb



Protein

(including dairy and substitutes)

- Eggs
- Fish: fresh, frozen, tinned (avoid breaded or battered fish)
- Meat: beef, lamb, pork
- Meat substitutes: Quorn, soya, tofu
- Nuts: almonds, walnuts, brazil nuts, hazel nuts, macadamias, pecans
- Poultry: Chicken, turkey
- Seeds: flaxseeds, chia seeds, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds
- Soya protein
- Beans and pulses: Lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, black eyed beans etc
- Full fat milk
- Full fat plain yogurt
- Full fat cheese



Fat

- Butter
- Cream and crème fraiche
- Sour cream
- Olive oil
- Coconut oil



Drinks

- Water
- Soda water
- Tea and coffee



Other

- Fermented vegetables (ie sauerkraut)
- Herbs and spices
- Almond flour, coconut flour
- Marmite
- Sauces such as homemade mayonnaise and pesto
- Oat fibre and vital wheat gluten
- Psyllium husk
- Vanilla essence
- Konjac noodles



Amber foods are foods which are ok in moderation

Vegetables

- Beetroot
- Butternut squash
- Carrots
- Leeks
- Parsnips
- Peas
- Pickled vegetables
- Sweetcorn



Fruit

- Apples
- Cantaloupe melon
- Cherries
- Figs
- Galia melon
- Honeydew melon
- Kiwi
- Melon
- Nectarine
- Orange
- Pears
- Plums
- Watermelon



Protein (including dairy and substitutes)

- Peanuts (but be careful not to have too many)
- Nuts: cashews, pistachios, chestnuts
- Processed meats: bacon, ham, sausages
- Baked beans in tomato sauce (choose reduced sugar)
- Low fat cheese
- Low fat milk
- Low fat yogurt
- Coconut milk, almond milk and soya milk (choose unsweetened versions)



Drinks

- Diet drinks
- Red or white wine
- Spirits with diet mixers
- Cocoa



Other

- Arrow root
- Dark chocolate (min 80% cocoa)
- Gram flour
- Sweeteners: stevia, erythritol, xylitol



Red foods are foods to avoid as much as possible

Vegetables

- Potatoes
- Sweet potatoes



Fruit

- Bananas
- Dried fruit
- Fruit juice
- Grapes
- Mango
- Pineapple
- Tinned fruit in syrup or juice



Starchy carbohydrates

- Bread
- Cereal: Weetabix, cornflakes, porridge, oats, granola, all-bran etc
- Cous cous
- Pasta
- Rice
- Rice based products: rice cakes and bars
- Wheat based products: wraps, pitta bread, flat bread, pizza, ryvita
- Wheat flour
- Rice milk and oat milk



Fat

- Vegetable seed oils: rapeseed, sunflower, cottonseed, Canola
- Margarine
- Low fat spreads
- Low fat cooking spray



Drinks

- Beer
- Cider
- Cordials
- Fizzy drinks
- Fruit juice
- Sports drinks



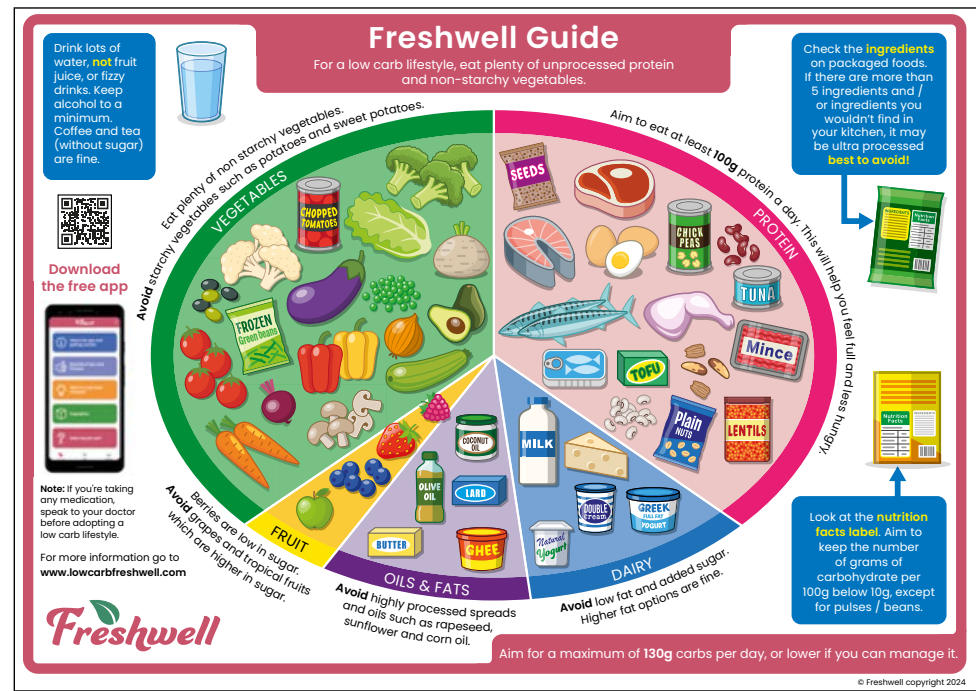
Sweet and processed foods

- Biscuits
- Breadsticks
- Cakes
- Chips
- Crackers
- Crisps
- Honey
- Ice cream
- Jam
- Maple syrup
- Milk chocolate
- Milkshake
- Pies and sausage rolls
- Protein bars
- Sugary sauces
- Sugary drinks
- Sweeteners (apart from those listed in the amber zone)
- Sweets
- Fruit yogurt containing sugar or sweeteners



The Freshwell Guide

Our patients continued to ask, “Please tell me what to eat summarised on one side of A4” – so that’s what we did! The Freshwell guide is our version of the NHS “Eatwell Guide” – a guide that we feel needs a massive overhaul and is not helpful for most people wanting to eat for good health. Our “plate” is a simple pictorial example of the sorts of foods and ratios that we believe constitutes a healthy diet that will help manage and prevent chronic disease.



The Freshwell Low Carb Community



I recommend you don’t visit the site if you are hungry though as there is always a new recipe to drool over or just food jealousy in general! The group freely shares recipes and even has some cooking demonstration videos if you can’t make it face to face.

If you are local to Essex, then the lovely community team also have multiple drop ins throughout our local area run by our local leaders. They also meet at the local swimming pool for some exercise and also every Saturday for Park Run – see if you can spot them in their snazzy FLCC T-shirts!

The FLCC was born in 2022 and is going from strength to strength. Initially, we had monthly educational sessions in our little village and since then the group has grown exponentially. A Facebook page was set up by our health coach to promote a low carb way of eating and to support those making the change. As of November 2024, there are a whopping 3200 members and I can honestly say it is one of the most supportive groups that I have seen on Facebook or indeed the internet. A lovely, supportive platform where anything can be asked without fear or reprimand.

It is bad luck if you are not local, but I am pleased to say the team now run Teams meetings every week for people who are nationwide and cannot make it to Face to Face drop ins. I would well recommend this if you have nothing local to you, as getting support and inspiration will help you maintain your focus.

If you would like to know more about the FLCC then either visit the Facebook page here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/382235179606729>
or contact the secretary Daryl Clark by email

at: daz.lowcarbcommunity@gmail.com.

The site contains helpful guides including tips, getting started, intermittent fasting, and simple swaps amongst many others. There is also a journal for completion that helps many and multiple success stories regarding how individuals have turned their lives around using the Freshwell approach.

Meet the Group Leaders:



Daryl
Senior Group Leader



Amy
Group Leader
- Halstead



Cara
Group Leader
- Braintree



Amanda
Group Leader
- Witham



FLCC Success Stories

Both in our medical practice, and on the Freshwell Low Carb Community Facebook page – we hear multiple, amazing stories of success and life changing results via the project. I just wanted to share a few of them here with you – revisit them when you need inspiration or encouragement to start a new lifestyle or to pick yourself up after a lapse!

Amy's JOURNEY



In June 2022 I was told that I couldn't take the medication I needed because I was too fat - this was a wakeup call! That evening, I came across a Facebook article promoting a low carb lifestyle programme run through the local doctors. I thought 'it can't be that bad if it's sponsored by the local doctors' so decided to sign up. I was allocated a lifestyle coach, Halima, who was wonderful. We had our first call on 25th June 2022, and I was on my way. Instead of speaking every week she agreed that we would catch up every three weeks. This worked better for me as I could make some progress between calls and the accountability kept me motivated and focused. Halima explained how the diet worked and gave me lots of links and guidance.

The diet was weird - unlike anything I had tried before.... Cheese and full fat cream were ok, but I had to avoid apples, oranges and carrots!! How was that going to work...? But I kept the faith and followed the Freshwell site advice. At the end of my first week I had lost 6kg - maybe they were onto something after all! I joined the Freshwell low carb Facebook page as a 'lurker' and continued to plan my meals. I used the Diet Doctor and Carb Manager apps in addition to the Freshwell app to help me understand the diet more and check the carb content of foods. I followed a keto approach and aimed at less than 20g carbs per day - I made good progress and by the beginning of September 2022 I had lost 19kg.

I knew I needed to do some exercise so signed up for the Cancer Research 30000 steps in September campaign, raising money for a good cause while getting a bit fitter too. I started jogging between a few telegraph poles on my third week and found I could run a little bit further each day. By 11th December I had lost 5 stone, but I also had to say goodbye to Halima as I had completed my support course. I knew how important checking in with someone had been for me; I couldn't go to the drop-ins as I work full-time so I decided to try the Marks Hall Parkrun advertised on the Facebook page. It was one of the best things I ever did! Everyone is so friendly and really supportive.

It has been a tough slog to finally reach my goal weight. I have lost 7 stone and I am now in the healthy BMI range. My waist dropped from 43" to 35". I feel healthier and fitter and have dropped 5 dress sizes and every so often I improve my parkrun PB by a few seconds too. I am now starting my maintenance phase, so wish me luck.

Why do I weigh in kgs instead of stones and pounds? When I started this journey, I was in denial and didn't want to know what I weighed so I weighed in kg as it didn't mean anything to me. Stones and pounds would have been far too scary!!

And my tip... find a few carb free foods that you love and eat them often. This reminds me why this diet works for me, and I don't feel that I am missing out...

I love belly pork slices, buttered cabbage, steaks with cream sauces, plain chocolate, pork scratchings and weekend fry-ups, and butter with everything. I focus on all the good things I can eat and don't dwell on the things I can't.

Dellanie's JOURNEY



My name is Dellanie Nash and I work as a GP Practice Nurse in Folkestone. I am very grateful for having met Dr Kim Andrews and Dr David Oliver at a conference in Solihull in March 2023. Since then, their presentation inspired me to start my low carb journey which was very difficult because being Filipino, we do eat 1-2 plates of rice 3 times a day! It is deemed that Filipinos who reduce white rice intake are socially viewed as rejecting Filipino culture. This exemplifies how difficult it is for Filipinos to make the necessary dietary changes to reduce our risk of type 2 diabetes.

Before my lifestyle change, I weighed in at 64kg, HbA1c 38mmol/mol – and although technically not at a pre-diabetic level yet, it was definitely heading that way. I have a high risk of Type 2 diabetes due to my mother being diagnosed 3 years ago.

Being a Diabetic Specialist Nurse myself, I was worried that my HbA1C could easily nip into 42 mmol/mol had I continued to eat rice 3x a day! I changed to a low carb lifestyle (50-80g of carbs/day) to reduce my type 2 diabetes risk. I did 16-8 intermittent fasting during my working week, and my HbA1C improved to 33 mmol/mol, triglycerides 0.6, and cholesterol HDL 1.7mmol/L. And in the process, my insulin resistance and peri-menopausal symptoms have improved, i.e. joint pains, lethargy, tiredness, brain fog and “frozen shoulder” (typical of peri-menopausal women). I feel more energetic, and my munchies have gone too since eating proper protein and fibre rich foods, and healthy fats. Weight loss was just a bonus!

So, I am very grateful for the Freshwell Low Carb Project, and since then, for any patient that I see (whether for B12, dressings, smear, blood pressure check, immunisations, Learning Disability health checks, contraceptive check, long term condition reviews, etc) - I signpost my patients to the Freshwell website and App. It only took me 6 weeks to lose 12kg but the hardest bit was keeping at it to maintain the new lifestyle but I have got used to eating less carbs. So, thank you for your initiative.

As well as my own personal success, many of my patients have reversed their prediabetes, de-escalated their BP/diabetes treatment, lost weight, improved their well-being and have learnt how to self-care - which is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle.

Charles's JOURNEY



Let me introduce you to Charles, one of our favourites and a much-loved member of the FLCC.

He joined the programme, under Dr Kim Andrews care, 3 years ago. At 16st 10lb and bordering on becoming a diabetic, he had to lose weight. It was very hard for him to give up pasta and particularly pizza, nothing with sugar and having no processed food.

At 71, Charles runs at the Markshall Estate Park Walk/Run, exercises a lot more and enjoys the social life offered by FLCC with his long-suffering wife, Sue!

Charles is no longer pre-diabetic, his blood pressure and cholesterol have lowered considerably so that he is off medications for these – as a bonus, he has also stopped snoring and no longer suffers with heartburn. Soon his arthritis medication will also be reduced.

Weight today, 15 August 2024, is 13st 3lbs. Healthier and fitter than ever before.

Food Addiction and Emotional Eating

*“Where I is too many
and 100 is never enough.....”*

As I have spent more time over the past 5 years talking to patients about their diet and lifestyle, it has become increasingly apparent to me that there is a large amount of disordered eating going on. There is no doubt in my mind that food addiction is a real thing and people need support to be able to control it, just as they would with addiction to alcohol or cigarettes – sometimes willpower just isn’t enough.

The human body loves homeostasis – a sense of balance – this includes the brain, which wants us to keep a perfect balance between pain and pleasure. Every time we feel pleasure, our brain will counter that with pain and the mistake many of us make is adding more pleasure which creates another “wave” of pain – another biscuit anyone?

“It’s OK in moderation” is just a fallacy to keep people inside the loop. For some people – as with drugs, smoking and alcohol - abstinence is the only way. Behind our vices, there is a need that’s not being fulfilled in healthier ways. Reward pathways need to be reset. Cutting back is harder than quitting as if you cut back and never quite stop, you will never fully restore and heal your reward pathways which puts you in a state of constant cravings.

When starting the Freshwell plan and deciding how low on carbs to go, and how often you might have a “treat”, I think it is really important to think long and hard about who you really are and make a decision on whether or not you should abstain rather than reduce. Although it’s a really tough decision to make, sometimes cutting out bread or biscuits or beer all together, is the only way forward for many.

Our health coach, Sharon Withnell, has completed further training on emotional eating and has a lot of expertise to offer, some of which can be read below. Please read on if you recognise some of these addictive traits in yourself....

Understanding and Managing Emotional Eating



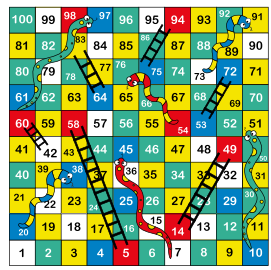
This section on emotional eating was written by **Sharon Withnell**, Health and Wellbeing Coach at Colne Valley PCN. Sharon has been working alongside the Freshwell Low Carb Project over the last few years, supporting local patients in adopting a low-carb approach to achieve their health goals. She has a special interest in emotional eating and has set up a local support group to help patients share tips and insights in this area.

Introduction

Emotional Eating - using food to cope with emotions rather than physical hunger - is a common challenge that can interfere with long-term health goals. Recognising and managing emotional eating is a valuable part of a sustainable low-carb lifestyle, helping to build healthier habits that support both physical and emotional wellbeing.

The Snakes and Ladders of Emotional Eating

Managing emotional eating can feel like a game of “Snakes and Ladders.” Just as players progress by climbing ladders and avoiding snakes, emotional eating management involves identifying triggers (the “snakes”) and building supportive strategies (the “ladders”) to overcome them. Journaling is a powerful tool to help make these connections clearer, especially when triggers are subtle or unconscious. Through regular journaling, you can uncover patterns, recognise triggers, and track your progress.



Understanding Emotional Eating Triggers (The Snakes)

The Role of Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs)

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) are closely tied to emotional eating patterns. These foods, typically high in refined carbohydrates and engineered for “hyperpalatability” (combining sugar, salt, and fat in certain proportions), can activate reward pathways in the brain, similar to addictive substances like drugs and alcohol. This can make it difficult to break free from emotional eating cycles.

How a Low-Carb Approach Can Help

By reducing reliance on UPFs, a low-carb diet can support emotional wellbeing in several ways:

- Stabilising blood sugar levels: Prevents spikes and crashes that lead to cravings and helps reduce the impulse to eat for comfort.
- Reducing hunger swings: Low-carb meals help curb intense hunger cycles.
- Avoiding foods that promote overeating and cravings.

Identifying Common Triggers

Through journalling, you can reflect on your eating habits and start identifying what drives emotional eating. Some common triggers include:

- Food-Related Triggers
 - Ultra-processed, sugary, or starchy foods
 - “Hyperpalatable” foods that combine sugar, salt, and fat
- Emotional Triggers
 - Stress, anxiety, depression, or past trauma
- External Triggers
 - Environmental cues (ads, shop displays), social pressures, and time constraints
- Physical Triggers
 - Fatigue, hunger due to lack of nourishing food, and blood sugar fluctuations

Strategies for Managing Emotional Eating (The Ladders)

1. Building Awareness and Intention with Journalling

Journalling can be a transformative tool in understanding emotional eating, especially when triggers are deeply ingrained or unconscious. By journalling regularly, you can:

- Identify and reflect on triggers: Note when and why urges to eat arise, paying attention to emotional cues.
- Set intentions and track coping mechanisms: Write down alternative ways to feel better without food.
- Celebrate small wins and recognise your self-worth: Reflecting on your progress reinforces the effort you’re putting in, building self-worth and selfcompassion over time.

2. Developing a Support System

Support is essential in managing emotional eating. Whether through professional or personal networks, support can offer guidance and accountability, helping you stay committed to healthier habits. Consider:

- Professional support: Specialised programs, counselling, health coaching
- Personal support: Friends, family, online communities, and accountability partners

3. Prioritising Self-Care

Consistent self-care builds emotional resilience and supports long-term goals. Focus on:

- Quality sleep and regular exercise
- Stress management and mindfulness practice
- Nourishing low-carb meals and staying hydrated

4. Creating a Supportive Environment

Setting up your surroundings can make a big difference in avoiding emotional eating. Consider:

- Organising your kitchen and workspace to limit access to “trigger” foods
- Planning meals and grocery shopping in advance to avoid impulse choices

Action Steps

To make your journey manageable, start with these action steps and integrate journalling along the way:

1. Set one intention for the week: For example, journal each morning or evening to reflect on any urges to eat and the emotions behind them.
2. Identify a trigger: When a food craving arises, pause and journal about what might have prompted it.
3. Choose a coping mechanism: Write down an alternative action (e.g., a walk, a call to a friend, or deep breathing) and note how it felt. Tracking these actions can help reinforce that they are worth doing.
4. Check in with a supportive friend or group for accountability.
5. Create a plan for your environment: Start by removing one “trigger” food from easy access or organise your kitchen for healthier options.

Remember

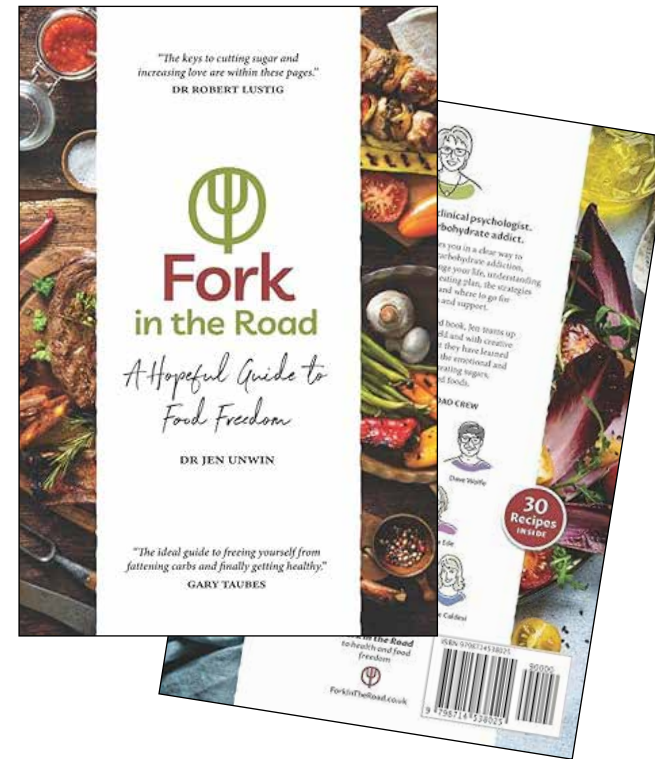
Focus on progress rather than perfection. Using journalling as a tool within the “snakes and ladders” framework can help you address unconscious triggers, track your progress, set intentions and reinforce self-worth. Focus on small, consistent steps and celebrate each bit of progress along the way.

Resources

- Liberate: Freedom From Obsessive Eating
- Overeaters Anonymous Great Britain | For anyone with eating issues
- NHS talking therapies for anxiety and depression - NHS
- Social prescribing and me | NASP
- Fork in the Road: A hopeful Guide to Food Freedom - Dr Jen Unwin

Reference

Addiction to ultra-processed foods as a mediator between psychological stress and emotional eating during the COVID-19 pandemic - PubMed



Sweet Enough Already?

Some of my recipes include sweeteners as an ingredient. It is important to understand that sweeteners are really included to act as a “stepping stone” to cutting sweetness out of the diet longer term – we want to train our bodies to accept a lower threshold for “sweet” which will help stop cravings. Once you have been on the plan for some time, foods that never seemed sweet previously will become more obviously so – like carrots, peas and plain yoghurt.

Artificial sweeteners give you that sweet taste your body is wired to crave. The issue is that artificial sweeteners can be up to 700 times sweeter than sugar with the result that they bombard your nervous system with dopamine- releasing sweetness. Just like sugar, there is mounting evidence that artificial sweeteners light up addiction areas in the brain (some studies suggest even more so than sugar!) and your brain wants that feeling back, so before long you find yourself reaching for more artificially sweetened foods for the “hit” – and you don’t have to worry about it because it’s not sugar and it has no calories, right?

Over the years there have been various concerns about the health effects of older sweeteners like saccharin and aspartame. My recipes tend to use more “natural” sweeteners such as erythritol or xylitol – which are also known as polyols. There has been some recent controversy about erythritol following a research study that was published in 2023 showing an increase in cardiovascular risk when polyol sweeteners are consumed.

I think we need to take some time to consider the study in the first instance. Firstly, the final number of patients enrolled is a very small group. Secondly, the study does not take into account that the body itself produces erythritol through something called the PPP - Pentose Phosphate Pathway – which the body produces due to underlying inflammation. The study does not take into account what was “consumed” and what was naturally already present in the body. So, this study could be affected by many confounding factors and may well be reverse causation i.e. the body has inflammation and insulin resistance which causes high levels of erythritol and leads to higher risk of heart attack.... ..It is also unclear whether these possible effects apply to all polyols like sorbitol or xylitol.



So, by all means when initially starting out on low carb – switch to sweeteners to help make the leap – but once your diet is becoming ingrained, work on slowly removing the artificial sweeteners from your diet. Obviously, a treat for a birthday or Christmas is perfectly fine (as long as you know it won't make you fall off the wagon longer term) but just because it is low carb and calorie free – does NOT mean that you should be consuming it on a regular basis. Based on current evidence, we believe that eating polyol sweeteners in small amounts is unlikely to be harmful, but your aim should be to get off the sugar rollercoaster as soon as you can!

Sweet and sugary foods should be a once in a while thing. No artificial sweetener can turn an unhealthy food in to a healthy one. Swopping out sugar for artificial sweetener isn't going to give you the health benefits you are looking for, so treat them accordingly.



4 week **ROTATING MEAL PLANNER**

WEEK ONE

(see recipes in bold)

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
MONDAY	Greek yoghurt with blueberries	Cheese and ham omelette	Soy Spaghetti and meatballs with broccoli
TUESDAY	Scrambled egg with fried mushrooms	Salad with goats cheese and blackberries	Lamb Koftas with baked aubergines and Tzatziki
WEDNESDAY	Raspberry Peanut Butter Chia Pudding	Cheese, antipasti and olives with Keto Cracker Shards	Soca Pizza
THURSDAY	My Favourite Granola with Greek yoghurt	Left over Soca Pizza	Steak cooked in butter with kale cooked in pan juices
FRIDAY	Scrambled egg with smoked salmon	Salad with feta cheese	Dragon Stew
SATURDAY	Halloumi with fried eggs and mushrooms	2-3 high quality sausages with tin of reduced sugar baked beans	Stuffat Tal-Fenek
SUNDAY	Fry Up! (No toast, hash browns or fried bread)		Roast Chicken and Silky Swede Mash with vegetables and gravy

WEEK TWO

(see recipes in bold)

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
MONDAY	Greek yoghurt with raspberries	Salad with boiled eggs and olives	Soybean Spaghetti and Meatballs
TUESDAY	My Favourite Granola with Greek yoghurt	Egg Mayo with Keto Cracker Shards	Cottage pie with a Celeriac Mash topping
WEDNESDAY	Scrambled eggs with tinned plum tomatoes	Cheese, antipasti and olives with Keto Cracker Shards	Beef burgers with Fat Head Dough Buns
THURSDAY	Raspberry and Peanut Butter Chia Pudding	1 or 2 Flax Bread Rolls with filling of your choice	Steak cooked in butter with cavolo nero cooked in pan
FRIDAY	3 or 4 hard boiled eggs dipped in mayonnaise	Salad with a tin of tuna	Lamb Koftas with Baked Aubergine and Tzatziki
SATURDAY	Scrambled egg with bacon	Pumpkin Soup with Bacon Croutons	Calzone +/- side salad
SUNDAY	Fry Up! (No toast, hash browns or fried bread)		Roast Meat of your choice with Nutty Balsamic Brussels and gravy

WEEK THREE

(see recipes in bold)

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
MONDAY	Greek yoghurt with pecans and blueberries	Chorizo and spinach omelette	Carbonara Fettuccini
TUESDAY	Scrambled egg with fried mushrooms	Keto Cracker Shards with hummus	Lamb steaks with Baked Aubergine and Garlic Yoghurt Dip
WEDNESDAY	Raspberry Peanut Butter Chia Pudding	Salad with feta and olives	Soca Pizza
THURSDAY	My Favourite Granola with Greek yoghurt	Left over Soca Pizza	Moussaka with Feta Topping
FRIDAY	Boiled Eggs with Halloumi soldiers	Cheese and ham omelette	Calzone +/- side salad
SATURDAY	Scrambled egg and sausages	Salad with a tin of tuna	Stuffat Tal-Fenek
SUNDAY	Fry Up! (No toast, hash browns or fried bread)		Roast meat of your choice with Silky Swede Mash and vegetables

WEEK FOUR

(see recipes in bold)

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
MONDAY	2 Barretta Bars	Salad with halloumi	Soybean Spaghetti and Meatballs
TUESDAY	Scrambled egg with tinned plum tomatoes	Creamy Roasted Cauliflower Soup	Steak cooked in butter with kale and mushrooms fried in juices
WEDNESDAY	Greek yoghurt with raspberries and desiccated coconut	Cheese, antipasti and olives with Keto Cracker Shards	Beef burgers with Fat Head Dough Buns
THURSDAY	My Favourite Granola with Greek yoghurt	1 or 2 Fat Head Dough Buns with filling of your choice	Dragon Stew
FRIDAY	3 or 4 hard boiled eggs dipped in mayonnaise	Salad with tin of tuna	Calzone +/- side salad
SATURDAY	Halloumi with fried eggs and mushrooms	Egg Mayo with Keto Cracker Shards	Chilli Con Carne with Chickpea Nachos
SUNDAY	Poached eggs with smoked salmon and avocado		Roast Meat of your choice with vegetables and Nutty Balsamic Brussels



Dr Kim's
RECIPES

My Favourite Granola

Serves 2-3 for approximately 1 week

A nutty and seedy granola - crunchy and satisfying and easy to make. This stores in an airtight container for a month or more and my kids love it with milk or yoghurt before they head off to school. We also tend to add some fruit - some microwaved frozen berries or our own home-made cinnamon apple purée. A great start to the day that will keep you full until lunch!

INGREDIENTS

- 100g pumpkin seeds
- 100g sunflower seeds
- 40g flaxseed (whole or milled)
- 80g flaked almonds
- 80g crushed pecans or hazelnuts
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons of xylitol or erythritol dissolved in a small amount of hot water.
- 2 pinches of salt - I prefer coarse sea salt for an intermittent salty hit!

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180 C.
- 2 Mix all ingredients in a large bowl and combine well.
- 3 Line a baking tray with grease proof paper and tip out the granola, spreading it out evenly over the tray.
- 4 Cook for 10-12 minutes or until the edges start to brown and crisp.
- 5 Remove from the oven and allow to cool.
- 6 Crumble into an airtight container and store in a cool cupboard where it will keep for around 3-4 weeks (if you don't eat it first!).



Egg mayo

This recipe has been kindly donated by **Veronika Slavik – a qualified holistic low-carb health coach who is also a part of the Freshwell Low Carb Community.**

My journey toward health and wellness has been transformative. After struggling with my weight for years, I lost 30 kg by adopting a low-carb lifestyle. But the benefits went far beyond the scale—I also managed to reverse my asthma and heartburn, two issues I thought I'd have to live with forever.

This experience inspired me to dive deep into understanding the power of nutrition and holistic health. I became a qualified health coach and discovered a passion for natural low -carb cooking and nutrition. Now, I share this passion with others, helping clients transform their own lives by embracing a nourishing, low-carb lifestyle. There's nothing more fulfilling than seeing others regain their health, energy, and confidence, just as I did.

Veronika has written a beautiful recipe book, “Homemade Low-carb Lifestyle”, regarding her low carb experience which can be purchased on Amazon. You will find 3 more of Veronika’s recipes in this meal planner so read on for more!



Homemade Low-carb Lifestyle:
By Veronika Slavik: Amazon.co.uk:
Slavik, Mrs Veronika: 9798320964799: Books

INGREDIENTS

- 4 eggs
- 2 tbsp mayonnaise
- 200g soft cream cheese
- 6 rashers of streaky bacon
- 25g chives
- Himalayan pink salt
- Ground black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Dry fry the diced streaky bacon until crispy.
- 2 Meanwhile, bring water to a boil in a cooking pan and cook the eggs, lowering the heat, for 4-5 minutes for a soft-boiled egg.
- 3 Peel the eggs and finely dice them. Mix the eggs with the bacon, soft cheese, and mayonnaise.
- 4 Stir through the seasoning and finely chopped chives.
- 5 Serve the egg mayo with your favourite lowcarb bread or low-carb crackers.



Fat Head Dough Buns

Makes 4-6 buns or 2 pizza bases

Bread, bread, bread. It's the main food that people struggle to give up when going low carb. These fat head dough buns are soft and flavoursome and work as a great substitute for a lunch roll or burger bun. These buns freeze well - make them in a batch so you can always grab one from the freezer when you're in a rush. The recipe can also be rolled flat to make a keto pizza base – excellent if you are trying to keep your blood glucose low.

INGREDIENTS

- 145g almond flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 250g grated mozzarella cheese
- 2 tbsp cream cheese
- 2 large eggs beaten
- 7g dry yeast
- ½ tbsp sesame seeds (optional)
- 1 tbsp erythritol

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 190C.
- 2 Mix dry ingredients – almond flour, yeast, erythritol, baking powder – and set aside.
- 3 Put the cream cheese and grated mozzarella in a glass bowl and microwave in 30 second intervals until the cheese is evenly melted. Stir in between. Usually takes 1 min 30 secs to 2 mins.
- 4 Pour dry ingredients into the microwaved cheese. Mix with wet hands or a spatula and then add the cold eggs. Mix until a ball of dough forms.
- 5 Divide the dough into 6 parts and place balls on to a baking sheet lined with greaseproof paper.
- 6 If you wish, sprinkle sesame seeds on top.
- 7 Bake for 10-12 mins until the top is golden brown.
- 8 Allow to cool and then slice in half. Toast lightly if preferred.
- 9 Serve with a hamburger or cheeseburger or can be used like a basic bread bun in a lunchbox with a filling of your choice.

Keep in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

You can also roll the dough between greaseproof paper sheets and serve as a pizza base (this is a lower carb option than soca pizza, hence better if you have diabetes).





Pumpkin soup with bacon croutons

Serves 3-4

A delicious pumpkin soup recipe kindly donated by Veronika Slavik and found in her book “Homemade Low-carb Lifestyle”. I love pumpkin but can sometimes struggle to find it out of season. You can purchase cans of pumpkin puree in larger supermarkets year round or roast up your Jack o’ Lantern at Halloween and get it frozen for future use! Butternut squash would work as a good alternative.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium size pumpkin
- 300g streaky bacon
- 4 slices of low-carb bread (plain chaffles would work here as an alternative)
- 100g mascarpone
- 50g pumpkin seeds
- 1.5 litres vegetable stock
- 1 tsp Himalayan pink salt
- 1 red chilli
- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 tsp hot smoked paprika
- ground black pepper
- olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Peel the pumpkin and slice it into cubes.
- 2 Melt the coconut oil in a large cooking pan, add finely sliced red chilli and garlic, and stir-fry for 1-2 minutes.
- 3 Add the pumpkin, vegetable stock, salt, and ground black pepper. Add less stock if you like the soup thicker.
- 4 Bring the soup to a boil, turn the heat down, and cook for 30 minutes or until the pumpkin is soft.
- 5 Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 220°C. Toss the diced bacon, bread, pumpkin seeds, hot smoked paprika, and olive oil in a large roasting tray.
- 6 Roast it for 10 minutes or until golden.
- 7 Stir the mascarpone into the soup. Pour the soup into a soup maker and whizz until smooth (or use a blender).
- 8 Serve the soup with the bacon croutons sprinkled on top.



Raspberry Peanut Butter Chia Pudding

Serves 2

Another of Veronika's lovely recipes, taken from her book, *Homemade Low-carb Lifestyle*. Whether you're following a low-carb diet for weight loss, managing diabetes, or simply looking to improve your overall health, this cookbook will inspire you with lots of delicious recipes - Say hello to a happier, healthier you—one delicious meal at a time!

This could be eaten as a breakfast (similar to overnight oats but healthier – get it all ready the night before so it is ready to grab and go in the morning) or as a dessert – the choice is yours.

INGREDIENTS

- 200 ml plain Greek yoghurt
- 50 ml full fat milk
- 50g raspberries (fresh or defrosted frozen)
- 30g chia seeds
- 3 tbsp smooth peanut butter
- 2 tsp stevia vanilla drops (this could be substituted for powdered erythritol and vanilla essence)

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Stir all the ingredients together.
- 2 Divide the mixture into two portions.
- 3 Leave the puddings in the fridge to thicken overnight.
- 4 Grab and go!.



Chickpea Nachos

Makes about 50 chips

I find the thing most missing on a low carb diet is “crunch”. So, I came up with this recipe to try and give a bit of texture. These nachos are perfect with chilli con carne or as a cracker to use with homemade guacamole or hummus. Just be sure to roll the pastry out as thin as you can to make sure the nachos are not too dense.

INGREDIENTS

- 250g chickpea flour (also known as gram flour or besan flour)
- 1 ½ tsp fine salt
- 1tsp freshly cracked black pepper
- 1tsp baking powder
- 60ml melted coconut oil
- 4-6 tbsp warm water

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Sift the chickpea flour, salt, pepper and baking powder into a large mixing bowl.
- 2 Add the coconut oil and mix with hands until the dough is crumbly.
- 3 Add 60mls warm water and stir until the dough comes together. Add more water if needed.

Do not overwork the dough.

- 4 Preheat oven to 175C.
- 5 Place the ball of dough between two sheets of greaseproof paper and roll out as thinly as possible. The thinner the dough, the lighter and crispier your nachos will be.
- 6 Remove the top layer of greaseproof paper and score the dough into triangles.
- 7 Slide the baking paper and dough onto a baking tray and place in the oven.
- 8 Bake for 10-12 minutes until the nachos are golden around the edges.

Enjoy warm or will store in an airtight container for up to two weeks.





Salad with Goats Cheese and Blackberries

Serves 2-3

Another lovely recipe from Veronika Slavik, taken from her book – *Homemade Lowcarb Lifestyle*. People think salads are boring but they don't have to be. A delicious salad with some interesting additions always makes you feel good and blackberries and goats cheese make a lovely combination. Switching up the ingredients is easy here – feta cheese would work well too and watermelon or chunks of apple or pear would combine well.

INGREDIENTS

- 150g goat cheese
- 150g blackberries
- 100g mixed salad leaves
- 50g almond flakes plus 25g for the pesto
- 50g Parmesan
- 50 ml of olive oil
- 4 tomatillos (cherry tomatoes could be substituted here)
- 1 red chilli

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Whizz the tomatillos (or cherry tomatoes), 25g of almond flakes, red chilli, Parmesan and olive oil in a food processor. Set the pesto aside.
- 2 Toast the remaining almond flakes in a dry frying pan until golden. This will take just a few minutes.
- 3 Toss the salad leaves with the pesto, add the sliced goat cheese and blackberries to each plate and top it with the toasted almond flakes.



Lamb Koftas with Baked Aubergine and Tzatziki

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

For the lamb koftas:

- 1kg minced lamb
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 egg
- 2 finely chopped onions
- 1tsp dried mint
- 1 tsp dried dill
- 1 tsp cumin
- 6 twists of black pepper
- Butter or olive oil for frying

For the baked aubergines:

- 3 large aubergines
- Olive oil

For the Tzatziki:

- 1 whole cucumber
- 1 small clove of garlic
- 500ml full fat Greek yoghurt
- ¼ tsp salt
- Pinch of dried dill

I love lamb and I also love aubergine, so this dish is always on my favourites list. The flavours take me back to holidays and evenings eating outside in warm, tropical, town squares on various Greek Islands – what's not to like?! This is my absolute favourite way to eat aubergine – the more heavily roasted and soaked in olive oil, the better.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Mix all the kofta ingredients in a large bowl.
- 2 Shape small egg sized patties and pat flat.
- 3 Fry the patties in butter or olive oil until crispy well done on the outside.
- 4 Slice aubergines into 2cm thick round discs and place on a baking tray.
- 5 Brush on both sides with olive oil.
- 6 Bake in the oven at 200C for 25-30 minutes until nicely browned.
- 7 Grate the cucumber (leave the skin on).
- 8 Place in a sieve or colander and press down until you can't push out more fluid.
- 9 Grate the garlic.
- 10 Add the cucumber, garlic, yoghurt, dill, and salt to a bowl.
- 11 Stir until well combined.

Place all 3 dishes on the table and let everyone enjoy!



Hobz Biz- Zejt

Serves 3-4 as a side or starter, or 2 as a main meal

I have a Maltese neighbour called Carmello (or Chas for short!) and we have spent many an hour chatting, enjoying grilled meat, wine and always Hobz Biz-Zejt! Pronounced ‘Hobs Bisay’, it is a literal translation to “bread with oil” and is a simple food tradition that the Maltese love. This is usually served with thick crusty bread but obviously that’s not really an option on low carb! However, it is equally delicious served on a chaffle or a slice of low carb bread or indeed eaten straight from the bowl with a spoon! The taste of a summer barbecue in a bowl!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tins tuna (in olive oil, brine or spring water)
- 1 can of butter beans
- 2-3 fresh, firm tomatoes or a large handful of cherry tomatoes
- 1/2 large white onion
- 1 tablespoon capers
- Handful of pitted green and black olives (around 12-15)
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Few grinds of black pepper
- Tomato puree to taste
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Chop the onion, tomatoes and olives into small chunks approx 1cm.
- 2 Put in a large mixing bowl and add the drained butter beans, capers and finely chopped garlic.
- 3 Add the drained tins of tuna (feel free to tip the oil in too if you are using tuna in olive oil).
- 4 Add 1/2 teaspoon of salt and a few good grinds of black pepper.
- 5 Add 2 tablespoons of tomato purée or more to taste.
- 6 Pour over liberal amounts of olive oil and combine well.
- 7 The taste develops when left to sit for a while, so aim to prepare earlier and then leave for 4-6 hours to sit and chill in the fridge.
- 8 Serve on a chaffle that has been coated in more tomato purée and olive oil - delicious!

If you are not a fan of tinned tuna, this would also taste lovely with feta cheese or even chopped up corned beef (just don’t tell Chas!).



Fettuccini Carbonara

Serves 4

A warm, creamy sauce of eggs, bacon and cream, well combined with a pasta alternative of your choice. When my husband and I first lived together, I would request he make this dish time and time again, and there's no reason I can't still enjoy it whilst eating low carb – just exchange the starchy pasta with a low carb alternative or even spiralized courgette or buttered cabbage strips – and you are good to go!

INGREDIENTS

- 6 eggs
- 2 packets of smoked streaky bacon
- 70g grated Parmesan
- Black pepper
- Salt to taste
- 2 tbsp butter
- 300ml double cream
- 1 lemon
- 1-2 packets dried pasta. I prefer this with mung bean fettuccini from Aldi, but soy spaghetti would also work or even spiralised courgette

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Grate a whole lemon rind and set aside.
- 2 Cook the bacon – grill, bake or fry it (keep the cooking liquid).
- 3 Beat the eggs and stir in the cream. Add the chopped butter and Parmesan cheese.
- 4 Stir until well combined.
- 5 Chop the bacon into small pieces and add to the mixture with any of the leftover cooking juices.
- 6 Add salt and pepper.
- 7 Cook the pasta as per the instructions on the box.
- 8 Drain the pasta, do not rinse.
- 9 Return the pasta to the pan and place on lowest heat.
- 10 Mix the lemon rind into the wet mixture.
- 11 Tip the mixture into the pan of drained pasta.
- 12 Stir once and turn off the heat.
- 13 Keep stirring until the mixture reaches a thick gloopy consistency.

Serve immediately. Grate fresh Parmesan over the dish and enjoy.

You can also add petit pois or peas to the cooking pasta to serve combined with the sauce or serve them separately on the side but this will bring up the carb count slightly.





Moussaka with Feta Topping

Serves 4

Back to some of my favourite ingredients – lamb and aubergine! This recipe does take a bit longer and involves a few more steps, but the result is well worth the work. The cinnamon and feta bring a beautiful flavour to the dish and there's enough for the whole family!

INGREDIENTS

For the base:

- 3-4 large aubergines
- Olive oil, for brushing
- 1kg lamb mince
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 4 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1½ tbsp dried mixed herbs
- 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes

For the topping

- 2 large eggs
- 500g Greek yogurt
- 200g feta, crumbled
- 25g finely grated Parmesan

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/fan200°C/gas 7. Thinly slice the aubergines diagonally, brush on 1 side with a little oil and lay on large baking trays. Roast in the oven for 20 minutes, turning halfway and brushing with more oil, until tender and turning golden. Set aside in a bowl.
- 2 Reduce the oven temperature to 200°C fan180°C/gas 6.
- 3 Meanwhile, heat a large casserole or deep, wide frying pan over a high heat. When hot, add the mince and cook, breaking up with a spoon, for 5 minutes. Stir in the onions and garlic and cook for a further 5 minutes, until the meat has browned and the onions have softened.
- 4 Add the tomato purée, cinnamon and mixed herbs to the mince and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Stir in the chopped tomatoes, half-fill 1 can with water and rinse out into the pan. Season and simmer rapidly for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid has evaporated.
- 5 Meanwhile, make the topping. Mix the eggs into the yogurt, until combined. Stir in the feta and season well with black pepper.
- 6 Layer up the moussaka. Start with a layer of the mince in a deep, large Pyrex dish or similar. Then follow with layers of aubergine and repeat until all the ingredients are used. Divide the yogurt mixture between them, spreading evenly on top of the aubergines. Sprinkle each with the Parmesan.
- 7 Cook for 35-40 minutes, until piping hot and golden – cover with foil if the top is looking too brown.

Divide between plates and serve alone or with a side salad.

Soy Spaghetti with Meatballs

Serves 4 - 6

Doesn't everyone love spaghetti and meatballs? Such a simple dish but full of rich flavours – the longer you leave your sauce to simmer, the more delicious it will be. Obviously, standard wheat flour pasta is not an option here, but big supermarkets now stock alternative pastas made of soybean or mung bean, or you can always just pop your meatballs on a bed of roasted vegetables or spiralized courgette.

INGREDIENTS

- 500g beef mince
- 1 medium onion
- 1 egg
- ½ tsp Salt and 6 twists of pepper
- Butter
- 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
- 3 tablespoons tomato purée
- 2-3 cloves of garlic
- Olive oil
- 1 pack of alternative pasta (soybean or mung bean)

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Put beef and chopped onion in a large bowl.
- 2 Add salt and pepper and mix well. Add egg and mix again until well combined.
- 3 Take a small handful of the mix and roll in your palms to make an egg sized ball.
- 4 Repeat until all mixture is used.
- 5 Fry in a deep frying pan with butter until meatballs are browned.
- 6 Into the same frying pan, add 3tbsp olive oil. Add the chopped garlic and lightly cook through.
- 7 Add the tin of tomatoes and the tomato purée. Heat through. Add a pinch of salt.
- 8 If the sauce is a little tart, feel free to add a pinch or two of erythritol/xylitol.
- 9 Simmer for 10-15 minutes or until sauce thickens.
- 10 Bring a pan of water to the boil.
- 11 Add 1 tsp of salt to the boiling water.
- 12 Add 1 box of soybean spaghetti.
- 13 Cook for time as directed on pack.
- 14 Drain and serve.

Enjoy with a side of vegetables of your choice.
I love mine with roasted broccoli.



Stuffat Tal-Fenek

Serves 4

Another Maltese dish! Stuffat Tal-Fenek is Malta's national dish and the original recipe consists of rabbit braised with herbs and tomatoes. Luckily, it is just as delicious with chicken and swede alternatives. It can be made on the stove in a casserole dish or also works well in a slow cooker. Marinate the meat for as long as possible to achieve the richest flavour.

We are grateful for the support given to our project from Metabolic Health Malta. For more information about the work they do, see <https://metabolichealthmalta.com/>.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole chicken, skinned and cut into parts (or use a selection of parts such as thighs and drumsticks). Alternatively, you could use 2 skinned and jointed rabbits if available and your preference
- 2 finely chopped medium onions (or 1 large)
- 4 + 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 1/2 bottle of red wine - cheap and cheerful will suffice!
- Approx 250mls water
- 8 bay leaves
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 2 carrots, peeled and sliced
- 1 medium swede, peeled and roughly chopped into 2cm chunks
- 3 tablespoons tomato purée
- 4-5 tablespoons olive oil (lard would also work well)
- 1 tablespoon oregano or rosemary or thyme (all optional but will give greater depth of flavour)
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Marinate the chicken in the wine, 4 cloves of chopped garlic, and bay leaves. Cover and chill in the fridge. The longer you can make this stage, the better the taste - marinade overnight if possible!
- 2 Heat the olive oil in a casserole pot and sear the chicken on both sides (shaking off any excess liquid) until lightly browned. When done, set aside (do not dispose of the marinade liquid as you will need this again later).
- 3 Lower the heat and add the onion, stirring until browned, and then the bay leaves.
- 4 Add the 2 leftover cloves of chopped garlic (and herbs if using) and fry for a further minute or so.
- 5 Add the tin of chopped tomatoes and cook for around 5 minutes, gently stirring intermittently - you may need to turn the heat up a bit here.
- 6 Add the marinade liquid to the pot and heat until the mixture is boiling.
- 7 Add the seared chicken to the pot and top up with water (approx 250mls) so that the chicken is just covered.
- 8 Return to the boil and then simmer gently for 30 minutes with a lid on.
- 9 Add the carrots, swede and tomato purée and stir to ensure well combined and all contents are below the liquid level.
- 10 Simmer for a further 30 minutes and then remove the pot lid to allow the sauce to thicken up.
- 11 Check after about 15 minutes - the stew is ready when the chicken is coming off the bone, the swede is soft and the liquid has reduced.
- 12 Serve in a bowl as is, or with a side of roast celeriac or cauliflower mash or with a few slices of low carb bread to mop up the delicious juices!



Soca Pizza

**Serves 1 to 2 depending on appetite!
Make extra for lunch the next day.**

Soca pizza is a traditional nicoise street food that originated from the Genoa region of Italy and was brought to Southern France through Genoese immigrants. Essentially it is a base made of chickpea flour – not quite a pancake and not quite a crepe. The chickpea flour lends a slight nutty flavour. My recipe involves cooking on a baking tray but I admit sometimes it does get stuck so make sure your tray is very well greased (or use greaseproof paper). You can also cook the soca base in a skillet and the resulting “pancake” can then be topped and popped in the oven. You can also use the “pancakes” as a wrap or tortilla which makes for a quick and easy lunch.

If you have diabetes, consider using the fat head dough pizza base option instead which will have less effect on your blood sugar.

INGREDIENTS

Chickpea base

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 95g chickpea flour
- 235mls water
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder

Super easy pizza sauce

- 1 pack tomato passata
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- Garlic powder
- 1 tsp dried Italian seasoning or dried oregano

Toppings

- Cheese – cheddar or mozzarella (or a combination of both)
- Fresh chopped basil
- Chopped veggies of choice e.g. red onion and pepper
- Ham, bacon, prosciutto
- Anchovies
- Olives
- Ricotta cheese and spinach

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat the oven to 230C and brush a 35x20cm baking tray with oil (or use a sheet of greaseproof paper). Alternatively, you can use a large, round pizza tray.
- 2 In a medium bowl, mix together the oil, chickpea flour, water and seasonings. Whisk until completely smooth.
- 3 Pour the batter onto the baking tray and tilt to make sure the tray is evenly coated. Cook for 10 minutes until golden and slightly crisp. Remove from the oven but keep the oven hot.
- 4 Meanwhile, make the pizza sauce by mixing the ingredients in a saucepan and warming through. Spread on top of the soca base.
- 5 Place sliced or grated cheese over the sauce and scatter the toppings of your choice. Bake again for a further 5-10 minutes.
- 6 Cut into slices and enjoy!





Dragon Stew

Serves 4

An absolute school night staple at our house. So quick and easy and enjoyed by all, any leftovers can be refrigerated and served for lunches in the week. Don't ask me why we call it Dragon Stew? It was named to make my kids eat dinner and it worked! We told the kids that the sweetcorn kernels were like golden jewels that the dragon protected in its lair - amazing what parents come up with! Sweetcorn is medium carb so shouldn't be eaten frequently on the Freshwell plan - if you are aiming to keep your blood glucose low you may wish to substitute the sweetcorn with chopped green beans or another vegetable of your choice.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons lard (olive oil also fine)
- 650g of sausages - we like to use a combination of Bratwurst and Bockwurst but any high-quality sausage will work!
- One can of black beans in brine
- One can of reduced sugar baked beans in tomato sauce
- 285g can of sweetcorn kernels in water
- 2 teaspoons cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons xylitol or erythritol (optional, but adds a nice hint of sweetness to the smokiness)
- 2 teaspoons liquid smoke

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Slice sausages into 0.5 cm slices.
- 2 Add the lard to a large pan and heat.
- 3 Fry sausages until browned.
- 4 Add all remaining ingredients other than the sweetcorn.
- 5 Simmer on low heat for 10 minutes.
- 6 Add the tin of sweetcorn.
- 7 Simmer for 2 minutes.
- 8 All tinned ingredients can be added with their liquid. If the end result is too dry, then add water. If too wet, simmer for longer.

Enjoy served in a bowl with a topping of grated cheddar. If you want to avoid baked beans, then a can of butter beans and a good squeeze of tomato purée should work well as an alternative.

We buy Colgin natural liquid smoke from Amazon. It isn't particularly expensive and a little goes a long way. It's actually a really versatile ingredient to add smoky deliciousness to many a meal so comes well recommended!

Celeriac Mash

Serves 3-4 as a side or use as a topping for cottage or Shepherd's pie.

This is a great, lower carb option for mashed potato. Celeriac is an ugly looking vegetable but makes a delicious creamy mash when combined with cream and butter. It does have a slight onion/celery taste to it, which I like, but it might not be to everyone's taste – give it a go and see!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 celeriac
- 50- 100g of butter
- 100ml single cream
- 1 clove of minced garlic
- salt to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Peel the celeriac and cut into 2-3 cm chunks.
- 2 Place in a suitable size saucepan, cover with water and season with salt.
- 3 Bring to the boil and simmer for 15-20 minutes. The chunks will be cooked when a knife easily slices through them.
- 4 Drain the water and return the celeriac to the pan with the butter and mash until smooth. Add cream and garlic. Season to taste.



Calzone

Serves 2-3

Everyone loves pizza, and a calzone just wraps it all up in a convenient pocket of deliciousness! I enjoyed my first calzone in Venice many years ago, sitting alongside the Grand Canal sipping on a jug of house prosecco (before it became the popular and expensive fizz it is today!). The outer “dough” is made of a fathead dough mixture which can be rolled out and filled with your content of choice.

INGREDIENTS

- 170g grated mozzarella
- 4 tablespoons/55g cream cheese
- 6 tablespoons/50g coconut flour (use 55g flax meal if you don't like the hint of coconut flavour)
- **Filling options**
 - Meatballs in a tomato sauce (meat or Quorn would work) (see recipe for meatballs and spaghetti or buy ready made if you prefer)
 - Tuna with onion and red peppers
 - Ham, cheese and mushroom

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Melt the mozzarella and cream cheese in the microwave for 1 minute.
- 2 Mix and add the coconut flour. Stir until the dough is well combined.
- 3 Preheat the oven to 180C.
- 4 Roll out the dough thinly between two sheets of greaseproof paper.
- 5 Add the filling to the centre of the dough and top with cheese of your choice (cheddar and mozzarella both work well).
- 6 Fold over to make a pouch and seal the dough gently with your fingers.
- 7 Using a sharp knife poke some holes in the dough.
- 8 Bake for 18-20 mins or until golden brown and firm to touch.
- 9 Cool for a few minutes and enjoy whilst hot or place in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Enjoy with a side salad.



Garlic Yoghurt Dip

Serving size depends on the amount of yoghurt you use

I think this makes a lovely addition to falafel and hummus and is ridiculously easy to make. It is also a lovely side to have with lamb dishes or even as a dip for some low carb nachos.

INGREDIENTS

- Full fat Greek yoghurt
- Garlic powder

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Take half a large pot of full fat Greek yoghurt (around 250mls).
- 2 Add 1-2 tsp of garlic powder (depending on how strong you want the garlic flavour to be) and stir well. That's it!

Serve!



Barretta Bars

Makes around 12-15 bars

Who doesn't love a crunchy, nutty trail bar? Most offerings in the shops are highly processed with a dearth of ingredients including oats and sugar. This is my own healthier version that I am happy for my children to have in their lunchboxes. These are perfect when you need to grab something quickly on the go or as an emergency "pocket snack" when you are out on a long walk. I love to include some dried cranberries here, which are not strictly low carb - but they are the lowest carb of all the dried fruits. I choose an unsweetened variety that isn't coated with vegetable oil and I keep the amount low. Alternatively, you could use freeze dried berries or even some 85% dark chocolate shards broken off a large bar.

INGREDIENTS

- 500g of chopped nuts - I combine almonds, pecans and brazil nuts, but macadamias, hazelnuts or walnuts would also work well
- 60g pumpkin seeds
- 60g sunflower seeds
- 60g milled flaxseed
- 5 tablespoons of peanut or almond butter
- 1 large egg white or 2 small egg whites - whites separated and whisked
- 4 tablespoons erythritol or xylitol
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 120g 85% dark chocolate chunks, or dried unsweetened cranberries (or 50g freeze dried raspberries)

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180 C.
- 2 Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper - approximately 10x12 inches.
- 3 Chop the nuts and seeds in a food processor or grind with a mortar and pestle - leave some smaller chunks in place for texture.
- 4 Place the broken nuts and seeds into a bowl and combine with the rest of the dry ingredients including the dark chocolate or berries.
- 5 Add the whisked egg whites, vanilla extract and nut butter and combine well.
- 6 Tip into the baking tray and press down hard to compact the mixture. I use an additional piece of greaseproof paper on top so that the mixture doesn't get stuck to my hands!
- 7 Bake for 25 minutes or until starts to brown.
- 8 Remove from the oven and leave to cool down.
- 9 Only when the tray is completely cold should you aim to cut the bars as otherwise they are likely to break.
- 10 Use a knife and press firmly directly downwards to cut into bars. This makes around 15 bars depending on the size.
- 11 The bars store in an airtight container for up to a few weeks (but they probably won't last that long!).





Fudge Aubergine Brownies

Makes around 8 brownies depending on portion size.

It is nice to be able to enjoy a dessert or sweet treat every now and again, although even if low carb, they should be occasional. Remember the aim is to wean you off a sweet tooth – not just to swap sugar for a different crutch. These brownies are flourless and lovely and squidgy and you would never know that aubergine is included – and the vegetables must make them healthier right?!

INGREDIENTS

- 240g aubergine, cubed and keep skin on
- 80g butter
- 200g chocolate (80% +)
- Sweetener to taste (I suggest about 2 tbsp of erythritol or xylitol)
- 40g ground almonds
- 40g cacao or cocoa powder
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp baking powder

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Pre-heat oven to 180°C.
- 2 Into a pan place chopped aubergine and cover with water.
- 3 Bring to boil and then simmer until soft (about 5 minutes).
- 4 Pop a glass bowl over the boiling water and melt the butter and chocolate (you could also use a microwave for this step).
- 5 Drain water from aubergine (don't worry that they have shrunk!).
- 6 Transfer chocolate mix and aubergine to food processor / blender and blend until smooth.
- 7 Add in all the other dry ingredients (not the sweetener though or sugar) and blend until fully combined.
- 8 Taste the mix and add sweetener or sugar until you are happy with the sweetness.
- 9 Now add in eggs and continue to pulse until fully mixed.
- 10 Transfer to a brownie tin (greased) and bake on 180°C for 20-25 minutes until fully set and the top is slightly cracked.

Allow to cool and then transfer to a sealed container and eat within 3 days. You do not have to keep them in the fridge but if you do, the consistency will change. They will keep for up to 6 days in the refrigerator.

Butter Pecan Cheesecake

Makes one cheesecake with 6-8 portions.

Who doesn't love a good cheesecake to finish off a meal? Cheesecake is rather easy to adapt on a low carb diet – essentially you just need to make a base out of nuts rather than biscuits and replace sugar with a low carb alternative and you're done. This is a butter pecan cheesecake but you could tweak the fillings to suit you by adding lemon zest, cacao powder or raspberry puree etc – the options are endless.....

INGREDIENTS

Cheesecake crust

- 1 tbsp salted butter, melted
- 4 tbsp pecans, finely crushed
- ½ tbsp powdered erythritol
- Or use smashed up shortbread biscuits (see recipe)

Filling

- 4 tbsp butter
- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 4 tbsp powdered erythritol
- 2 tbsp milk or double cream
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- pecans, for garnishing

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat the oven to 175°C.
- 2 Grease a 4-inch (10 cm) springform pan with butter. Place melted butter, crushed pecans and erythritol in a small bowl. Stir with a fork to combine well. Use your fingers to press mixture into the bottom of the springform pan.
- 3 Place in oven to pre-bake for 6 minutes while you prepare the filling.
- 4 Place the butter in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Stirring often, heat until the butter foams up and brown (but not black!) flecks appear.
- 5 Remove from the heat and allow to cool a bit. This brown butter creates a caramel-like flavour to the cheesecake.
- 6 Place softened cream cheese, erythritol, almond milk or cream, egg and vanilla in a medium bowl.
- 7 Use a hand mixer to combine well.
- 8 Slowly add the browned butter and stir to combine. Pour mixture into pre-baked shell. Tent loosely with foil and bake for 30-35 minutes or until cheesecake is set and barely jiggles in the centre.
- 9 Remove from oven and allow to chill for 10 minutes then place in fridge to chill for at least 2 hours.



Shortbread Biscuits

Makes 12-15 biscuits depending on size

If you are craving a biscuit on your low carb lifestyle, this recipe might help. Although lacking the “crunch” of a standard sugar laden biscuit, these have a nice texture and definitely help to take away a craving. You can enjoy them plain or dip them in melted dark chocolate for some extra deliciousness. The biscuits can also be crunched up to make the base of a low carb cheesecake if you have any spare – but in all likelihood they will be gone before then!

INGREDIENTS

- 270g almond flour
- 45g erythritol
- 1 pinch of salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 70g unsalted butter, softened
- 1 large egg

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 150 C.
- 2 Add almond flour, erythritol, salt and vanilla extract to a mixing bowl and stir.
- 3 Add the butter and rub into the dry ingredients until fully combined.
- 4 Add the egg and mix well.
- 5 Take tablespoon sized amounts of mixture and roll into balls.
- 6 Press on to a baking sheet lined with greaseproof paper. Leave a gap between each biscuit as they will spread.
- 7 Bake for 15-25 minutes until the edges are browned.

These can be stored in an airtight container for up to 7 days.

As a special treat, melt some 85% dark chocolate in a bowl and dip the biscuits into it so they are half covered. Leave to set.



Fudge Popsicles

Makes 10

My kids love ice-cream so my aim was to come up with a slightly healthier option that would tempt them and not be full of oils or sugar – this recipe seems to do the trick! Ideally, use ice lolly moulds or silicone pop makers, but would work just as well being frozen in small pots or ramekins with a topping of crumbled nuts.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cans/800mls coconut milk
- 85g dark chocolate (minimum 85%)
- 25g cacao powder (cocoa powder will also work)
- 120g erythritol or xylitol– can use up to 140g if you prefer your fudgesicles sweeter
- 2-3 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tsp cinnamon (optional)
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg (optional)
- ¼ tsp salt

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Add coconut milk to a saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat.
- 2 Remove from heat and add chocolate and allow to melt.
- 3 Add cacao powder, erythritol, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. Mix until well combined and then set aside until reaches room temperature.
- 4 When cool, pour into lolly or popsicle moulds and freeze for 3-4 hours.

Freeze for up to 6 months.

To make these even more nutritious you can substitute 1 large avocado for ½ can of the coconut milk and blend it with the cooled mixture before pouring into moulds.



BONUS
Christmas
section



Christmas – To Be, or Not To Be?

Christmas comes but once a year, but what is the best way to navigate it food wise? Processed Christmas food is making it into our supermarkets earlier and earlier and it is now often on the shelves before Halloween is even over! Most of the time you are best to avoid it as much as you can in the weeks running up to Christmas – but what about the big day? Are you thinking of going off-piste?

When I first wrote this menu, I did get some criticism from people advising I' t's only one day – stop being a bah humbug - let people eat cake and be merry!'"

And in general – I agree with this notion. But before you rush in, please think carefully about the person that you are and the relationship you have with food. If you can eat everything you see for 48 hours and by the 27th December be back on a low carb diet, then no problem – go for it and enjoy. However, some people really don't like the way that processed carbohydrates make them feel (for some days/weeks afterwards) and some people know that they have addictive potential and going off-piste for only a day or two can send them into a downwards spiral that is hard to escape – cue falling off the wagon and feeling bad about yourself for the whole of January and more. If you want to stick to a low-carb Christmas, then I have put together a menu so that you can enjoy it alongside everyone else and have treats that will have other people's jealous eyes on them!

I would recommend that you start prepping early – get in the ingredients that you need and plan for your meals. Many of the sweet treats can be made in advance and frozen, seed crackers keep in an airtight container for 2-3 weeks, and flax rolls can be popped in the freezer and defrosted a few hours before use.

Be smug in the fact that you can eat delicious food that makes you feel good, gives you essential nutrients and won't leave you asleep on the sofa by 2pm with a wonky Christmas hat! Ho Ho Ho!



Festive LOW CARB MENU

TO START

Creamy Roasted Cauliflower Soup
or
Serrano Ham and Melon

MAINS

Roast Turkey
or
Low Carb Nut Roast

with Arrowroot Yorkshires, Silky Swede Mash, Festive Cabbage,
Nutty Balsamic Brussels and Pigs in Blankets

DESSERT

Non Figgy Pudding
or
Low Carb Buche De Noel

TO FINISH

Low Carb Mince Pies
or
Keto Cracker Shards with a variety of cheeses



Christmas RECIPES



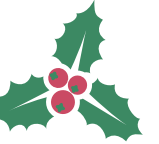
Creamy Roasted Cauliflower Soup

Serves 2-3

A hearty and warming soup – perfect for autumnal and winter days wrapped up in front of the fire. A great option for carnivores, omnivores, and vegetarians - so everyone can tuck in.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 head of cauliflower
- Olive oil
- 1-2 tsp garlic powder (or fresh garlic if preferred)
- 1 finely chopped onion
- 1 pint vegetable stock
- 2 tbsp butter
- Double cream (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Grated nutmeg and lemon juice (optional)



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180 degrees.
- 2 Start by breaking the cauliflower into florets and place in a large baking tray.
- 3 Liberally douse in olive oil and sprinkle garlic powder on top.
- 4 Toss in the baking tray until evenly coated.
- 5 Place in the oven for 25 minutes until starting to brown.
- 6 Remove and set aside.
- 7 Add olive oil to a large saucepan and sauté chopped onions until tender.
- 8 Add vegetable broth.
- 9 Add the roasted cauliflower and simmer on medium heat for about 20 minutes.
- 10 Add the butter and then blend the mixture until completely smooth.
- 11 Season lightly with grated nutmeg and a dash of lemon juice.
- 12 Serve in a bowl and add a swirl of cream to the top.

Any leftovers can be frozen and reheated on another day or stored in the fridge for up to 5 days.



Low Carb Nut Loaf

Serves 2-3

Christmas dinner is pretty straight forward for the carnivores and omnivores – a succulent joint of meat of your choosing, be it traditional turkey, goose or beef. If you are vegetarian or have vegetarian guests for dinner, then this low carb nut loaf might be your saviour!

INGREDIENTS

For the top and bottom of the loaf

- 50g butter
- 1 medium onion chopped
- 200g of chopped mixed nuts – for example almonds/hazelnuts/peanuts
- 100g whole pine nuts
- 3 tablespoons psyllium husk
- 2 large free range eggs beaten
- sea salt and pepper
- half teaspoon grated nutmeg

For the stuffing layer

- 130g grated carrot
- 70g broken walnuts
- 30g butter
- half teaspoon thyme
- half teaspoon marjoram
- half teaspoon parsley



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Line a 1lb loaf tin with greaseproof paper. Preheat oven to 180 degrees C.
- 2 Start by making the top and bottom of the loaf. Melt the butter and gently fry the onion until it is translucent.
- 3 Mix the dry ingredients (nuts, psyllium husk, nutmeg and seasoning). Then add the butter and onions and eggs and mix well.
- 4 Divide the mixture in half and spread half evenly into the bottom of the tin. Press down.
- 5 Make the stuffing mix. Melt the butter and mix into all the other ingredients. Add the stuffing layer to the loaf tin and press down. Then finish the loaf with the rest of the nut mix and press down.
- 6 Wrap the loaf tin in foil and bake for one hour. Then remove the foil and bake for a further 10 minutes.

Notes:

Chestnuts and Cashews are higher in carbs so are best avoided if you are trying to follow a tight low carb lifestyle.

Alternatives to the stuffing layer could be a layer of sliced mushrooms or a layer of slices of red pepper.



Nutty Balsamic Brussels

Serves 4-6

“What’s everyone’s favourite w(h)ine at Christmas? - “I don’t like Brussels!”” You either love them or hate them but they definitely have a place on the table at Christmas! The balsamic vinegar gives these Brussel sprouts a zing and walnuts replace higher carb chestnuts.

INGREDIENTS

- 500g Brussel sprouts – peel away outer leaves and halve (can be left whole if small)
- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil
- 100g smoked bacon lardons or chopped streaky bacon
- 50g broken walnuts
- 2tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 onions – finely chopped
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp salt

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Place the olive oil in a saucepan and heat until hot.
- 2 Add the bacon lardons or streaky bacon and fry until lightly browned.
- 3 Add the crushed walnuts and fry for 5 minutes then add the finely chopped onions.
- 4 Turn down the heat and cook slowly whilst stirring occasionally for around 30 minutes.
- 5 Bring a saucepan of water to the boil and add the salt followed by the halved Brussels.
- 6 Boil for 5 minutes until just tender.
- 7 Drain the Brussels and stir through the bacon and walnut mixture.
- 8 Add the butter and the balsamic vinegar and season with salt and pepper to taste.
- 9 Serve immediately or can be reheated in the pan later.

Festive Cabbage

Serves 4

I always look forward to seeing beautiful, red, shiny cabbage on my plate at Christmas. To make it low carb, all you need to do is change the sugar to erythritol or xylitol (or just leave it out completely) and you're done!

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp ghee or unsalted butter
- ½ small red cabbage thinly sliced
- 1 medium red onion sliced
- 60ml apple cider vinegar
- 30ml water
- 2 tsp erythritol or 1 tsp xylitol (optional)
- Salt and black pepper to taste



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Add the ghee or butter to a large saucepan and heat until melted.
- 2 Add the onion and stir until softened – approx 4-5 minutes.
- 3 Add the cabbage, vinegar, water and erythritol to the saucepan and stir until the cabbage is shiny.
- 4 Add a pinch of salt and a few grinds of black pepper to taste and again combine well.
- 5 Reduce heat and cover.
- 6 Simmer for approximately an hour, stirring occasionally.
- 7 When the cabbage is tender, remove from the heat and serve.

Can be stored in the fridge for approximately 5 days.





Silky Swede Mash

Serves 4

Does mash belong on a plate of roast dinner? Some say yes, some say no, and I stand on the fence!

This mash makes a good side dish in exchange for roast potatoes, and the recipe can also be used as a topping for cottage or shepherd's pie. Any leftovers could be used to make Bubble and Squeak on boxing day and beyond.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium swede peeled
- 50g unsalted butter melted
- Splash of cream or milk (optional)
- ½ tsp salt
- Black pepper



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Chop the peeled swede into 1 inch chunks and place in a saucepan.
- 2 Cover with water.
- 3 Add the salt and cover with a lid.
- 4 Cook on high heat until the water boils.
- 5 Once the water is boiling, reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes until the swede is tender.
- 6 Increase the heat and remove the lid and boil for a final 5 minutes until the swede is soft and the liquid has reduced.
- 7 Remove from the heat and mash the swede until smooth (I sometimes use a hand blender here to make the result extra smooth).
- 8 Add melted butter and a splash of cream or milk if desired (optional).
- 9 Combine well and season with salt and pepper to serve.



Arrowroot Yorkshires

Makes 2 puddings

A good Yorkshire pudding is a fine thing indeed and these are no exception. You won't believe how puffy they are when you finally take them out of the oven but remember – no peeking before as opening the oven too soon might cause them to deflate. No-one at the table will know that they aren't eating the traditional thing and they might even comment that these are the most delicious Yorkshire puddings they have ever tasted – I won't tell if you don't!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 egg (weigh)
- Same weight double cream
- Same weight arrowroot powder
- Pinch of salt
- Butter/Lard or olive oil for greasing the tin



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 200C.
- 2 Beat egg and cream together.
- 3 Stand mixture for 10 minutes.
- 4 Add arrowroot and whisk thoroughly – stand for 1 hour.
- 5 Place knob of lard/butter or olive oil in pudding tin and heat up in oven.
- 6 Pour mixture into HOT smoking oil and cook for 20-25 minutes.

Low Carb Buche De Noel

Serves 8

Today, a Yule Log is still a Christmas tradition in some cultures – a large log is traditionally burned in the fireplace on Christmas Eve. Luckily, it's also a tasty chocolate dessert and this low carb option hits the spot. The rolling is a bit tricky but you can cover a lot of flaws with the chocolate cream topping!

INGREDIENTS

For the sponge:

- 4 medium eggs – separated into yolks and whites
- 3 oz almond flour or ground almonds
- 1 oz cocoa (or cacao) powder
- 3 tbsp milk (dairy or non dairy if you prefer)
- 3 tbsp erythritol
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp vanilla extract

For the filling:

- 175mls thick double cream
- 1 tbsp erythritol
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ cup of fresh or defrosted frozen raspberries or cherries (optional)

For the coating (optional)

- 175mls thick double cream
- 180g shaved dark chocolate (minimum 85% cocoa)
- 2 tsp vanilla extract

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200 C.
- 2 Line a shallow baking sheet with greaseproof paper (approx 30 x 20cm).
- 3 Place the egg yolks in a bowl and add the sifted cocoa or cacao powder.
- 4 Add the almond flour, erythritol, milk, baking powder and vanilla essence.
- 5 Mix thoroughly.
- 6 Beat the egg whites until they form stiff peaks (can be done by hand or with an electric beater).
- 7 Add 2 tbsp of beaten egg whites to the flour mixture and beat well.
- 8 Then add the remaining egg whites and fold in gently with a spoon.
- 9 Pour the mixture into the baking tray and spread evenly until approx ½ cm thick.
- 10 Bake in the oven for around 8-10 minutes until the firm is just firm to touch, Do not over cook!
- 11 When cooked, remove from the oven and turn the sponge out on to a tea towel (lining the long side up against the long edge of the towel).
- 12 Use the tea towel to roll up the sponge into a tight cylinder (be careful not to wrap the towel inside the sponge – this can be a bit tricky!).
- 13 Leave to cool with the edge facing downwards to keep its shape.
- 14 To make the chocolate coating, either grate or use a peeler to make around 2tbsp of chocolate shavings.
- 15 Put the shavings in a bowl and place in the fridge.
- 16 Break the remaining chocolate into pieces and place in a glass bowl.
- 17 Warm the cream and vanilla essence in a small saucepan over medium heat.
- 18 When steaming (not boiling), pour over the broken chocolate.
- 19 Stir until melted and whisk until smooth.
- 20 Place the chocolate mixture in the fridge to cool.
- 21 Whip the filling cream until firm and then add the vanilla essence and erythritol.
- 22 When the sponge is cool, carefully unroll it on to a piece of greaseproof paper.
- 23 Spread the filling cream evenly over the surface of the sponge leaving a 2cm border around all the edges.
- 24 Sprinkle the raspberries or cherries (if using) over the cream filling, breaking them up with your fingers if large.

- 25 Use the greaseproof paper to roll the sponge back into a long cylinder shape - again a bit fiddly! Aim for the seal to slightly overlap to stop the cream coming out.
- 26 Place on a serving tray with the seam underneath.
- 27 Remove the chocolate coating from the fridge and spoon over the sponge roll. For extra artistic talent use a palette knife to create the illusion of bark!
- 28 Scatter the chocolate shavings over the top.
- 29 Place in the fridge to chill for 1-24 hours before serving.



Low Carb Kitchen Mince Pies

Makes 8 mince pies

Adapted from www.thelowcarbkitchen.co.uk – huge thanks to the lovely Emma Porter for giving her permission to use this recipe. You can purchase her full low carb Christmas eBook on her website and can also book for online cooking classes!

I first made these mince pies 2 years ago and was impressed with their flavour. It's worth spending an extra 5 minutes making little pastry stars for the top as it really sets them off. The reduced berry jam "mincemeat" is an excellent alternative to shop bought sugary mincemeat and means you can enjoy them without too much guilt as part of your low carb lifestyle!

INGREDIENTS

For the pastry:

- 100g ground almonds
- 30g coconut flour
- 20g erythritol
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 medium egg (plus 1 for glazing if you wish)
- 15g unsalted butter
- 15mls water

For the filling:

- 250g thawed frozen berries (raspberries, cherries, red currants etc – mixed summer fruits works well)
- ½ tsp orange zest
- ¼ tsp lemon zest
- 45g erythritol or xylitol (optional)
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1 tbsp chia seeds

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 180 C.
- 2 Grease a cupcake/tart baking tray.
- 3 Place the ground almonds, coconut flour, erythritol and cinnamon in a bowl and stir until well combined.
- 4 Beat the egg and add to the mixture – stir until forms coarse breadcrumbs.
- 5 Add the melted butter or coconut oil and combine well.
- 6 Slowly add the water until a dough forms.
- 7 Knead the dough into a ball and wrap it in clingfilm and chill in the fridge for a minimum of 20 minutes.
- 8 Strain the thawed berries from their liquid and place in a saucepan.
- 9 Use a high heat and bring to the boil stirring well for around 1 minute.
- 10 Reduce heat to a medium simmer.
- 11 Add the orange and lemon zest, mixed spice and erythritol (optional).
- 12 Stir until well combined and continue to simmer for 5-10 minutes until the mixture reaches a jam like consistency.



- 13 Remove from heat and add the chia seeds.
- 14 Leave for 20-30 minutes until cooled.
- 15 Remove the ball of dough from the fridge.
- 16 Divide the dough into 7 or 8 small balls (keep a little to the side if you wish to make pastry stars for the top).
- 17 Flatten the balls and press each into a cupcake mould.
- 18 Bake in the oven for around 10 minutes until slightly golden at the edges.
- 19 Remove from the oven and place 2 tsp of fruit filling into each pastry case.
- 20 If you wish, cut 8 small stars out of the remaining ends of pastry dough and place on the top of the tart.
- 21 If you wish to egg wash your pastry, then do so at this stage.
- 22 Place back in the oven for a further 10 minutes until the pastry is golden and the fruit jam is bubbling.
- 23 Enjoy with brandy butter or cream.

Can be stored in a sealed container in the fridge for up to 7 days.





Non Figgy Pudding

Serves 4

A bowl of warm stodgy Christmas Pudding is always a treat to finish off a delicious Christmas dinner. And luckily, although not an exact match, this low carb alternative is a clever substitution. Best of all it only takes 10 minutes to cook!

INGREDIENTS

- 100g ground almonds
- 100g carrots – peeled and grated (grated apple is an alternative if you prefer your pud a bit sweeter)
- 50g frozen blueberries
- 50g frozen cherries
- 1 medium egg whisked
- Small handful of pecans crushed (plus optional flaked almonds for a little crunch)
- 2 tbsp butter melted (and more to grease the pan)
- 1 tbsp thick double cream
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp cocoa or cacao powder (instant coffee granules would also work here)
- 2 tbsp erythritol or xylitol
- 2 tsp mixed spice
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- Zest of half an orange
- Slug of brandy (optional)



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Grease a glass Pyrex bowl with butter.
- 2 Place the grated carrot and chopped berries in a bowl (you could put the carrots and berries in a food processor to blitz if you prefer).
- 3 Mix the ground almonds, chopped pecans, flaked almonds (optional), baking powder, cocoa powder, erythritol, mixed spice and cinnamon in another bowl.
- 4 Add the melted butter to the dry ingredients along with the double cream and zests.
- 5 Stir well and add a slug of brandy if desired.
- 6 Combine well with the carrot/fruit mixture and pour into the greased Pyrex bowl.
- 7 Microwave at 700W for 6 minutes (adjust according to your microwave power).
- 8 Leave to cool for a few minutes and then turn out upside down on to a serving dish.
- 9 Cut into four portions and serve with lashings of cream!





Keto Cracker Shards

Makes approx 30 small crackers

It's essential to have a box of these crackers ready for Christmas and they can be made days ahead of time. Perfect to pair with cheese after dinner and also with pate, salmon or cured meats for a Boxing Day snack. Warm them up under the grill to return the crunch and store in an airtight tin.

INGREDIENTS

- 32g almond flour
- 50g sunflower seeds
- 50g pumpkin seeds
- 45g ground flaxseed
- 50g sesame seeds
- 1 tbsp psyllium husk
- 1 tsp fine sea salt
- ¼ cup coconut oil melted
- 235mls boiling water



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat the oven to 150 C.
- 2 Combine all the dry ingredients in a bowl.
- 3 Add the boiling water and melted coconut oil and mix well.
- 4 When a "ball of dough" forms, place it on a baking tray lined with greaseproof paper.
- 5 Place another sheet of greaseproof paper on top and use a rolling pin to flatten the dough evenly.
- 6 Remove the upper piece of greaseproof paper and bake in the oven for 45 minutes – checking frequently towards the end to avoid burning the seeds.
- 7 Turn off the oven and leave the crackers to cool in the oven (this is really important to retain the crunch!).
- 8 Once cool, break the crackers into pieces and serve with lashings of cheese, pate or salami.

Will store in a sealed container for up to 5 days. If they soften slightly, you can crisp them up by placing them under the grill for 5 minutes or so.



Flax Bread Rolls

Makes 4 buns

This is my favourite, go to, bread roll recipe. Perfect for Boxing Day turkey sandwiches! Make before the big day and store in the freezer, defrosting what you need.

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup coconut flour
- 2 tablespoons flaxseed meal
- 170g of grated mozzarella
- 2 tablespoons full fat cream cheese
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 tablespoon sesame or poppy seeds
- Salt to taste



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 190C.
- 2 Line a baking sheet with greaseproof paper.
- 3 In a bowl mix together the coconut flour, flaxseed, baking powder and salt and put aside.
- 4 In another bowl combine the grated mozzarella and cream cheese.
- 5 Microwave for 45 seconds, stir and continue to repeat until the cheeses are melted and well combined.
- 6 Beat the eggs and add to the dry ingredients.
- 7 Add the cheese mixture and mix until well combined.
- 8 Knead with your hands until a dough forms.
- 9 Divide the dough into 4 equal balls.
- 10 Place the balls on to the baking sheet and gently press down into a roll shape.
- 11 Top with sesame or poppy seeds.
- 12 Bake for 18 minutes or until lightly browned.
- 13 Allow to cool before slicing in half.

Can be stored in an airtight container for 2-3 days or frozen.

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Why donate to the Freshwell Low Carb Project?

We launched the Freshwell Low Carb Project because we wanted our patients to have **FREE** access to tools to help them adopt a low carb lifestyle. Five years later, we've developed an accredited structured educational programme that consists of a website, four meal planner books and an app which has had over 110,000 downloads. Our resources are signposted to patients by health care practitioners all over the UK.

It has taken a lot of time and work from ourselves and the development team. This work has been self-funded so far, but we are no longer in a position to continue to self-fund it any more. We feel really strongly that people should have access to credible low carb resources that are completely **FREE**, to help them improve their health. But ultimately, to continue this work, keep the project up and running and expand it, whilst keeping it free, we now need funds.

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Thank you!

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