

LEARNING MADE EASY



Keto Desserts

**for
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Eat your cake
and be keto too

Satisfy your sweet
tooth with more than
125 keto desserts

Treat yourself
without the guilt

**Rami Abrams
Vicky Abrams**

Authors of *Keto Diet For Dummies*

Founders of Tasteaholics.com, So Nourished,
and the Total Keto Diet app

Keto Desserts

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by Rami Abrams and Vicky Abrams,
authors of *Keto Diet For Dummies*

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Contents at a Glance

Introduction	1
Part 1: Understanding How Desserts Fit into Keto	5
CHAPTER 1: Brushing Up on the Basics	7
CHAPTER 2: Recognizing Why Desserts Are Important to Keto	23
CHAPTER 3: Identifying Common Keto Dessert Cooking Techniques	53
Part 2: Healthy and Guilt-Free Keto Desserts and Drinks	75
CHAPTER 4: Baking Keto Cakes — Moist and Delicious	77
CHAPTER 5: Going Sweet with Keto Candies	89
CHAPTER 6: Enjoying Keto Pies and Tarts	101
CHAPTER 7: Cooking Keto Cookies That Everyone Loves	113
CHAPTER 8: Staying Cool with Keto Ice Cream and Frozen Treats	127
CHAPTER 9: Baking Keto Mug, Dump, and Slow Cooker Cakes	137
CHAPTER 10: Blending Keto Shakes and Smoothies	149
CHAPTER 11: Keeping Warm with Keto Hot Drinks	163
CHAPTER 12: Serving Up Keto Cocktails	175
Part 3: Keto Desserts for Holidays and Special Occasions	187
CHAPTER 13: Showing Your Loved Ones How You Feel: Keto Valentine's Day Desserts	189
CHAPTER 14: Getting Spooky with Halloween Keto Fun	201
CHAPTER 15: Making Keto Desserts for Thanksgiving	211
CHAPTER 16: Crafting Keto Easter Treats	221
CHAPTER 17: Commemorating December Holidays the Keto Way	231
CHAPTER 18: Bringing In New Year's with a Keto Bang	243
Part 4: The Part of Tens	253
CHAPTER 19: Top Ten Most Common Keto Sweeteners	255
CHAPTER 20: Top Ten Resources for Keto Dessert Recipes	259
Appendix: Metric Conversion Guide	263
Index	267

Recipes at a Glance

🍷 Lemon Chiffon Cake	79
🍷 Citrus Olive Oil Cake.	80
🍷 Strawberry Almond Cake	81
🍷 New York Cheesecake	82
🍷 Butter Cake	83
🍷 Coconut Cake	84
🍷 Pistachio Pound Cake	85
🍷 Chocolate Cake with Chocolate Whipped Cream	87
Chocolate Pound Cake with Bacon Bourbon Frosting	88
🍷 Pecan Turtles.	91
🍷 Peanut Butter Fudge	92
🍷 Chewy Caramels	93
🍷 Coconut Candies	94
🍷 Peppermint Bark	96
🍷 Sea Salt Almond Bark	97
🍷 Coffee Gummies.	98
🍷 Strawberry Fat Bombs.	99
🍷 Peanut Butter and Jelly Cups	100
🍷 Chocolate Cream Pie	103
🍷 Lemon Curd Pie	105
🍷 Strawberry Cream Pie	106
🍷 French Silk Pie.	107
🍷 Coconut Almond Tart	108
🍷 Peanut Butter Pie	109
🍷 Grasshopper Mousse Pie	110
🍷 No-Bake Cheesecake Pie.	111
🍷 Coconut Cream Pie	112
🍷 Chocolate Chip Cookies.	115
🍷 Coconut Shortbread Cookies	116
🍷 Raspberry Thumbprint Cookies.	117
🍷 Snickerdoodles	118
🍷 Chocolate Peanut Butter Cookies	120
🍷 Macadamia Cookies.	121
🍷 Lemon Sugar Cookies	122
🍷 Cinnamon "Sugar" Cookies.	123
🍷 Double Chocolate Cookies	124
🍷 Espresso Cookies	125

☞ Chocolate Chip Ice Cream	128
☞ Mint Chocolate Chip Ice Cream	129
☞ Easy Coconut Ice Cream	130
☞ Death By Chocolate Ice Cream	132
☞ Avocado Ice Cream	133
☞ Strawberry Yogurt Pops	134
☞ Mocha Latte Ice Cream Bar's	135
☞ Key Lime Pops	136
☞ Vanilla Mug Cake	139
☞ Chocolate Chip Mug Cake	140
☞ Berry Lemon Mug Cake	141
☞ Peanut Butter Chocolate Mug Cake	142
☞ Coconut Mug Cake	143
☞ Almond Butter Mug Cake	144
☞ Tahini Chocolate Mug Cake	145
☞ Pumpkin Dump Cake	146
☞ Slow Cooker Lava Cake	147
☞ Lemon Coconut Slow Cooker Cake	148
☞ Peanut Butter Chocolate Milkshake	151
☞ Almond Butter Shake	152
☞ Strawberry Shake	153
☞ Coconut Vanilla Shake	154
☞ Green Power Smoothie	156
☞ Cinnamon Vanilla Smoothie	157
☞ Strawberry Avocado Smoothie	158
☞ Mocha Smoothie	159
☞ Blueberry Cheesecake Smoothie	160
☞ Pineapple Kale Smoothie	161
☞ Turmeric Vanilla Power Coffee	165
☞ Vanilla Keto Coffee	166
☞ Hazelnut Keto Coffee	167
☞ Cinnamon Keto Latte	168
☞ Mocha Mint Latte	169
☞ Golden Milk Cappuccino	170
☞ Hot Buttered Rum	171
☞ Keto Hot Cocoa	172
☞ Mexican Hot Chocolate	173
☞ Coconut Cocoa	174
☞ Vanilla Vodka Mojito	177

☞ Orange Margarita	178
☞ Classic Gin Fizz	179
☞ Keto Long Island Iced Tea	180
☞ Frozen Mudslide	181
☞ Blueberry Cosmopolitan	182
☞ Cranberry Lemon Spritzer	183
☞ Strawberry Lime Martini	184
☞ Chocolate Latte Martini	185
☞ Red Velvet Doughnuts	191
☞ Peanut Butter Chocolate Hearts	192
☞ Orange Chocolate Fat Bombs	193
☞ Dark Chocolate Fudge	194
☞ Chocolate-Covered Strawberries	196
☞ Dark Chocolate Raspberry Cheesecake	197
☞ Raspberry Gummy Bears	198
☞ Strawberry Cheesecake Bites	199
☞ Strawberry Shortcakes	200
☞ Pumpkin Cookies	203
☞ Chocolate Chip Pumpkin Bars	205
☞ Candy Corn Cookies	207
☞ Spider Web Cupcakes	208
☞ Mummy Cookies	209
☞ Black and Orange Brownies	210
☞ Pumpkin Mousse	213
☞ Keto Chocolate Chip Cookie Pie	214
☞ Pecan Pie	215
☞ Pumpkin Crunch Cake	217
☞ Almond Cheesecake	218
☞ Chocolate Pecan Bars	219
☞ Lemon Raspberry Cheesecake	223
☞ Easter Egg Truffles	224
☞ Carrot Cake Cupcakes	225
☞ Sugar-Free Gelatin Fluff	226
☞ Tropical Carrot Cake	228
☞ Coconut Cupcakes	229
☞ Coconut Mousse Cups	230
☞ Gingerbread Roll Cake	233
☞ Eggnog Cheesecake Fat Bombs	234
☞ Low-Carb Fruitcake	235

🍪 Chocolate Peppermint Shortbread.....	236
🍪 Hazelnut Truffles	237
🍪 Cranberry Swirl Cheesecake.....	238
🍪 Chocolate Pots de Crème	239
🍪 Low-Carb Praline Cookies.....	241
🍪 Chocolate Rugelach	242
🍪 Champagne Cupcakes.....	244
🍪 Coconut Chocolate Bark	245
🍪 Espresso Rum Truffles.....	246
🍪 Coconut Squares	247
🍪 Crème Brulee	249
🍪 Raspberry Chocolate Cheesecake Bars	250
🍪 Almond Semifreddo	251

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
About This Book	1
Foolish Assumptions	3
Icons Used in This Book	3
Where to Go from Here	4
 PART 1: UNDERSTANDING HOW DESSERTS FIT INTO KETO	 5
CHAPTER 1: Brushing Up on the Basics	7
Understanding What the Keto Diet Is	7
Ketosis as an evolutionary development	8
Combating common objections	9
Realizing the Importance of Dessert	10
Making the Transition to the Low-Carb Lifestyle	11
Appreciating the effects of eating dessert	12
Integrating alcohol into your diet	13
Discovering a New Way of Cooking	13
Starting with restrictions	14
Exploring flour alternatives	15
Milking dairy replacements	15
Flavoring food with fat versus carbs	16
Cooking with grease	17
Enjoying All Types of Keto Desserts	18
Embracing Natural and Artificial Sweeteners	19
Our personal favorites	20
Dealing with pre-fab keto products	21
Discovering Other Resources	21
 CHAPTER 2: Recognizing Why Desserts Are Important to Keto	 23
Making Sustainable Diet Choices	24
Comparing crash dieting and sustainable eating	24
Dividing fat bombs and keto desserts	27
Making Desserts Social Again	29
Using sweets at social events to keep your diet on track	30
Introducing family and friends to keto	31

Overcoming Diet Obstacles	33
Outlining your reasons	34
Identifying your goals	34
Working with dietary restrictions	36
Dealing with carb cravings	39
Understanding and fighting side effects	40
Making the transition easier	43
Using social pressures positively	45
Understanding What Happens When You Eat Dessert	46
Understanding how the body reacts to a non-keto dessert	47
Seeing how your body reacts to a keto dessert	48
Pitting glycolysis against ketosis	49
Comprehending the role of intermittent fasting	49
Reconciling Alcohol and Keto	50
Understanding alcohol as a fourth macro	50
Classifying the types	51

CHAPTER 3: **Identifying Common Keto Dessert**

Cooking Techniques	53
Preparing Your Kitchen for Keto	54
Understanding your goal: Differentiating between net and total carbs	54
Finding carbs you don't have to count	55
Organizing a blended household	55
Purging all processed foods	57
Finding Flour Substitutes	61
Almond flour and almond meal	62
Coconut flour	62
Sunflower seed flour	63
Pumpkin seed flour	64
Psyllium husk	64
Selecting the Right Milk Replacements	64
Comparing Fat and Carbs: Where the Flavor Comes From	66
Looking closer at carb substitutes	67
How carbs and fat affect the body	70
Adding healthy fat into your diet	70
Classifying keto sweeteners	72
Avoiding non-sugar sweeteners	73
Fitting Pre-Fab Keto Products and Supplements into the Picture	73

PART 2: HEALTHY AND GUILT-FREE KETO	
DESSERTS AND DRINKS	75
CHAPTER 4: Baking Keto Cakes — Moist and Delicious	77
Creating Classic Cakes, Keto Style	77
Making Chocolate Cakes Keto	85
CHAPTER 5: Going Sweet with Keto Candies	89
Making Caramels and Fudge Candies	90
Trying Some Tasty and Quick Keto Candies	95
CHAPTER 6: Enjoying Keto Pies and Tarts	101
Baking Perfect Pies	102
Embracing No-Bake Pies	108
CHAPTER 7: Cooking Keto Cookies That Everyone Loves	113
Lining a Cookie Tray Correctly	113
Perfecting Cookie Storage	119
CHAPTER 8: Staying Cool with Keto Ice Cream and Frozen Treats	127
Going Machine-Free	127
Personalizing Your Ice Cream and Frozen Treats	131
CHAPTER 9: Baking Keto Mug, Dump, and Slow Cooker Cakes	137
Keeping Keto with Mug Cakes	138
Adding Dump and Slow Cooker Cakes to Your Keto Repertoire	145
CHAPTER 10: Blending Keto Shakes and Smoothies	149
Shaking Up Your Keto Diet with Shakes	150
Living Your Keto Life with Smoothies	155
CHAPTER 11: Keeping Warm with Keto Hot Drinks	163
Making Some Classic Keto Coffee Drinks	164
Adding Cocoa Recipes to Your Keto Repertoire	171
CHAPTER 12: Serving Up Keto Cocktails	175
Making Favorite Cocktails the Keto Way	176
Shaking Up Some Martinis	183

PART 3: KETO DESSERTS FOR HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS	187
CHAPTER 13: Showing Your Loved Ones How You Feel: Keto Valentine's Day Desserts	189
Emphasizing Nutrition on Valentine's Day.	190
Getting Fruity with Your Valentine's Day Treats	195
CHAPTER 14: Getting Spooky with Halloween Keto Fun	201
Discovering the Health Benefits of Pumpkin.	202
Having Fun with Halloween Baking	206
CHAPTER 15: Making Keto Desserts for Thanksgiving	211
Embracing Pie at Thanksgiving	212
Adding Nuts to Your Thanksgiving Keto Desserts	216
CHAPTER 16: Crafting Keto Easter Treats	221
Discovering Berries at Easter Time.	222
Adding Coconut to Your Easter Desserts.	227
CHAPTER 17: Commemorating December Holidays the Keto Way	231
Remembering Holiday Baking Traditions	232
Loving Christmas Cookies	240
CHAPTER 18: Bringing In New Year's with a Keto Bang	243
Gathering with Keto Desserts	243
Creating Some New Year's Eve Desserts	248
PART 4: THE PART OF TENS	253
CHAPTER 19: Top Ten Most Common Keto Sweeteners	255
Erythritol	256
Monk Fruit Extract.	256
Stevia.	256
Xylitol.	257
Truvia.	257
Sucralose	257
Splenda	258
Yacon Syrup	258
Aspartame	258
Saccharin	258

CHAPTER 20: Top Ten Resources for Keto Dessert Recipes	259
Tasteaholics and So Nourished	259
Low Carb Yum	260
FatForWeightLoss	260
Wellness Mama	260
Chocolate Covered Katie	261
Sugar-Free Londoner	261
Kalyn's Kitchen	261
Ditch the Carbs	262
Joy Filled Eats	262
Hey Keto Mama	262
APPENDIX: METRIC CONVERSION GUIDE	263
INDEX	267

Introduction

Welcome to the best part of low-carb dieting: desserts. The concept of keto-friendly desserts may seem counterintuitive, but that's only because you're used to thinking about sweets exclusively in terms of processed sugar. We're ready to introduce you to a whole world that includes how to lose weight, live healthier, and still be able to have desserts regularly.

In *Keto Desserts For Dummies*, we tell you about the physical, mental, and social aspects of dessert, because these cornerstones are all critical to living healthier in a sustainable way.

We firmly believe that knowledge is power, and we want to give you the freedom to go out and conquer desserts without sacrificing your health and weight loss momentum. No longer are sweets the exclusive domain of the cheat day: with this book, you can bring them into the everyday.

About This Book

One of the worst aspects of dieting is the pressure that can come from your friends, your family, social expectations, and even yourself. The best way to keep these pressures from affecting your diet goals is with knowledge and confidence, and we've found that they typically occur in that order.

Understanding how desserts fit into the ketogenic diet requires wrapping your mind around how the diet works as a biological process. Doing so helps you comprehend why certain ingredients are allowed and others are substituted. That knowledge forms the foundation of this book. Ketosis is a completely natural process your body has evolved to turn fat into energy: this works equally well with consumed fat (such as what you put in your mouth) and stored fat (for example, those few extra pounds you're tired of carrying around).

The standard American diet, or SAD — arguably the most appropriate acronym we've ever encountered — is primarily based on carbs, which the body converts into sugars. The thought that flavor comes from sugar has been ingrained in humankind's dietary thought processes for so long that many of us have lost sight

of the tremendous range of delectable tastes that fat can provide. We help you rediscover how to use those building blocks to fashion an effective, sustainable diet.

The key theme we want you to focus on in this book is sustainability. Whether you decide to stay on keto long term is up to you, but you should always approach eating in such a way that you can eat well long term without having adverse side effects.

Here is an overview of the main materials we cover in this book:

- » **The adverse effects of crash dieting:** Crash dieting, even if it uses ketosis as a mechanism, only hurts your overall health. You can certainly drop a lot of weight in a short period, but we're more interested in helping you lose weight and keep it off so that you're the healthiest version of yourself. Crash dieting practices rely on rigorous eating habits and dietary restrictions that are unsustainable. When they end, the weight often comes roaring back with a vengeance; sometimes, it even brings friends! We want to help you create a diet that has space for desserts at family reunions, work functions, and other social events — simply abstaining isn't usually a long-term solution. Our previous book, *Keto For Dummies*, includes sections on appetizers, entrees, and snacks. In this book, we fully explore desserts.
- » **Substitute ingredients for baking keto desserts:** Low-carb baking involves working with ingredients that typically fall into flour alternatives, sugar replacements, and dairy substitutes. We delve deeper into them all, explain them in plain English, and advise you how and when to use them.
- » **A plethora of recipes for every kind of dessert:** The majority of this book focuses on more than 150 recipes to help you start baking your way to keto yumminess. From cakes and cookies to pies and ice cream treats, we have you covered. We also include recipes you can use for holidays.

Here are a few other guidelines to keep in mind about the recipes in this book:

- » All butter is unsalted unless otherwise stated. Margarine isn't a suitable substitute for butter.
- » All eggs are large.
- » All salt is kosher.
- » All dry ingredient measurements are level.
- » All temperatures are Fahrenheit (see the appendix to convert Fahrenheit temperatures to Celsius).
- » All lemon and lime juice is freshly squeezed.

- » All Greek yogurt is full-fat yogurt.
- » All dark chocolate chips are unsweetened, no sugar added. Our go-to favorite for chocolate chips is Lily's Chocolate Chips. They're perfect for keto baking because they're sweetened with erythritol and stevia.
- » All protein powder is unflavored, sugar-free whey protein powder, no sugar added, low carb.

We have your back and want to help you overcome common hurdles. This handy guide sets you up for success with everything you need to know to begin making tasty keto desserts. We want you to work *with* your body, not against it!

Foolish Assumptions

We made the following assumptions about you when we were writing this book:

- » You have a basic understanding of keto, but perhaps not why desserts are so crucial to sustainable success.
- » You're going to face social pressures as part of your dieting journey, and these pressures often occur at events where sweets are present.
- » You have a basic understanding of how to bake and cook, but you have likely not explored keto dessert recipes.
- » You're open to trying new things and working with unfamiliar ingredients.
- » Your overall goal is a healthier you.

No matter who you are, you can find all sorts of helpful information here.

Icons Used in This Book

If you've flipped through this book at all, you've probably noticed little pictures, called icons, in the margins. Here's what they mean:



TIP

This icon indicates good advice and information that can help keep your baking on track.



WARNING

When we discuss something that might have special dietary considerations (such as a common allergen), we make a note of it with this icon.



REMEMBER

When we make a point or offer some information that we feel you should keep with you forever, we toss in this icon.

Where to Go from Here

This book is a reference, not a tutorial. You don't have to read it from Chapter 1 to the end if you just want to get a glimpse of the hobby before you get down to the basics. Just use the table of contents or index to find the topics that interest you and go from there. Start with your needs and interests.

If you're not sure how desserts can possibly fit into keto, start with Part 1. If you have a little more background in the diet, you may want to begin with the recipes in Part 2. If you have a holiday coming up and need a themed treat, Part 3 is going to be your (low-carb) bread and butter. Perhaps the chapter on additional resources (including sites designed around dietary restrictions or keto for kids) caught your fancy. Go ahead and skip around. That's what this book is for. You can also refer to the Cheat Sheet at www.dummies.com for more helpful advice that you can review whenever you need to.

1

Understanding How Desserts Fit into Keto

IN THIS PART . . .

Review how keto works as a natural metabolic process and how desserts fit into that picture, including how the diet works biologically to how to make the transition from a standard American diet to embracing ketosis.

Understand how dessert impacts your mental, physical, and social well-being. You don't have to skip desserts when you're on keto, and you wouldn't want to anyway.

Wrap your mind around the impact of alcohol on your diet and discover the right way and the wrong way to drink on keto. Knowing how alcohol impacts ketosis biologically helps you make the right decisions each time.

Find out how to prep your home for keto and conquer speed bumps that may get in the way by setting effective goals to give you the highest chance of success as well as common-sense strategies for preparing your kitchen if you have roommates or family members who won't be joining you.

Explore dairy, flour, and sugar alternatives and how their unique properties affect baking. We've designed these recipes to imitate the effects that you would see with wheat flour and sugar.

Replace tasty carbs with delectable fats while losing none of the flavor. In fact, as your palate recovers from a constant carb overload, you'll likely develop a deeper appreciation for more complex tastes.

- » Grasping what keto is
- » Appreciating dessert's role in keto
- » Identifying which ingredients to use in keto
- » Choosing the right sweetener
- » Finding more keto dessert resources

Chapter 1

Brushing Up on the Basics

Keto continues to be one of the most popular diets worldwide, and it's not showing any signs of slowing down. Although many people try it because of the fantastic weight-loss benefits it offers, just as many (if not more) people want to be on it because of how healthy the lifestyle is. That's the reason we've stayed on keto long term: we've never felt better in our lives. That's also fundamentally different from most diets, which focus on transitioning you into the body you want and then assuming you'll transition back to the way you ate before.

The keto diet is a sustainable lifestyle choice, incorporating all elements of a meal, including dessert. That concept may seem ironic because the one thing most people know about keto is that you have to avoid sugar. When you change your eating style, however, you also change how you cook. This chapter serves as your jumping-off point to see how simple enjoying delicious sweets can be while staying low-carb.

Understanding What the Keto Diet Is

The ketogenic diet is an entirely different approach toward eating than the standard American diet (SAD) currently recommends. SAD (an ironically appropriate acronym) focuses on carbohydrates as the foundation of a proper diet, with

55 percent of calories sourced from carbs, 30 percent from fat, and 15 percent from protein. When this mix is present, your body runs off of a metabolic process called *glycolysis*, where virtually all food is converted into glucose (blood sugar) for fuel. Anything you've consumed that the body doesn't immediately need is transformed into love handles, muffin tops, back rolls, and any other term used to describe stored fat.

A low-carb diet, on the other hand, is based on 65 to 75 percent of your daily calories coming from fat, 20 to 30 percent from protein, and a minuscule 5 to 10 percent from carbohydrates. When you eat like this, your body runs off a metabolic process called *ketosis*, where your body converts nearly all calories into ketone bodies, which are used for fuel. If you eat too much fat, you'll simply excrete the excess ketones through your urine.

Many people are surprised when they discover that ketosis is a completely natural metabolic process with roots in humankind's evolutionary history. The human race probably wouldn't have survived if it just had glycolysis: the ketogenic diet was what saw the human species through the hunter-gatherer stage. Although the way people eat has changed drastically since those days, the building blocks of health haven't. You'll hear many objections to keto, and we've found the best way to address these arguments is with facts, which we discuss in the following sections.

Ketosis as an evolutionary development

The basis of a ketogenic diet is a core part of human evolution. Think back a few thousand years: before refrigeration, before modern farming, before any kind of agricultural cultivation — what was life like? Humanity's hunter-gatherer ancestors subsisted off what the land provided. Common sources of carbs were fresh fruits and vegetables; they didn't have many ways to preserve these items, so they ate them whenever they were available. Gorging was a consistent way of life.

Fruits and vegetables were only available for part of the year, and it wasn't uncommon to go for significant periods without large meals. Humanity's Neolithic ancestors would gorge on carbs: the body would use what it needed at the moment and then store any additional calories as fat. That was the only real pantry they had, so it makes sense that this is how people evolved to stock it.

After a few hours, their bodies burned through the glucose they'd just consumed and began to use its glycogen stores. *Glycogen* is a more stable form of blood sugar that's stored in the muscles and liver. Depending on their activity level, they could

exhaust it within a day, and the body knew it had to keep going using its stored fat. At this point, the primary metabolic pathway switched to ketosis, which is the primary way fat is converted into energy.

When they made a kill, they would gorge themselves. Massive amounts of carbs or protein would immediately switch the body back to glycolysis so that fat could be created and stored easily. When they burned through that, the body slowly transitioned back to ketosis.

Combating common objections

You may hear objections to how “natural” ketosis is — the argument generally goes that if ketosis is so natural, why does it take days to transition into it while the body can switch back to glycolysis in a single meal? That’s where we need to mention a serious, potentially deadly condition known as *ketoacidosis* that occurs when high levels of glucose and high levels of ketones are both simultaneously present in the bloodstream. It can have severe negative repercussions, including death. Chapter 2 explains this condition in greater detail.

The body precludes ketoacidosis by burning through all the glucose in your system before switching to the process that generates ketones. This evolutionary masterpiece is what keeps ketoacidosis from being a common experience; in fact, it’s exceedingly rare. The population most at risk for this is comprised of people who have Type 1 diabetes (T1D). With this type of diabetes, the pancreas makes little or no insulin, which is required to drive glucose out of the bloodstream and into individual cells. If the body switches over to ketosis and begins generating ketones, this condition is possible.

Your digestive system naturally prefers to utilize consumed energy (for instance, food in your stomach) before resorting to stored energy, which may not seem particularly useful in the western world of today where food is readily available. Still, it was developed as an evolutionary survival mechanism that kept the fat storage tanks topped off as much as possible while telling you to continue eating regularly, even if you had excess fat.

One of the benefits of the ketogenic diet is that it keeps your body trained to consume fat for energy. When dietary fat is burned through, your digestive system automatically switches over to stored fat without a hitch. One of the most common praises we hear from keto dieters is their steady energy state throughout the day: it isn’t uncommon to skip meals without experiencing any drop in energy. Your body is consistently satiated with fats and continues to burn them at a consistent rate.

THE HISTORY OF KETO

The ketogenic diet has been around for more than a century when doctors originally created it as a medical treatment. Although its original purpose was treating epileptic seizures — something it's still used for today — one of the surprising side effects was sustainable weight loss, which led to its current popularity.

Unlike many fad diets, keto has been rigorously tested by doctors and scientists, with thousands of peer-reviewed studies examining the short-, medium-, and long-term effects on both adults and children. Historically, the harshest criticism of keto has been that in a carb-obsessed society it can be difficult to adhere to.

Conversely, the benefits are numerous and well-documented. Weight loss, a decrease in insulin resistance, more consistent mental clarity, and energy throughout the day are all reasons to at least give keto a try. Quite a few low-carb advocates stay on keto long term, while many cycle on and off of it periodically. It's a flexible diet that works *with* your body, not against it. Our life wouldn't be the same without it!

Realizing the Importance of Dessert

Because carbs are out on the keto diet, you may presume that you have to avoid desserts to stay on keto. Because of this presumption, many people approach low-carb eating as if it were a crash diet: they'll make any necessary sacrifice for a brief period to lose weight, and then go back to their regular way of eating. This plan of attack will work for a short time, but it isn't the best way to approach the ketogenic diet.



REMEMBER

The benefits of the ketogenic diet extend far beyond simple weight loss. We firmly believe that keto is a lifestyle choice: it's something we've lived for years, and we couldn't be more pleased with our decision. Mental clarity, steady energy, and the ideal weight for our body types are some of the benefits we've noticed. We also aren't okay living without desserts, so one of our goals for the recipes in this book was a robust and varied sweets menu. We were able to cobble together a subpar recipe with the right macros and call it dessert, but we didn't want to have to choke it down or force our taste buds to accept something less on a regular basis. We wanted gourmet-level treats, and we didn't stop until we found them.

One of the things we hate most is seeing people go through unhealthy diet practices. *Crash dieting* is one of the most common, and is essentially an attitude; it isn't limited to a specific named diet, and we even see people approach low-carb eating in this way. This happens when someone drastically changes their eating

patterns and dietary habits for a short period with a specific goal in mind (typically it's dropping a few pounds before an event), but plan to go back to their "normal" way of eating after they've achieved their goal. Crash dieting can have serious negative repercussions not only for your physical health, but also your mental and emotional well-being, especially if it involves severely undereating calories, macronutrients, and micronutrients.

Dessert is a critical component of making a sustainable lifestyle change. You're virtually cutting out an entire group of macronutrients, so you shouldn't have to cut courses out as well. Appetizers, entrees, desserts, and snacks are all part of a balanced dietary approach, and we've found that with keto. Remember that this isn't a competition to see who can torture or deprive themselves the most or a contest to see whether you can muscle your way through an unpleasant experience. Keto should always be something that directly contributes to your overall health.

Furthermore, eating isn't always about you. The majority of social events involve some kind of food, and treats are often filled with carbs you're not allowed to touch. Technically, never attending social events or choosing not to eat at them are options, but they're never choices we would want (or expect!) someone to pick. One of our motivations for creating recipes that are so good you can't tell them from the real thing is that we're very active socially and we weren't about to give that up.

Chapter 2 provides some strategies you can use when focusing on desserts and social gatherings and also shares some of our insights for relying on your support system as you continue on your keto journey.

Making the Transition to the Low-Carb Lifestyle

Mastering a new style of cooking can take a bit of effort, and it isn't a great idea to do so while you're weaning yourself off carbs at the same time. We recommend beginning to experiment with recipes a few weeks before your official diet start date. Find what works for you, create a list of favorite recipes, and you'll be good to go starting on day one.

This pre-diet experimentation period can also be the best time to introduce family and friends to keto. You're still eating the same way they are, and introducing a keto-approved dessert that everyone can enjoy is an excellent way to kick off the conversation.

Because of the tremendous difference between SAD and a low-carb approach, the first transition can be a bit difficult. Slowly increasing your fat intake while decreasing your carbs can make easing into keto much easier. Trying out new recipes to build your top ten list is a great start. Eliminating sugary treats and carb-laden snacks should be your next step: if you do this while you can still eat carbs for your main dishes, it won't be as much of a shock to your system when you make the actual switch.

Having a plan extends beyond a list of recipes, however. We go into more depth on creating a plan in Chapter 2, but here are some quick tips to get you started:

- » **Write down your reasons and goals.** Doing so can help provide the motivation you need to make such a significant change.
- » **Identify obstacles you'll likely face.** They can include people, events, or anything else.
- » **Identify your support structure.** Take the time to write down a list of the people you can call for advice, feedback, or even encouragement when cravings get tough.
- » **Think about what specific things you need to do and when.** Wrapping your mind around your situation permits you to make the right choices at the right time, which is critical to your success.

We also cover how to evaluate the contents of your current pantry, cabinets, refrigerator, and freezer, and then select replacement ingredients that work for you. If your entire household isn't making the switch, you need to keep a few special considerations in mind that can help keep stress levels low and success rates high.

You'll encounter a few "exceptions" on keto: situations where you step outside of the bounds of the diet, such as cheat meals or consuming alcohol. Knowing how to approach these scenarios allows you to enjoy their benefits and get back on track with keto as quickly as possible.

Appreciating the effects of eating dessert

If your body reacts differently to eating carbs and eating fat, it isn't any surprise that this variation extends to the world of desserts. How your digestive system treats these two macros isn't incredibly complex. Still, taking into account factors like cheat meals, whether your body is fat-adapted or not, and how intermittent fasting fits into the picture does complicate the keto diet a bit more.