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tooth with more than
125 keto desserts

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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

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

for
dummies
A Wiley Brand

Keto Desserts For Dummies®

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To view this book's Cheat Sheet, simply go to www.dummies.com and search for “Keto Desserts For Dummies Cheat Sheet” in the Search box.

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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.

Part 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.

Chapter 1

Brushing Up on the Basics

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » 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
-

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.

As always, the more information you have, the better the decisions you can make with it. For example, cheat meals aren't necessarily bad, and they can even be necessary in certain situations. They do have specific effects on your diet though, and knowing what you're dealing with can help minimize any dietary distractions or pauses you can experience. [Chapter 2](#) works through these issues in more detail.

Integrating alcohol into your diet

We want to help you make sustainable lifestyle choices. If you drink on occasion, you don't have to give that up; keto can still work with alcohol. However, like so many other things, it all depends on how you do it. Knowing which beers, liquors, wines, and mixers work and which ones you should avoid at all costs is crucial knowledge, especially if you're going to be in a social setting where you won't be mixing your own drinks.

Another significant consideration is how alcohol impacts your diet. The body treats alcohol like a fourth macronutrient (the first three being fat, protein, and carbohydrates), and the way your body prioritizes metabolism is fundamentally different with and without alcohol, which can have a significant negative impact on your weight-loss inertia if you don't handle drinking correctly. We dig into all of this in [Chapter 2](#).

Discovering a New Way of Cooking

Adopting a well-rounded approach to ketogenic dieting does take some work, and it's a bit more difficult in some areas than others. For centuries, baking revolved around wheat flour and, with a few notable exceptions, yeast that required sugar to transform batter into a light, delicious product. People on the keto diet have to do without those ingredients, so certain adjustments are necessary. The good news is that alternate ingredients and substitute approaches have never been more widely available than they are today. With a little bit of work, you can transform your kitchen into a low-carb bakery that consistently produces some of the best dishes you've ever eaten.

A successful keto journey begins with understanding what you are and aren't allowed to eat. Contrary to what some may say, not all carbs are off-limits. Entire classes of carbs are both allowed and encouraged: knowing what these are and how they fit into your daily macros will make all the difference between a pleasant or unpleasant experience.

NET CARBS AND THE KETO DIET

Throughout the recipes in this book, you may see the term *net carbohydrates* or *net carbs* being used, especially in the nutritional analyses. Net carbs are what you get when you subtract any dietary fiber and sugar alcohols from the total carb count. Dietary fiber and sugar alcohols can be subtracted because they pass through the body mostly intact, having little to no effect on blood glucose. In fact, the body passes many sugar alcohols untouched, excreting them entirely. For this reason, many people can and do safely ignore the addition of sugar alcohols in their sugar-free desserts.

Note that not all sugar alcohols are created equal! Our go-to sweetener in many recipes is a sugar alcohol named erythritol. It can be found in lots of prepackaged keto desserts and is generally tolerated by most people. It has no effect on blood glucose, which is helpful to diabetics or anyone watching their sugars.

Conversely, maltitol is a sugar alcohol that actually spikes blood glucose in most people. We recommend avoiding it in baking and when purchasing snacks at your grocery store. Always read the ingredients and do your research before buying a new product.

Changing your entire approach to eating comes with a few special considerations that we briefly cover in the next several sections. As you introduce new foods into your diet, pay special attention to any that may be an allergen or intolerance. Don't get discouraged if you find foods you can't eat; there are plenty of alternatives, particularly when it comes to flour, dairy, and cooking oils.

Starting with restrictions

Your diet options will change considerably after you're on keto, and knowing whether you're dealing with food allergies or intolerances is a critical place to start. Check with your doctor and potentially an allergist/immunologist if you have any concerns at all.

Some of the more common potential allergens you'll encounter on keto are as follows:

- » Almonds
- » Cashews
- » Coconut
- » Dairy
- » Soy



TIP

If you haven't had any experience with these potential allergens, try a couple of recipes that feature them as main ingredients. Do this one at a time, not only because you want to isolate what can cause any potential symptoms, but also because as creative as we are in the kitchen, matching all those ingredients in a single dish would be a culinary masterpiece, indeed.



WARNING

If you have any reactions, stop eating the dish immediately and speak with your doctor. If you don't have a reaction, then use those ingredients if you like the way they taste. If you don't enjoy their flavor, you can find a substitute, many of which we cover in [Chapter 3](#).

Exploring flour alternatives

Making a variety of desserts usually means you're going to be baking. If you're baking, you'll need to use flour. Traditional wheat flour is loaded with carbs, so that's out, but we're happy to report that you can use numerous alternatives that are available. The challenge lies in recreating the texture and consistency you want to have in your dessert, which can vary, so you likely won't find one replacement flour that does it all, simply because different ingredients have different properties.

[Chapter 3](#) discusses seven replacement options, outlining their behavior, texture, consistency, and their use in conjunction with each other to create the effect you want. Some flour substitutes won't work like you want if they're used alone, but we recommend combination strategies that work well when combined with others.

Achieving the same effects as wheat flour with substitute ingredients is as much of an art as it is a science, so be prepared for some experimentation and some trial and error. Don't be discouraged if you don't get it right the first time. That's pretty common even when you're trying a new recipe without changing cooking styles entirely. If you keep trying and experimenting, we're confident that you're going to love the results.

Milking dairy replacements

The majority of dairy products are very pro-keto. Butter, sour cream, and heavy cream can be everyday staples in your kitchen. Milk, on the other hand, contains a substantial amount of lactose, which is a dairy-based sugar. You can still drink it in small quantities, but the days of pouring a full glass and chugging it with a