



Carb Manager®

KETO FOOD GUIDE

What to Eat and What to Avoid

When you're new to the Keto diet, the grocery store can feel like enemy territory, with hidden carbs everywhere just waiting to make their way into your cart and throw you out of ketosis.

If you've read our Ultimate Guide to the Keto Diet, then you already know the basics: limit carbs, get adequate protein, eat plenty of healthy fats, and avoid processed junk.

But what does that look like in practice?

Rest assured that after a few weeks, this will all seem like second nature. But in the meantime, we've put together this printable Keto food list to save you hours of staring at labels on your next shopping trip.

And remember -- if you do come across an item in the grocery store that you're unsure of, we've got you covered. Just open the Carb Manager app on your mobile device, and use our barcode scanner to quickly determine the "Keto grade" for any food item.

Note: Carb Manager recommends buying the highest quality food that you can afford. Key words being "that you can afford." Local, organic produce, grass-fed and/or cage-free meats, and wild-caught seafood are ideal. But if your budget is tight, you can still succeed and thrive on Keto. Be sure to check out the "Eating Keto on a Budget" section of our Ultimate Guide to Keto for tips and suggestions. Above all, do what's best for your own personal goals and budget.

Foods to Eat

Keto is a high fat, moderate protein, very low-carb diet, with a macros target of about 70% fat, 25% protein, and 5% carbs (70:25:5).

Examples of foods that you'll eat in abundance on the Keto diet:

- Fish and seafood
- Poultry
- Low-carb veggies
- Low carb dairy; Cheese, plain Greek yogurt, cottage cheese etc
- Avocados
- Eggs
- Nuts and seeds
- Healthy oils
- Unsweetened coffee and tea
- Water

Examples of foods that are allowed in moderation:

- Berries
- Dark chocolate and cocoa powder (90%+ cacao)
- Non-glycemic sweeteners

Let's go ahead and explore the main Keto food categories in more detail.

MEAT & EGGS

The idea that Keto is an “all meat” diet is a popular misconception. While the idea that over-consuming protein will kick you out of ketosis is no longer supported by current research, Keto dieters should strive to maintain a balance between meat, vegetables, and other foods to maximize nutritional variety. Most individuals following Keto should aim to eat a fairly “normal” amount of meat, and to choose meats that are higher in fat to help with hitting your fat macro target.

Examples of Keto-friendly meat and egg options:

- Beef
- Chicken
- Bacon
- Ham
- Eggs
- Pork
- Lamb

- Poultry
- Pork
- Venison
- Veal
- Wild Game
- Organ meats
- Deli meats in moderation (Sliced chicken, corned beef, ham, pancetta, pastrami, prosciutto, roast beef, speck, and turkey, etc.)
- Cured meats in moderation (Sliced chorizo, pepperoni, salami, and soppressata)

Note: Some types of processed meats like ham, bacon, some deli meats, as well as some cured meats, may contain sugar or fillers which can pack on the carb count and render them non-Keto friendly.

FISH AND SHELLFISH

Fatty fish and other seafood is an ideal source of both protein and fat. Note that some seafood, particularly shellfish, can contain a significant number carbs.

Examples of Keto-friendly options:

- Crabmeat
- Cod
- Clams & Oysters (In moderation)
- Halibut
- Flounder
- Mackerel
- Lobster
- Herring
- Wild salmon
- Shrimp
- Sardines
- Squid
- Sole
- Trout
- Tuna

CHEESE AND OTHER DAIRY

This category can be an excellent source of healthy fats. Be cautious about eating large amounts of dairy until you're sure that your body can handle it; many people are sensitive and run into issues with inflammation. You'll notice that milk is NOT included in this list, as it's relatively high in carbs due to it's naturally occurring sugar content, and should be consumed very sparingly.

Examples of Keto-friendly dairy options:

- Butter/ghee
- Bleu cheese
- Cottage cheese
- Cheddar cheese
- Cream cheese
- Cream
- Goat cheese
- Feta
- Gouda
- Goat cheese
- Mozzarella
- Plain greek yogurt
- Swiss cheese
- Parmesan cheese

HEALTHY OILS

While most of your fat calories will come from elsewhere in your diet, cooking with liberal quantities of healthy oils can really help to boost your daily fat macros ratio. Healthy oils can also be used to bump up the fat content of dishes that might otherwise be lacking in that area. Asparagus sauteed in avocado oil? Salad drizzled in olive oil? Yes, please!

Examples of Keto-friendly fats and oils:

- Butter, preferably from grass-fed sources
- Coconut cream
- Avocado oil
- Coconut oil
- MCT oil
- Olive oil
- Walnut oil
- Sesame oil
- Cacao butter
- Ghee
- Lard from pasture-raised sources

SEEDS AND NUTS

This category is packed with protein and healthy fats, and many options are very low carb. Use for topping salads, incorporate into recipes, or eat on their own as a healthy snack.

Examples of Keto-friendly options:

- Coconut
- Chia seeds
- Brazil nuts
- Hemp seeds
- Flaxseeds
- Macadamia nuts
- Hazelnuts
- Pumpkin seeds
- Pecans
- Sesame seeds
- Sunflower seeds
- Walnuts
- Almonds
- Pecans
- Flours or butters made from any of these sources

VEGETABLES

Contrary to the version of Keto that's often portrayed in the media, the diet (when followed properly) actually skews more toward vegetables sauteed in healthy fats than it does endless piles of bacon. Veggies prepared with a healthy oil should be the backbone of your Ketogenic diet.

Although there are numerous exceptions, a good rule of thumb is to choose vegetables that grow above ground, and to avoid starchy root vegetables. Use the food database in the Carb Manager app to check net carbs for foods that you're not familiar with.

Examples of Keto-friendly vegetable options:

- Broccoli
- Bitter greens
- Bok choy
- Chard
- Collards
- Endive

- Kohlrabi
- Nori
- Summer squash
- Zucchini
- Eggplant
- Cabbage
- Asparagus
- Brussel sprouts
- Celery
- Cauliflower
- Green Beans
- Cucumber
- Spinach
- Green and red peppers
- Kale
- Lettuce
- Avocados
- Olives
- Tomatoes (In moderation)
- Certain mushrooms

FRUITS

Most fruits are sugar-bombs, and are strictly off limits on the Keto diet. But that doesn't mean you have to swear off of all fruits forever!

These fruits are fairly low in carbs, and are acceptable in moderation:

- Blueberries
- Blackberries
- Limes
- Lemons
- Strawberries
- Raspberries
- Cranberries (unprocessed, unsweetened)

BEVERAGES

Individuals following Keto should drink an abundance of water to keep themselves hydrated and flush out toxins. Alcohol (even Keto-friendly options) should be kept to a minimum.

Examples of Keto-friendly beverage options:

- Lemon water
- Black coffee
- Unsweetened tea
- Bone broth
- Mineral water

SWEETENERS

While sugar is strictly forbidden on a Ketogenic diet, it's possible to satisfy your sweet tooth while remaining in ketosis with non-glycemic alternatives.

Examples of Keto-friendly sweeteners:

- Erythritol
- Monk fruit sweetener
- Stevia
- Xylitol
- Sorbitol
- Maltitol
- Allulose
- Splenda

Foods NOT to Eat

You probably already know that you should avoid high-carb foods while following the Keto diet. But did you know that unhealthy fats and “processed foods” are also restricted if you’re doing “clean Keto”? While these foods might not knock you out of ketosis, they can contribute to inflammation and other health issues, which defeats the purpose of losing weight and taking control of your health.

Examples of foods that you should avoid altogether on the Keto diet:

- Grains
- Pastas
- Starchy vegetables
- High-sugar fruits
- Sweetened yogurt
- Soda and fruit juices
- Honey, syrup, or sugar in any form
- Chips and crackers
- Baked goods, including gluten-free

- Corn products
- Seed oils
- Sugary snacks

With that basic list in place, let's go ahead and explore the main categories of "foods to avoid" in more detail.

GRAIN-BASED FOODS

Grain-based foods tend to be very high in carbs. This includes many "gluten-free" substitutes, which are made with non-wheat grains or other high-carb alternatives.

Examples include:

- Oatmeal
- Pumpernickel
- Flour and corn tortillas
- White bread
- Rye bread
- Wheat bread
- Oats
- Sourdough bread
- Buckwheat
- Corn
- Sandwich Wraps
- Chips
- Cereals
- Pasta

VEGETABLES

While low-carb vegetables should be a staple of your healthy Ketogenic diet, many vegetables are surprisingly high in carbs and should be avoided. As mentioned above, most root veggies are loaded with carbs and are "off-limits".

Examples of vegetables to avoid:

- Sweet potatoes
- Potatoes
- Yams
- Corn
- Peas
- Parsnips

- Artichoke
- Cassava (also known as Yuca)
- Pumpkin
- Rutabaga

LEGUMES

Leguminous foods like peas and beans are usually high in protein and other essential nutrients. Unfortunately, they are also very high in carbs, and should be avoided when following a Ketogenic diet.

Examples of legumes to avoid:

- Chickpeas
- Baked beans
- Pinto beans
- Lima beans
- Black-eyed peas
- Black beans
- Green peas
- Cannellini beans
- Kidney beans
- Lima beans
- Great Northern beans
- Navy beans
- Peanuts

FRUITS

Despite their healthy reputation, fruits are loaded with carbs. A single small apple contains enough carbs to knock most people out of ketosis! Most fruits should be avoided completely by those following a Ketogenic diet.

Examples of fruits to avoid:

- Oranges
- Tangerines
- Bananas
- Pineapples
- Grapes
- Pears
- Nectarines
- Mangos
- Peaches

- Fruit juices
- Fruit smoothies
- Dried fruits

DAIRY

While many types of dairy can be important sources of healthy fats and protein, other varieties can be loaded with carbs. In particular, check carb counts carefully on milk and any type of flavored or sweet yogurts.

Examples of dairy products to avoid:

- Condensed milk
- Most milks derived from animal sources
- Fat-free or low-fat yogurt
- Creamed cottage cheese

MEATS

Maintaining an adequate amount of protein is important for maintaining muscle mass when following a Ketogenic diet, and meat can be an excellent source of that protein. On the other hand, some meat products can contain hidden carbs, unhealthy fats, and processed “junk”.

Examples of meat products to avoid:

- Breaded meats
- Bacon with added sugar
- Processed meat that could have hidden carbs
- Processed meats high in nitrates
- Plant-based proteins

UNHEALTHY FATS AND OILS

For the purposes of the Keto diet, we typically consider “unhealthy” fats to be trans fats, hydrogenated fats, and fats that have a tendency to increase inflammation.

Examples of fats and oils to avoid:

- Corn oil
- Canola oil
- Grapeseed oil
- Peanut oil

- Rapeseed oil
- Safflower oil
- Soybean oil
- Sunflower oil
- Margarine
- Vegetable shortening
- Cottonseed oil
- Flaxseed oil
- Soy-based oils
- Commercial lard

Success tip: Don't allow oils with a low smoke point to reach overly high temperatures when you are cooking meals, as this can "denature" otherwise healthy oils and cause them to break down into unhealthy compounds. Always use fresh oil and throw out any oils that have even a hint of rancidity.

SEEDS AND NUTS

While seeds and nuts, in general, are thought of as healthy, Keto-friendly snacks, some varieties are relatively high in carbs and should be avoided.

Examples of seeds and nuts to avoid:

- Cashews
- Chestnuts
- Pistachios
- Soybeans
- Edamame
- Peanuts
- Flours or butters made from any of these sources

BEVERAGES

Be mindful of what you drink. Beverages can be a significant source of hidden carbs, often in the form of sugars. The majority of your fluid intake should come from water (6-8 glasses per day), and sweetened beverages should be avoided entirely.

Examples of beverages to avoid:

- All soda, including diet soda
- Tonic water and energy drinks (use caution with "sugar-free" varieties)
- Sugary sports beverages
- Kombucha
- Kefir

- Lemonade
- Fruit juice
- Frappuccino, mocha, and other sweetened “coffee” drinks
- Sweetened iced tea
- Most beers
- Cocktails like screwdrivers, margaritas, and pina coladas
- Liqueurs and other sweetened liquors
- Sweet wines

SWEETENERS

You probably know that high-carb, sugary sweeteners have no place on a Ketogenic diet. But certain other sweeteners that are technically low carb can cause health issues aside from an insulin response and should be avoided as well.

Examples of sweeteners to avoid:

- Sugar
- Honey
- Agave
- Maple syrup
- Fructose
- Saccharin
- Aspartame
- Sucralose

Putting it all together

As with any macros-based diet, there can be a bit of a learning curve in getting up to speed with Keto and gaining an intuitive understanding of which foods to eat and avoid.

With the help of the Carb Manager app, you'll be a Keto pro in no time!

If you're ever unsure on whether a specific food is a good fit for your diet goals, you can look it up in the Carb Manager nutrition database by typing in the name manually, scanning the barcode, or just snapping a picture of the item!

Carb Manager is your all-in-one Keto resource with a built-in macros tracker, nutrition database with millions of common and branded food items, Keto recipes, meal plans, an active community, and much more!