

# Planning Keto-Friendly Meals

One of the biggest challenges of the keto diet is changing the traditional approach to meals. With a few tips and tricks, you can still eat the foods you love in a keto-friendly fashion.

The ketogenic diet has certainly turned many heads in recent years for its ability to help people shed pounds with a low-carb, high-fat approach. But for many who are intrigued by the diet, they aren't quite sure how to begin.

Perhaps the biggest challenge is that the traditional American diet isn't exactly what you'd call "keto-friendly." The focus on bread, pasta, and even starches like potatoes and rice fly in the face of the 50 grams of carbs or fewer that are recommended with keto.

## Simple solutions

To help you find some strategies for planning your keto-friendly meals, we spoke with Nicole Rittman, R.D., a clinical dietitian at the University of Miami Health System. She provided several easy ways to take the average American meal and make it dovetail nicely with the keto diet.

## Take a closer look at cauliflower

Cauliflower is a low-carbohydrate vegetable that is a perfect component of the keto diet. It also happens to be incredibly versatile and an ideal stand-in for a wide variety of different carb-heavy foods in the traditional American diet. "Instead of a traditional chicken & rice recipe, you could substitute for cauliflower rice," says Rittman. "Cauliflower can also be used to make mashed potatoes and pizza crust."

To see just how effective this change can be, all you have to do is check the stats. One cup of cauliflower rice weighs in with 4 grams of carbohydrates. White rice, on the other hand, has a whopping 49 grams. Pizza crust tells the same story: 27 grams of carbs for a traditional pizza crust, compared to 3 grams for the cauliflower crust.

## **Give zucchini a try**

If you're a pasta lover, then zucchini may be a good option for you. "Instead of spaghetti and meatballs, you can switch in zucchini noodles," says Rittman. Here again, you're talking 49 grams of carbs for the spaghetti compared with 3 grams of carbs for a comparable amount of zucchini noodles.

## **Make friends with lettuce**



Rittman says that lettuce can be used in many fun, unconventional ways to spice up your favorite meals and make them keto-friendly. Specifically, she advocates using romaine and other large, leafy lettuce in place of buns, tortillas, and bread. Great choices include hamburgers or cheeseburgers with lettuce "buns," tacos or fajitas with lettuce tortillas, and sandwich meats and cheeses served as lettuce wraps.

## Watch pre-packaged sauces and other products

One hidden diet buster is pre-packaged or bottled tomato sauces, dressings, and other meal ingredients that claim to be healthy. “I recommend preparing your own fresh tomato sauce,” says Rittman. “Commercially prepared sauces oftentimes have extra sugar added.”

## Don't get too hung up on setbacks

While the keto diet has shown some success in helping people lose weight, Rittman is quick to point out that the diet isn't for everyone. Even if you don't go “all in” on keto, incorporating these ideas into your meals a few times a week can improve your overall health and well-being.

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Make no mistake: The keto diet isn't for everyone. The diet helps the body burn fat and shed pounds by severely restricting carbohydrates. But many have found success with the keto diet foods by forming a plan and sticking with it. [Read more.](#)  
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