

South Beach Diet



name, **South Beach Diet**, it is inspired to the beach of Florida in which the beautifulst bodies of the world admire.

It promises to make to become thin permettendo also fat and proteins a.voluntad.

Between its it follows to us more famous, **Hillary and Bill Clinton**.

The idea of the South Beach has come to a cardiologist cinquantaseienne of Miami, **Arthur Agatston**, theorist, like the famous dietologo **Atkins**, of the "nocività" of carbohydrates (bread white man, paste, peak), that they would be responsible of the weight excesses, until the obesity.

The consacrazione of the Agatston diet is work just of the Clinton. To presentation of the biography of Hillary all have noticed the physical shape of the spouses and it has explained: "Merit of the South Beach Diet".

The struck one has promoted on the Agatston field, whose book is schizzato to the third party place in classifies of the best-seller of the New York Times, while for

Weekly it is between the ten more important books of the year.

The Clinton have contagiato the former vice president **To Gore**, while to Hollywood they have become fan of the South Beach also **Jennifer Aniston** and **Liz Hurley**.

The controversies do not lack: **in good part of the world the iperproteiche diets are judged with alarm from the doctors**; diets as the Mediterranean has instead prove advantages to you for the health.

For more Agatston it has been accused to copy Atkins. But it defends itself: " my diet is not rigid as that one of Atkins.

Creed that little carbohydrates, but just, can help to lose weight ". And for just Agatston it means integral bread, cereals and natural oils, inserted in its plan of loss of weight only after two weeks of meal made up of fish, meat and bacon.

Clinton, than little evenings ago to the Coffee Milan di South Beach it is itself launch on a generous portion of salmone, seems some it are convinced.

VADE BACK, PASTE

BREAKFAST

Tomato juice, bistick with spinaci or eggs and two slices of bacon.

LUNCH

Insalata of turkey, prosciutto cooked, lean cheese and mixed verdure.

SUPPER

Salmone, or hamburgers with peas and verdure flavored with oil.



South Beach Diet

In the first phase of the South Beach diet, which lasts two weeks, you eat normal-sized helpings of lean meats, such as chicken, turkey, fish, and shellfish. Vegetables are also allowed, as are nuts, cheese, and eggs. A salad with real olive oil dressing is fine. Coffee and tea are OK, and lots and lots of water is required.

Forbidden in those first 14 days, however, are fruit, bread, rice, potatoes, pasta, or baked goods. No sugar, ice cream, cookies, or cake. And no alcoholic drinks of any kind (wine, fruit and whole-grain breads may be added back to the diet in subsequent phases).

Highly processed carbohydrates cause a cycle of overeating, says Agatston. White bread, for example, is digested quickly, resulting in a spike in insulin levels. Once the carbohydrates are used up, he says, you're left with too much circulating insulin, which causes your body to crave more food. Eating simple carbohydrates makes you want to eat more simple carbohydrates, and in the process, you gain weight, disrupt your lipid levels, and expose your cardiovascular system to unnecessary stress.

A typical South Beach diet breakfast is two eggs and lean bacon. **Lunch is salad greens with grilled chicken.** A small amount of dry-roasted nuts makes up an afternoon snack. **Dinner is lean meat again with fiber-rich vegetables.** Cheese and low-fat yogurt are allowed, as is sugar-free gelatin for dessert.

According to Agatston, at the end of two weeks, most South Beach dieters are eight to 14 pounds lighter. He says the weight loss doesn't happen because you're eating less, but rather because eliminating simple carbohydrates has broken a bad eating cycle. As a result, you'll continue to lose weight after the initial two-week period ends.

It's a well-established fact that rapid weight loss can be achieved when your body does not have carbohydrates to digest. This state is called ketosis.

The second phase is similar to the first phase, but you'll start to reintroduce some of the banned foods. You can start eating high-fiber carbohydrates, such as whole-grain breads, which raise your insulin levels in a much milder way than do simple, starchy carbs.

"We don't want prolonged, severe weight loss," says Agatston. "You stay on the second phase only until you reach your goal weight."

In the mid-1990s, I became disillusioned with low-fat, high-carbohydrate diets. They didn't work for many of my patients, especially over the long haul. Being a cardiologist, my concern was not for my patients' appearance, of course: I wanted to find a diet that would help prevent or reverse heart disease.

I never found such a diet. Instead, I developed it myself.

The South Beach Diet is not low-carb. Nor is it low-fat. Instead, it teaches you to rely on the right carbs and the right fats--the good ones--so you lose weight, lower your cholesterol, reduce your risk of heart disease and diabetes, and get rid of cravings without feeling hungry.

In one 12-week study of 40 overweight people, those who followed the South Beach Diet lost an average of 13.6 lb, almost double the 7.5 lb lost by those on the strict "Step II" American Heart Association (AHA) diet. And the South Beach group showed greater decreases in waist-to-hip ratio (belly fat) and triglycerides, and their good to bad cholesterol ratio improved more. Plus, only one person dropped out compared with five in the AHA group.

By choosing the right carbs and the right fats, you simply won't be hungry all the time, and portion sizes will take care of themselves.

Caution: If you have kidney problems, talk to your doctor before starting this diet. If you have diabetes, get tested to make sure that your kidneys are not impaired before starting this diet.

Good Carbs versus Bad Carbs

Much of our excess weight comes from the carbohydrates we eat, especially the highly processed ones found in baked goods, breads, snacks, soft drinks, and other convenient favorites. Modern industrial processing removes the fiber from these foods, and once that's gone, their very nature--and how we metabolize them--changes significantly, and for the worse.

One side effect of excess weight, we now know, is an impairment of insulin's ability to do its job of processing fuel (fats and sugars) properly. This condition is called insulin resistance. As a result, the body stores more fat than it should, especially in the midsection.

Decrease consumption of those bad carbs, studies showed, and the insulin resistance starts clearing up. Weight decreases, and you begin metabolizing carbs properly. Even the craving for carbs disappears once you cut down on them. Finally, cutting out processed carbs lowers triglycerides and cholesterol.

The Right Fat

To make up for the overall cut in carbs, my diet permits ample fats and animal proteins. The low-fat regimen's severe restrictions on meat were unnecessary. The latest studies had shown that lean meat did not have a harmful effect on blood chemistry. Even egg yolks are good for you, which is contrary to what we once believed. Chicken, turkey, and fish are recommended, along with nuts and low-fat cheeses and yogurt.

As a rule, low-fat prepared foods can be a bad idea; the fats are replaced with carbs, which are also fattening. But dairy products such as cheese, milk, and yogurt that are low-fat are exceptions to this rule; they are nutritious and not fattening.


I also allowed plenty of healthy monounsaturated fats such as olive and canola oils. These are the good fats. In addition to actually reducing the risk of heart attack and stroke, they taste good and make food palatable. They're filling too.

Phase 1: Two Weeks of Restraint

This is the strictest part of the diet and is meant to last for 2 weeks only. But you could lose up to 13 lb depending on your starting weight. It allows ample portions of protein, good fats, and the lowest-glycemic index carbs needed for satisfaction and blood sugar control. By the time this phase ends, your cravings for sweets, baked goods, and starches will also have vanished.

Each day includes six different occasions to eat, so you should never feel hungry. If you do, maybe you're being too stingy with your portions. Meals should be of normal size, enough to satisfy you, but no more than that. No need to measure most things.

Phase I -- Sample Meal Plan

<p>Breakfast</p>	<p>Tomato juice, 6 oz</p> <p>Scrambled eggs with fresh herbs and mushrooms</p> <p>Canadian bacon, 2 slices</p> <p>Decaf coffee or decaf tea with fat-free milk and sugar substitute</p> 
<p>Midmorning Snack</p>	<p>Part-skim mozzarella cheese stick</p>
<p>Lunch</p>	<p>Chicken Caesar salad (no croutons)</p> <p>Prepared Caesar dressing, 2 Tbsp</p>
<p>Midafternoon Snack</p>	<p>Low-fat cottage cheese (½ cup) with ½ cup chopped tomatoes and cucumbers</p>
<p>Dinner</p>	<p>Mahi mahi</p> <p>Oven-Roasted Vegetables</p> <p>Arugula salad</p>

Low-sugar prepared dressing

Dessert Lemon Peel Ricotta Crème

FOODS TO ENJOY

Beef: Lean cuts such as sirloin (including ground), tenderloin.

Poultry (skinless): Cornish hen, turkey bacon, turkey breast, chicken breast.

Seafood: All types of fish and shellfish.

Pork: Boiled ham, Canadian bacon, tenderloin (FILETTO).

Veal: Chop, cutlet, top round.

Lunchmeat: Fat-free or low-fat.

Cheese (fat-free or low-fat): American, Cheddar, cottage cheese, cream cheese substitute (dairy-free), feta.

Nuts: Peanut butter, peanuts, pecans, pistachios.

Eggs: Whole eggs are not limited unless otherwise directed by your doctor. Use egg whites and egg substitute as desired.

Tofu: Use soft, low-fat, or light varieties.

Vegetables and legumes: Artichokes, asparagus, beans and legumes, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, lettuce, mushrooms, spinach, tomatoes, zucchini.

Fats: Canola and olive oils.

Spices and seasonings: All seasonings that contain no added sugar, broth, butter sprays, pepper.

Sweets (limit to 75 calories per day): Chocolate powder (no added sugar), cocoa powder (baking type), hard candy, sugar substitute (all sugar-free unless otherwise specified).

FOODS TO AVOID

Beef: Brisket, liver (FEGATO), rib steaks (COSTICCE), other fatty cuts.

Poultry: Chicken wings, thighs (COSCE E PETTO DI POLLO), and legs, turkey wings, duck, goose, poultry products (processed).

Pork: Honey-baked ham (PROSCIUTTO).

Veal: Breast.

Cheese: Brie, Edam, all full-fat.

Vegetables and legumes: Barley (ORZO), beets (BARBABIETOLA), black-eyed peas, carrots, corn (MAIS), pinto beans, sweet potatoes, white potatoes, yams (PATATA AMERICANA).

Fruit: Avoid all fruits and fruit juices during Phase 1.

Starches: Avoid all starchy food during Phase 1, including all types of bread, cereal, matzo (PANE AZIMO), oatmeal, rice, pasta, pastry (PASTICCINI), potatoes, and baked goods (PRODOTTI DA FORNO).

Dairy: Avoid all dairy (LATTICINI) foods during Phase 1, including ice cream, milk, soy milk, yogurt.

Miscellaneous: Alcohol of any kind, including beer and wine.

Phase 2: More Liberal Meal Plans

Here's where you gradually reintroduce certain healthy carbs into your diet: fruit, sweet potatoes, whole grain bread, whole grain rice, whole wheat pasta. Start with one piece of fruit a day for lunch or dinner, and continue with some cereal or a piece of bread. Weight loss will slow a little. (A healthy average rate of weight loss is 1 to 2 lb a week over time.) Stay on this phase until you hit your target weight. If you regain some weight, switch back to Phase 1 until you lose it.

A key to success is the glycemic index (GI) that ranks carbohydrate foods by their effect on your blood sugar levels. Focus on adding low-GI foods (apples, berries, grapefruit, high-fiber cereal, whole grain breads) to your diet instead of those with a high GI (cakes, cookies, crackers, pasta, white bread).

The goal is to eat more carbs again while continuing to lose weight. If you add an apple and a slice of bread a day, and you're still dropping pounds, that's great. If you try an apple, two slices of bread, and a banana daily and notice that your weight loss has stalled, you've gone too far. Cut back, or try some different carbs.

You'll go on that cautious way as long as you're in Phase 2, eating the most beneficial carbs and paying attention to how they affect you. You should also be aware of foods that increase cravings. No two people will experience this phase the same way. Some dieters can have pasta once a week with no detrimental effects. Others have to avoid pasta but can eat sweet potatoes. You'll have to figure this dynamic out for yourself.

PHASE II Sample Meal Plan

Breakfast	Berry smoothie (8 oz Dannon Light 'n Fit fruit-flavored yogurt, ½ cup berries, ½ cup crushed ice, blended) Decaf coffee or decaf tea with fat-free milk and sugar substitute
Midmorning Snack	1 hard-boiled egg
Lunch	Lemon Couscous Chicken Tomato and cucumber slices
Midafternoon Snack	Dannon Light 'n Fit yogurt, 4 oz
Dinner	Meat Loaf asparagi cotti al vapore Mushrooms sautéed in olive oil

	<p>Sliced Bermuda onion and tomato with drizzled olive oil</p> <p>Dessert Sliced cantaloupe with 2 Tbsp ricotta cheese</p>
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<u>FOODS YOU CAN EAT AGAIN</u>	<u>FOODS TO AVOID OR EAT RARELY</u>
<p>Fruit: Apples, blueberries, cantaloupe, grapefruit, grapes, mangoes, oranges, peaches.</p> <p>Dairy: Milk (light soy, fat-free, or 1%), yogurt.</p> <p>Starches (use sparingly): Bagels (small whole grain), bran muffins, bread (multigrain, bran, whole wheat), cereal (high-fiber, oatmeal [not instant]), pasta (whole wheat), pita, rice (brown, wild).</p> <p>Vegetables and legumes: Barley, black-eyed peas, pinto beans, sweet potatoes, yams.</p> <p>Miscellaneous: Chocolate (bittersweet or semisweet, sparingly), pudding (fat-free).</p>	<p>Starches: Bagels (refined wheat), bread (refined wheat, white), cookies, cornflakes, dinner rolls, matzo, pasta (white), potatoes (white baked, instant), rice cakes, rice (white).</p> <p>Vegetables: Beets, carrots, corn, white potatoes.</p> <p>Fruit: Bananas, canned fruit, fruit juice, pineapple, raisins, watermelon.</p> <p>Miscellaneous: Honey, ice cream, jam.</p>

Phase 3: The Rest of Your Life

This is the maintenance phase: how you'll eat for the rest of your life. It's the most liberal stage. You can continue to eat snacks if you need them, but most people find that they are satisfied without them.

There will always be times when you overindulge a little even after years on the diet. Those are the times when you'll switch back to Phase 1 for a week or two. You'll get back to where you were, and then you'll return

PHASE III --Sample Meal Plan

Breakfast	½ grapefruit Tex-Mex eggs (2 eggs scrambled with shredded Monterey Jack cheese and salsa) Whole grain toast, 1 slice Decaf coffee or decaf tea with fat-free milk and sugar substitute
Lunch	Roast Beef Wrap Nectarine
Dinner	Grilled salmon with tomato salsa Tossed salad (mixed greens, cucumbers, green bell peppers, cherry tomatoes) Olive oil and vinegar to taste or 2 Tbsp low-sugar prepared dressing Dessert Chocolate-Dipped Apricots

Don't Forget (All Phases)

1. Drink at least eight glasses of water or decaf beverages (club soda, unsweetened flavored seltzers, decaf tea or coffee [no sugar], decaf sugar-free sodas) per day.
2. Limit caffeine-containing beverages to 1 cup per day.
3. Take a daily multivitamin and mineral supplement.
4. Take a daily calcium supplement (500 mg for men of all ages and women under 50, 1,000 mg for women over 50).

SOUTH BEACH DIET RECIPES

ROASTED VEGGIES & RICOTTA CRÈME



Oven-Roasted Vegetables:

- 1 med zucchini, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 med summer squash, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 med red bell pepper, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 med yellow bell pepper, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 lb fresh asparagus, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F. Place the zucchini, squash, bell peppers, asparagus, and onion in a large roasting pan, and toss with the oil, salt, and black pepper. Spread in a single layer.
 2. Roast for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are lightly browned and tender.
- Makes 4 servings

Per Serving: 170 cal, 5 g pro, 15 g carb, 11 g fat, 2 g sat. fat, 0 mg chol, 5 g fiber, 586 mg sodium

LEMON PEEL RICOTTA CRÈME



- ½ c part-skim ricotta cheese
- ¼ tsp grated lemon peel
- ¼ tsp vanilla extract

1 pkg sugar substitute

Mix together the ricotta, lemon peel, vanilla extract, and sugar substitute. Serve chilled.

Makes 1 serving

Per Serving: 178 cal, 14 g pro, 7 g carb, 10 g fat, 6 g sat. fat, 38 mg chol, 0 g fiber, 155 mg sodium

ROAST BEEF WRAP



1¼ c reduced-fat cream cheese

4 flour tortillas (9"-10")

½ red onion, sliced

4 spinach leaves

8 oz roast beef, sliced

For each wrap, spread a small amount of the cream cheese over the surface of a tortilla. Layer the onion, spinach, and roast beef on top. Roll, and fold.

Makes 4 servings

Per Serving: 300 cal, 13 g pro, 42 g carb, 9 g fat, 3 g sat. fat, 21 mg chol, 3 g fiber, 659 mg sodium

CHOCOLATE DIPPED APRICOTS



2 oz bittersweet chocolate

24 dried apricots

1 Tbsp chopped pistachios

Microwave the chocolate on high for 2 minutes, stirring halfway through until completely melted. Dip the apricots halfway into the chocolate. Let the excess drip off. Place the apricots onto wax paper. Sprinkle the pistachios over the chocolate-covered portions, and place them in the refrigerator until the chocolate is set.

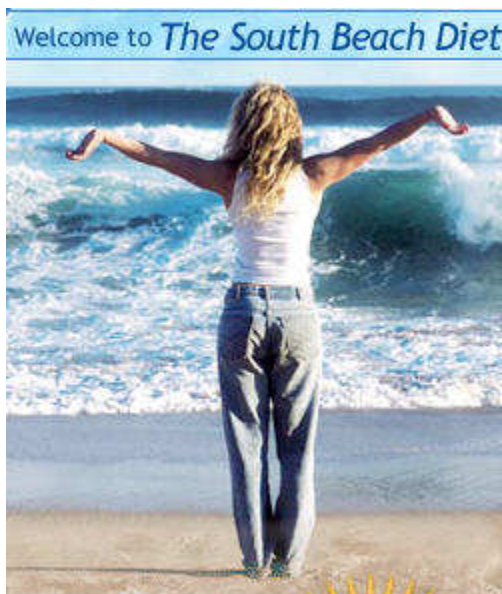
Makes 8 servings

Per Serving: 99 cal, 1 g pro, 17 g carb, 3 g fat, 2 g sat. fat, 0 mg chol, 2 g fiber, 1 mg sodium

ASPARAGI LESSATI



South Beach Diet Philosophy



Introducing a delicious, foolproof plan for fast and healthy weight loss
by Arthur Agatston, M.D.

The South Beach Diet is not low-carb. Nor is it low-fat.

The South Beach Diet teaches you to rely on the right carbs and the right fats--the good ones--and enables you to live quite happily without the bad carbs and bad fats. As a result, you're going to get healthy and lose weight--somewhere between 8 and 13 pounds in the next 2 weeks alone. Here's how you'll do it.

Phase 1

You'll eat normal-size helpings of meat, chicken, turkey, fish, and shellfish. You'll have plenty of vegetables. Eggs. Cheese. Nuts. You'll have salads with real olive oil in the dressing. You'll have three balanced meals a day, and it will be your job to eat so that your hunger is satisfied.

Nothing undermines a weight-loss plan more than the distressing sensation that you need more food. No sane eating program expects you to go through life feeling discomfort. You'll be urged to have snacks in the midmorning and midafternoon, whether you need to or not. You'll have dessert after dinner. You'll drink water, of course, plus coffee or tea if you wish.

For the next 14 days you won't be having any bread, rice, potatoes, pasta, or baked goods. No fruit, even. Before you panic: You'll begin adding those things back into your diet again in 2 weeks. But for right now, they're off-limits.

No candy, cake, cookies, ice cream, or sugar for 2 weeks, either.

No beer or alcohol of any kind. After this phase you'll be free to drink wine. It's beneficial for a variety of reasons. Not a drop during the first 2 weeks, however.

Now, if you're the kind of person who lives for pasta or bread or potatoes, or if you believe that you can't get through a day without feeding your sweet tooth (three or four times), let me tell you something: You're going to be shocked at how painlessly 2 weeks will pass without these foods. The first day or two may be challenging; but once you weather that, you'll be fine.

It's not that you'll have to fight your urges--during the first week the cravings will virtually disappear.

I say this with such confidence only because so many overweight people who have already succeeded on this program tell me so. The South Beach Diet may be new to you, but it has existed for several years--long enough to have helped hundreds of people lose weight easily and keep it off.

Phase 2

After the first 2 weeks, the strictest part of the diet, you will be somewhere between 8 and 13 pounds lighter than you are today. Most of that weight will come off your midsection, so right away you'll notice the difference in your clothes. It will be easier to zip your jeans than it's been for some time. That blazer will close without a bulge.

But this will be just the noticeable difference. You won't be able to see that during those 2 weeks you'll also have changed yourself internally.

You will have corrected the way your body reacts to the very foods that made you overweight. There's a switch inside you that had been turned on. Now, simply by modifying your diet, you'll have turned it off. The physical cravings that ruled your eating habits will be gone, and they'll stay away for as long as you stick with the program.

The weight loss doesn't happen because you're trying to eat less. But you'll be eating fewer of the foods that created those bad old urges, fewer of the foods that caused your body to store excessive fat.

As a result of that change, you will continue losing weight after the 14-day period ends, even though by then you will have begun adding some of those banished foods back into your life. You'll still be on a diet, but if it's bread you love, you'll have bread. If it's pasta, you'll reintroduce that. Rice or cereal, too. Potatoes. Fruit will definitely be back.

Chocolate? If it makes you feel good, sure. You will have to pick and choose which of these indulgences you permit yourself. You won't be able to have all of them, all the time. You'll learn to enjoy them a little differently than before--maybe a little less enthusiastically. But you will enjoy them again soon.

You'll remain in Phase 2 and continue losing weight until you reach your goal. How long it takes depends on how much you need to lose. In this phase, people lose, on average, a pound or two a week.

Phase 3

Once you hit your target, you'll switch to an even more liberal version of the program, which will help you to maintain your ideal weight. This is Phase 3, the stage that lasts the rest of your life. When you get to that point, you'll notice that this plan feels less like a diet and more like a way of life. You'll be eating normal foods, after all, in normal-size portions. You can then feel free to forget all about the South Beach Diet, as long as you remember to live by its few basic rules.

As you're losing weight and altering how your body responds to food, a third change will be taking place. This one will significantly alter your blood chemistry, to the long-term benefit of your cardiovascular system. You will improve invisible factors that only cardiologists and heart patients worry about. Thanks to this final change, you will substantially increase your odds of living long and well--meaning you will maintain your health and vitality as you age.

You may start on the South Beach Diet hoping just to lose weight. If you adopt it and stay with it, you will surely accomplish that much. But you'll also do a lot more for yourself, all of it very good. I'm not exaggerating when I say that this diet can, as a fringe benefit, save your life.

A Day in the Life

I've described, in a nutshell, how you would pass the initial weeks on the South Beach Diet. Now I'll back up and tell you in greater detail how a typical day will go.

Let's start with the first day of Phase 1. You've no doubt treated yourself to a memorable meal the night before, but whatever carb-driven cravings you prompted came as you slept, with no further damage done. By the time you wake up today, your bloodstream is a relatively clean slate. The immediate goal is to keep it that way. We will accomplish that simply by not introducing any bad carbs into your system.

We'll begin with a two-egg omelet fortified by two slices of Canadian bacon, cooked in a spray of olive or canola oil. You may yearn for your usual toast or bagel, but if you can get your mind off bread, the rest of you will follow.

This will be your first test of the new regimen. It may take a few days to wean yourself from the customary morning dose of carbs. But it's our goal in Phase 1 to begin reversing your body's likely inability to process sugars and starches properly, the condition at the root of most weight problems.

To accomplish this, we must cut off all carbs but the healthiest ones. This means we'll allow those highest in fiber and nutrients and lowest in sugars and starches--vegetables and salads only, in other words, at least for these 2 weeks.

This morning's combination of proteins (the eggs and Canadian bacon) and good fats (the oil and the bacon, which is leaner than its American cousin) will keep your stomach full and occupied with digestion. You won't have to contend with hunger pangs now or later this morning.

It didn't have to be the Canadian bacon omelet--we could have gone with two eggs and some asparagus, broccoli, mushrooms, or peppers. That would have introduced some good vegetable fiber to the mix. An omelet with ham or low-fat cheese would have been fine, too.

With this meal you can have coffee or tea if you like, with low-fat milk and sugar substitute. There are many to choose from nowadays--I prefer one that's actually derived in part from a form of sugar, although it has no calories. Some diets prohibit coffee or tea because caffeine does intensify cravings somewhat. But you've got enough changes to contend with without having to give up your morning coffee, too.

A phenomenon I've noticed when dealing with overweight people is how many of them skip breakfast altogether--especially women, for some reason. It's not even necessarily an attempt to save on calories. They say they just don't like eating first thing in the morning.

The problem is that this allows blood sugar to drop and hunger to increase over the course of the morning, resulting in powerful cravings for a lunch that includes carbs of questionable value--the very kind guaranteed to keep you overweight. So, skipping breakfast is a bad idea, especially if you're trying to fight off obesity.

Planning Your Meals



The array of breakfasts, even in the strict first phase, is varied. There's a frittata made with smoked salmon, for instance, and something we call Vegetable Quiche Cups To Go, which are made with eggs and spinach and, for the sake of convenience, can be prepared in advance and then microwaved at mealtime.

We make liberal use of eggs for breakfast, which will alarm some people who have been taught to avoid them due to cholesterol concerns. It turns out that eggs contain no saturated fat and raise the good cholesterol along with the bad. The yolk is a good source of natural vitamin E and protein, too. So eggs are permissible.

By the second phase of the diet, we'll begin to reintroduce carbs, even whole grain toast and English muffins, along with high fiber cereals. Fruit, too.

Whether you feel the need for a midmorning snack or not, you should be ready for one by 10:30 or so. Wisely, you remembered to pack a part-skim mozzarella stick.

Cheese and yogurt are the only low-fat foods I recommend for dieters, because they're the only ones that don't add bad carbs to replace the fats. The sugar is limited to lactose--milk sugar--which is an acceptable component of the South Beach Diet.

You can find cheese sticks in most supermarkets--they've become a favorite snack for children. They're convenient and they taste good. Most important, they do the job of filling you up with good fats and proteins. That means you won't arrive at the lunch hour feeling famished.

When lunch rolls around, you may have a salad--lettuce and tomato mixed with grilled chicken or fish, dressed in a vinaigrette made with olive oil. You'll also have water or a beverage containing no sugar. Another day you might choose grilled shrimp over a bed of greens, or a tomato stuffed with tuna salad. Niçoise salad is great, too.

All these dishes can easily be made at home, and, thanks to the trend toward fresh, healthy dining out, can usually be found in restaurants, too.

Don't even think about limiting the amount you eat--the point of this diet is to eat well. Food is one of life's dependable pleasures, and it can be a wholesome one if you're eating the proper foods. Accomplish that and you'll be free to indulge in the improper treats from time to time.

I hope you are beginning to see the pattern of these meals: They're all combinations of healthy carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. They are normal, everyday dishes intended to fully satisfy your hunger while depriving your system of the low-quality sugars and starches that have wreaked such havoc on your blood chemistry.

You may have noticed that we're not discussing calorie counts, fat grams, or portion sizes. The South Beach Diet is designed so that you don't pay attention to any of that. One hallmark of this program is its simplicity--life is complicated enough without having to overanalyze your food before you eat it. If you're eating the right foods you don't need to obsess over how much of them you eat.

Since fats and proteins create the sensation of satiety much more efficiently than refined carbs do, you won't sit in front of the TV all night popping bites of steak into your mouth, though you can easily imagine snacking for hours on potato chips or cookies!

Through this diet, you'll understand the principles of metabolism--not as a matter of academic interest but in a practical, nuts and bolts way that will give you a basic understanding of how foods affect your blood chemistry and how that, in turn, determines what you weigh. You'll actually learn how to control your blood chemistry and your metabolism through food choices.

Knowing how individual foods affect your internal workings will help you lose weight and maintain the loss. In the future, if you ease up on the diet and find you've gained a few pounds, you'll know how to undo the damage.

Changing Your Thinking

Okay, by now it's midafternoon, typically the first dangerous time of day, dietwise. This is when you might normally crave a sugar fix, owing to the natural dip in blood sugar and consequently, energy, that takes place about this time. This is when people tend to run to the coffee shop, the candy counter, or the vending machines.

Instead, you'll have nuts--let's say plain almonds (not salted or smoked). Nuts contain good, healthy fats, and they fill you up. It's possible to have too many of them, however, and undermine your weight loss. I recommend counting out 15 almonds or cashews or whatever you choose.

Some people have told me they prefer pistachios, in part because they're so small that you can allow yourself 30 of them. Cracking and eating 30 pistachios makes it a more elaborate, and therefore more satisfying, snack.

Now it's time to begin thinking about dinner. Recent trends in fine food have brought us all toward something close to the South Beach Diet way of thinking--fresh vegetables, fish, and lean meats are the staples of dinner on our program. So Phase 1 features dishes such as grilled salmon with lemon, roasted eggplant and a salad, chicken made with balsamic vinegar, or even marinated London broil and mushroom caps stuffed with spinach.

You could happen upon any of these on the menu of a good restaurant and be happy with them. And this is the strict phase of the diet! As you'll see, in the meal plans for Phase 1, we rely on chicken, fish, lean beef, and plenty of vegetables and salads to go with them.

We strongly recommend that you have dessert after that meal. The second dangerous time of day is between dinner and bedtime. This is when all good intentions and strong resolve are challenged.

Partly it's just the normal nightly routine--you unwind with a book or in front of the TV, perhaps in the company of friends or family, and the communal snacking habit kicks in. If you've got children, as I do, you've almost certainly got lots of temptations around the kitchen. Or it may just be that you've trained yourself to expect something sweet after a savory dinner.

In any event, we've come up with two basic strategies for dessert during Phase 1. The first, and simplest, is to have some sugar-free gelatin. For people who love fruit, it may even make up for the loss of fresh fruit flavors during these 2 weeks.

The other suggestion makes ample use of low-fat ricotta cheese. You can use it as the basis for a number of delicious, permissible desserts. This one is reminiscent of the Italian delicacy known as tiramisu, which combines cheese, chocolate, espresso, and ladyfingers.

Instead, you take a half-cup of low-fat ricotta and stir in a few teaspoons of unsweetened cocoa powder, some slivered almonds, and a packet of sugar substitute. It tastes great, and I guarantee that when you're done you'll feel as though you've had a real dessert.

We've tried a number of variations on this--using vanilla or almond extract, lemon zest, or even topping the ricotta with sugar-free chocolate syrup and then baking it.

And that's day one on the South Beach Diet! By the time you finish the last bite of mocha ricotta, you will have already begun ridding yourself of the cravings that pushed you into the growing (in every way) ranks of the overweight in America.

Your blood is different from the way it was 24 hours ago: it's healthier. Get through another day this way and you'll be even closer to your goal of weight loss, and my goal for you, of better overall health.