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Easy, low-calorie recipes for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks

By Nanci Hellmich, USA TODAY

For our seventh annual USA TODAY Weight Loss Challenge, we are offering a low-calorie diet plan to help you lose 10 pounds in 10 weeks.

And we're going to keep it simple.

LOSE 10 LBS. IN 10 WEEKS: [Dieters nail calorie count](#)
VIDEO: [Overcome dieting obstacles](#)

To lose a pound a week, you need to cut about 500 calories a day. Your specific caloric needs are determined by several factors, including your muscle mass, current weight, height, age and activity level. But as a general rule, a sedentary woman can lose weight on about 1,500 calories a day; a sedentary man can consume about 1,800 calories a day, says Chicago-based registered dietitian Dawn Jackson Blatner, author of *The Flexitarian Diet*. Some people may have to go a few hundred calories lower to lose weight, and some will be able to go higher.

Blatner came up with dozens of healthful low-calorie meals and snacks for the Weight-Loss Challenge. The breakfasts are all about 300 calories, lunches about 400, dinners about 500 and snacks about 150 calories. Most of the meals are relatively high in fiber and low in saturated (animal) fat. **Click the links below to print out the recipes. You can mix and match breakfasts, lunch, dinners and snacks to suit your tastes and create a customized menu.**

For a 1,500-calorie plan, you might eat breakfast, lunch, dinner and two snacks a day. For the 1,800-calorie plan, consider doubling the breakfast portion and then eat lunch, dinner and two snacks a day, Blatner says.

The program includes simple recipes you can make at home and meals you can get when you're dining out (at left are dinners, below are lunches and breakfasts).



Breakfasts (about 300 calories each)

Lunches (about 400 calories each)

Dinners (about 500 calories each)

Snacks (about 150 calories each)



Three-cup breakfast



Ham and Swiss sandwich with grape salad



Black bean and zucchini quesadillas



Apple and cheddar

[Vanilla maple French toast with raspberry sauce](#)

[Better BLT](#)

[Pesto-style chicken and pasta](#)

[Balsamic strawberries romanoff](#)

[Waffles and berries](#)

[Turkey avocado wrap](#)

[Cilantro-lime shrimp fajitas](#)

[Honey curry dip with carrots](#)

[Peanut butter and banana pancakes](#)

[Classic turkey sandwich and side salad](#)

[Toasted roast beef sandwich and salad](#)

[Maple yogurt](#)

[Egg sandwich](#)

[Barbecue chicken strip wrap](#)

[Steak and pepper tacos](#)

[Melted cheese tortilla](#)

[Herbed cheese and tomato bagel](#)

[Black bean taco salad](#)

[Barbecue chicken and veggie brown rice pilaf](#)

[Corn chips and salsa verde](#)

[Broccoli cheese omelet](#)

[Greek chopped pita salad](#)

[Pasta and ricotta with fresh herbs](#)

[Peanut butter and celery](#)

[Cranberry honey parfait](#)

[Grilled cheese with turkey and](#)

[Beef and chicken stir fry](#)

[Cookies and milk](#)

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Granola berry parfait | tomato | peanut and chicken satay | cookies and milk |
| Cereal with bananas | Spinach salad with strawberries | Maple lime salmon with cilantro couscous | Chocolate pudding |
| Black bean breakfast burrito | Garden tuna wrap | Lemon butter pasta and broccoli | Fruit and nuts |
| Apple and peanut butter or almond butter toast | Chili and chips | Pita pepperoni pizza | Cottage cheese and fruit |
| | Baked chicken with pears | Baby greens with spicy Mediterranean vinaigrette | Almond-stuffed dates |
| | | Spaghetti and meatballs | Chive spread on whole-grain crackers |
| | | | Strawberry yogurt parfait |
| | | | Pizza popcorn |

More options for dining out:

Lunches about 400 calories each:

- **Subway**, deli or lunch at home: Turkey breast 6-inch sandwich or Veggie Deluxe. Salad with fat-free dressing
- **Au Bon Pain**: Steak salad with cranberries and mandarin oranges and fat-free raspberry vinaigrette
- **KFC**: Grilled chicken breast, macaroni and cheese and green beans
- **Chipotle**: Vegetarian burrito bowl — black beans, fajita vegetables, lettuce, green and red salsa and 1 oz. cheese
- **Wendy's** or lunch at home: Large chili and side salad with light ranch or an ultimate chicken grill sandwich with mustard or ketchup and mandarin orange cup.
- **Burger King**: Veggie burger (without mayo) and fresh apple fries with caramel sauce or Jr. Whopper (no cheese or mayo), side salad and fat-free ranch dressing

Breakfasts about 300 calories:

- **McDonald's**: Egg McMuffin
- **Dunkin' Donuts**: Egg White Veggie Flatbread Sandwich with coffee (no cream or sugar)
- **Starbucks** or other restaurant or at home: Oatmeal topped with pre-portioned brown sugar and nuts or brown sugar and dried fruit. Can add nutmeg and cinnamon to taste. With coffee.
- **Einstein Bros. Bagels** or other bakery or grocery store: Plain bagel or honey whole-wheat bagel with 1 or 2 Tbsp. low-fat plain or low-fat strawberry cream cheese or whipped smoked salmon cream cheese

Snacks about 150 calories each:

- Coffee shops or bakeries: 12 oz. nonfat cafe mocha (no whipped cream).

READERS: Tell us which of these recipes you try and how it turns out or share your own low-cal meals and snacks:

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Find this article at:

http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/weightloss/2010-01-03-diet-menus-recipes_N.htm

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