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Experts' tips for Dieting on a Dime

By Nanci Hellmich, USA TODAY

Looking for inexpensive weight-loss ideas? Consider designing a deck of dinner cards. Write down five to seven healthful dinners on index cards. The front has the recipe and the back has the ingredients. Keep this deck of dinner ideas in your purse or car and take it grocery shopping so you don't forget ingredients, says Dawn Jackson Blatner, author of *The Flexitarian Diet*.

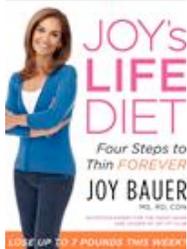
Her book and others offer cost-effective ways to trim down. Here are some of the ideas:

FLEXITARIANS: [Have your meat and not eat it, too?](#)

DAWN'S BLOG: [Resolution to eat a salad a day in '09](#)

BETTER LIFE: [Fitness and nutrition tips, plus worst grocery store picks](#)

Joy's Life Diet



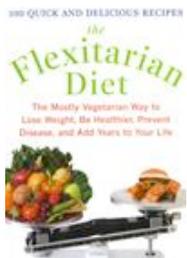
By Joy Bauer

Keep a food/mood journal. Write down your food choices and portions to see your healthy and unhealthy patterns. Use the journal to track your progress as you weight yourself once or twice a week.

Get a diet buddy. Some people do better if they have a friend, spouse, online community or therapist -- someone they can talk to about successes or setbacks. Ideally, this person is nonjudgmental and unconditionally supportive.

Prepare a list of activities for those times when you are tempted to overeat. Go for a walk, call a friend, clean the house, organize a closet.

The Flexitarian Diet



By Dawn Jackson Blatner

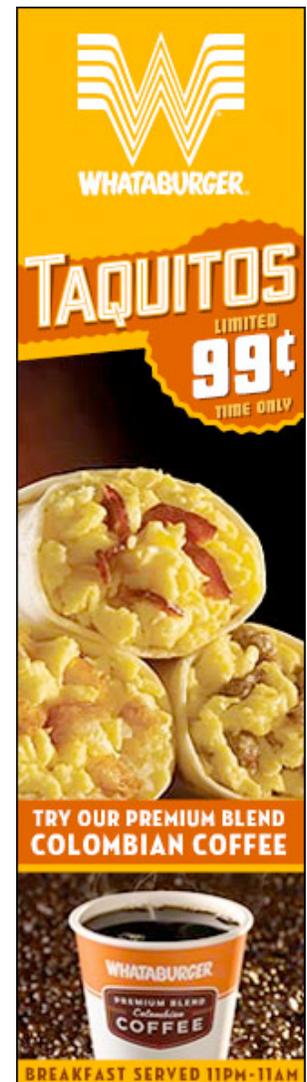
Ask yourself these three magic words before eating anything: "Am I hungry?" It is a quick way to be more connected to what is causing you to reach for mindlessly for food.

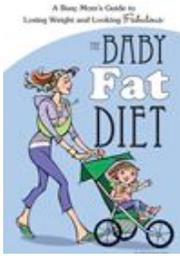
Enjoy meals for about 30 minutes. Eating slowly can reduce your intake by 70 calories a meal, which translates into a savings of more than 200 calories a day.

Start a tea tradition. Drink a cup of dessert-flavored tea such as English toffee or white chocolate macadamia nut after meals. Tea has zero calories and promotes a healthy heart.

Eat four to five times a day, which translates to three meals and one or two snacks. Many people who are successful at losing weight and keeping it off eat that often.

The Baby Fat Diet





By Monica Bearden and Shara Aaron

Have a well-balanced breakfast each day with some fiber, protein and a fruit or veggie. Sit down and eat it with your kids, not in the car or standing at the counter.

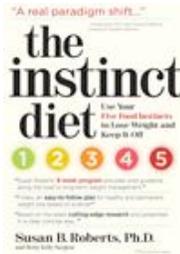
Start your meals with broth-based soups and veggie-rich salads.

Portion out your food when at home. Don't eat directly out of packages.

Chew gum while making your kids' dinners so you won't be able to taste-test.

Don't eat the leftovers off your kids' plates. Put an empty container on the counter so leftovers go right into the refrigerator.

The Instinct Diet



By Susan Roberts and Betty Kelly Sargent

Get rid of unhealthy foods in your home. Toss out all those half-full bags of chips, leftover cake, bags of cookies.

Make the food that's available good food. Arrange fruit in a bowl on the counter. Have cut-up celery, red peppers and lean meats handy in the fridge.

Cut cravings with regularly timed meals and a menu plan. You may discover that casual eating is your diet destroyer.

Enjoy daily treats but never by themselves. Eat healthy foods before and after.

Suppress hunger with foods that are high in protein and/or fiber.

Eat This, Not That! Supermarket Survival Guide



By David Zinczenko with Matt Goulding

Work the edges of the grocery store. In general, the healthiest food in the supermarket is found along the walls. The dairy case, produce, meats and seafood are all found in the outlying regions of the supermarket while the inner aisles tend to be dominated by things that come in boxes, bags or cans. Most of this vast nutritional dead zone is composed of highly processed foods.

Watch for less packaging. The process of cooking, refining and packaging foods strips out essential nutrients, leading to empty calories.

Look for fewer ingredients, which usually means healthier foods.

Photos: Handout

'EAT THIS NOT THAT': [The fast-food version](#)

PARENTING AID: ['Eat This ... For Kids'](#)

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