

Before I get to the details of what fat fast is and how to do it, I should mention that this is a tweaked version of the original. One difference is the decreased minimum intake of fat and the second is the reduced number of meals a day. Both of these are explained in this post and are just optional - it will be up to you which path you choose.

The *Fat Fast* is not a new concept, it has been around for many years. The first proponent of using fat fast to break through a weight loss plateau or "reset" a cheat day was Dr Robert Atkins himself in his best-selling book [Dr Atkins New Diet Revolution](#).

In 2013 [Dana Carpender](#), the best-selling author of books about low-carb and ketogenic diets, published her [Fat Fast Cookbook](#). If you want to try fat fast, you should get her book. It contains 50 delicious and easy to prepare recipes, enough to stay away from boring monotonous meals! Keep in mind that not all ingredients in her book are paleo-friendly and you may need to make small adjustments to fit your needs.

# What Is Fat Fast?

Although most of you probably know how the ketogenic diet works, I'll give you a quick overview before I get to the fat fast itself. Ketogenic and other low-carb diets have been around for a long time. Most low-carbs diets, including the ketogenic diet, can be used for weight loss and offer [numerous health benefits](#). In fact, very low-carb ketogenic diets have been used to treat neurodegenerative diseases such as epilepsy or Alzheimer's for decades. Currently, they are also shown to have [potential use in cancer treatment](#).

We have all been told that all calories are the same no matter where they come from. This advice [has been proven to be false](#) and despite all the evidence, the guidelines still remain the same: "Exercise more, eat less and focus on eating low-fat foods." Sadly, I keep seeing this piece of advice on most packaged foods - just another reason to avoid them!

Here is the general rule that applies to the ketogenic diet: When you restrict carbohydrates to a certain level (20-50 grams of net carbs), your body starts producing ketones and you enter ketosis ([ketosis is not the same as ketoacidosis](#) which is dangerous).

Once you become fat-adapted, your body uses your fat stores and ketones for energy and you won't need to eat extra protein to spare muscle mass. This doesn't mean you should avoid protein - your [protein intake should be adequate](#) and based on your individual needs. Although [your body still needs some glucose](#), it can produce it on demand via *gluconeogenesis*.

*Fat Fast* is a type of fasting often recommended for those who are already keto-adapted and reach a weight loss plateau. The idea is that you eat about **80-90% of your calories from fat while keeping your calorie intake low, up to 1000-1200 kcal a day. This fast should be followed for no more than 3-5 days.** If you follow fat fast for a longer period, you run the risk of getting your body into starvation mode, lose muscles and get deficient in essential nutrients.

When you go on a fat fast and you are already keto-adapted, your ketone level will likely get very high (mine got as high as 3.2 mM). Because most of the energy (that is limited to 1000-1200 kcal) comes from fats, your body enters *lipolysis* and starts using fat stores for energy.

[Recent studies show](#) that in terms of weight loss and muscle sparing, "traditional" fat fast (90% kcal

from fat) doesn't seem to have more benefits than a fast with less fat and more protein. This doesn't mean that traditional fat fast doesn't work. It only means that even if you eat slightly more protein, you may achieve the same or better results. [Since protein is the most satiating macronutrient](#), it will help you keep hunger at bay during the fast.

Here's a simple calculation: the adequate protein intake from 1200 kcal for an average person is about 15-20% (or even more for physically active people and those with less body fat and more lean mass). Since you'll be eating ~ 5% or less calories from carbs on a fat fast, you will be left with 75-80% of calories from fat. Not a big difference from the "traditional" fat fast.



Studies from the 1950's and 1960's (first by Kekwick and Pawan, <sup>1</sup> later by Benoit <sup>2</sup> ) showed that fat fast is best for fat loss and preserving muscle mass when comparing three diets (1000 kcal diet with 90% fat vs. 1000 kcal diet with 90% protein vs. 1000 kcal diet with 90% carbohydrates). However, these studies have been shown to be largely flawed. While Kekwick and Pawan admitted that participants may have been cheating and the study was poorly controlled, Benoit's results seemed to have been overrated. In his study from 1965, Dr. Benoit compared results achieved in obese participants by putting them on a *fat fast* and on a *complete fast*. Interestingly, those following a fat fast resulted in twice as much fat loss compared to those following a total fast during which they lost more muscle mass and less body fat. In later reviews of this study, some experts pointed out that the participants would have to have enormous energy expenditure to reach such weight loss results.

An extract from a [review of studies from 2006 on protein-sparing effects of very low-carb diets](#):

*"Because of metabolic adaptations to prolonged changes in diet composition, the results of such short-term studies cannot be applied to longer-term situations... Although more long-term studies are needed before a firm conclusion can be drawn, it appears, from most literature studied, that a VLCARB is, if anything, protective against muscle protein catabolism during energy restriction, provided that it contains adequate amounts of protein."*

Keep in mind that **prolonged calorie restriction with inadequate amount of protein can lead to deficiencies, muscle mass loss and a decreased BMR**. That's why you shouldn't do the fat fast for more than 5 days. It's also important to mention that no study seems to take keto-adaptation / fat-adaptation into consideration. The body works differently for sugar-burners and those who are fat-adapted and the logical conclusion would be that fat-adapted people would lose less muscle mass during a fat fast.

## When to Consider the Fat Fast

Here are the rules for when to follow the fat fast:

- If you **are already keto-adapted**. Otherwise, it will be very difficult for you, as your body is not used to the ketogenic diet. If you are not keto-adapted, try following the ketogenic diet for 3-4 weeks and only use the fat fast technique if you reach a weight loss plateau. You can start by following my weekly diet plan here: [7-Day Grab & Go Keto/Paleo Diet Plan](#)
- If for any reason **your weight is stalling for more than 2-3 weeks** and you have eliminated [all the potential reasons](#). Make sure you check your [keto ratio](#) to eliminate the most obvious reasons for weight stalling such as too many carbs, inadequate amount of protein, fats or calories in your diet. You may want to try intermittent fasting (I'll talk about IF more in one of my upcoming posts).
- If **you had a "cheat day"** and would like to get back on track the next day. I would personally not use the fat fast for this situation but it is up to you. I would just keep eating healthy, low-carb foods from the day following your "cheat day" instead of giving my body such a calorie shock.

## How Do I follow Fat Fast? What Should I Eat?

Because most of your calories will come from fat, you have to make sure to include healthy fats such as MUFA, Omega 3s and saturated fats. You can follow [this guide I have created for fats and oils](#) to make the right choices.

The traditional *Fat Fast* guidelines advice is to eat **4-5 small meals** a day, each about **200-250 kcal**. This is totally up to you. If you prefer to have 1-2 regular meals like I do, it's perfectly fine. You can follow the fat fast for no more than 3-5 days.

### Tips before you get started:

- Ideally, you should **take a multivitamin** to make up for the missing micronutrients on a fat fast.
- **Don't plan to do any extensive exercise** on the days of fat fast. Don't plan doesn't mean be inactive. You can always include light cardio (walking) or some strength training at home (squats, press-ups, etc.) but you should take it easy and avoid prolonged exercise. I personally didn't feel lack of energy or hunger and could easily incorporate some exercise every day (either 30-60 minutes walking or 20-30 minutes strength training).
- **Get an app to help you track your diet** or make sure you track whatever you eat on a piece of paper. [My iPad app](#) has been designed specifically for low-carb, ketogenic & paleo diets. This way you can easily keep track of your macros and calorie intake, both of which are critical on a fat fast.

## Many Small or Few Regular Meals? It's Up To You...

Traditional *fat fast* as defined by Dr Atkins in *New Diet Revolution* says you should be eating 4-5 small meals throughout the day, each of them containing 200-250 kcal. However, what I've learnt is that **once you get keto-adapted, you don't need to eat many small meals a day to stay sated**. In fact, it may be easier for you to just eat 1-2 regular meals rather than many small meals, especially if you are used to [intermittent fasting](#). Eating 1-2 large meals and having a long gap between meals (16-22 hours) is an example of intermittent fasting.

I rarely eat breakfast and often have my first meal round 1 pm. When I was doing the fat fast, I ate the



same number of meals I'm used to (2 meals a day plus 1-2 cups of coffee with cream). I just increased the amount of fat to 80-90% and ate no more than 1200 kcal. In fact, **unless you are hypoglycemic**, you don't need to eat too often. However, those of you who find it easier to have several small meals, you can try all sorts of fat bombs from my blog.

Keep in mind that eating just 1-2 meals instead of 5 small is my approach and it may not be suitable for everyone. I've tried the fat fast twice (with 4-5 meals and 1-2 meals a day) just to make sure all of these can be done and experienced the same results on both plans. However, I was struggling to follow the plan with several small meals. I always wanted to eat more than just a handful and my mind was thinking

about food.

Below is an overview of foods you can include on your fasting days. Plus here is a [complete list of suitable recipes that is updated regularly](#), making it easier and less boring for you to follow the fat fast!

"Small" Meals: Here is a selection of small meals you can have if you opt for 4-5 meals a day, each ~ 200-250 kcal.	% Fat	kcal
<b>Easy 3-ingredient fat bombs</b> (coconut oil, cocoa powder and stevia) - simply follow the recipe for my <a href="#">Chocolate Coconut Candies</a> and only use the 3 ingredients listed above	92	65
<a href="#">Strawberry Cheesecake Fat Bombs</a>	90	67
2 oz / 60g olives	96	82
<a href="#">Other Fat Bombs</a> , all sorts of fat bombs from my blog (values per piece)	90-95	100-150
Coffee with 2 tbsp heavy whipping cream (or coconut milk)	95	109
<a href="#">Low-Carb Cappuccino (dairy-free)</a>	90	113
2 oz / 60g cream cheese	86	138
1 oz / 30g extra dark chocolate (85% cocoa solids)	77	150

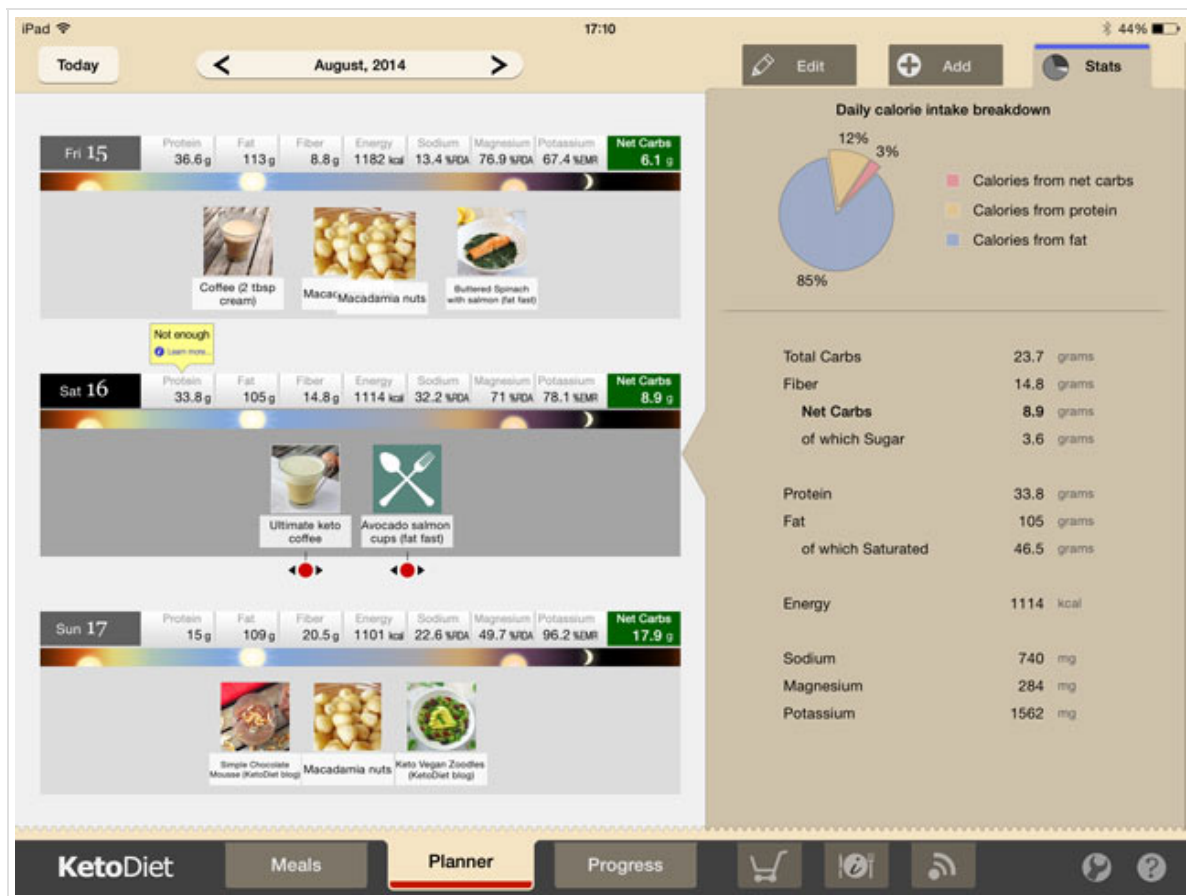
1 oz coconut butter (= blended coconut meat, not the same as coconut oil)	91	159
<a href="#">Home-made Coconut &amp; Pecan Butter</a> , 1 tbsp	79	151
1 oz / 30g almonds	78	163
<b>Deviled eggs:</b> 1 large hard-boiled egg, 1 tbsp mayo seasoned with salt and pepper	85	182
1 oz / 30g walnuts	87	185
2 tbsp full-fat cream cheese rolled in 1 oz of ham	79	186
1 oz almond butter	82	188
<b>Smoked salmon &amp; cream cheese rolls:</b> 2 oz / 60g smoked salmon, 3 oz / 85g cream cheese	75	189
2 oz / 60g full-fat cheese such as brie	75	189
1 oz / 30g macadamia nuts	93	203
1 oz / 30g of macadamia nut butter with 1 oz / 30g celery stalk	92	209
2 tbsp coconut oil. Yes, if you can eat coconut oil just like this, spoon some right into your mouth!	100	234
3 large slices / 3 oz bacon	81	239
<b>Buttered spinach:</b> 1 cup spinach (5.5 oz / 156g) cooked in 2 tbsp cream and 1 tbsp butter seasoned with salt	85	256
<a href="#">Broccoli Cheese Pie</a>	72	258
<a href="#">Spiced Coconut Chips</a>	93	259
<b>Easy Avocado Salad:</b> ½ medium avocado (3.5 oz / 100g) mashed with 1 tbsp mayonnaise (home-made if possible) and seasoned with salt	94	272
<b>Fish &amp; mayo tacos:</b> 2 oz / 60g mackerel, salmon or sardines (cooked or tinned) with 2 tbsp <a href="#">mayo</a> served on 1-2 small lettuce leaves and seasoned with salt	84	292
1 oz / 30g roasted pecans in 1 tbsp ghee, butter or coconut oil with a pinch of salt	95	297
<b>"Regular" Meals: Here is a selection of small meals you can have if you opt for 2-3 meals a day, each ~ 400-700 kcal.</b>	<b>% Fat</b>	<b>kcal</b>
<b>Scrambled eggs:</b> 2 large scrambled eggs with 1 tbsp butter and 1 tbsp cream cheese	80	323
<a href="#">Cheese-Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms</a>	76	334
<a href="#">Low-Carb Thin Crust White Pizza</a>	73	352
<a href="#">Shamrock Eggs with Braised Spinach</a>	75	360
<a href="#">Keto Mexican Rice</a>	74	385
<a href="#">Egg &amp; Celeriac Nests</a>	74	397
<a href="#">Brussels Sprout and Bacon Hash</a>	72	400
<b>Poached eggs with Hollandaise:</b> 2 poached eggs with one serving of <a href="#">Hollandaise sauce</a>	83	417
<a href="#">Delicious &amp; Simple Chocolate Mousse</a>	88	435
<a href="#">Strawberry &amp; Rhubarb Parfait</a>	89	448

Grilled Halloumi With Strawberry & Cucumber Salsa	76	449
Keto Vegan "Zoodles"	86	449
Ultimate Keto Coffee	85	474
All Day Keto Breakfast	78	489
Keto Mexican Chocolate Shake	91	503
Ultimate Bacon Hash (without the orange juice)	80	521
<b>Avocado &amp; salmon salad:</b> 2 oz / 60g smoked or cooked salmon with 2 oz / 60g cream cheese, 1 tbsp mayo and 1 tbsp finely chopped spring onion or chives on top of one avocado (7.1 oz / 200g) seasoned with salt	82	526
Paleo Greek Meatballs aka Soutzoukakia	72	539
BBQ Pork Ribs	71	586
<b>Quick Tzatziki</b> from ½ cup sour cream (4.1 oz / 120g), 3 oz / 85g grated cucumber, 1 clove mashed garlic, 1 tbsp lemon juice, 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, 1 tsp freshly chopped dill and salt	90	539
<b>Shirataki noodles with bacon &amp; cheese sauce:</b> 1 packet, 7.1 oz / 200g shirataki noodles, drained and fried on 2 tbsp butter or coconut oil with 2 slices bacon (2 oz / 60 g), 2 tbsp heavy whipping cream, 1 oz / 30g grated cheddar cheese and salt)	87	604
Paleo Stuffed Avocado	78	633
<b>Buttered spinach with salmon:</b> ½ cup spinach (2.8 oz / 78g) cooked in 2 tbsp butter seasoned with salt and topped with a small salmon fillet (4.4 oz / 125g) cooked on 1 tablespoon of butter or coconut oil and topped with 2 tbsp of home-made pesto - <a href="#">Paleo Avocado Pesto</a> or <a href="#">Red Pesto</a>	79	639
Quick Beef Ragù with "Zoodles"	73	645
<b>Avocado &amp; mackerel salad:</b> 2 oz / 60g mackerel with 2 oz / 60g cream cheese and 1 tbsp mayo on top of one avocado (7.1 oz / 200g) seasoned with salt	86	689
Pumpkin & Beef Sauté	73	762
Keto Omelet Wrap	78	765
Herbed Omelet	81	719
Salmon with Creamy Spinach & Hollandaise Sauce	81	813

### 3-Day Meal Plan (85-90% fat):

I've tried the fat fast twice and I'll be sharing my progress details as well as my meal plan (Update: you can find [my experiment here](#)). For now, here are **two sample meal plans** I created using the [KetoDiet iPad app](#). These meal plans are designed for those who prefer to eat 2-3 regular meals. The first one is higher in fat (85-90% calories from fat), while the second is lower in fat (75-80% calories from fat) and higher in protein (15-20% calories from protein). If you don't drink coffee, substitute it with tea or a few nuts of your choice.





## Day 1

- Coffee with 2 tbsp heavy whipping cream or coconut milk (94% fat, 112 kcal) and 2 oz / 60g of macadamia nuts (93% fat, 406 kcal)
- **Buttered Spinach with Salmon:** ½ cup spinach (2.8 oz / 78g) cooked in 2 tbsp butter seasoned with salt and topped with a small salmon fillet (4.4 oz / 125g) cooked on 1 tablespoon of butter or coconut oil and topped with 2 tbsp of home-made pesto ([Paleo Avocado Pesto](#) or [Red Pesto](#)) (79% fat, 639 kcal)

**Total daily values:** Total carbs: 14.8 g, Fiber: 8.8 g, Net carbs: 6.1 g, Protein: 36.6 g, Fat: 113 g, **Calories: 1182 kcal**, Magnesium: 307 mg (77% RDA), Potassium: 1347 mg (67% EMR), **86% calories from fat**

## Day 2

- [Ultimate Keto Coffee](#) (85% fat, 474 kcal)
- **Avocado & salmon salad:** 2 oz / 60g smoked or cooked salmon with 2 oz / 60g cream cheese, 1 tbsp [home-made mayo](#) and 1 tbsp finely chopped spring onion or chives on top of one avocado (7.1 oz / 200g) seasoned with salt (82% fat, 526 kcal)

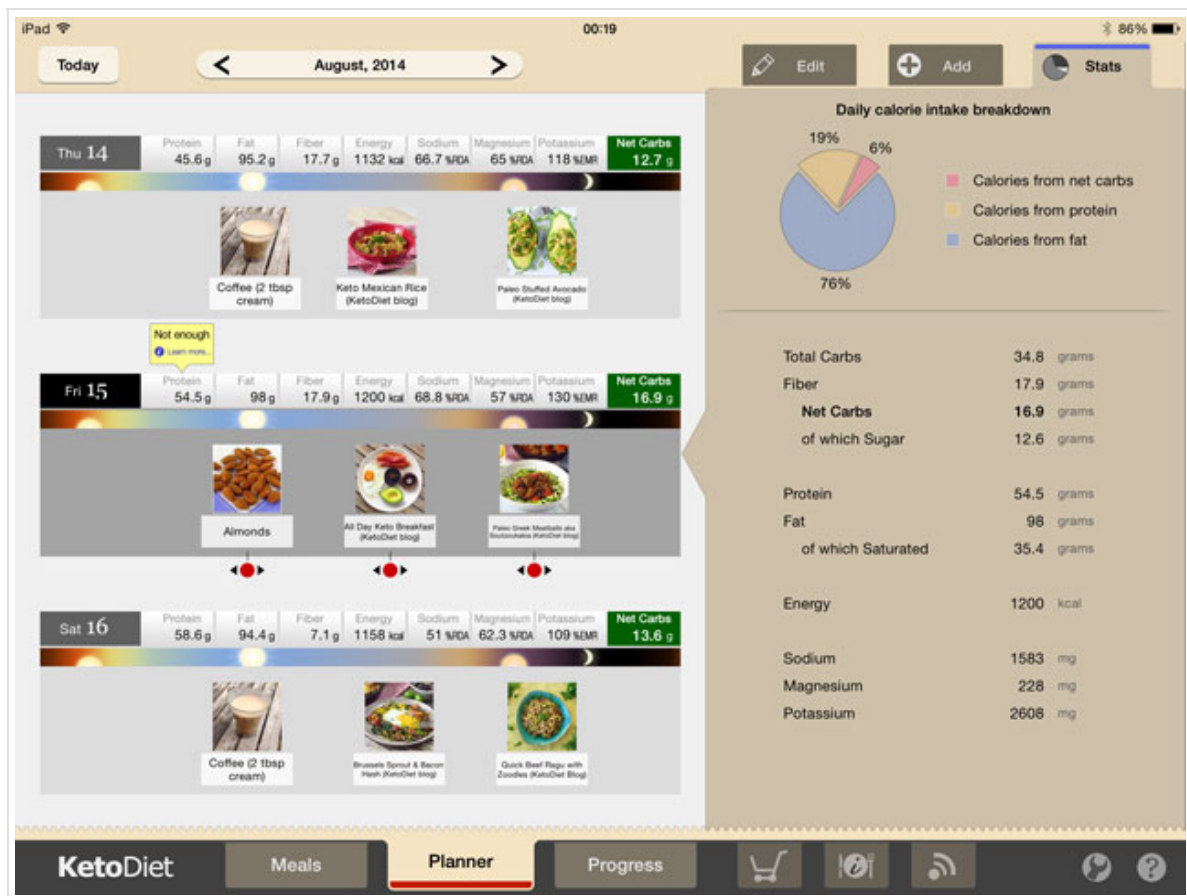
**Total daily values:** *Total carbs: 23.7 g, Fiber: 14.8 g, Net carbs: 8.9 g, Protein: 33.8 g, Fat: 105 g, **Calories: 1114 kcal**, Magnesium: 284 mg (71% RDA), Potassium: 1562 mg (78% EMR), **85% calories from fat***

## Day 3

- [Delicious & Simple Chocolate Mousse](#) - use coconut milk, soured cream or whipped cream (88% fat, 435 kcal)
- 1 oz of macadamia nuts (93% fat, 203 kcal)
- [Keto Vegan "Zoodles"](#) (86% fat, 449 kcal)

**Total daily values:** *Total carbs: 38.3 g, Fiber: 20.5 g, Net carbs: 17.9 g, Protein: 15 g, Fat: 109 g, **Calories: 1101 kcal**, Magnesium: 198 mg (50% RDA), Potassium: 1924 mg (96% EMR), **88% calories from fat***

## 3-Day Meal Plan (75-80% fat):



## Day 1

- Coffee with 2 tbsp heavy whipping cream or coconut milk (94% fat, 112 kcal)
- Keto Mexican Rice (75% fat, 385 kcal)
- Paleo Stuffed Avocado (78% fat, 633 kcal)

**Total daily values:** Total carbs: 30.4 g, Fiber: 17.7 g, Net carbs: 12.7 g, Protein: 45.6 g, Fat: 95.2 g, **Calories: 1132 kcal**, Magnesium: 259 mg (65% RDA), Potassium: 2368 mg (118% EMR), **79% calories from fat**

## Day 2

- 1 oz / 30 g almonds, roasted or raw (78% fat, 172 kcal)

- All Day Keto Breakfast (78% fat, 489 kcal)
- Paleo Greek Meatballs aka Soutzoukakia (72% fat, 539 kcal)

**Total daily values:** Total carbs: 34.8 g, Fiber: 17.9 g, Net carbs: 16.9 g, Protein: 54.5 g, Fat: 98 g, **Calories: 1200 kcal**, Magnesium: 228 mg (57% RDA), Potassium: 2608 mg (130% EMR), **76% calories from fat**

### Day 3

- Coffee with 2 tbsp heavy whipping cream or coconut milk (94% fat, 112 kcal)
- Brussels Sprout and Bacon Hash (72% fat, 400 kcal)
- Quick Beef Ragù with "Zoodles" (73% fat, 645 kcal)

**Total daily values:** Total carbs: 20.7 g, Fiber: 7.1 g, Net carbs: 13.6 g, Protein: 58.6 g, Fat: 94.4 g, **Calories: 1158 kcal**, Magnesium: 249 mg (62% RDA), Potassium: 2195 mg (109% EMR), **75% calories from fat**

## Fat Fast FAQ

### Is fat fast suitable for everyone?

As mentioned above, fat fast is suitable for breaking through a weight loss plateau and those who are already keto-adapted. If you attempt to do a fat fast without being used to a LCHF (low-carb, high-fat) diet, you will make your life difficult. Make sure you follow a low-carb diet for at least 4 weeks before you try a fat fast.

Keep in mind that fat fast is quite extreme and if you have any medical conditions such as diabetes, **you have to inform your doctor and only follow the fat fast under his medical supervision.** It is very likely that with any dietary changes, you

medication dose may need to be adjusted. This recommendation applies to all dietary changes, especially if you start following a low-carb diet that is very different to what most people have been used to (based on the Standard Dietary Guidelines).

**If you are hypoglycemic, you will likely have to eat more small meals a day (traditional Atkins approach) and avoid eating irregularly.**

### Is it safe to follow fat fast for more than 5 days?

Although studies by Kekwick and Pawan and then by Benoit showed no negative side effects on a 10-day fat fast, they have proven to have many flaws and the results are therefore unreliable. The main reason you don't want to do fat fast for longer is the increasing risk of muscle mass and deficiencies during prolonged periods. It's better to be safe than sorry and for this reason, I'd personally follow the fat fast for up to 5 days, as originally recommended by Dr Atkins. Some resources say that fat fasting for longer (e.g. 10 days) is dangerous but I haven't found any supporting evidence to these claims.

### What if I'm hungry?

Fat is calorie-dense and when you eat 1000-1200 kcal from fat, you'll realise it's not a lot of food. It's still better than doing a complete fast but you may feel hungry, at least during the first 1-2 days. **If you are not keto-adapted, don't do the fat fast.** You will feel hungry with no energy and most likely will [develop symptoms of "keto-flu"](#).



Drink loads of water, tea and some coffee and **if you have to, avoid all sweeteners, including low-carb.** Even [low-carb / zero-carb sweeteners](#) may trigger cravings in some people. If you are one of them, avoid using sweet *fat bombs* during this fast.

Most people find it **easier to eat 4-5 smaller meals** a day while others (including me) prefer to eat 1-2 regular meals. Make sure you don't exceed the 1200 kcal limit. When it comes to fat

percentage per day, it's up to you. As mentioned above in the first part of this post, adding some protein seems to do no harm. Do not add more carbs. If you eat less than 80% fat, make sure it is compensated with protein, not carbs.

## Do I gain all the weight back?

After you complete your fat fast, you should go back to your previous way of eating (low-carb, whole foods). Don't expect to keep all the weight off. Although you will probably gain some of the weight back, you should be able to keep a few pounds off. The weight gain doesn't necessarily mean you gain body fat. When you lose weight on a fat fast, part of it is because your digestive system gets "empty" and you also lose water.

If you follow a 3-day fat fast, you should lose 4-8 pounds and gain up to 40-50% back. If you follow a 5-day fat fast, the weight loss could be even larger, up to 6-10 pounds and again gaining up to 40-50% back. The fat loss depends on your current weight and body fat percentage. In general, people with more weight and higher body fat percentage lose more fat than those with just a few extra pounds.

## Can I do fat fast without dairy?

Yes, you can. Use coconut milk / creamed coconut milk instead of cream and cheese and ghee, lard or coconut oil instead of butter. You can also use [mayonnaise](#) instead of cream cheese in some of the suggested recipes. Although I didn't follow a dairy-free fat fast, I was naturally avoiding too much dairy and included foods rich in micronutrients (avocado, nuts, eggs, spinach, etc.)

- 
1. Kekwick, A., and Pawan, L.S., "Calorie Intake in Relation to Body Weight Changes in the Obese", *Lancet*, 1956 and "Metabolic Study in Human Obesity with Isocaloric Diets High in Fat, Protein and Carbohydrate", *Metabolism*, 1957 ↩
  2. Benoit, F.L. et al., "Changes in body Composition During Weight Reduction in Obesity: Balance Studies Comparing Effects of Fasting and a Ketogenic Diet", *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 1965 ↩