

# The “big day” diet

How to slim down fast—  
and wow friends and  
family you haven't seen  
in ages *by Jim Karas*

**U**h-oh. That family wedding (or anniversary or high school reunion—yes, you really did graduate 25 years ago) is coming up. You had vowed to lose weight, but so far, the scale hasn't budged. It's time to stop making excuses and to start some serious slimming. How to do it quickly and, let's be honest, without too much sacrifice? Just follow this simple diet faithfully (emphasis on *faithfully*). I estimate that the average woman will drop about two pounds a week. But why be average? If you throw in a little exercise (or a lot), you can shed more. It's up to you. Here are some ground rules.

On the next page, I've suggested five options for each meal. So every day, select one breakfast, lunch, and dinner from the lists. Don't worry about keeping track of your calories—I've done the counting, so you can eat three satisfying meals and come out with a total of 1,200 calories. (Yes, I'm talking calories, not carbs. Research shows that calories are all that matter when you're dieting.) Following my “3-4-5 rule,” you'll eat about 300 calories in the morning, 400 in the early afternoon, and 500 at night. (A note to superbusy moms: I've included some fast-food options because, as we all know, going to a drive-through is much easier than cooking for a crowd when things are hectic.) Some days are tough to survive without a snack—but if you're going to grab something, choose from my list of healthy, 100-calorie options. And remember that every calorie counts, so don't go overboard.

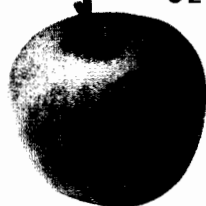


Do you have to eat something different every day? No. Researchers say that successful dieters eat the same things over and over because they like the food and they know the calorie count. So feel free to customize this diet to satisfy your tastes—just be religious about the portion sizes so that the calories will stay the same.

Drink lots of water—at least nine 8-ounce glasses a day. When you don't drink enough, your body starts to feel like it's stranded in the desert, and it holds on to whatever moisture is on hand. The result: You may begin to bloat. So drink up. And just say no to alcohol. Besides adding lots of calories, it's a serious dehydrator. Another super-bloater: salt. Please, put down the shaker! ►

## Ready, set, lose weight!

### Breakfast (300 calories each)—Choose one a day



- 2 poached or hard-boiled eggs (either is a great choice when you're eating out) plus 1 toasted English muffin
- 1 cup nonfat vanilla yogurt and 1 cup cut-up mixed fruit
- 1 package instant oatmeal (but skip the calorie-laden flavored varieties) with 1 cup skim milk and an apple
- 1 cup raisin bran plus  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup skim milk, topped with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fresh or frozen berries (both types are packed with nutrition)
- A McDonald's Egg McMuffin (only 290 calories!)

### Lunch (400 calories each)—Choose one a day

- 4 cups salad (with lettuce, tomato, broccoli, spinach, and other veggies you love) plus a 6-ounce can of water-packed tuna. Add 50 calories' worth of your favorite calorie-reduced dressing or make your own—like 1 teaspoon olive oil mixed with balsamic vinegar and a little Dijon mustard.
- 2 slices whole wheat bread (or a 6-inch pita) topped with 4 ounces lean deli-style turkey or chicken (I love the Healthy Choice varieties), 1 tablespoon light mayonnaise, 2 teaspoons mustard, lettuce, and tomato slices. Finish



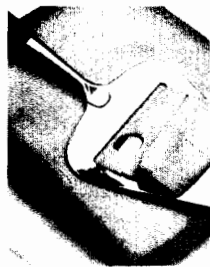
the meal off with an apple.

- Burger King Original Whopper Jr. Sandwich, which is 370 calories. If you hold the mayo, you'll shave off 80 of those calories—and then you can eat an apple, a pear, or a banana for dessert.
- 1 cup 2% (or lower) calcium-fortified cottage cheese and 2 cups cut-up mixed fruit—the darker and brighter the color, the more the nutrients and vitamins
- A big bowl (about 2 cups) of homemade or canned bean soup (like minestrone, black bean, or lentil). For a sweet finish, grab an orange.

### Dinner (500 calories each)—Choose one a day

- 6 ounces skinless turkey breast, white-flesh fish, or skinless chicken breast (roasted or broiled); 1 small baked potato; and 2 cups steamed veggies
- 2 Boca Burgers (from the freezer case at your market) on 2 slices whole wheat bread or an English muffin, topped with a few tomato slices and 1 tablespoon ketchup and mustard;  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cottage cheese
- Cheese plate. Toast 1 piece of bread; add 2 ounces of any hard or semisoft cheese (but not triple-cream Brie). Eat it with a pear and an apple, both sliced.
- Chicken taco. Into a 9-inch tortilla, stuff 4 ounces

grilled chicken strips,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup shredded cabbage,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped red onion,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup shredded low-fat cheese, and 4 tablespoons salsa. You can throw in an orange for dessert.



- Pasta. Yes, you can eat it! Mix 1 cup cooked pasta with 2 cups cooked veggies (I go for squash, zucchini, and bell peppers). Then add up to 1 cup low-fat spaghetti sauce.

### Snacks (100 calories each)—For when you really need one to tide you over

- String cheese
- 5 Triscuits
- 1 cup light yogurt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cottage cheese
- 1 pear, apple, or banana
- 12 roasted almonds
- 1 Jolly Time Healthy Pop Mini Bag popcorn
- 20 cherries