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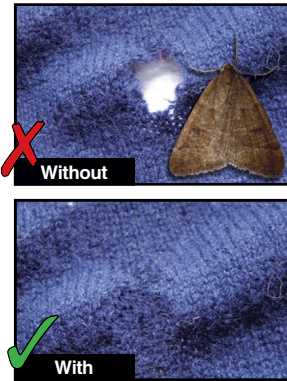
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Have fun fasting

USUALLY a diet stands for restriction and deprivation. It means denying yourself your favourite foods, tasty treats and fun nights out. However the 48 Hour Diet is different. It's designed to fit into a busy lifestyle. It's not like a conventional weight-loss plan where you count every calorie until you're bored to tears. Remember, on this diet you eat delicious, healthy meals and snacks five days a week and you have between 500 and 600 calories on your two "fasting" days. All this week I've shared my exclusive meal plan and easy-to-follow recipes. Today I will show you how to follow the diet and still buy takeaway lunches, dine with friends and attend special occasions.

TAKEAWAY LUNCHES AND DINNERS

Earlier this week I showed you a variety of tasty and healthy recipes to make when you're on the diet. They include 250-calorie meals for the fasting days and substantial breakfasts, lunches and dinners for the five non-fasting days.

However sometimes you don't have time to cook, you're too busy or you just can't be bothered. Fortunately it's easy to stick to the 48 Hour Diet and still grab food on the go from supermarkets and sandwich shops.

The key is getting used to reading the labels. If you can't pronounce what it says on the label, you probably shouldn't be eating it.

Even though you are strict

for only two days it is important that you eat a healthy diet overall. You're eating less than usual so you shouldn't waste your precious calories on fatty or sugary foods that give you a quick hit without filling you up. The best way to achieve a healthy diet is to eat foods that contain real ingredients, not a load of tongue-twisting chemical names or random numbers and letters.

Think about it. Nobody binges on lentil soup or freshly cooked fish, do they?

SNACKS

The fasting days need planning. However if you do leave it to the last minute and don't have time to follow a recipe, arm yourself with snacks. Hard-boiled eggs are the ultimate food on the go. Not only are they low in saturated fat but if you eat eggs in the morning you are less likely to feel hungry later in the day.

Fruit is obviously low in calories and keeping plain salad in the fridge or packet soups close to the kettle is a good idea. If you're craving a sweet snack and only a chocolate fix will do, eat a couple of squares of the dark variety. Most people need less of it to feel satisfied.

RESTAURANT DINING

I love eating in restaurants and the good news is there's no need to become a hermit on this diet but some guidelines do apply.

Salads, soups and vegetables are bulked up with fibre and water. That means they fill you up without filling you full of calories.

Combining these with lean protein such as fish or chicken is ideal. Good-quality protein is low in calories and helps you stay fuller for longer.

Watch out for creamy sauces and dressings. Swap them for tomato-based sauces. Add herbs, lemon, spices and garlic to reduced-fat meals to boost flavour. In many cases asking for your meal to be cooked with less oil or fat can help. Anything deep fried is most certainly out so choose grilled, steamed or oven-baked options.

You might be surprised to learn you can eat curries on the 48 Hour Diet.

Nutritionist AMANDA HAMILTON explains how you can eat out and still enjoy healthy, slimming meals with her exclusive diet plan



As long as you choose the lighter versions (tandoori rather than korma) and opt for a chapatti over a naan bread or rice, an Indian meal can be relatively low in calories. Italian food is also on the menu but go for pasta with a tomato sauce rather than one that is cheese or cream-based. Cheese can be eaten but only as a topping. Choose types with a strong flavour such as parmesan or goat's cheese so you need only a little. To make the most out of the dining experience, I suggest you eat out on your non-fasting days. However if you do find yourself in a restaurant on your two fasting days you'll be pleased to know it is possible to find a few meals under 250 calories as you can see in my suggestions (right).

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

You don't need to turn down any invitations. Simply plan your fasting days away from special events. Many people naturally have a day of light eating after overdoing it so the fasting diet simply adds more structure. If you go over the top one day you know the following day's fasting will get you back on track.

Remember much of the good work can be undone with what you drink rather than what you eat. Alcohol contains empty calories. If you're out for the evening try some healthy soft drinks such as tonic with cordial or an alcohol-free grape juice as a tasty substitute for wine.

If you're at a party with a buffet table avoid the beige-coloured food, the pastry and bread nibbles such as quiche, sausage rolls and Scotch eggs. Creamy sauces also pile on the fat and calories so give anything with cream a miss too.

DINNER PARTIES

Food should always be fun and the chance to share a meal with friends should never be missed in my opinion.

Use your head. Don't eat bread or crisps before the meal has even started and if the meal is very calorific have a small portion. Fill up on side salads and vegetables and share a pudding with the person next to you or skip it altogether.

If all else fails, relax, enjoy yourself and make sure you add in some extra exercise to burn off any indulgences.

BARBECUES

It's hard to believe the weather will ever be warm enough for a barbecue but alfresco dining is one of our favourite summer pastimes. Fortunately barbecued



Picture: GETTY

food can be a really healthy option as it is basically outdoor grilling.

Vegetable skewers with chicken, salmon or some cubes of halloumi cheese are much better than a traditional greasy burger in a bun.

Saying that, lean burgers made from beef, venison or turkey are also good. Just ditch the bun and opt for a side salad instead. Small corn on the cobs are a healthy side option.

Avoid eating charred or burnt food and opt for golden brown instead. Blackened food is far more likely to contain acrylamides, a potential carcinogen.

THE CINEMA

What with the giant-size bags of sweets, hotdogs and fizzy drinks on offer, there is

very little in a cinema that would work on any diet, to be honest. However feel free to maintain your new figure rather than stick to a strict routine. In this instance it is easiest to follow another of my lifestyle fasting patterns during which you simply fast for 16 hours in a day and eat within an eight-hour window.

ON HOLIDAY

On holiday you will probably be looking to maintain your new figure rather than stick to a strict routine.

In this instance it is easiest to follow another of my lifestyle fasting patterns during which you simply fast for 16 hours in a day and eat within an eight-hour window.

In other words you skip breakfast and eat your first meal at noon. Just like the 48 Hour Diet the

benefits are considerable and there are no negative side-effects on your metabolism.

For many people the best place to kick-start a fasting programme is on a guided retreat.

For details on fasting retreats and spring and summer special offers visit nourishholidays.com

● To order Eat Fast Slim: The Breakthrough Diet For Amazing Weight Loss And Lifelong Health (Duncan Baird, £8.99) with free UK delivery, call 0871 988 8367 (10p/min from BT landlines) with your card details, send a cheque payable to Express Newspapers to: The Express Bookshop, PO Box 200, Falmouth, TR11 4WJ or order via expressbookshop.co.uk

● For more information visit amandahamiltondiet.com Use the code "dailyexpress13" at the checkout before May 31 to receive 20 per cent off all weight-loss packages.

Here are just some of the delicious lunches and dinners you can grab on the go or take home to cook. I've included the calories in brackets.

LUNCHES AND DINNERS UNDER 250 CALORIES FOR FASTING DAYS

Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Rainbow Salad Bowl (178)

Half a pot of Tesco Finest Puy Lentil and Tomato Soup (192)

Pret A Manger Smokey Root Veg & Bean Soup (192)

Tesco City Kitchen Moroccan Tagine Soup (205)

Sainsbury's lean chicken breast (135) flavoured with garlic and a squeeze of lemon and served with a large portion of Sainsbury's Ready To Roast Mediterranean Vegetables (111)

LUNCHES AND DINNERS FOR NON-FASTING DAYS

Pret A Manger Chicken and Avocado Sandwich (469)



Marks & Spencer Slow Roasted Aubergine and Tomato Curry and Spiced Rice (365)

Eat Spicy Moroccan Vegetable Soup (288) and Grape Bag (80)

Sainsbury's Balanced Beef & Lentil Casserole & Potatoes (415)

Tesco Enjoy Whole Wheat Spaghetti Bolognese (428)

EATING OUT ON FASTING DAYS

Nando's Quarter Chicken Breast in Peri-Peri Sauce (134) and a side of corn (69)



Yo! Sushi Crunchy Tofu Salad (145)

EATING OUT ON NON-FASTING DAYS

Wagamama Chilli Beef Ramen (680)

Pizza Express Light Pizza Padana Leggera with goat's cheese, spinach, garlic oil and caramelised onions (500)

Nando's Couscous Salad with Chicken (371)

Yo! Sushi Beef Tataki Salad (292) with Chocolate and Yogurt Coated Edamame Beans (236)

Wagamama Mixed Selection Sushi Platter (346)

TOMORROW: DISCOVER THE SECRETS TO A HEALTHIER YOU - FOR LIFE