

# Could healthy foods

Choosing the right foods for YOU is key to losing

**W**hen it comes to making slimming food choices, you know the drill—you choose the salmon over the greasy burger, the oatmeal over the syrup-drenched pancakes, and the side of asparagus over the side of fries. And yet, frustratingly, the pounds aren't melting away as quickly as you'd hoped...or maybe you're even gaining weight despite your efforts. What gives? According to nutrition specialist Lyn-Genet Recitas, author of *The Plan*, you may be unknowingly loading your plate with a food that's setting off a fat-packing chain reaction in your body—and the problematic food may be something you'd never suspect. In fact, it might be widely touted as an energy-revving, pound-paring superstar.

"A given food might be healthy in a vacuum, but when combined with your body's unique chemistry, it can become quite toxic," Recitas says. Several factors can cause a food to be reactive, she adds. It can start as a low-level, barely noticeable sensitivity that becomes more pronounced with age—or problems can begin if you make a given item (say turkey) a diet staple because you've heard that particular food is healthy.

As Recitas explains, each time you eat a food that contains a compound or chemical that mildly irritates your body, the immune system releases inflammatory chemicals to attack that "invader." When the food is eaten often and the body is continually forced to launch this immune response, it becomes overwhelmed—and in its weakened state, it becomes even more sensitive to the culprit food.

Once your body becomes overly reactive to a food, it's bad news for your waistline, no matter how many nutrients that food contains. "When you ingest a reactive food and the immune system releases inflammatory



# be making you gain?

**Yes, says Lyn-Genet Recitas, author of the bestselling new book *The Plan*. The reason: Constant exposure to a food can trigger an inflammatory response that packs on fat**

chemicals to attack it, the inflammation inhibits digestion and impairs metabolism,” Recitas explains. “This lowers the body’s calorie-burning ability and causes it to store fluids and fat.” Indeed, she says, one serving of a reactive food can cause a weight spike of up to 4 pounds in a single day.

The more extreme your reaction to a given food is, the more weight you’ll gain when you eat it, suggests research conducted at the Ranguel Institute of Molecular Medicine in France. In the study, scientists looked at a group of adolescents suffering from mild to severe food sensitivities. What they found: Subjects who launched the strongest immune-system response to a problematic food had internal inflammation levels that were three times higher—and a body mass index (BMI) that was more than six times higher—than those of study subjects who were less reactive to that food.

Though a similar study has yet to be conducted on adults, Recitas contends that food reactions can become more common with age. This is especially true after 35, due to downturns in factors that control inflammation, like hormonal changes, drop-offs in beneficial gut bacteria and lower levels of crucial digestive enzymes.

Another complicating factor as we age: Inflammatory chemicals damage the intestinal lining over time, causing microscopic food particles and toxins to leak into the bloodstream. When immune system fighter cells encounter these wayward particles, they attack them as invaders and inflammation

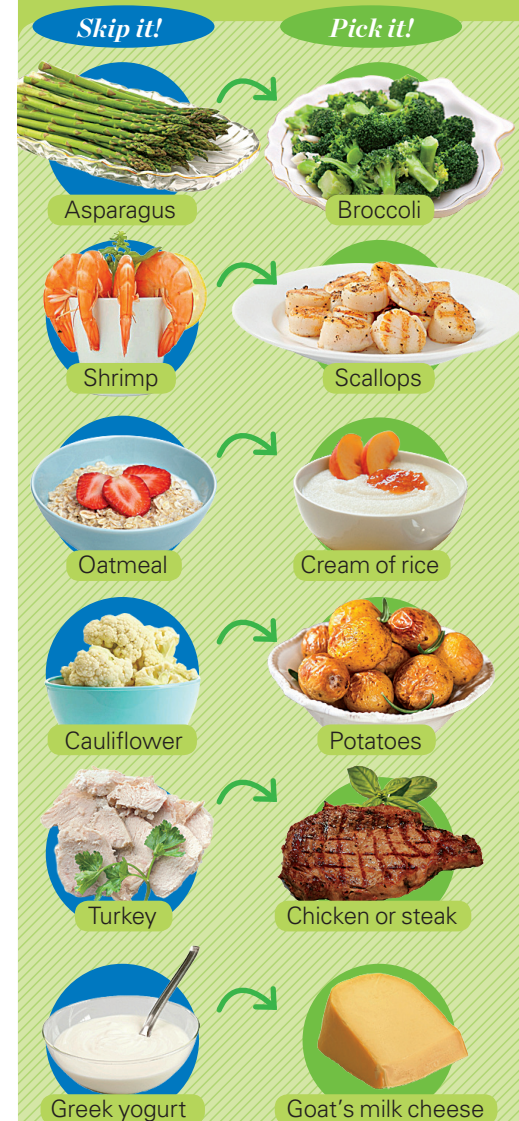
soars even higher. This heightened inflammation hinders cells’ ability to use insulin, causing problems with blood-sugar regulation that result in more sugar being stored as belly fat. In fact, scientists reporting in the journal *Obesity* discovered that people caught in this inflammatory “leaky gut” trap harbor 56 percent more belly fat.

The problem goes beyond weight gain, Recitas adds. When the immune system is launching its inflammatory attack, other body systems take a backseat. “The body wants to function as a perfectly balanced machine, and to do that, it’s always going to deal with the most immediate problem first,” she notes. “When you have an inflammatory food affecting your intestines, the body diverts energy from your brain, heart, liver and lungs in order to deal with this invader.” This results in symptoms such as brain fog, fatigue, depression, headaches and other aches and pains—the sort of problems women typically accept as “normal” consequences of stress and aging.

The good news from Recitas, who has seen the proof in thousands of clients: Feeling that way is *not* normal—and you *can* correct it. When you do a little detective work and identify the food—or foods—that are reactive for you, you’ll be able to avoid them. This allows the body to heal and pounds to drop off at a steady clip—all while energy levels spike, mood improves and aches and pains ease. “Controlling inflammation isn’t just about losing weight,” Recitas emphasizes. “It’s about feeling good.”

## 6 swaps that can fast-track weight loss

Nutrition expert Lyn-Genet Recitas has identified several foods that, although rich in nutrients, are weight-gain culprits for 70 to 85 percent of her clients. If one of these is a staple in your diet and you’re having trouble losing, trading it for the “pick it” can kick-start slimming.



Turn for your slimming formula

## THE KEY TO WOW-WORTHY RESULTS

Before starting your slimming program, it's important to address a sneaky weight-loss saboteur that prevents many women—especially those ages 35 and older—from enjoying optimal results on this or any other plan: an overgrowth of yeast, which triggers diet-sabotaging cravings. Since yeast thrives on sugar and fermented foods, nutrition specialist Lyn-Genet Recitas suggests this quickie self-test to help identify an overgrowth: Take one day to enjoy several servings of the foods yeast love—such as chocolate and other sweets, balsamic vinegar, wine and beer. The next morning, look at your tongue in the mirror upon waking. If you see a white coating, it's a sign that yeast is an issue for you.

“The best way to counteract yeast overgrowth is through a course of high-quality probiotics,” says Recitas, who advises choosing a brand that has between 30 and 50 billion active cultures. (She suggests Renew Life Ultimate Flora Critical Care, \$21 for 14 capsules; look for it in the refrigerated section of health-food stores and specialty retailers like Whole Foods Market.) “I find that most people respond to probiotic treatment within a week and are ready to start phase 1 of the program with yeast issues well under control.”

### Phase 1

#### Flush toxins to melt 5 lbs in 72 hours

**DAYS 1-3** During this phase you'll eliminate all highly reactive foods from your diet. “This resets your system by decreasing inflammation and creates a purified, neutral baseline against which you'll begin testing new foods,” Recitas explains. Since you'll be detoxing, you may experience flu-like symptoms, headaches, fatigue, light-headedness and irritability, but hang in there: “Symptoms such as these are perfectly normal and, thankfully, usually pass within the first 24 to 48 hours,” she assures. And after 72 hours, you could be up to 5 pounds slimmer!

**Your slimming how-to:** On all three days, weigh yourself when you wake up and record the results in a journal. Then, before breakfast, drink 16 oz. of water with lemon juice added to taste. You'll also take a liver-support supplement (Recitas likes Now Foods Liver Detoxifier & Regenerator, \$16 for 90 capsules, at [drugstore.com](http://drugstore.com)) or drink a cup of herbal tea that contains dandelion root (Recitas recommends Yogi Detox Herbal Tea, \$3 for 16 tea bags, at [Vitacost.com](http://Vitacost.com)).

Each day for breakfast, have 1 cup of flax granola. (To make, mix

1 cup of whole flaxseeds with ½ cup of water seasoned with cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves to taste; refrigerate overnight, then spread in a thin layer on a baking sheet and bake at 275°F for 50 minutes, turning several times to dry out; makes 2 to 3 servings.) Enjoy with ½ cup of blueberries, apples, raisins or pears, plus a glass of coconut milk (like Silk) or rice milk (like Rice Dream).

For lunch and dinner, choose one of the following meals: Sautéed Kale and Mushrooms, Roasted Winter Vegetables, Carrot-Ginger Soup or Spicy Vegetarian Soup (see the “Mix-and-match meals” boxes below and on the following pages for recipes).

Also drink plenty of water (1 oz. for every 2 pounds you weigh—for example, 75 oz. if you're 150 pounds), and enjoy your favorite unsweetened, caffeine-free herbal teas.

### Phase 2

#### ID your fat traps to slim down without struggle

In this next phase, you'll be adding a different *potentially* reactive food each day, then taking note of how you feel so you can determine whether that food is causing internal inflammation and weight gain. Among the signs that a food is triggering a reaction: a weight spike of up to 4 pounds in a

## Mix-and-match meals to jump-start your slimdown



These meals contain foods that are non-reactive for most people, so they can be enjoyed throughout the diet. And as your testing reveals more non-reactive foods, you can add those to recipes as well.

#### MANGO-CUCUMBER CHICKEN

Mix 1 sliced mango, 1 sliced cucumber, ½ minced roasted jalapeno and juice of 1 lime. Enjoy with 3 oz. chicken. Serve with a salad of arugula, ¼ avocado and carrots and a side of steamed broccoli drizzled with orange oil. For orange oil: Wash and zest 1 orange, then soak zest in ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil.

#### SAUTÉED KALE AND MUSHROOMS WITH BEET-AND-CARROT SALAD

Saute 3 cups chopped kale and 2 chopped shiitake mushrooms in 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil and the herbs of your choice. Top with pumpkin seeds. Serve with Beet and Carrot Salad. To make salad: Peel and grate 4 whole carrots and 1 small beet; toss to combine. (Serves 4.)



single day and/or flare-ups of chronic health concerns such as acne, psoriasis, GI distress, joint pain, depression, insomnia and fatigue. Symptoms can set in within 10 minutes to several hours of eating. “It’s not normal to suddenly get a headache after a meal...or be tired...or look in the mirror and notice bags under your eyes that weren’t there a few hours earlier,” says Recitas. “Your body is constantly ‘talking’ to you, and these symptoms are its way of saying a food is problematic.”

On the upside, if you’re eating foods that *aren’t* problematic, you’ll lose up to 10 pounds by week’s end—plus enjoy perks such as refreshing sleep, renewed energy, sunny mood and a smooth complexion.

**Your slimming how-to:** Continue to start each day as you did in phase 1—record your weight, drink lemon water and take a liver-detoxifying supplement or drink dandelion tea. For breakfast, continue to have 1 cup of flax granola with ½ cup of blueberries, ½ apple or ½ pear, plus a glass of coconut or rice milk. For lunch and dinner, enjoy any of the recipes in the “Mix-and-match meals” boxes—or pick up *The Plan* for more slimming recipes. You’ll also introduce a new “test food” into your daily menu every other day or so. Read on for details. ▶

## ROASTED WINTER VEGETABLES WITH ORANGE-ZEST CHICKEN

Chop 3 large carrots, 1 large zucchini, 1 head broccoli, 1 medium onion and 4 to 5 cloves garlic; toss with 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil and Italian herbs (fresh or dried) to taste. Roast at 375°F until vegetables are tender. (Serves 4.) Serve with Orange-Zest Chicken. To make chicken: Wash 1 orange and grate the peel until you have 2 Tbs. of orange zest. Set aside. Liberally sprinkle Italian herbs on 3 oz. chicken breast. Add orange zest and bake at 350°F for 20 to 30 min. or until chicken is done.

## It worked for me

### “My fibro pain lifted in 9 days!”

Standing in the bathroom, Lisa Boyer faced her daily difficult decision: Should she use her limited energy to take a shower, or should she run an errand before fatigue sets in? Feeling defeated, she thought, *I’ll never understand how people manage to accomplish so much in a day. I can’t get anything done...*

Since her teens, Lisa had been dealing with the symptoms of fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, depression and severe PMS. When countless doctors failed her, she felt she had no choice but to try to cure herself. The more she learned, the deeper she wanted to delve—first studying to become a nutritionist, then a naturopath and finally a naturopathic physician. But after a 10-year journey, Lisa was still lacking energy and gaining weight. She shares, “Forget exercise—just climbing out of bed was a feat of athleticism.” So when she read about *The Plan* online, she decided to try it.

The process was life-changing. After removing inflammatory foods such as oatmeal for nine days, Lisa was free of the pain that had burdened her for 25 years. Within three months, she no longer suffered from PMS.

In all, Lisa dropped 5 pant sizes and nearly 8 inches of belly bloat, while still enjoying treats like chocolate. “I’ve been dieting nonstop since I was 15, and this is the least painful diet I’ve ever done,” Lisa marvels. “Without the ball and chain that was my pain, I’m free. Yesterday I shopped for six hours and still had enough energy to go out with friends for the night!”

Lisa lost 46 lbs!

Lisa Boyer, 41,  
San Jose, CA  
Height: 5’8”

**NOW: 134 lbs**



**THEN: 180 lbs**

Turn for more slimming strategies



# weight-loss discovery

## DAY 4 Cheese.

"We start by testing cheese because it's the least reactive form of dairy—varieties made from goat's or sheep's milk are reactive for fewer than 10 percent of people while cow's milk cheese causes symptoms for around 20 percent of people," according to nutrition specialist Lyn-Genet Recitas, who recommends giving goat versions of your favorite cheese a try. "Goat cheddar and goat Gouda are just as delicious and widely available as cow's cheese. You won't be able to tell the difference!" (Another plus: Goat cheese has been growing in popularity, so it's easier than ever to find budget-friendly brands.) To do your test, simply have 1 oz. of goat cheese with your lunchtime meal, chosen from one of the options in the "Mix-and-match meals" boxes (like the Roasted Winter Vegetables on page 33).



## DAY 5 Rye.

"We test rye as the first grain because it is very similar in structure to wheat but contains a prebiotic, which aids digestion," says Recitas. "Rye is a pivotal test, because it will help inform you how your body may tolerate wheat. If you do well on rye, it



doesn't guarantee that bread and other grains will be friendly for you, but it does increase the odds." To test, have a snack of 1 rye cracker, 2 Tbs. raw almond butter and ½ apple.

## DAY 6 Protein.

Chicken is a staple of the plan because it's reactive for fewer than 10 percent of people. "But it's important to rotate protein sources for optimal health benefits and weight loss, since eating a given food too often can actually make you sensitive to it over time," Recitas explains. To test how your body handles other protein sources, choose one of the following for dinner: steak, lamb, venison, duck, egg or wild white fish (farm-raised fish is problematic for 90 to 95 percent of people because chemicals used in feeding and farming can enter fish flesh and cause inflammatory reactions, according to Recitas). Serve over mixed greens, along with a side of roasted kale, squash, and shitake mushrooms.



**DAY 7 Rest day.** As you continue to test a greater variety of foods, it's helpful to give the body a day off so it can heal and reset, says Recitas. You can also include additional rest days any time you feel your body needs a break from testing—perhaps because

you've had a strong reaction to a particular food or because you have a stressful day ahead and don't want to consume something that might tax your system. "A rest day is also a good option if your weight is up," says Recitas. "Weight gain signals that you're in a state of inflammation, and testing a food when you're in this state can add even more weight if it turns out that the new food is also reactive for you." During rest days, continue with your morning routine, then enjoy any of the meals and snacks in the "Mix- and-match meals" boxes, as well as any of the meals and snacks you have already successfully tested.

## DAY 8 AND BEYOND

**To keep slimming to your goal weight, you can continue to test one new food every other day, choosing options**



**you consume regularly.** For example, if you eat steak for dinner every Sunday, enjoy a cocktail on Friday nights or have bread with lunch several days a week, be sure to test those items. When testing something new, the day's menu should consist only of foods you already know aren't problematic for you, along with the one test food—that way you'll know immediately if the test food is triggering a reaction.

## More nonreactive mix-and-match meals!

### BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

Chop 1 large butternut or delicata squash, 2 zucchini, 1 large onion and 1 Tbs. fresh chopped ginger. Simmer with cinnamon, black pepper and onion powder (all to taste) in ½ to 1 quart water (depending on desired thickness) until soft. Puree in blender or food processor. (Serves 2-4.) Serve with steamed broccoli with orange oil (see page 32 for recipe) and a side of mixed salad greens with ½ pear and a handful of pumpkin seeds.

### CARROT-GINGER SOUP

Chop 1½ lbs. carrots, 1 zucchini, 1 large onion and 2 to 3 cloves garlic. Simmer with raw ginger (peeled and minced), cinnamon, cumin and onion powder (all to taste) in ½ to 1 quart water (depending on desired thickness) until soft. Puree in blender or food processor. (Serves 6-8.) Serve with steamed broccoli with orange oil (see page 32 for recipe) and a side of mixed greens with ½ pear and a handful of pumpkin seeds.





If the food doesn't trigger a reaction, you can work it into your diet without worry. But if it does lead to a slight increase in your weight or other troubling symptoms, finding an alternate will help kick-start your slimdown. (A note on bread: Recitas advises testing plain white or wheat bread first since these varieties are a reactive food for only about 20 percent of women. Once you have a sense of how your body responds to white or wheat, you can test other favorites like multigrain, sprouted grain or bagels, which tend to be more problematic due to additional ingredients like oat, corn, millet and lentils.)

You'll continue to test different foods until you identify 30 to 40 items that are friendly for your body, advises Recitas, who offers more information on the testing protocol in *The Plan*. Then you can construct balanced daily menus featuring the foods that will help you stay slim, energized and vibrant for life.

And if you've been avoiding any foods you love because they proved reactive during an earlier test, Recitas says you can try those favorites again after six months: "When you eliminate a reactive food, inflammation eases and your digestive system begins to heal—then you may be able to add that food back into your diet without risking weight gain."

### SPICY VEGETARIAN SOUP

Saute 1½ cups onion; 1 Tbs. garlic; and cinnamon, ginger, cumin, turmeric, black pepper and cayenne to taste in 1 can coconut milk. Add ½ tsp. sea salt and 1 Tbs. brown sugar. Reduce 20 min. Sauté 1½ cups onion, 4 tsp. garlic, 1 Tbs. poultry seasoning, 1 tsp. honey, 1 tsp. cinnamon, 1 Tbs. chopped ginger and 1 cup coconut mixture. Add 2 qts. water, 1 bunch kale, 1 butternut squash, 3 zucchini, 3 carrots and 1 head broccoli (chopped). Simmer 30 min., adding 1 bay leaf after 25 min. (Serves 4-6.) Serve with salad of romaine, ¼ avocado, carrots and pumpkin seeds.

### It worked for me

**"I lost 19 lbs in 30 days!"**

*Grrrrr.* The sound of Lynn Konkel's gurgling stomach was like a starting gun, triggering a game of mental tug-of-war. *I can't be this hungry—I just ate,* Lynn told herself. *How long do I have to wait before I can give in and eat again?*

Instead of yo-yoing like usual, in recent years Lynn's weight was only moving in one direction: up. Blaming menopause, Lynn figured she'd be stuck with those unwanted pounds forever... until she saw an article on food reactions and inflammation and decided to try *The Plan*.

The diet wasn't easy at first, Lynn admits. "I felt awful for the first few days. But I'd heard that the worse you feel, the more your body is dealing with inflammation, so I stuck with it." And she's glad she did! "On day five, the energy kicked in," Lynn shares. "I felt 10 years younger. I wanted to bottle that feeling!"

Lynn learned to avoid corn (which caused her to gain 1½ pounds overnight) and embrace once-shunned foods like avocado. Her body responded—she lost 19 pounds in 30 days, plus silenced her nagging cravings and growling stomach. Trapped inflammation was flushed from every part of her body—Lynn even had to resize her wristwatch!

Fast-forward three months: Lynn no longer felt the chronic pain in her hips or the need to take pain meds. And as for that feeling Lynn wanted to "bottle"? It never left! Now free of age-related worries, Lynn recently enjoyed a vacation with the energy of a carefree child. She shares, "My husband and I hiked for an hour, and I wasn't even tired. I could have gone for another two!"

**Lynn lost 59 lbs!**

Lynn Konkel, 58,  
Watertown, WI  
Height: 5'5"

**NOW: 150 lbs**



**THEN: 209 lbs**