

Real People Go On Vacation



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“Stop dieting. Start eating!”

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So, you went on a diet before that big vacation, losing enough weight to fit into a spiffy new bathing suit. You worked out and ate a ton of salad.

Then, you actually **went** on vacation.

And hey, you only do it once a year...or once every five years...or once every few years.

And so you justify the buffet, the rich sauces, and the desserts.

By the time you get home, you've gained back all the weight you lost—and then some!

I can share a horror story when it comes to vacation weight gain: my first cruise.

I wore a great pair of jeans on the flight down to Florida. The seven-day Caribbean cruise was amazing—and so was the food. I ate multiple entrees at dinner, enjoyed the midnight buffets and even raided the little ice cream shops as much as I pleased.

Let's not forget all the “cocktails” that go along with lying in the sun, relaxing.

By the time Saturday rolled around and we had to leave the ship, not only didn't my jeans fit, I couldn't even **button** them! I had gained eight pounds in one week!

I didn't know then what I know now, which is that I still could've eaten as much as I pleased, as long as I kept my carbs under control.

Just in case you haven't read “Real People Don't Diet” yet, and you don't know the Real People Formula, let me repeat it here:

If you eat fewer carbs at every meal, you WILL lose weight.

No dieting. No counting. No heavy exercising. No bars, shakes or processed meals.

Just plain math.

And week by week, the pounds will begin to melt away.

So how do you keep on eating the Real People Don't Diet way when you go on vacation? Isn't it too tempting to abandon it altogether?

How do you eat fewer carbs at every meal with that huge midnight buffet staring you in the face? How do you have fun and not let yourself go?

Here are some great tips for keeping your carbs under control while you relax and recharge:

Bring or buy your own food, as much as possible. This is easiest if you're going camping, to that lake house in the woods, or the beach cottage on the seashore. At a minimum, pack your favorite snacks.

When we vacation at the ocean, we bring a basic supply of food to get us through our first dinner and breakfast, as well as any special foods we know we can only get from home (like the local bakery's seedless rye that's low in carbs).

Once we arrive, we relax a bit. Then I head out to the grocery store to buy breakfast, lunch and snack foods. I simply buy what I normally would at home.

If you know you're going to eat some high-carb desserts or treats, plan a "trade-off" in advance. My idea of vacation is to have a slice of cheesecake after every meal. Heck, it's only one week out of the year! So, to compensate, I don't drink a lot of alcoholic beverages, and I enjoy a lot of eggs-only breakfasts.

I simply "make room" for the higher-carb cheesecake. It's more important to me than the alcohol and cereal I'm giving up.

If having cocktails is something you enjoy doing on vacation, plan ahead.

Choose one meal of the day to "go crazy" and eat as low-carb as possible for the other two meals. This strategy works great for me! My idea of vacation is to eat out every night. I don't really enjoy cooking (and I definitely don't enjoy cleaning up). However, as you can guess, restaurants are high-carb danger zones.

Keeping this in mind, I plan very low-carb breakfasts and lunches for myself. That way, I can go to dinner, and simply enjoy myself. I'm still "even" when it comes to carbs at the end of the day.

We also plan on one or two breakfasts out while we vacation. In this case, I mentally adjust to the fact that I will have to eat low-carb lunches and dinners that day. Those are the nights we stay late at the beach and eat in, or order room service. So at breakfast, I enjoy home fries or pancakes, guilt-free! (And don't forget that 100% real maple syrup...how can anyone eat the fake stuff? Yuck!)

Have someone hold you accountable. It's easy if you and your spouse are using the Real People Don't Diet strategy together, and making a lifestyle change in tandem. Whether you are or you aren't, letting someone else know ahead of

time that you have a goal to maintain your lower-carb habit while on vacation can go a long way towards success.

Chances are, just saying it out loud will prevent you from being tempted when you pull up to the buffet table. You know someone's watching...and you really don't want to have to explain yourself!

See buffets in a positive light. I could never control myself at buffets (remember the cruise story?) until I started eating the RPDD way.

Now, I think they're the greatest thing since sliced lower-carb bread!

Chances are you can find **tons** of lower-carb, tasty foods at a buffet. You can also find most of the higher-carb foods you enjoy (and you can control the size of the portions). Trade-offs are easy when you have so many choices!

I had the opportunity to enjoy a buffet recently, and here's what was on my very full plate:

Beef pot pie (I only ate the beef and a touch of the biscuit)

Chicken marsala

Broccoli and cauliflower in a cheese sauce

About ½ cup of mashed potatoes

About ½ cup bow-tie pasta with light alfredo sauce

Mixed veggies

Salad

White Zinfandel wine

Ice water

Where did I “borrow” my carbs for the pasta, mashed potatoes and beef pot pie? I skipped the rolls and canoli for dessert. Before, I would have added those to my plate, and drank soda instead of water.

The best part of all is that when I finished my meal, I didn’t feel “stuffed”. I could still wear my dress comfortably without having to “suck in” my stomach.

Use a buffet to your advantage. If something isn’t entirely lower-carb, such as chicken and dumplings or beef pot pie, you can still serve it up—just minimize the “higher-carb” portion.

Most buffets put salads at the beginning of the line, so load up on as much salad as you can first. But don’t take more than you really want—you’re on vacation, and you shouldn’t have to eat something you really don’t want.

When you get to the higher-carb entrees and starchy vegetables, just take smaller portions: mashed potatoes, creamed corn, ziti, lasagna...you get the picture.

Pile on the meats and veggies, even if they come with sauces (hey, you have to eat like a “real person”, right?).

Try to skip desserts altogether, or at least eat fewer than you normally would. Prioritize.

Is chocolate cake **your** ultimate dessert? Great! Then you may want to skip the less-important desserts (cookies or ice cream) other times you dine out.

Don’t forget fresh fruit constitutes dessert! If you’ll feel unsatisfied without dessert, then try to find one that’s lowest in carbs. For example, I would go for cheesecake rather than a slice of rich chocolate cake. I also enjoy fresh fruit

dipped in flavored whipped cream (make it yourself at home by combining sugar-free Jell-O powder and Cool Whip). Berry pies are better than custards. Dark chocolate is better than rich cookies.

Always have cool water handy. I'm not a huge fan of water—I usually prefer flavored seltzer to drink. But when I'm thirsty, an ice-cold bottle of water always satisfies.

When you're on vacation and doing the "tourist" thing, invest in a purse-sized soft-sided cooler. Pack it with a bit of ice and some bottles of water.

You can take it with you just about anywhere.

When you're thirsty, instead of springing for a soda or cocktail, grab a bottle of water. Not only is it satisfying, it'll reduce hunger pangs and keep you energetic and refreshed. In very high-temperature locations, water is actually a life-saver. It's a must-have.

If I drink water while busy on vacation, I don't feel guilty enjoying cocktails or the occasional soda when I'm relaxed...and sipping...and enjoying the tropical breeze. Ahhhhhh.

Driving to your destination? Create a traveling vending machine. My kids love our vacations, because we stock the SUV with a big cooler in the back and a smaller cooler up front. It's loaded with seltzers, fruit and cheese sticks. We also have individual bags of pretzels and Fritos (you don't think I'd go on vacation without Fritos, do you?), as well as cashews and sunflower seeds. We also pack lots of bottled water. They get to eat in the car, something I'm not usually enthusiastic about.

We only have one rule in the car: as long as we don't have to stop, you can eat whatever you want! (There's nothing to eat that a Shop-Vac can't handle.)

We routinely go on thirteen-hour trips with just three, maybe four stops. We don't have to hit the expensive (and high-carb) rest stops to load up on fast food.

When we do eat on the road, we look for places that offer lower-carb side dishes. If the rest stop has a pizza joint and a Burger King, we opt for the Burger King—small burgers, small fries or side salad and a bottled water from the car. Maybe onion rings.

Since we frequently drive at night, my husband eats hardly any carbs at all, because he wants to stay as awake and alert as possible...and we all know what happens when you eat a high-carb meal. Snooze city.

Choose an “end of vacation” outfit. Make this an outfit you can fit into comfortably when you begin your vacation. Periodically try it on. If you notice it isn't fitting as well as it did before you left, then you'll know you need to make a few more lower-carb tradeoffs.

You don't want to have to weigh yourself on vacation. You want to be as low-stress as possible. So, just use that snazzy outfit to remind yourself of how great it will feel to know you've relaxed and eaten to your heart's content, without compromising how you look.

On your last day of vacation, put on that outfit and pat yourself on the back for a job well-done! You've kept your weight right where you want it!

CONCLUSION

The main point I tried to make in “Real People Don’t Diet” is that it’s impossible to diet for a lifetime. So, we need to adopt eating habits that keep us satisfied and content while at optimum weight.

Eating fewer carbs at every meal was the strategy my husband and I came up with to live in the “real world” but lose weight at the same time. Once we lost weight, we naturally maintained it by continuing to eat lower-carb (compared to how we ate when we were gaining weight).

The same theory applies when you go on vacation. How can you possibly maintain a diet on vacation? And why would you **want** to?

Purposefully plan to eat like a “real person” on your vacation, and enjoy every minute of it. I don’t care what you eat or where you eat, there is **always** a lower-carb adjustment you can make that will still leave you feeling satisfied, and create room to enjoy the higher-carb drinks and treats you crave and **deserve** while relaxing and recharging.

Dieting is so engrained in our consciousness that most of us feel it’s perfectly fine to eat without abandon while on vacation. Instead, realize that the RPDD way isn’t a diet, so there’s no reason to abandon it. Instead, give yourself the freedom to eat yourself happy.

Eating fewer carbs at every meal is a mathematically-based plan that can’t go wrong. Use it to your advantage—and then you’ll be able to make your friends jealous of not only your cruise to Europe, but your post-vacation physique as well.

Bon voyage!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cate Brizzell and her husband Chris developed the “Real People Don’t Diet” weight-loss strategy in June of 2006. By the time her e-book of the same name was published in January of 2007 the couple had lost nearly 60 pounds combined.

A freelance author and stay-at-home mom, Cate manages website design and content for local corporate clients. She founded and maintains several websites of her own, including www.home-budget-help.com and www.moms-make-money-online.com, as well as www.RealPeopleDontDiet.com.



Cate lives with her husband and three children in upstate New York where she enjoys homeschooling, Jane Austen novels, scrapbooking, golf and traveling to tropical destinations whenever possible!