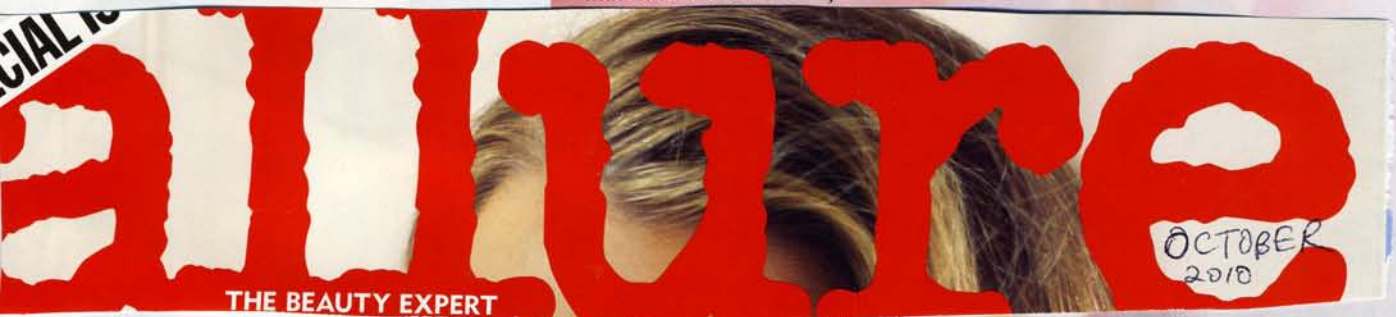


# The Hedonist's Diet

Rich. Creamy.  
Fatty. Boozy.  
If that sounds like  
your idea of  
a diet, read on.

BY MEIRAV DEVASH

**The father of all foodies,** the Greek philosopher Epicurus, was a hedonist: "We call pleasure the beginning and end of the blessed life," he wrote. Hedonism of any sort seems antithetical to diets. But in fact, research shows that the typical dieting tack—deprivation—leads people to wind up fatter. "If you look at cultures that have done a better job



THE BEAUTY EXPERT

about their food, so that a little bit is enough." The idea of conscious indulgence in the sights, smells, tastes, and experience of eating is not just for the Michael Pollan worshippers of the world—it's for those watching the scale as well.

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# 1

## Eat a Fatty Breakfast

Bacon and eggs for breakfast has come to represent the unhealthful. But done right, that meal can be the smartest way to kick off your day. Mice who ate a fat-rich meal when they first woke metabolized fat and carbohydrates more efficiently during the day than mice who ate a carb-rich breakfast and a high-fat meal at the end of the day, according to a study published in the *International Journal of Obesity*. A three-egg-whites-and-one-yolk omelet is preferred by nutritionists for its lack of saturated fats. And at 42 calories and three fat grams, “one strip of bacon at breakfast isn’t going to make anybody fat,” says admitted bacon lover Jana Klauer, a weight-loss expert in New York City and author of *The Park Avenue Nutritionist’s Plan* (St. Martin’s Press).

## 2 Power Up With Coffee

Savor a skim or soy latte with that omelet—and before a workout: It can help you extend your time on the elliptical. “Caffeine enhances physical performance and

endurance,” says Zemel. It not only mobilizes fat to fuel you as you work up a sweat, but according to numerous studies, it also improves endurance, allowing you to work out longer. More good news: “Coffee is the number-one

way people get antioxidants in this country,” says Keri Glassman, a nutritionist in New York City and author of *The O<sub>2</sub> Diet* (Rodale). “It’s also not as dehydrating as previously thought, so it counts toward your daily fluid intake.”

# three

## BE A DAIRY QUEEN

Dairy consumption seems to go hand in hand with weight loss. A study in *Obesity Research* showed that obese adults who ate a diet high in dairy lost significantly more weight and body fat than those who ate the same number of calories minus it. “Without enough calcium, your body releases a hormone that causes fat storage. Leucine helps burn fat and protect lean muscle,” says Zemel, who coauthored the study, which was sponsored by the National Dairy Council. Try replacing your humdrum proteins with a creamy low-fat Greek yogurt or salty crumbles of feta.



# 4

## Indulge Yourself


Do you make your sandwiches with gluten-free spelt bread when you really want a crusty French baguette? Turns out, your dedication to healthy eating may give you an unhealthy sense of entitlement. A recent study in the *Journal of Consumer Research* found that people who ate a chocolate-raspberry protein bar described as “a new health bar” reported being hungrier afterward than those who ate the same bar when it was described as “tasty and yummy.” The “health bar” eaters were also hungrier than a third group of subjects who didn’t eat the bar at all.

Similarly perplexing results were found in a recent study by Cornell University’s Food and Brand Lab: People who ate cookies labeled “organic” estimated the number of calories at 40 percent lower than they did for the same cookies unlabeled. It seems like when you’re busy congratulating yourself on your virtuous eating, you may neglect your satisfaction—and end up elbow-deep in a bag of organic cheese puffs by bedtime. “Just because something says it’s organic, or low-fat, or anything else doesn’t mean you don’t have to account for it,” says Lisa Young, adjunct professor of nutrition at New York University and author of *The Portion Teller Plan* (Broadway). “Pick a food you like so that you’ll feel satisfied and won’t go looking for something more. If that happens to be M&M’s, it’s better to get a snack-size bag than a giant carob-chip cookie you won’t enjoy.”

## 5. Savor Every Bite

How much pleasure can you really get from your lunch if you wolf it down while hunched over your keyboard? Scarfing your food this way can make you eat bigger portions, too. Scientists found that subjects released more hormones that made them feel full when they ate ice cream in 30 minutes instead of 5 in a recent study published in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*. “Scientists at the University of Pennsylvania have shown that even at McDonald’s, the French eat less and more slowly than Americans,” says Young.

“There’s something to be said for slowing down and being in the moment.”



For sugar cravings, nutritionists recommend chocolate with at least 60 percent pure cocoa.

# 6

## Seek a Sugar High

Many dieters have deemed this white powder almost as addictive as that other one, but you can still satisfy your sweet tooth and keep your weight in check. Avoiding high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) can help. In a recent study in *Pharmacology, Biochemistry and Behavior*, researchers found that rats with access to HFCS gained more weight than those with access to table sugar, even when their overall calories were the same. HFCS is demonized for two reasons: First, it is both sweeter and cheaper than cane sugar, so it's in an astonishing number of foods. Also, some studies have shown that it's metabolized differently. Instead of entering the bloodstream directly, these studies show, it goes through the liver, spurring the body to store the excess as fat instead of as energy or muscle-fueling glycogen. One place you'll find sugar that isn't HFCS: in dense, high-quality dark chocolate. "Look for bars with at least 60 or 70 percent pure cocoa," Glassman says. "The label may list cocoa powder or cocoa liqueur, sugar or cane sugar." Young prefers nature's desserts—what's more sensual than biting through the velvety skin of a ripe peach or the juicy flesh of a papaya? And your sugar load is controlled: "You can easily eat a sleeve of Oreos, but no one ever eats six pineapples."

# 7

## Don't Count Calories

Apart from the pressure of doing constant food math, restricting calories can actually decrease weight loss. The stress hormone cortisol was elevated in test subjects who counted calories in a study published in *Psychosomatic*

*Medicine*—and cortisol affects weight. "Calorie counting is an old-fashioned concept that doesn't take into account a food's nutritional value," says Klauer. The secret: Free your mind (of calories), and the number on the scale will follow. "Even if the calorie count is a little bit higher, eating nutritionally

sound foods with ample protein, fat, and fiber means you'll feel satisfied for longer," says Glassman. Replace your snack-size bag of potato chips with baked whole-wheat chips and a quarter cup of guacamole; a slice of toasted whole-wheat bread with a half ounce of herbed goat cheese is better than a plain half bagel.

# 8. Drink a Little

New research in *Archives of Internal Medicine* found that women who had one to two drinks a day were 30 percent less likely to gain weight over time than teetotalers. Lead researcher Lu Wang of Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital thinks one explanation is the subjects' self-control: Women tend to substitute alcohol for other items in their diet.

# nine

## EAT THE BEST

Scallop ceviche. Maine lobster. Beef carpaccio. If that sounds tempting, so will this: Upscale tastes may go with lower dress sizes. Glassman encourages her clients to choose conscious indulgences like tiramisu or airy chocolate soufflé. "Save your calories for a few bites of crème brûlée at an amazing restaurant. Enjoy it, feel satisfied, and move on to the next healthy meal," she says. You probably won't see Daniel Boulud's chocolate-and-peanut-butter ganache every day, so your indulgence won't become a habit—the way a peanut-butter cup might.

# 10

## Sleep In

To sleep, perchance to dream in your 800-thread-count sheets? In a recent study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, subjects ate over 500 more calories after getting four hours of sleep than they did with eight hours. Says Glassman, "When you don't sleep enough, your hunger hormones increase, so you're starving the next day."