

SPECIAL

TIME

EDITION

# THE GUIDE TO **WEIGHT LOSS**

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Why Exercise Matters

The Truth About Popular Diets

PLUS

25 Foods That Help  
You Drop Pounds

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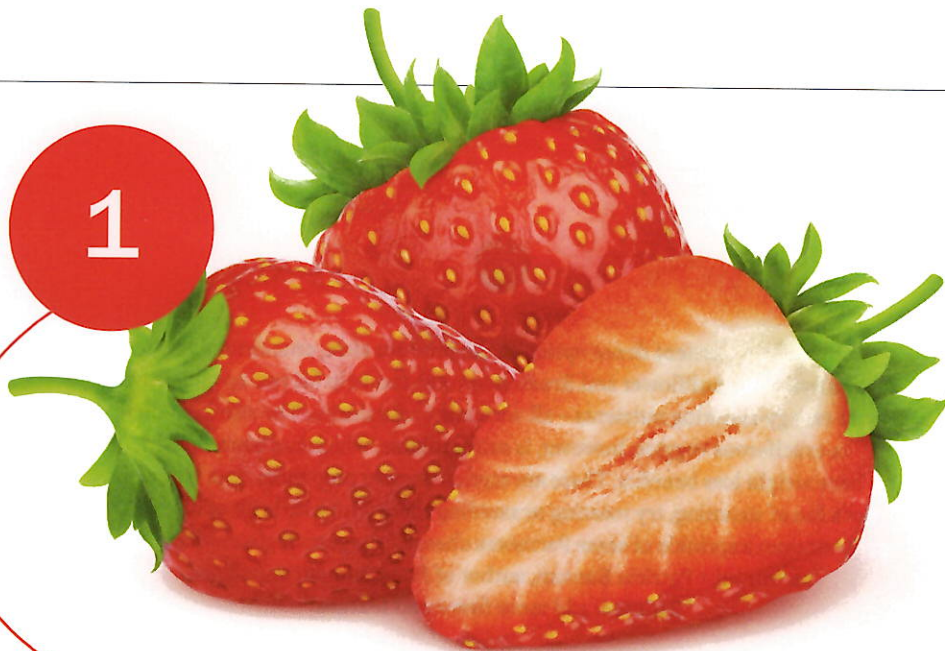


# THE 25 BEST FOODS TO HELP YOU LOSE

BY LAMBETH HOCHWALD

Depending on what you hear, you may be told to avoid fruit, grains and legumes and eat lots of protein to slim down. Yet another diet might extol the benefits of filling up on fruits and vegetables and limiting animal products. Indeed, many people's quests to lose weight often hit a roadblock at the grocery store or make a U-turn when they start discussing their food choices with others. To clear things up, we polled registered dietitians and nutrition experts to create a list of 25 delicious foods that will support your weight loss journey, plus simple and tasty ways to prepare them.

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## STRAWBERRIES

Packed with fiber, ounce per ounce strawberries also have more vitamin C than even an orange. In fact, eight strawberries will give you all the vitamin C you need for the day. In a recent study, vitamin C was even linked to fat loss—another win. “They’re also really low in calories and what I love about them is that they’re a chameleon food,” says Bonnie Taub-Dix, a registered dietitian nutritionist in New York. “You could combine them with ricotta and cereal for breakfast or you could have them over a lunch salad.” Consider buying them when they’re in season and freeze them for use in smoothies or cobblers all year long.

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## LENTILS

A fan favorite thanks to their potent mix of protein and fiber, lentils are a powerhouse. Research has shown that regularly eating lentils may help you manage and prevent diabetes, and a separate study found that four weekly servings led to more effective weight loss. Combine them with your favorite veggies for an ideal plant-based meal, says Jinan Banna, a registered dietitian and associate professor of nutrition at the University of Hawaii. “I like to add some veggies and pesto to fill the dish with even more fiber and healthy fat.”



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## AVOCADOS

Technically a fruit, avocados are packed with healthy fat and 20 vitamins and minerals, including vitamins A, C, E, K and B6. In studies, they have been shown to help lower LDL, or “bad” cholesterol. “Avocados also keep you satiated thanks to their high fiber content, too,” Taub-Dix says. “That’s why I tell people to think outside the guac and use it instead of mayo on a sandwich or make it the star in your next pesto sauce.”



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## YOGURT

Reach for Greek yogurt due to its great combination of calcium, carbohydrates (from the milk sugar), probiotics and versatility. Thanks to the dose of good gut bacteria in yogurt (make sure the yogurt you choose contains at least two live and active strains, such as *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*) you’ll get an immune boost. Yogurt helps you stay full and maintains muscle, too, says Jeanette Schaible, a registered dietitian in North Andover, Massachusetts. “Stick with the plain option instead of flavored, including vanilla, which have a lot of extra sugar that isn’t helpful for weight loss or feeling full.” Instead, she recommends simply dressing up yogurt to taste sweet by adding fruit and cinnamon at breakfast, or savory, as a sub-in for mayo in chicken salad for lunch.







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### CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES

An incredibly nutrient dense option in the produce aisle, cruciferous veggies such as broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts can help fill you up and provide extra energy-boosting nutrients—all with minimal calories. The star ingredient

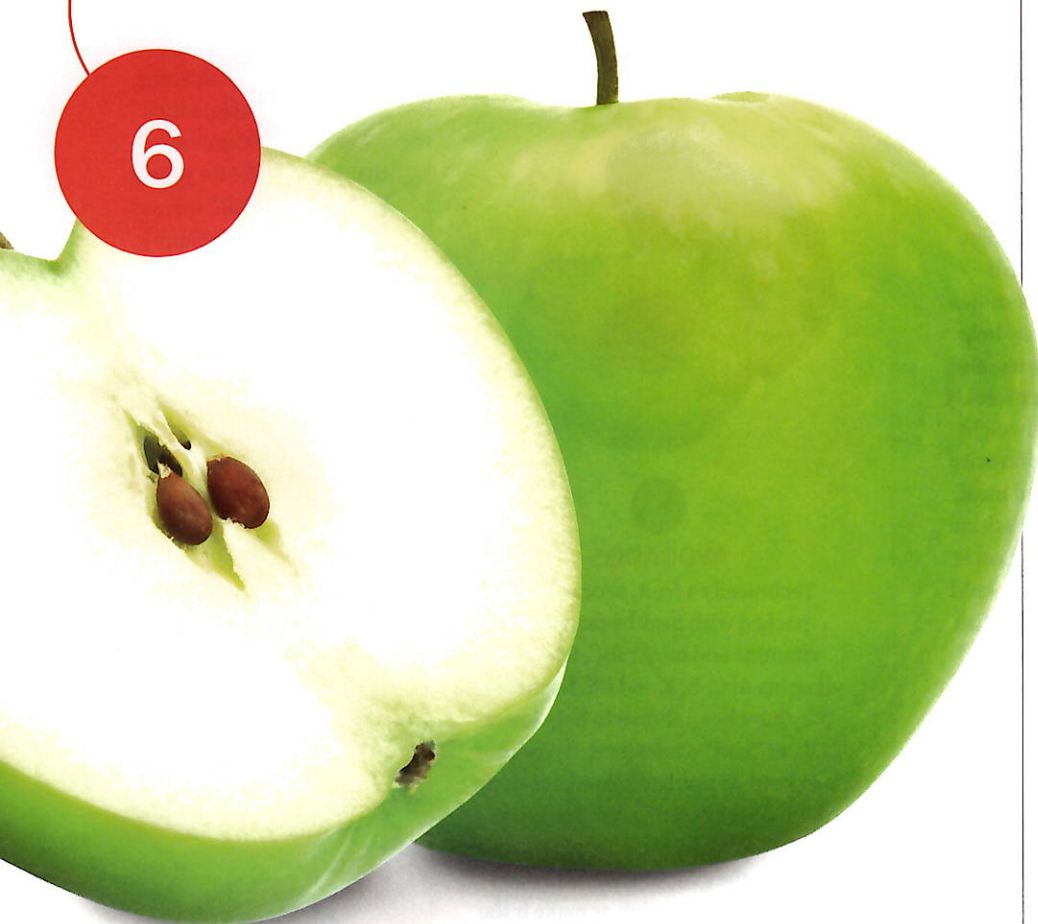
in cruciferous veggies, however, is sulforaphane, which has been shown to have weight loss benefits. There are myriad ways to prep them, too. “If you’re not a fan of steaming, try roasting or sautéing them with a little bit of olive oil, garlic or even a sprinkle of some Parmesan cheese,” suggests registered dietitian nutritionist Patricia Bannan, author of *From Burnout to Balance*.

“This will add more flavor and texture.”

### APPLES

Fruit, especially apples, are fiber-rich—one medium apple contains about 5 grams of fiber—to help regulate digestion and keep you feeling full. “To get your apple a day, pair one with nut butter, yogurt dip or a handful of almonds or pistachios for a satisfying snack,” Bannan says.

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### EGGS

Eggs are a versatile protein source that are rich in vitamin D and choline (a B vitaminlike nutrient found in the yolk) that is often sold as a dietary supplement to “burn fat.” However, it’s the protein in eggs that appeals to dieters most. “Protein is more satisfying and takes longer to digest, which can help with weight loss,” Bannan says. “There are so many options—you can make ahead a batch of hard-boiled eggs for a quick snack or breakfast on the go, make a veggie-filled omelet in the morning or serve up scrambled eggs with sliced avocado.”





### LEAFY GREENS

Leafy greens such as spinach or kale are nutrient dense, meaning they pack in a lot of fiber plus micronutrients such as vitamins A, B, C and K, while also being low in calories. “Bulking up meals with leafy greens can help you feel more full, and make portions a little bigger,” Bannan says. “Enjoy a green salad with grilled chicken, avocado and chopped nuts, add spinach or kale to a pasta dish or sauté with a bit of olive oil and garlic.”

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### QUINOA

Not only is quinoa packed with fiber and protein, but a quinoa salad with chopped veggies and chickpeas is a great item to add to your daily rotation given all of the fiber, protein, vitamins and minerals you’ll get per bite, suggests Banna. “To prepare, simmer the quinoa for 15 minutes, chop the veggies and mix everything together along with some lemon juice, olive oil and salt and pepper to taste.” Besides this salad, consider subbing quinoa for rice or even using it to make pancakes.



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### OATMEAL

The 4 grams of fiber in 1 cup of oatmeal can help curb snacking before lunchtime, Bannan says. “Compared to other grains, oatmeal contains a good amount of protein, as well as other important vitamins and minerals,” she adds. “Beta-glucan, the particular fiber in oats, slows gastric emptying, suppresses gut hormones and makes you feel fuller longer.” Add some extra staying power to your morning bowl of oats with chopped nuts, fresh berries or nut butter.

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### BEANS

Beans are a plant-based source of both fiber and protein, two nutrients that help keep you feeling fuller for longer, which is great for weight loss, says Bannan. “They’re also very versatile, and come in plenty of varieties, which can help keep meals from becoming boring and repetitive. Canned beans are budget friendly, always in season and take no time to prep.” The fiber will also keep you regular, preventing uncomfortable bloating. Your best bets for recipes: “Add black beans to tacos or chili, make a bean-based veggie burger with kidney beans, or simply toss in some chickpeas to your salad at lunch,” suggests Bannan.





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### SALMON

This fish is known for its health benefits, such as omega-3 fatty acids that are super important for the heart and have some weight loss-specific benefits as well. “There may be a cancer prevention component to salmon and it keeps you full thanks to its protein,” Taub-Dix says. “I’ll grill a giant piece and then I know I’ll have leftovers that I can make the next day into salmon on a salad or I’ll mash it with vegetables, panko and egg and make salmon burgers.”

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### KEFIR

This fermented milk drink made from kefir grains is rich in calcium, protein and B vitamins. It also offers a powerful dose of probiotics or “good” gut bacteria, which has been linked to weight loss. “My favorite way to use kefir is in smoothies and muesli,” shares Bannan. “Or I’ll just sip it as an afternoon snack.”

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### ALMONDS

These nuts are a great source of plant protein—a quarter cup provides 6 grams of plant protein—which is a lot given that one egg has 7 grams. In addition, almonds have been shown to be heart-healthy and help reduce LDL cholesterol. “It’s also the nut that is highest in fiber and highest in calcium content,” notes Taub-Dix. While there are endless ways to enjoy almonds, a healthy trail mix is a great way to start. “If you want something sweet, add dried fruit such as dried cranberries,” she says. “Or add a favorite cold cereal and chocolate chips.”



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**GRAPEFRUIT**

Tangy grapefruit is fiber-rich and high in water, making it a satisfying citrus fruit to snack on. "Grapefruit also has a low glycemic index, meaning it can help balance blood sugar levels," Bannan notes. "This may be beneficial for weight loss by providing a long-lasting fuel for your body. In addition, low blood sugar levels can affect your food and sugar cravings, which can cause you to overeat."

Enjoy it as an afternoon snack, pair it with a handful of pistachios, slice it into a salad or chop some into a yogurt bowl for breakfast.

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**CAYENNE PEPPER**

If you can handle a lot of tongue-tingling spice, capsaicin, which is the active ingredient in cayenne pepper, has been found to help boost your metabolism, according to several studies. Add cayenne regularly to your meals and you may even find yourself eating 200 fewer calories per day, according to a study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.



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**GREEN TEA**

Green tea is a natural source of antioxidants and caffeine, which can help support metabolism for weight loss. "The main catechin in green tea, called epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), may inhibit carbohydrate digestion and absorption, which could help with weight loss," Bannan says. "Enjoy a cup of green tea without added sweeteners or heavy creams for a low-calorie energy boost." For more benefits, matcha, or green tea powder, is an even more concentrated source of EGCG.

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**APPLE CIDER VINEGAR**

Using low- or no-calorie flavorings such as apple cider vinegar can be a great way to add a flavor boost to meals without extra oils or sugars. "Apple cider vinegar can also help when it comes to bitter leafy greens such as kale, collard greens or broccoli rabe, as it can cut out some of the bitterness when added at the end of cooking," Bannan says. There are also studies that show apple cider vinegar can curb blood sugar spikes when consumed before a meal, while others suggest it can help promote belly fat loss. While this research remains inconclusive, apple cider vinegar, especially organic and unfiltered, is a smart addition to your diet.







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### SWEET POTATOES

No matter how you slice them, sweet potatoes are a smart choice if you're watching your waistline. With 4 grams of protein, prebiotic fiber to feed your healthy gut bugs and all the vitamin A you need for the day (and then some), a tasty sweet potato is an ideal side dish to add to any meal. Consider adding a baked sweet potato, chilled and cut into cubes into your favorite salad, make a creamy sweet potato soup or bake strips of sweet potatoes in the oven. "My favorite way to make sweet potatoes is to switch up my everyday avocado toast by using toasted sweet potato as the base instead of bread," Bannan says. "Simply bake the sweet potato the night before, slice and put in a toaster oven or broil in the oven until heated through or slightly crisped."

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### DARK CHOCOLATE

Two servings of dark chocolate a day are not only super satisfying but dark chocolate also contains flavonoids, heart-healthy antioxidants that can reduce the risk of diabetes and heart disease, according to a Harvard study. "When you're shopping for dark chocolate, opt for a bar that contains at least 70% cacao since it's lower in sugar and higher in antioxidants compared to milk chocolate," says Bannan. "Have a little dark chocolate with blueberries or walnuts for a healthy snack with staying power."



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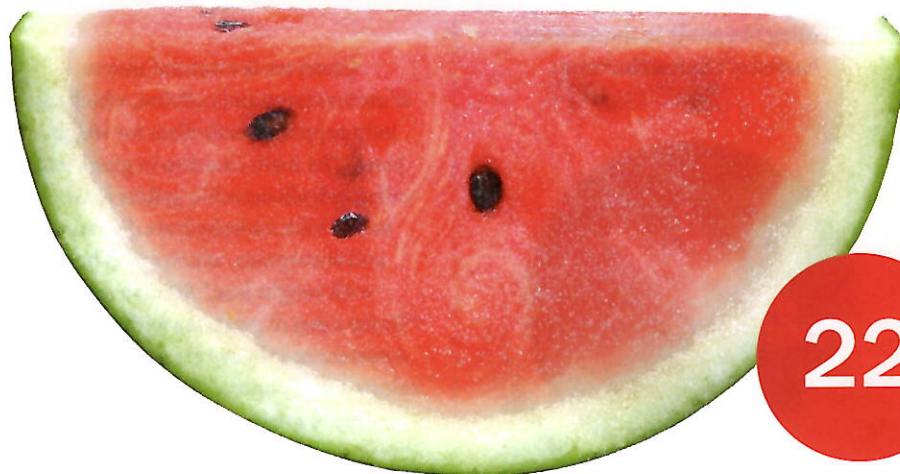
### PISTACHIOS

Pistachios are a healthy snack choice for people who are watching their weight and want to make the most out of every bite. "They're a good source of plant protein and fiber, plus about 90% of the fats found in pistachios are unsaturated, for a trio of nutrients that may help keep you fuller longer," Bannan says. "In addition, in-shell pistachios may help you fool yourself into feeling full because the leftover shells can be a visual cue for portions, potentially helping to curb intake."



### WATERMELON

This sweet fruit has a high water content, making it both hydrating and filling. It's a great source of hydration, which is key for weight loss, and the tasty treat is a clever alternative if you're not a big fan of drinking water. "Chop up watermelon ahead of time or purchase pre-chopped watermelon to make it quick, easy and convenient to enjoy throughout the week," Bannan says.



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### SALSA

Even if you're not having Mexican food, topping a lean protein with salsa instead of ketchup is a wise, diet-friendly option. Tomatoes are a great add-on to any dish as they're packed with fiber, vitamin C and immune-boosting lycopene—plus they deliver a powerful punch of flavor. Opt for homemade salsa since it's fresh, isn't processed and has less sugar than a store-bought brand. "Salsa is a low-calorie condiment that can easily spice up tacos, scrambled eggs or be used as a salad dressing alternative," Bannan says.



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### OLIVE OIL

A staple in the Mediterranean diet, olives and olive oil offer monounsaturated fats for heart and brain health. "Healthy fats can also help with weight loss by creating a feeling of fullness and helping the body absorb fat-soluble nutrients for optimal nutrition," Bannan says. Use olive oil in a homemade vinaigrette or when sautéing veggies. "I toss my vinaigrette with baby mixed greens, fresh herbs (such as chopped mint or dill), some shaved pecorino or Parmesan cheese and chopped walnuts," she says.



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### LEAN PROTEIN

Lean meat options such as skinless chicken, turkey, pork loin and grass-fed lean beef can help you manage your weight by giving your body the high levels of protein, vitamins and minerals it needs to keep your metabolism humming along, says registered dietitian nutritionist Mary Kate Keyes, a clinical instructor and the director of nutrition and wellness for MindFirst, a holistic health app. It may even help us sleep better. "Hunger may keep you from getting the sleep you need," she says. "There's some evidence that getting enough protein can help you catch those zzz's and it's even better when that protein is from the amino acid tryptophan, found in turkey."

