

CHAPTER 8 THE 14-DAY MINI DETOX

Choose the right time for it

You should pick a time when you will have few commitments or distractions so that you can keep focused on your eating plan. Otherwise, you may find that if you take on too many new challenges and become overstressed, you're more likely to give up. We all know how easy it is to reach for chocolate or a glass of wine when we're tired, stressed or angry! Don't do it.

3, 7 or 14?

You'll get the best results from following the 14-day plan. If you can only manage 7 or 3 days you'll notice great results but if you can continue for longer you will benefit from a bigger improvement in your energy levels, skin complexion and body shape. Although weight loss is not the major objective of this plan, you may find that you shed pounds. By filling up on fibre-packed nutritious foods, you can expect to lose weight. And the longer you stick to the detox plan, the more weight you'll lose!

Be flexible

Use this 14-day menu plan as a base for developing your own eating plan. While the daily menus have been carefully balanced to provide the right proportions of nutrients to keep you healthy, it is possible to swap meals between different days. For example, you may prefer to have the lunch suggested

for Day 7 on Day 1 instead. Or you may fancy having the evening meal suggestion for Day 10 on Day 3.

Eat in tune with your body

The lunches and evening meals are also interchangeable. So, if you prefer to have your main meal at lunchtime, you may wish to have the suggested evening meal at midday and the suggested lunch in the evening.

Change a few ingredients

Most of the recipes can be adapted slightly according to which ingredients you have to hand. You don't have to stick rigidly to the stated ingredients. For example, with the recipe for Vegetable Kababs you may use other summer vegetables (sweetcorn or fennel) instead of the courgettes or peppers.

Keep favourite recipes

Feel free to adapt your favourite recipes to fit in with the detox principles. By omitting or substituting a few ingredients in your own recipe, you can incorporate it into the Summer Detox plan. This is useful when you have to cook for your family or friends. Alternatively, take out your portion before adding, say, the cheese or meat to the remainder of the dish for everyone else. Easy!

Keep changing

Whether you decide to use all the recipes in this eating plan or you include some of your own, remember to vary the foods you eat daily. The more varied your diet overall, the more likely you are to get all the vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients you need. It may seem easier to begin with to stick to the same meals day after day, but you could end up missing out on some nutrients.

Listen to your body

You'll notice that this eating plan does not state precise amounts of some of the foods, for example, accompanying rice or fresh fruit. That's because we all have different energy and nutritional needs and, therefore, should eat different quantities of food (see page 29 – Rule 5 in '6 rules for success'). It may sound obvious but one of the biggest failings of most weight-loss diets is that they assume one size fits all and prescribe the same diet for everyone. That's madness! So, how do you know how much to eat? Listen to your body and respond to your appetite. Eat when you are hungry, eat only as much as your body needs – and no more – and then stop eating when you are satisfied. Believe me, this really works – provided you are choosing naturally filling nutrient-packed foods (the vegetables, fruit and whole grains) and not high-calorie sugary foods.

Get ahead

To make life easier, you may wish to prepare some of the dishes in advance or cook larger amounts so that you have a meal ready – in the fridge or freezer – when you are pressed for time. Try to prepare vegetables, salads and fruit snacks just before you eat them, though, as they start to lose their vitamins through oxidation once they are cut.

Get a drinking habit

Remember to drink plenty of water, herb or fruit tea. Aim for 6–8 glasses or cups daily, more when it's hot or when you exercise. This helps the detoxification process and keeps your system healthy.

Dine with friends

Can you entertain and eat with friends on the Summer Detox plan? Definitely! Eating is a social thing so we've supplied recipes that not only taste delicious but are good enough to share with friends. Three menus for summer entertaining are given at the end of this chapter on pages 54–55.

Snacks

If you feel hungry between meals, have a healthy snack. Remember, this diet is not about starvation, hunger or denial so you must never feel guilty about eating. Here are some suggestions on what to eat:

- A bowl of strawberries, raspberries, blueberries or blackberries
- A bunch of grapes
- A peach, nectarine or kiwi fruit
- A couple of plums or apricots
- A large slice of melon or pineapple
- A bowl of fresh fruit salad
- A banana
- Vegetable crudités with hummus or avocado dip
- A small handful of unsalted nuts (plain or toasted)
- A small handful of (unsalted) dried fruit
- A small handful of seeds (plain or toasted)
- A glass of juice (see recipes on pages 121–8)
- A smoothie (see recipes on pages 130–9)