

KETO AND FAST FOOD: ON THE GO

Whether you're out and about and need a quick meal, or you want to go out with family to have a sit-down dinner, you should be able to find low-carb and ketogenic friendly foods at most places.

We've all been there. You're out running errands on a Saturday afternoon and your tummy growls: it's 2 pm and you haven't eaten yet! Or it's a Tuesday night at a friend's house, and they want to grab a meal.

What do you do? Luckily, you have plenty of keto fast food and sit-down restaurant options! We have happily eaten my way through the research for you - below you'll find a look at the most common fast food restaurants in the U.S. and their keto meal options.

Here are a few general rules of thumb that you can apply to almost any fast food and sit-down restaurant:

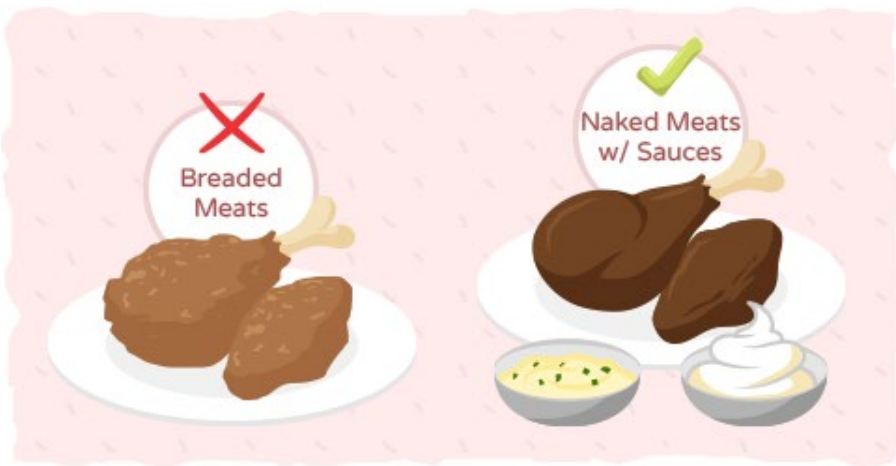
- **Stick to meat, cheese, and vegetables.** Most fast food and restaurant places put excess sugar and carbs in their ingredients. It's worth sticking with the simplest ingredients you can find.
- **Avoid the bun.** Whether you're ordering a burger from a drive-thru or a table menu, you can opt out of the bun. Typically you can also add in extra sides like avocado, bacon, and sauces if you request it.
- **If you get a salad, read the ingredients.** Many salads have leafy greens and berries that are very high in carbs. It's better to stick with simpler salads that include meat and ask for dressing on the side. Many Greek places offer low-carb gyro salads (as long as their meat does not contain filler). Avoid croutons where possible and pick out excess items that are carbey from the salads.
- **If it's breaded, try to avoid it.** Typically chicken wings, mozzarella sticks, and other fried items will have a wheat flour-based breading. If you have no other choice, try to peel off as much of the breading as you possibly can. Pair the now naked meat with a fatty sauce. If you can, try to order your food with no breading. Many chicken wing restaurants usually offer naked (traditional) chicken wings as a choice, as an example.
- **Be careful of condiments.** While sauces and dressings are a fantastic way to get both fat and flavor into your food - they usually are filled with sugar. Be very careful with any sweet tasting sauces and try to opt for fattier salad dressings (that usually contain no sugar) like ranch, caesar, and bleu cheese. If you have the choice when it comes to sauces at a sit-down place, you can usually order an extra side of butter.
- **Special request.** While some people don't like to ask for particular food, you can certainly do so at higher quality restaurants. The menu will usually do a good job of breaking down what each dish has; you can request to the waiter that the meal be prepared in a certain way (gluten-free, low-carb, etc.)
- **If you're not sure, skip it.** Time and time again we get e-mails about people who are stalling on their weight loss goals. The most common reason: they're not tracking. There are so many hidden carbs and hidden sugars in the foods we eat that we truly do have to be careful with what we order. Just a few teaspoons of a sweet sauce can be 15-20g carbohydrates - almost all of your daily allowance.
- **Check online.** Many food establishments put their nutritional information online - some even offering a "build your own" style app where you can choose what ingredients you're eating. This is a perfect way to see how many carbs are in the meats and extra side dishes.

STICK TO MEAT, CHEESE, &
VEGETABLES



AVOID BUNS, USE FATTY &
LOW-CARB SAUCES

REMOVE HIGH CARB ADD-ONS,
READ INGREDIENTS



AVOID BREADED MEATS, USE SAUCES ON NAKED MEATS

CHOOSE CONDIMENTS CAREFULLY




YOU CAN MAKE SPECIAL REQUESTS

IF YOU'RE NOT SURE, SKIP IT!



USE ONLINE RESOURCES

Browse down to see options from the most popular restaurants in the US, or if you're looking for something specific you can select it from the list below:

-  McDonalds / Burger King
-  Wendy's
-  Hardee's / Carl Jr's
-  In-N-Out Burger
-  Five Guys Burgers
-  Sonic
-  Checkers / Rally's
-  Red Robin
-  Burgerville
-  Jack in the Box
-  Whataburger
-  White Castle / Steak n' Shake
-  Chick-fil-A
-  Zaxby's
-  El Pollo Loco / Nando's / Other Grilled Chicken Places
-  Kentucky Fried Chicken
-  Popeyes
-  Bojangles'
-  Church's Chicken / Other Fried Chicken Places
-  Potbelly / Whichwich / Saladworks / Other Salad Shops
-  Dickey's BBQ / Famous Dave's / Other BBQ Places
-  Jimmy John's / Jersey Mike's / Subway / Other Sub Shops
-  Panera Bread
-  Chipotle / Moe's Southwest Grill / Other Mexican Chains
-  Taco Bell / Del Taco / Other Taco Places
-  Dairy Queen
-  Arby's
-  Denny's / Perkins / Waffle House / IHOP
-  Cracker Barrel
-  Buffalo Wild Wings / Wingstop / Other Wing Places
-  Pizza Hut / Dominos / Papa John's / Papa Murphy's / Other
-  Dunkin' Donuts / Starbucks / Tim Hortons / Other Coffee Shops
-  Gas Stations / Convenience Stores
-  Grocery Stores
-  Trader Joes / Whole Foods / Specialty Stores



MCDONALD'S / BURGER KING

Both McDonald's and Burger King offer things that can be made low carb at a low price - this makes it a great stop on a road trip as one of these restaurants can usually be found in the smallest of pit stop towns.

You can ask for a breakfast sandwich at either restaurant and order it without the bun, and the same goes for a grilled chicken breast or burger for lunch or dinner. Try to avoid the chicken nuggets as they're always breaded and climb in carbs very quickly.

Our personal favorite of these two is the McDouble from McDonald's without a bun or ketchup. They will usually serve it in a bowl and sometimes will add lettuce with it. Pretty tasty and keto-friendly at only 4g net carbs (ketchup will add 1g net carb extra)!

Both chains offer their nutritional information in a customizable menu builder which allows for deletion of single ingredients (like the bun) - a great way for you to plan out a meal ahead of time or track macros after.



WENDY'S

Almost as iconic as McDonald's and Burger King, Wendy's comes in as one of the most popular fast food chains in the US. They don't have a lot of low-carb options, so you have to be careful what you choose. Some ideas if you're in a rut are below:

- Double Stack without Bun (2g net carbs)
- Baconator without Bun (4g net carbs)
- Grilled Chicken Sandwich without Bun (5g net carbs)

Make sure that you request no sauces (like sugary ketchup) and get mayonnaise and mustard on the side. Mayonnaise and extra cheese can add some fats to your meals without added carbs.

Unfortunately, you have to stay away from the salads at Wendy's. Their salads range above the 30g carb mark for all of the options available, so it's best to avoid this. This may change in the future, so it's always worth checking their website for updated information.



HARDEE'S / CARL JR'S

This is another great place to grab a keto-fied fast food meal and where the staff is comfortable knowing their low-carb menu options. They are one of the few spots to grab a keto breakfast on the go with their Low Carb Breakfast Bowl (8g net carbs) - a rich selection of egg, cheese, and meats.

For lunch or dinner, consider ordering one of the following:

- Low Carb 1/2 lb Thickburger (8g net carbs)
- Low Carb Charbroiled Chicken Club Sandwich (7g net carbs)

These are all low carb versions of your favorite sandwiches served on a lettuce wrap. You have to specifically ask them to make it low-carb for them to wrap your chicken or burger in lettuce.

Hardee's/Carl Jr's websites also allow you to see the nutritional information of these items, helping you to easily track your daily macros.





IN-N-OUT BURGER

Are you lucky enough to have an In-N-Out Burger nearby? While I, unfortunately, do not live near one, you can get a great keto-fied burger there as well! Order your In-N-Out burger "protein style, double double" and they will swap out the bun with a lettuce wrap. This comes out to 8g net carbs for their double-double (protein style). To up the flavor without the carbs, swap the house spread for mustard and more pickles.

- Double-double Protein Style (8g net carbs)
- Cheeseburger Protein Style (8g net carbs)

It's well worth ordering a double protein style to get more calories and fat instead of carbs. If you want to order specifically to their low-carb menu, you can!

Their Flying Dutchman is a combination of two meat patties, two slices of cheese, and no bun or lettuce wrap! They don't have the nutrition information for this on the website, but we estimate it to be about 5g net carbs. If you want any condiments, be sure to request them as they are not included on the Flying Dutchman. Remember that some condiments do add to the carbs.



FIVE GUYS BURGERS

This is one of the few burger places we've been to that doesn't flinch when we ask for no bun - you can either get your burger wrapped in lettuce or in a to-go box (as pictured). Think of Five Guys as a build-your-own burger bowl. You have plenty of options to choose from and a lot of the included sides are no extra cost. Next time you're here, consider any of the following:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ■ Bacon, 2 slices (0g net carb) | ■ Grilled Mushrooms (1g net carb) |
| ■ Hamburger Patty (0g net carb) | ■ Jalapeno Peppers (0g net carb) |
| ■ Hot Dog (1g net carb) | ■ Mayonnaise (0g net carb) |
| ■ A1 Steak Sauce (0g net carb) | ■ Onions (1g net carb) |
| ■ Cheese (0.5g net carb) | ■ Tomatoes (2g net carb) |
| ■ Green Peppers (1g net carb) | ■ Pickles (1g net carb) |

You can pick the toppings you want from their board. Best part is, if you order a bacon cheeseburger, you can ask for extra cheese and extra bacon as well! Another perk if you eat inside the restaurant is that they have all you can eat peanuts in the shell. A fun side dish that doesn't have all the added carbs of french fries - just be careful with the amount you eat (peanuts do add up in carbs).



SONIC

While Sonic doesn't have any low-carb options at first glance, we can always apply our rule of thumb to find something. For Sonic, we can remove the bun and have burgers or hot dogs. Although the nutrition information is not known, you should estimate that there are some carbs in the meat. Typically fast food restaurants use some filler ingredients in their meat so you should expect at least 2g carbs per patty or hot dog.

One great thing about Sonic is that you have the option to "Build Your Own." That means toppings! Just like Five Guys, you're able to add a plethora of toppings to your burgers and hot dogs. Among other things, there are favorite keto staples like cheese, bacon, and avocado.

For condiments, they have a few great low-carb options which include:

- Mayo (0g net carbs)
- Mustard (0g net carbs)
- Ranch (1g net carbs)
- Salsa (1g net carbs)





CHECKERS / RALLY'S

Checker's/Rally's has quite a few options when it comes to keto. This is mostly because of the new chicken wings that they have on their menu. You can choose from a lot of different low-carb flavors, including:

- Plain Naked (2g net carbs per 5 wings)
- Garlic Parmesan (3g net carbs for 5 wings)
- Angrier/Mild Buffalo (2.5g net carbs for 5 wings)

They also have burgers and hot dogs available here. Using our rules of thumb for ketogenic fast food, we can take out the bun and assume there are a couple of carbs per piece of meat. You can always pair their burger or dogs with:

- Bacon (1g net carb per serving)
- Cheese sauce (2g net carbs per serving)
- Ranch (2g net carbs per serving)
- Check for real mayo at the condiment station (0g net carbs)

If you plan to have a burger here, consider ordering one of their larger size items like a bacon double cheeseburger. You usually get the best bang for your buck regarding calories.



RED ROBIN

Red Robin is an excellent choice when it comes to their burgers, but they have a few options that most don't think about. Be careful with the burgers you choose as they have many different types. Some burgers may include high-carb sauces or extras (onions, pickled vegetables, etc.) which you want to avoid. Luckily, Red Robin supports low-carb lifestyles and will wrap your burger in a lettuce wrap if requested.

Remember that you can always add bacon (0g net carbs) or cheese (1g net carbs on average) to your burgers. If you're in the mood for something lighter, you can always order from the kid's menu. Specifically, the Grilled Chicken Stickens (4g net carbs) and steamed broccoli (1g net carbs) are great items.

They do have some side salad options, but you can order a side grilled caesar salad for only 7g net carbs.

For dressings, you can choose between any of these:

- Bleu Cheese (1g net carbs per 2 oz.)
- Caesar (2g net carbs per 2 oz.)
- Lemony Oil (2g net carbs per 2 oz.)
- Ranch (2g net carbs per 2 oz.)
- Salsa-Ranch (2g net carbs per 2 oz.)

If you do end up getting the chicken, or just want some extra sauce to top your burger with, you can choose from the following:

- Buzzard (0g net carbs per serving)
- House-Made Ranch (2g net carbs per serving)
- Roasted Garlic Aioli (3g net carbs per serving)





BURGERVILLE

Burgerville is a popular west coast chain. Your options are mostly limited to burgers with no bun. Though, there are plenty of toppings and condiments to choose from that are low-carb. Remember when you're ordering to keep away from the chicken sandwiches and fish as they are breaded with flour and filled with carbs.

If you want to add a topping or side to your burger, consider:

- Slices of cheese (1g net carbs on average)
- 1.5oz ham (1g net carbs)
- Fried egg (0.5g net carbs)
- Bacon (0g net carbs)
- Sausage patty (0g net carbs)

Their lowest carb condiments include:

- Cream Cheese (1g net carbs)
- Tartar Cups (2g net carbs)
- BV Spread Cups (4g net carbs)
- Ranch Dressing (2g net carbs)
- Bleu Cheese Dressing (3g net carbs)
- Caesar Dressing (2g net carbs)

Avoid the vegetarian options for burgers as they'll be extremely high in carbs.

Note: Sometimes they will have seasonal offerings like asparagus and wild salmon salad. Feel free to check their website for the nutrition information to make a decision on if it's keto-friendly!



JACK IN THE BOX

A very well known chain across most of the US, Jack in the Box offers burgers as their mainstay specials. If you're coming here for a burger, consider getting a combination so that your money stretches. Consider a sirloin swiss burger with bacon (sans onion) - of course leaving the bun off. We estimate that it is about 8g net carbs.

If you're not in the mood for a burger, Jack in the Box also offers chicken strips (4 piece) for 5g net carbs. Alongside it, they have a Chicken Club Salad (served with grilled chicken) for 8g net carbs.

They indeed offer a wide variety of sauces and condiments to go with your burgers, chicken, and salads. Feel free to pick any from the list below:

- Bacon Ranch Dressing (3g net carbs)
- Creamy Southwest Dressing (3g net carbs)
- Buttermilk House (3g net carbs)
- Fire Roasted Salsa (1g net carbs)
- Buffalo Dipping Sauce (2g net carbs)
- Tartar Sauce (2g net carbs)
- Zesty Marinara (4g net carbs)
- Chipotle Sauce (1g net carbs)
- Creamy Italian Sauce (1g net carbs)
- Peppercorn Mayo (1g net carbs)
- Sun Dried Tomato Sauce (1g net carbs)

Keep in mind that some of the sauces listed are sandwich sauces, so you may have to request them on the side. They do also offer some breakfast options, but they're typically in a wrap or have hashbrowns cooked in. If you opt for one of these, make sure to remove the carb-filled items.



WHATABURGER

Like most burger places, you can opt to get their burgers with no bun. They do have a lot of different toppings to choose from, so feel free to add/combine flavors for your burger. They have many peppers and cheese, so don't forget to include some for flavor (but not too many to add a lot of carbs)!

Some other options that are available here include their salads and melts. If you want to get breakfast, they do have breakfast tacos, but you should opt to eat them without the tortilla. Here are a few examples:

- Grilled Chicken Melt (no bread)
- Bacon Tacquito (no potato)
- Garden Salad (5g net carbs)
- Garden Salad with Grilled Chicken (6g net carbs)

They offer seasonal sauces and menu items (including salads), so it's not clear what will be available at any given time. You're welcome to look up the nutrition information on their website if you happen to be there and unsure of what to order.





WHITE CASTLE / STEAK N' SHAKE

Neither of these places is a great choice when it comes to keto. If you have the choice of going somewhere else that has more to choose from – we recommend it.

At White Castle, you only really have the option of ordering their chicken or beef sliders with no bun. The double beef burger slider is about 9g net carbs each while the chicken sliders are only about 1-2g net carbs each, without the bun. If you want to pair with sauce, you can get cheese sauce or ranch dressing on the side (1g net carb each).

At Steak n' Shake, the options are virtually the same, though they offer much more toppings for their burger. They have guacamole and bacon that you can add to your burgers, alongside sausage and eggs that you can order from their breakfast menu. Their nutrition information is not laid out well online, so if you eat here, try to be sensible with what you order.



CHICK-FIL-A

Unfortunately, Chick-fil-a doesn't have too many low-carb options. They do offer a few options, but the easiest and lowest-carb item is their:

- Grilled chicken nuggets (2g net carb per serving)

If you have the carb allowances, you could opt for a salad, though. Their best salad would be the:

- Grilled market salad (11g net carbs)

You could pick out some of the berries/fruit and leave out the granola to reduce the carb counts significantly. Don't be fooled by their side salad and "superfood" salads as they're both heavy in carbs. Similarly, don't be too fooled by their sauces. Almost all of their dipping sauces are higher than 10g carbs per serving – so definitely avoid them.

If you have to get a dipping sauce, consider the following:

- Zesty buffalo (1g net carbs)
- Garlic & herb ranch (1g net carbs)



ZAXBY'S

A very well known chicken chain that's growing in popularity. There are a few low-carb options here, so we recommend checking their online nutrition guide. The Grilled House Zalad (11g net) or the Garden House Zalad (9g net) without Texas Toast are good options, but they also offer a substantial amount of other salads in their restaurant.

They have a fantastic online nutrition lookup, which offers each ingredient of their salads broken down for you. This way if you're not sure how to remove some carbs, it will give you an excellent guide on where they are all coming from.

Zaxby's also offers traditional chicken wings with a variety of sauces. We recommend getting their wings naked and dipping in their ranch sauce (2g net carbs).

The buffalo sauce can add up quickly, but if you have to have hot sauce try to choose their Tongue Torch flavor as it has the least carbs per serving (2g net carbs).





EL POLLO LOCO / NANDO'S / OTHER GRILLED CHICKEN PLACES

El Pollo Loco is one of the few restaurants that have gotten on board with the lettuce taco shell. Here, you can grab any of their tacos in a lettuce shell – so make sure to check their nutrition information beforehand on their website. All of their flame-grilled chicken has 0g net carbs, so they're a fantastic option to choose if you have an El Pollo Loco closeby.

They also offer a few dressings and a lot of salsas. All of their salsas are either 2g net carbs or 1g net carbs per serving – so you can eat these. If you want to add in a dressing, choose one of the following:

- Creamy Cilantro (2g net carbs)
- Ranch Dressing (2g net Carbs)
- You can add avocado

They also serve broccoli and side salads if you're looking for a vegetable option to pair up with your meal.

El Pollo Loco's menu looks pretty similar to those of other grilled chicken places. Make sure to double check what their carb counts are online before ordering, but you should have a detailed idea of what to order based on this.



KFC

KFC can be a good place to stop for a keto meal – each serving of their grilled chicken is either only 0 or 1g of net carbs. Ordering a few pieces of grilled chicken is super simple and super quick. Skip most of the sides – but if you must have one, ordering an individual serving of green beans is 2g net carbs.

If salad is more up your alley, consider from the following choices:

- Caesar Salad without Croutons (1g net carbs)
- House Salad without Croutons (2g net carbs)
- Heinz Buttermilk Ranch Dressing (1g net carb)
- Marzetti Light Italian Dressing (2g net carbs)
- KFC Creamy Parmesan Caesar Dressing (4g net carbs)

Note: KFC seems to be phasing out their grilled chicken during 2017, so when we are updated with their new options the post will be updated as well!



POPEYES

At the end of the day, there are only a few choices at Popeye's chicken. If this is the only fast food around, our recommendation would be either the blackened tenders or the bonafide legs (scrape off as much of the breading as possible). That way you can get a bit more protein and fat in. Otherwise, there's probably some better choices for you within just a few minute drive.

The blackened chicken tenders are only 2g net carbs for three tenders, which is a rare find at most fast food stops. Their bonafide chicken legs (spicy or mild) come out to 4g net carbs each. They're not that big, so we recommend scraping as much of the breading off to reduce the carb count.

Normally restaurants like this will have real mayonnaise in their condiment section – so take advantage! Popeyes has tartar sauce at 1g net carb per serving and blackened ranch at 2g carbs per serving.

A good mix of protein and fat (tenders and sauce, in this case) would be appropriate for anyone on a ketogenic diet.





BOJANGLES'

The best meal in terms of calories to carbs you can get at Bojangles' is their Grilled Chicken Salad, sitting at only 6g net carbs. Although they do offer a few chicken dishes – you just have to be careful with the number of carbs that they contain.

Their small roasted chicken bites are a pretty good option at 4g net carbs per serving, but it's a rather small amount. You can actually opt to get their fried chicken, too. Notably, the chicken legs are 4g net carbs each. Similarly, with other chicken places, we recommend trying to scrape as much breading off of the chicken as possible. This will reduce the carb count substantially.

If you choose a salad or something that needs dipping, you can choose one of their few low-carb sauces:

- Ranch (2g net carbs)
- Hot Sauce (0g net carbs)
- Bleu Cheese (2g net carbs)
- Mayonnaise (1g net carbs)

You're welcome to pair with a side of green beans (their only low-carb side option), but they are still 5g net carbs so it may be worth skipping.



CHURCH'S CHICKEN / OTHER FRIED CHICKEN PLACES

Church's Chicken doesn't have too many options when it comes to low-carb and ketogenic diets. But, they do offer some foods (like fried chicken legs and thighs) that have a moderate amount of carbs. If you have no other fast-food options available and you're in a hurry, you can scrape the excess batter off of the outside of the chicken.

If available (or if you're at a different chicken place), it's always better to try to opt for grilled chicken as typically the carb counts are very low and there's no cross contamination of wheat products. It's better if you can pair chicken with a side salad and top with fattier dressings. Most popular chains carry at least Ranch dressing, though many chains have their nutrition information (with sauces separate) online.

Remember, if you're not sure if you can or should eat it – just don't. It's better to be safe than sorry.



POTBELLY / WHICHWICH / SALADWORKS / OTHER SALAD SHOPS

Standalone sandwich and salad shops are growing in popularity and there's usually a handful in every major city. Salads are a staple lunch for most people on a ketogenic diet, so there's no surprise when salad places have spectacular low-carb options. Some example salads that you can get from Potbelly include:

- Wreck Salad (8g net carbs)
- Farmhouse Salad (6g net carbs)
- Clubhouse (5g net carbs)

Whichwich is primarily a sandwich shop but you can build your own sandwich on a lettuce wrap (or have it in a bowl similar to Jersey Mike's). They have a lot of different options, but you can build your own on their website, which we highly recommend. Keep in mind that the lettuce bowl/wrap itself will be 2g net carbs.

Most salad shops will have a similar offering or allow you to build your own salads around what they have on hand. Usually, if you explain that you're low-carb, they'll be very willing to help out. Typically you want to watch out for carb counts of mixed greens and toppings like corn, apples, and cranberries that are often overlooked in salads.





DICKEY'S BBQ / FAMOUS DAVE'S / OTHER BBQ PLACES

BBQ joints are scattered all across the US, and for a good reason - it's delicious! On a ketogenic diet, you can usually get smoked meats and sometimes even pickled vegetables with no sauce or sugar added. We always recommend that depending on which chain you're choosing, you look up the nutrition information online. It's always going to be the easiest way to make sure you're staying on track with your carbs.

At Dickey's, for example, you can choose from:

- Beef Brisket (2g net carbs per 1/4 lb.)
- Pulled Pork (2g net carbs per 1/4 lb.)
- Polish Sausage (2g net carbs per 1/4 lb.)
- Spicy Cheddar Sausage (3g net carbs per 1/4 lb.)
- Side Caesar Salad (6g net carbs)

Typically if you're ordering from a BBQ place, all of their meat will be fine to eat as long as it doesn't have sauce on it. If you're lucky enough, some chains even carry sauces that are low-carb friendly.

Check beforehand if their meat uses a sugar-intensive rub (usually this can be found through their online nutrition portal) as well. Or if you're in a small enough town, you can ask the chef yourself. The less sugar you can consume for any meal, the better.



JIMMY JOHN'S / JERSEY MIKE'S / SUBWAY / OTHER SUB SHOPS

Many sub shops nowadays offer their full subs to be made and tossed into a lettuce bowl - making low-carb options super easy. At Jimmy Johns you can order an unwich, their subs wrapped in lettuce; at Jersey Mike's you can order their subs in a tub; at Subway, you can order grilled chicken salads or their entire subs put into a salad.

The options are pretty limitless when it comes to subs. Try to stick with the lower carb ingredients like meat, cheese, and other leafy green vegetables.

For the lowest carb counts at these places, try to order with:

- Grilled Chicken
- Boiled Egg
- Bacon
- Spinach
- Cheddar Cheese
- Pecan/Almond Pieces
- Olive Oil/Vinegar

Of course, you can find nutrition information for many more ingredients that they have on hand on their respective website. There are lots of options to choose from, so take some time to review!



PANERA BREAD

Don't let the "Bread" in Panera Bread stop you from giving this place a try for a keto meal - there are plenty of options! While they have a few salads that are low-carb with no dressing, there is a newer, better option for keto menu items at Panera found on their hidden menu.

For a breakfast meal, ask for the:

- Power Breakfast Egg Bowl with Steak (3g net carbs)
- Power Breakfast Egg White Bowl with Roasted Turkey (4g net carbs)

If you go during the day for lunch or dinner, consider getting:

- Power Mediterranean Chicken (7g net carbs)
- Power Mediterranean Roasted Turkey Bowl (7g net carbs)
- Power Steak Lettuce Wraps (6g net carbs)

Panera also does an excellent job of listing the nutritional information for these menu items on their website. Make sure that you double check for additional side items and dressings that you can add on there.





CHIPOTLE / MOE'S SOUTHWEST GRILL / OTHER MEXICAN CHAINS

Up for Mexican food? You're not alone! Mexican is our favorite go to food when we are craving spicy while on the go. At many build-a-burrito places, you can choose between a burrito bowl sans rice and beans or a salad. There's normally a lot of options to choose from for a ketogenic diet, too. Just be careful as the carb counts do start to creep upward as you add more toppings.

We recommend ordering a salad bowl with a combination of the following:

- Meat (beef, pork, chicken)
- Cheese (cheddar, mozzarella, jack)
- Sour Cream (make sure that it is full fat)
- Lettuce (this does add up in carbs)
- Salsa (tomatillo-red usually has fewest carbs)
- Guacamole (may cost extra)

There are countless options you have when building a salad at places like this. They normally have many toppings and sides to choose from, so try to stick with the simpler and lower carb options. Bigger chains almost always have their nutritional information online, so make sure to check out the respective website of where you visit.



TACO BELL / DEL TACO / OTHER TACO PLACES

Typically taco places don't stock low-carb tortillas on their shelves, so the options are pretty limited. Your only real choice is to order heavy meat/cheese filled items and remove the shell, otherwise it may get too expensive.

You used to be able to order a side of chicken, beef, lettuce, and guacamole for under \$2 at Taco Bell, but many locations no longer offer this. You're welcome to try to order side dishes (or no shell at a reduced cost), but your experiences may vary.

Even at Del Taco, their lowest carb salad (Chicken Bacon Avocado) comes in at a whopping 18g net carbs. It's best to try to skip taco places unless you have no other choice.



DAIRY QUEEN

This is another popular fast food chain that offers both burgers and hot dogs. Not only that, Dairy Queen is a staple in most small towns. If you're on a road trip or live in a low population town, odds are you'll run into a Dairy Queen. Luckily, they have some low-carb options that are readily available.

If you're in the mood for a burger or hotdog, make sure that you remove the bun and take into account that the meat will have 2-3g net carbs per piece. You can pair it with one of their dipping sauces, but please be careful of the carb counts. They add up quickly:

- Ranch Dipping Sauce (5g net carbs)
- Wild Buffalo Dipping Sauce (1g net carbs)
- Marzetti Ranch Dressing (2g net carbs)
- Marzetti Balsamic Vinaigrette (4g net carbs)

For salads, the best option is their Grilled Chicken BLT Salad, at only 7g net carbs for the entire thing. You can always grab extra side dishes from their breakfast menu which include ham, sausage, and bacon at 0g carbs.





ARBY'S

At first glance, Arby's might not be the best choice when it comes to keto - but do they have one thing: meat. Feel free to grab their brisket or roast beef sandwiches without the bun. If you want any extra dipping sauces, consider the following:

- Buffalo (2g net carbs)
- Ranch (2g net carbs)
- Light Italian (2g net carbs)
- Buttermilk Ranch (2g net carbs)
- Balsamic Vinaigrette (2g net carbs)

If you're in the mood for a salad, you can opt for their Chopped Farmhouse Salad, which has 6g net carbs. Pair it with a dressing or vinaigrette and you have yourself a super simple low-carb meal.

At the time of writing this, they also have a great special called the Meat Mountain. You can order with no bun or chicken tenders for a total of 6g net carbs and over 600 calories. Pair it with some fatty sauce and you've got yourself a huge meal on the go!

Arby's also has a fantastic online build-a-meal service where you can individually take out each ingredient to get an accurate count of the carbs of their foods without the bun. Make sure to take a look at it before ordering.



DENNY'S / PERKINS / WAFFLE HOUSE / IHOP

Typically at places that serve breakfast all day, that's what you should order. At Denny's, for example, there's a Build Your Own Grand Slam, where you can have eggs and bacon for a very reasonable price.

Though breakfast is a staple at most of these places, they also offer some lunch and dinner items that shouldn't be overlooked. Many places offer burger patties that you can order, as well as a variety of toppings that are keto-friendly including:

- Sausage
- Eggs
- Bacon
- Spinach
- Broccoli
- Avocado
- Cheese

Most chains will take special orders and allow you to create a meal based on what they have on hand. Though if they seem confused, just order an omelette with the toppings you want. Nutrition information per item varies between each restaurant, so make sure to double check their nutrition information online before ordering.

Note: Please be careful and review nutrition information before ordering. Some places (IHOP, as an example) will add pancake batter into their scrambled egg mixture. This will knock most people out of ketosis, so research ahead of time.



CRACKER BARREL

Although Cracker Barrel falls into most breakfast food categories, we thought they deserved their own mention since they have a specialty low carb menu. While it's nothing out of the ordinary, it does allow for many low-carbers and ketoers to enjoy their restaurant without having too much trouble deciding what to get.

They have a wide variety of things offered including:

- Half Pound Bacon Cheeseburger (3g net carbs + carbs in sides)
- Grilled Steak Salad (7g net carbs + dressing)
- Lemon Pepper Grilled Trout (0g net carbs + carbs in sides)
- Grilled Roast Beef (4g net carbs + carbs in sides)

They include low-carb side items as well, including things like:

- Green Beans (2g net carbs)
- Spicy Pork Rinds (1g net carbs)
- Blue Cheese (2g net carbs)
- Buttermilk Ranch (1g net carb)

Don't forget that you can always ask for a side salad or sub in some broccoli in place of something else. Of course, if none of the low-carb options sound good, you can always order omelettes, scrambled eggs, or salads with your choices of toppings.





BUFFALO WILD WINGS / WINGSTOP / OTHER WING PLACES

Pretty much every wing place you go to will offer traditional style chicken wings. While the lowest carb option is always going to be naked (best dipped in a fatty sauce like ranch), it can get boring quickly.

Many of the bigger chain wing places will usually have dry rub options or sauce options that are very low in carb. Make sure that you double check the nutrition information before going or ordering, but you generally have the choice of a few sauces. One of our favorite wing spots is Buffalo Wild Wings – where some of their options include:

- Naked or Plain (0g net carbs)
- Buffalo (1g net carbs for 20 wings)
- Blazin' with Ghost (7g net carbs for 20 wings)
- Chipotle BBQ (2g net carbs for 20 wings)
- Desert Heat (2g net carbs for 20 wings)
- Hot (4g net carbs for 20 wings)
- Lemon Pepper (1g net carbs for 20 wings)
- Salt and Vinegar (1g net carbs for 20 wings)
- Parmesan Garlic (6g net carbs for 20 wings)

If you're ever in doubt, always order naked wings with a side of ranch. Sometimes chains will add sugar into their sauces and rubs, so make sure you check online (or with them).



PIZZA HUT / DOMINOS / PAPA JOHN'S / PAPA MURPHY'S / OTHER

Most pizza places, whether a chain or a local joint, offer chicken wings (since pizza is off the menu). Normally, this is one of the few items that you can order from pizza places while on a ketogenic diet. Just be careful about the breading on the chicken wings and don't be afraid to ask ahead of time.

At Pizza Hut, for example, you can get:

- All American (0g net carbs per 2 wings)
- Garlic Parmesan (1g net carbs per 2 wings)

You can also pair this with a fatty side dish like Ranch Dressing, but it will have around 1-2g net carbs per container.

At other places like Papa Johns, you can order:

- Wings with No Sauce (1g net carbs per 2 wings)
- Buffalo Wings (2g net carbs per 2 wings)

Remember to always double check the nutrition information online before ordering. Many times the sauces and dry rubs contain sugar, so be careful of what flavor wings you choose.



DUNKIN' DONUTS / STARBUCKS / TIM HORTONS / OTHER COFFEE SHOPS

When you are looking for a drink to warm you up or cool you down, you can always head to a coffee place. While the easiest option is to ask for a black coffee or tea, hot or iced, you can always ask them if they have heavy whipping cream, almond, or coconut milk (make sure these are unsweetened, if they carry it). We have found most small mom and pop coffee shops will have heavy whipping cream and Starbucks will usually have it if you ask.

Other low carb options include an Americano, which is hot water added to espresso, and a Depth Charge, which is a shot of espresso added to a cup of coffee (also known as a red eye, turbo, and shot in the dark). Most baristas will not bat an eye at your drink requests – they are used to getting silly long orders!

A lot of coffee houses now offer hot breakfast sandwiches as well – so if you are in a rush, order a breakfast sandwich and get rid of the bun – you'll be left with a gooey and delicious mess of eggs, cheese, and sausage or bacon!





GAS STATIONS / CONVENIENCE STORES

We never thought we would be the ones to eat a sandwich from a gas station but a long car trip last year changed that; we didn't want to have to stop for gas (and at a restaurant) when we just wanted to keep driving. But, hunger struck!

We picked up a breakfast sandwich from inside a gas station and after peeling off the bun - it was pretty tasty! Just sausage, egg, and cheese. Keep in mind, though, that the sausage patties will usually have a few carbs in from filler material.

A lot of gas stations now offer ketogenic options like:

- Hard-boiled eggs
- Deli meat
- String cheese
- Almonds
- Pork rinds

Take a look around; you can easily make a keto meal when you're in a rush. Many gas station chains have also started to make their cheap coffee more "gourmet" too and offer add-ins - we have found sugar-free syrups at more than one chain, making that late night pick-me-up taste so much better!



GROCERY STORES

Grocery stores are always going to be your best bet for keto food when you're not at home. The easiest and most cost-effective thing to get is a rotisserie chicken, where you can save the leftovers for dinner (or lunch the following day). Costco and Sam's Club typically have the best deals on them, but they usually only run \$5-6 at other stores.

Some other keto foods you can look for in grocery stores are:

- Meat and Cheese Packs
- Hard Boiled Eggs
- Canned/Packaged Tuna
- Pre-packaged Salads
- Parmesan Crisps
- Pre-cooked Bacon
- Heavy Cream + Butter + Coffee
- Raw Green Veggies + Dip

There's always going to be options in grocery stores for you to choose from, and even the smallest towns typically have a decently stocked store. Plus, if you live in a larger city where lunch lines can be very long - grocery stores typically have self-checkouts that are extremely quick.



TRADER JOES / WHOLE FOODS / SPECIALTY STORES

Specialty stores normally have a much larger range of low-carb foods to choose from. Another perk of visiting a grocery store while on a fast food run is that you can pick up extra keto-friendly options for later in the week. Some choices that specialty stores sometimes offer include:

- Artisan Smoked Meats
- Long-aged Cheese
- Parsnip Chips
- Baked Cheese
- Zoodles
- Riced Cauliflower
- Riced Broccoli
- Broccoli Chips
- Specialty Condiments/Sauces (e.g. Hollandaise)
- Seaweed Snacks

Among these, you'll find many other specialty low-carb goods and items from both the grocery stores themselves and brands across the US. Just like in standard grocery stores, you'll find a wide selection of meats and cheese from the deli that you can use as a meal replacement.



GET KETO ACADEMY

ruled.me