

Title: Battle of the diet books II.

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Then we last reviewed diet books (Jan./Feb. 2004, p.1), low-carb was king. The South Beach Diet and Dr. Atkins' New Diet Revolution ruled the bestseller list. Good Carbs, Bad Carbs and The New Glucose Revolution weren't far behind.

Only two have survived that list of 10: South Beach (that's good, given its sensible advice) and Eat Right 4 Your Type (that's bad, given its scientific-sounding baloney).

The latest crop of weight-loss books pooh-poohs both low-carb and low-fat diets. The good news is that most of them recommend fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and other healthy foods and rail against sweets, refined grains, and bad fats. Can't complain about that, even if the rationale is sometimes, shall we say, imaginative.

Since no large, long-term studies have tested these diets on weight, we can't judge their ability to trim your physique. Instead, we've rated each book's scientific credibility ("Is the Science Solid?") and whether the diet is healthy (good points are marked with a [up arrow] and not-so-good points with a [down arrow]). In "What You Eat," Yes means frequently and Less means rarely, if ever.

These weight-loss books are listed in the order they appeared on amazon.com this spring.

Name	Claim	What You Eat
The Rice Diet Solution by Kitty Gurkin Rosati and Robert Rosati	Austere, high-carb diet that limits salt (an appetite stimulant) and fat will detox your body and trim pounds.	Yes: whole grains (not just rice), fruits, vegetables, beans, (limited) fish, non-fat dairy. Less: all other foods.
The Fat Smash Diet by Ian K. Smith	Detox your body with (mostly) fruits and vegetables for 9 days, eat 4-5 small meals every day, and exercise.	Yes: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, seafood, lean meats, low-fat dairy, sugar substitutes. Less: sweets, refined grains, fatty meats, alcohol, fried foods, fat-laden salad dressings.

The South Beach Diet by Arthur Agatston	Switching to the "right" carbs stops insulin resistance, cures cravings, and causes weight loss.	<p>Yes: seafood, chicken breast, lean meat, low-fat cheese, nuts, oils, most vegetables; (later) whole grains, most fruits, low-fat milk or yogurt, beans.</p> <p>Less: fatty meats, full-fat cheese, refined grains, sweets, juice, potatoes.</p>
Ultra-Metabolism by Mark Hyman	Turn up your metabolism by controlling gut-brain-fat-cell communication, stress, inflammation, thyroid function, and toxins in your home and your liver.	<p>Yes: whole grains, fish, grass-fed or organic beef or poultry, nuts, soy foods, beans, fruits, vegetables.</p> <p>Less: sugar, artificial sweeteners, oils, refined grains, dairy foods, processed foods.</p>
The Shangri-La Diet by Seth Roberts	Curb your appetite and lower your body's preferred weight (set point) by consuming unflavored sugar water and oil between meals.	<p>Yes: 1-3 Tbs. Of sugar in water and/or 1-2 Tbs. of extra-light olive oil each day between meals.</p> <p>Less: processed foods high-glycemic-index foods.</p>
The Sonoma Diet by Connie Guttersen	The right carbs and fats, wine, and 10 "power foods" bring lasting weight loss, health, and energy.	<p>Yes: olive oil, nuts, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, lean poultry, meat, wine, (limited) dairy.</p> <p>Less : sweets, refined grains, fatty meats, poultry.</p>
Eat Right 4 Your Type by Peter J. D'Adamo & Catherine Whitney	Your blood type determines your diet, supplements, and personality because it is "the key to your body's entire immune system."	<p>Type O. Yes: meat, seafood, fruits, vegetables.</p> <p>Less: wheat, beans.</p> <p>Type A. Yes: fruits, vegetables, beans, most seafood.</p>

Eat, Drink, &
Weigh Less
by Mollie Katzen
& Walter Willett

Gradual shifts to a
healthier, more
delicious diet will
trim your waist.

Less: meat, dairy,
wheat.

Type B. Yes: meat,
beans, fruits,
vegetables, seafood.

Less: chicken, wheat.

Type AB. Yes: seafood,
dairy, fruits,
vegetables.

Less: meat.

Yes: fruits,
vegetables, whole
grains, legumes, nuts,
unsaturated oils, fish,
poultry, beans.

Less: fatty meats,
butter, full-fat dairy,
trans fats, refined
grains, sweets.

Name	Is the Science Solid?	Is the Diet Healthy?
The Rice Diet Solution by Kitty Gurkin Rosati and Robert Rosati	Yes, if you can stick to this very-low-fat, low-salt, low-flavor diet (sprinkled with Buddhist mindfulness, yoga, and the 12-Step program originally designed for Alcoholics Anonymous).	[up arrow] Low in salt, sugar, bad fat. [down arrow] Low in protein.
The Fat Smash Diet by Ian K. Smith	Detox mumbo jumbo aside, exercise and diet advice (fill up on fruits and vegetables) is solid, if scarce.	[up arrow] Mostly healthy foods. [down arrow] Some recipes high in sodium.
The South Beach Diet by Arthur Agatston	Healthy version of Atkins diet that's backed by solid evidence on fats and heart disease.	[up arrow] Mostly healthy foods.
Ultra-Metabolism by Mark Hyman	Sketchy, unproven science that sounds impressive.	[up arrow] Unprocessed, healthy foods rich in fiber and phyto-nutrients.

		[down arrow] Too many supplements backed by scant evidence.
The Shangri-La Diet by Seth Roberts	What science? Advice is based largely on author's dieting and a few (misinterpreted) rat studies. Many references are irrelevant, random testimonials.	? Who knows? The author never identifies the "nutritious and healthy" foods he recommends.
The Sonoma Diet by Connie Guttersen	Evidence for Mediterranean diet is stronger for heart disease and diabetes than for weight loss.	[up arrow] Mostly healthy foods. [down arrow] Doesn't mention that alcohol may increase risk of breast cancer.
Eat Right 4 Your Type by Peter J. D'Adamo & Catherine Whitney	Science fiction is more like it. References (some from the 1930s) have little to do with diet.	Not applicable (diet varies according to blood type, ancestry, etc.).
Eat, Drink, & Weigh Less by Mollie Katzen & Walter Willett	Packed with good science from Willett, who chairs the Nutrition Department at the Harvard School of Public Health.	[up arrow] Mostly healthy foods. [down arrow] Could lead people to use too much oil.
Name	Worst Feature	Most Preposterous Claim
The Rice Diet Solution by Kitty Gurkin Rosati and Robert Rosati	Low protein (16 to 20 grams a day) may lead "Ricers" to lose more muscle than a higher-protein diet.	"It has been shown that we only really need about 20 grams of protein per day."
The Fat Smash Diet by Ian K. Smith	Skimpy book for "Smashers" has few recipes, menus, details ... Or words, for that matter.	"There is no limit and there's no counting calories. But even with this freedom, don't overeat!"
The South Beach Diet by Arthur Agatston	Restricts carrots, bananas, pineapple, and watermelon.	"Watermelon is bad."
Ultra-Metabolism	Imprecise advice to	"Relaxing makes you

by Mark Hyman	take dozens of supplements like quercetin, fenugreek, N-acetylcysteine, taurine, glycine, pycnogenol, rutin, and bioflavonoids.	thin ... there are a number of foods that will help you relax and reduce the impact of chronic stress ..."
The Shangri-La Diet by Seth Roberts	Tries to convince the reader that "the better food tastes, the more fattening it is."	"If you add cinnamon to your pizza, it will make it less fattening, at least the first time."
The Sonoma Diet by Connie Guttersen	Exaggerates benefits of "power foods."	"Radicchio's star nutrient, a phytochemical called intybin, aids digestion and strengthens the liver."
Eat Right 4 Your Type by Peter J. D'Adamo & Catherine Whitney	People may use these diets instead of effective treatments for cancer, asthma, infections, diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, and infertility.	"If you are a Type A woman with a family history of breast cancer, consider introducing snails into your diet."
Eat, Drink, & Weigh Less by Mollie Katzen & Walter Willett	Recipes allow "salt to taste" and don't list sodium levels.	"If you're a little hungry at bedtime, let the slight discomfort be an overnight bridge connecting you with a delicious breakfast."

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