SNEAK PEEK

NO MORE FOOD ENVY, *with more than* **80 Surprisingly Keto Recipes**

ROCCO'S KETO COMFORT FOOD DIET

EAT THE FOODS YOU MISS AND STILL LOSE UP TO A POUND A DAY

#1 *New York Times* Bestselling Author

ROCCO DISPIRITO

INTRODUCTION

After a long absence of more than a decade, I recently returned to the highly pressurized, intense world of being a head chef at a brand-new New York City restaurant. This can be a grueling process—long days and late nights working to create the perfect menu to satisfy and wow customers.

To get this eatery open and ready for the public, I spent months developing the entire menu. This was a long, painstaking process, but I loved it. I was definitely up for the challenge—it's one of the things I missed most about heading up a restaurant. It was fun creating new dishes and experimenting with flavors. I was using everything I had ever learned—food development, menu creation, and overall kitchen management. I was back in my element. Of course, this process required *a lot* of tasting. Sometimes, though, I wouldn't just taste it, I'd scarf down the whole dish. This is both a perk and a curse. After all, some of the items that ended up on the menu were very rich and not dishes you'd eat daily if you wanted to stay trim and fit.

And so gradually (and inevitably), I began filling out and putting on pounds—to the point that I started wearing baggy shirts and pants. Underneath, I knew I was getting big, and eventually I had to face the music.

One day I woke up, looked at my body in the mirror, and said to myself, "That's it. Enough is enough." I decided to lose that ugly pudge, and I needed to do it fast.

Like everyone else, I had heard about the ketogenic diet. Needing to shed those pounds, I decided to dig deeper, reading and rummaging through all the resources I could find about keto. The ketogenic diet is essentially a fast-results plan for weight loss. You drop pounds quickly—a lot of people have been known to lose up to 10 pounds the first week!—and feel good while on it. You lose inches of fat all over your body.

You don't have mood swings caused by spikes in blood sugar, and you rarely feel hungry. And you can eat foods that for many years you've been told not to eat—bacon, eggs, steak, butter, and other fatty foods—because fat, not sugar, is really the ideal fuel for the body.

I remember thinking, what sort of diet magic is this? I can lose weight by eating fat? Cheese? Real cream? Steaks? Bacon? Really? And my most favorite food in the world—butter? What's more, we chefs create and cook with all this stuff backstage in our restaurants all the time. And fat as fuel? I had a lot of that. It was like a dream come true. Count me in!

So I started a keto diet, with hopes of losing shedloads of weight. Initially, I did. But like all my friends, I started getting bored with it. The diet was very limited—no grains, fruits, starchy vegetables, bread, pasta, and legumes like chickpeas and lentils. Eating the same things over and over gave me taste fatigue. I thought I'd eventually crack and wolf down a monster plate of spaghetti. Panic was slowly descending on me.

As a guy who is very good at consuming food, my philosophy is that eating should be enjoyable. Not temporarily enjoyable as in I-had-a-bad-day-so-I'm-going-to-pound-down-a-gallon-of-chocolate-chip-ice-cream. I mean the kind of enjoyable where you love your meals, you get to eat stuff like pizza, you don't feel deprived, and your weight comes off faster than hubcaps stripped from a Lexus parked in a bad neighborhood.

So I wasn't ready to give up.

I started pondering this whole keto-is-boring thing and thinking about how I could turn keto meals into comfort food at its tastiest, especially at a time when my own fat-burning flames needed some fanning. I decided to dust off some strategies that I had used years ago to transform America's favorite comfort foods into deliciously healthy dishes—all with zero bad carbs, zero bad fats, zero sugar, and maximum flavor.

These strategies were partly the basis of my bestselling series of *Now Eat This!* books years ago when reducing fat and calories was topical.

Ketogenic diets needed the same big makeover—so that people could eat bread, pancakes, puddings, cookies, cakes with frosting, cheesecake, pizza, tacos, burgers, and more. And none of it could taste like cardboard!

I knew that's what I needed to lose my extra pounds quickly and keep them off—and it's what others needed as well.

The ketogenic diet is medically sound and effective, but any eating plan that feels restrictive cannot work long term. So while there are many books on the keto lifestyle on the market, I knew that no one with the culinary credentials I have or the skill for crafting flavorful dishes had attempted to make over Americans' favorite comfort foods keto-style. I was up for the challenge!

I conjured up about eighty "keto comfort food recipes"—and a diet to go along with them. All the dishes I listed on pages 8 to 9 made the cut. So did the foods I grew up with. As an Italian-American, I love lasagna, spaghetti, and pasta galore. I created keto comfort food versions of these traditional dishes so I could once again enjoy the meals I grew up with. It didn't even feel like keto dieting, and it sure wasn't deprivation.

Along with the recipes, I put all these keto comfort foods into a four-tiered food plan that guarantees you'll stay with a keto diet right down to your target weight—and beyond. Best of all, it includes a maintenance plan called Keto Comfort Phasing that helps you keep that weight off. It's all here. Once you get started, you won't even know you're on a diet, much less a keto diet! And you'll be able to keep your weight off easily.

This book is a completely new, unique, and revolutionary way to use keto dieting to burn fat and keep it off. Here's a look at several of the key weight-control benefits you can expect, all while you enjoy what you are eating.

LOSE WEIGHT SUPER FAST. Ketogenic diets, including my Keto Comfort Food Diet, retrain the body to use fat as an energy source. When you restrict carbs in your diet, your body taps into fat stores and burns them for energy. As a result, it's not unusual to lose up to a pound a day on this diet—as was proven in a test group of dieters who followed my plan.

GET A SLIMMER WAISTLINE. Research into keto diets shows that they trim your waist circumference, otherwise known as belly fat—as well as hip fat—and so will the Keto Comfort Food Diet. Dieters on my plan lost an average of one inch around their waist. Now that's something to look forward to!

SAY GOODBYE TO HUNGER PANGS. Studies on keto diets suggest that they reduce ghrelin, a hormone that makes you hungry. What's more, in the fat-burning state called "ketosis," when the body is functioning on a high-fat, moderate-protein, and low-carb diet, your appetite goes down, and cravings are a distant memory. Essentially, you can stay satisfied much longer with my eating plan.

These benefits and others are entirely possible, as long as you stay with it. To do that, you've got to prepare, eat, and enjoy all the delicious keto comfort foods I have for you here. I've taken all the foods you and I love—no matter how bad they might be for us—and turned them into keto comfort food versions that make it easy for you to blast away fat, lose inches, and drop pounds.

As for me, I never had to cheat or fall off the wagon because I was eating these super delicious and super flavorful keto adaptations of my favorite foods. I achieved my weight-loss goal, and my baggy-clothes wardrobe became a casualty.

And I got healthier. My blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood-sugar levels are in the normal ranges now. My mind remained sharp as a whip because the brain loves to run on ketone bodies, by-products of fat breakdown.

My cravings disappeared, too. The higher level of fat in the diet kept me fuller for longer. I never turned "hangry" where I wanted to bite everyone's head off. I'm not tempted by starchy foods, desserts, or sweets, either.

I experienced boundless energy, which is a good thing because now that we've opened the restaurant my schedule is even more grueling than before!

The other good news is that I no longer have to obsess over the endless list of foods I "can't" eat because I can now eat the food that I love. I buy all my food at regular grocery stores and farmers' markets because I get to eat real food. I don't have to purchase processed, packaged diet food that tastes and smells nasty.

I want you to enjoy the wonderful dishes that fit within my real-foods, ketogenic way of eating. With them, you'll drop amazing amounts of weight and inches in no time at all—fast results that will keep you motivated—while enjoying food that won't make you feel deprived. I promise, this brand-new way of doing keto will also improve your health in spectacular ways.

The Keto Comfort Food Diet was definitely something that fit into my lifestyle almost seamlessly. And I know it can work for you, too.

GETTING INTO KETOSIS

After you start a keto diet, your body begins casting off its stored sugar within about 72 hours. At that point, it's forced to draw on fat. After about 4 days to 1 week of restricting carbs and eating more fat, you enter the metabolic state of ketosis, signifying your body has gotten used to burning fat for energy. Everyone is different, but you can expect to lose between ½ pound and 1 pound a day.

This is consistent with what I observed in the test group who followed my Keto Comfort Food Diet. Besides rapid fat-burning, ketosis makes you feel less hungry and helps you maintain your lean muscle mass.

To kick your body into ketosis on the Keto Comfort Food Diet, you must do three main things:

1. Severely restrict carbohydrates.

2. Eat moderate amounts of protein.

3. Eat as much saturated fat and monounsaturated fat as it takes to feel satisfied. (Saturated fat is found in meat, dairy foods, and coconut oil; monounsaturated fat is present in nuts, seeds, avocados, and olive oil.)

Thus, a true ketogenic diet like the Keto Comfort Food Diet is low in carbohydrates, moderate in protein, and high in fat. To stay in ketosis, I side with experts on daily nutrient percentages: Roughly 60 to 75 percent of your daily calories should come from fat (60 to 120 grams daily). Five to 10 percent of your calories should come from carbs (20 to 30 grams a day). The remainder, 15 to 30 percent of your daily calories, should be obtained from protein (100 to 150 grams or slightly more, depending on if you work out regularly). These percentages are general guidelines only; they can certainly vary a bit. I won't sentence you to hard time in a bakery if you deviate a little! Simply follow the guidelines provided here and you'll be headed in the right direction.

A FOUR-TIERED PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Looking ahead, you'll see that my plan has four tiers:

TIER 1: THE 3-DAY KETO CLEANSE. This tier kicks off the plan and launches you quickly into ketosis. Men and women who start with this cleanse have dropped between 4 and 8 pounds in 3 days (men will be in the upper range of loss), according to the results in my test group.

TIER 2: THE ACCELERATED 21-DAY KETO COMFORT FOOD DIET. I provide you with 3 weeks of low-calorie and low-carbohydrate meal plans and recipes to continue your rapid and effective weight loss. On this tier, you can burn fat fairly rapidly by clearing sugar and carbs from your body. It incorporates "intermittent fasting" to boost and sustain ketosis.

TIER 3: THE BASIC 21-DAY KETO COMFORT FOOD DIET. You'll up your calories and carbs slightly— plus eat optional keto comfort food desserts—in order to continue your success.

TIER 4: KETO COMFORT PHASING. This is my maintenance plan, which most keto diets neglect to provide. It teaches you how to introduce certain foods back into your diet and helps you stay at your desired weight.

QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE KETO COMFORT FOOD DIET

TIERS	PURPOSE
TIER 1: The Keto Cleanse	A 3-day detox plan to rapidly launch your body into fat-burning. It helps remove sugar and carbohydrates from your system.
TIER 2: The Accelerated Keto Comfort Food Diet	A 21-day plan that is low in calories and carbohydrates. It is designed to sustain rapid fat-burning and employs the strategy of intermittent fasting.
TIER 3: The Basic Keto Comfort Food Diet	A 21-day plan with slightly increased calories and carbohydrates to help you move closer to your goal weight.
TIER 4: Keto Comfort Phasing	A maintenance plan in which you follow ketogenic nutritional principles 4 to 5 days a week, then reintroduce clean carbohydrates and other foods into your lifestyle on the weekends.

BEFORE YOU START . . .

To ensure your keto success, it's important to honestly assess where you are today. Once you know your true starting point, you'll be able to better form a clear vision of where you want to be. There are thus a couple of tasks I'd like you to do prior to starting this diet.

The first is to take "Before" pictures. One of the best ways to stay motivated is to be able to see tangible results—results that can't be disputed. So take several pictures of yourself first, and do it from different angles—front, side, and back. When you take the pictures, capture as much of your body as possible. Wear a bathing suit, ideally, and take the pictures against a plain background or white wall. If you don't want anyone to see you in a bathing suit, set your camera on a selfie stand, or pose in front of a full-length mirror, and snap away. Or have a family member or trusted friend take the photos.

Next, step on the scale and obtain your starting weight. Weigh yourself every few days at the same time each day to see how fast you're losing. Record those weights.

Remember that keto dieting burns pure fat. This means that you'll find yourself quickly losing inches. If your clothes are looser or fit better, that means inches are vanishing from your body, thanks to keto.

I recommend tracking the loss of those inches. At the very least, use a cloth tape measure to take the circumferences of your waist, hips, and thighs. To determine your waistline measurement, women should measure 1 inch above the navel and men should measure 1 inch below the navel. The tape measure should be snug, but should not compress the skin. Measure your thighs and hips at their widest part.

Let me add here that your waist measurement is a better tool than the number on your scale for monitoring health, says the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. If you're a woman, shoot for a waist circumference of less than 36 inches; for men, it's less than 40 inches. The smaller your waist, the lower your risk for heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Optional measurements include your chest, biceps, and calves. When measuring these body parts, measure at the widest parts.

Record these numbers in a journal or notebook.

Super important: Record your ketone bodies test results, too. Check your ketone levels in your urine, using test strips, in the morning and in the late afternoon.

When you take this time to honestly evaluate yourself, you've put yourself on the path to fat-burning.

RECIPES

MAMA'S KETO MEATBALLS WITH ZUCCHINI NOODLES

PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES ★ COOK TIME: 1½ HOURS (SEE TIP) ★ SERVINGS: 6

This dish is a keto version of my mother's signature dish, fondly known as Mama's Meatballs. While you won't find them on a mound of begging-to-be-twirled spaghetti, you'll still be wowed by their full-on flavor atop zoodles.

MARINARA SAUCE (SEE TIP)

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 clove garlic, crushed through a press

2 tablespoons finely chopped yellow onion

¾ teaspoon tomato paste

Red pepper flakes

Celtic sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1 (16-ounce) can tomato puree

½ (16-ounce) can crushed tomatoes

¼ cup chicken stock

1½ cups water

⅛ teaspoon liquid stevia (optional)

MEATBALLS

Olive oil or avocado oil cooking spray

⅓ cup chicken stock

¼ yellow onion, roughly chopped

1 clove garlic, peeled but whole

½ pound ground beef

½ pound ground pork

½ pound ground veal

⅓ cup crushed Herbed Parmesan Crisps (page 189) or store-bought Parmesan crisps (such as Whisps)

2 large eggs

¼ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

¼ cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1 teaspoon Celtic sea salt

ZUCCHINI NOODLES

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 pound store-bought zucchini noodles

Celtic sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

¼ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, for serving

1. MAKE THE MARINARA SAUCE: In a saucepot, heat the olive oil over medium-low heat. Add the garlic and onion and cook until the garlic is tender and the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the tomato paste and cook for 30 seconds. Season with red pepper flakes, salt, and black pepper to taste.

2. Add the tomato puree, crushed tomatoes, chicken stock, and water to the pot along with the liquid stevia (if using) and stir to combine. Bring to a simmer, season with salt to taste, cover, and simmer for 25 to 30 minutes. If the sauce is too thin, simmer uncovered for 2 to 3 minutes. If the sauce is too thick, add a little water. The sauce should be fairly thin and very smooth, but not watery.

3. MEANWHILE, MAKE THE MEATBALLS: Preheat the oven to 400°F. Coat a sheet pan with cooking spray.

4. In a food processor or blender, combine the chicken stock, onion, and garlic and puree. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl and add the meats, crisps, eggs, Parmigiano, pepper flakes, parsley, and salt. Mix with your hands until just combined, being careful not to overmix.

5. Grease your hands with olive oil and form the mixture into 12 balls a little smaller than golf balls.

6. Arrange the meatballs on the sheet pan and bake until browned, at least 18 and up to 20 minutes.

7. Transfer the finished meatballs to the marinara sauce and allow to simmer for 10 to 15 minutes.

8. PREPARE THE ZUCCHINI NOODLES:
In a large sauté pan, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add the zucchini noodles and cook until tender but still a little crunchy, 2 to 3 minutes. Season with salt and black pepper to taste.

9. Serve the meatballs and sauce over the zucchini noodles sprinkled with the Parmigiano.

TIP: To shave over an hour off the cooking time, use a good-quality, low-carb store-bought marinara such as Rao's instead of the homemade.

PER SERVING ★ CALORIES: 400 ★ GRAMS OF PROTEIN: 32 ★ GRAMS OF FAT: 21 ★ GRAMS OF CARBOHYDRATE: 20 ★ PERCENT OF PROTEIN: 32% PERCENT OF FAT: 48% ★ PERCENT OF CARBOHYDRATE: 20%

GROUND PORK RAMEN

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES ★ COOK TIME: 40 MINUTES ★ SERVINGS: 6

If you're a ramen fan, you know it can be addictive and rich in taste. This Japanese dish normally consists of wheat noodles, but I've used no-carb shirataki noodles and flavored it with Asian delights like ginger, mushrooms, scallions, and of course, pork.

This dish is truly delicious, and won't end up on your hips. Make it and enjoy it. I gulped down a generous helping at dinner—and snuck an extra helping when no one was looking.

1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil

2 tablespoons coconut oil

3 cloves garlic, minced

3 scallions, minced

2-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and grated

8 ounces ground pork

Celtic sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

8 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stems removed, caps sliced

2 teaspoons chili-garlic sauce

4 cups chicken stock

1 tablespoon coconut aminos

2 teaspoons fish sauce

¼ cup MCT oil

Sriracha (optional)

2 (7-ounce) bags shirataki noodles

½ cup fresh basil, torn

½ cup fresh cilantro, chopped

1 cup bean sprouts

2 limes, cut into wedges, for serving

1. In a large heavy-bottomed pot, heat the sesame oil and coconut oil over medium-high heat. Add the garlic, scallions, and ginger and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, until softened and fragrant. Add the ground pork, breaking it up using the back of a wooden spoon. Cook until browned and cooked through, 7 to 8 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the mushrooms and chili-garlic sauce, and cook until lightly browned, another 6 minutes. Add the chicken stock and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook for 20 minutes. Taste, and season again with salt and pepper if needed. Stir in the coconut aminos, fish sauce, MCT oil, and Sriracha to taste (if using).

2. Divide the noodles among 6 bowls (after cooking according to package instructions) and ladle the hot broth over the top. Sprinkle with the basil, cilantro, and bean sprouts. Serve with lime wedges.

PER SERVING ★ CALORIES: 297 ★ GRAMS OF PROTEIN: 11 ★ GRAMS OF FAT: 23 ★ GRAMS OF CARBOHYDRATE: 12 ★ PERCENT OF PROTEIN: 15% ★ PERCENT OF FAT: 69% ★ PERCENT OF CARBOHYDRATE: 16%

CINNAMON ROLL BITES

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES + 30 MINUTES REFRIGERATION ★ COOK TIME: 20 MINUTES
SERVINGS: 16

I've cloned one of the world's best cinnamon rolls with this recipe. Start baking these, and that magical cinnamon aroma will waft through your house and draw everyone to the kitchen. These rolls are the ultimate comfort food at breakfast.

CINNAMON ROLL DOUGH

1 (8-ounce) container full-fat cream cheese, at room temperature

2½ cups shredded low-moisture whole-milk mozzarella cheese

¾ cup almond flour

⅓ cup coconut flour

⅓ cup granulated erythritol

2 tablespoons baking powder

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

¼ teaspoon Celtic sea salt

3 large eggs, beaten

2 tablespoons unsalted grass-fed butter, melted

CINNAMON ROLL FILLING

2 tablespoons unsalted grass-fed butter, melted

⅓ cup granulated erythritol

2 tablespoons ground cinnamon

CINNAMON ROLL FROSTING

4 ounces full-fat cream cheese, at room temperature

¼ cup granulated erythritol

2 tablespoons heavy cream

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

1. PREPARE THE CINNAMON ROLL DOUGH: In a large microwave-safe bowl, combine the cream cheese and mozzarella and heat in the microwave in 30-second intervals, stirring after each, until melted and smooth. Add the almond flour, coconut flour, erythritol, baking powder, vanilla, sea salt, and eggs and stir until combined and a dough forms. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

2. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Grease an 8 x 8-inch baking pan with the 2 tablespoons melted butter.

3. MAKE THE CINNAMON ROLLS: Roll the dough out between two pieces of parchment paper to a 15 x 10-inch rectangle ¼ inch thick. Brush the melted butter over the dough. In a small bowl, combine the erythritol and cinnamon. Evenly sprinkle the cinnamon mixture over the dough. Starting at the long side, roll the dough up in a jelly-roll fashion. Cut crosswise into 8 wheels. Then cut each wheel in half to make 16 bites.

4. Arrange in the baking dish, spiral-side up, and bake until golden, 18 to 20 minutes. Allow to cool almost completely before frosting.

PER SERVING ★ CALORIES: 258 ★ GRAMS OF PROTEIN: 8 ★ GRAMS OF FAT: 22 ★ GRAMS OF CARBOHYDRATE: 5 ★ PERCENT OF PROTEIN: 13% ★ PERCENT OF FAT: 78% ★ PERCENT OF CARBOHYDRATE: 9%

THANKS FOR PURCHASING MY BOOK!

You'll receive it shortly from the retailer, but I hope you enjoyed this sneak peek.

I'd love to hear your comments, questions and thoughts about the book. Join the conversation on social, using **#RoccosKetoComfortFood**, and tag me: **@RoccoDiSpirito**.

You could also write a review of the book on your favorite retailer's book page.

Thanks again and happy cooking,