

## The ultimate diet: The French have kept it a secret for years. Now the protein rich Dukan Diet is coming to Britain

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Have you ever wondered why most French women appear to be so effortlessly chic and slender, whatever their age?

The answer could lie in their diet. Not the olive oil and red wine Mediterranean diet so popular on the Continent, but a striking weight-loss programme that has been taking the country by storm.

When eminent French nutritionist Dr Pierre Dukan introduced his Dukan Diet there ten years ago, the book rushed to the top of the French best-seller list and spawned an underground dieting revolution of 200 websites, forums and blogs.

Today, more than 1.5 million French women swear by its dramatic - and long-lasting - slimming results.

Politicians, film stars and high-profile models, including Gisele Bündchen and Jennifer Lopez, live the Dukan life, all of them seduced by its promise of the ultimate dieters dream - permanent slenderness while eating what you like.

Now this great French dietary secret is coming to Britain, with the launch next month of an English version of the Dukan Diet.

Unlike so many other diet fads that have come and gone, this plan is designed to get inside the head of the inveterate dieter.

It acknowledges the innate pleasure to be had from eating and, incredibly, promises efficient weight loss while eating unlimited quantities of real food.

The Dukan Diet is, in fact, four very different eating programmes that each follow on from the other.

It starts with a dramatic and rapid weight loss, and leads on into a structured, but simple long-term, real-food regime that ensures you never regain the weight you've lost.

The crucial element that links the four stages is the days spent eating nothing but protein. It may sound similar to Atkins, but the Dukan Diet is very different.

### FEEL FLUSHED

**Due to the high amounts of protein, dieters are advised to drink three litres of water a day**

Protein days are used for crucial strategic effect at each stage of the diet, and dieters are urged to stay clear of butter and oil that forms one of the mainstays of the Atkins regime.

Dr Dukan says he stumbled on the idea of a low-fat, protein-only element to his diet when a friend begged him for some dietary advice, saying he'd do anything as long as he didn't have to give up meat.

'I told him to eat nothing but protein and drink only water for five days, and when he came back he asked if he could use my scales because his appeared to be broken,' he says.

They were stunned to see that he had lost 10lb. The patient stuck to the plan and went on to lose another 6lb over the next five days.

Dr Dukan was so amazed with the results and the effect this had had on his friend's weight and health that he switched his medical specialism from neurology to nutrition and spent the next 35 years researching and perfecting



© Image Source  
Slimming secret: More than 1.5 million French women swear by the Dukan Diet



Protein-based: It may sound similar to Atkins, but the Dukan Diet is very different

the various elements of his diet.

'It has become clear to me over the years that calorie counting does not work - dieters' brains don't work like that,' he says.

'Calorie counting sets quotas, doses and portions, but it forgets that the people having to follow it are flesh and blood, made up of emotions and instincts. 'Yes, the most motivated ones may manage to lose weight, but all or almost all of them will eventually put it back on.'

He purports to have huge respect for Atkins but, as a doctor, refuses to believe that unlimited fat in the diet can be healthy. He is circumspect about its long-term impact.

'When you remove the taboo surrounding fat, you create impossible long-term problems for people when they try to eat normally again,' he says. Many diets will help you lose weight, but most, he says, leave you stranded and alone when the pounds inevitably start to re-appear.

'Doctors assume their work is done once you've slimmed down, but there is something uncomfortable and unethical about having to face patients again six months later when their weight has returned.

'I couldn't stand the idea of putting people on a diet for life. That would be impossible - there is far too much pleasure to be had in eating!'

Instead, Dr Dukan came up with an innovative phase of the diet that gradually reintroduces, in successive layers, the basic elements of healthy eating.

This is carefully designed to control a body that, stripped of its reserves through weight loss, would be bent on revenge.

If you follow the plan to the letter, and your new weight becomes established and stable, the Dukan Diet eases you back to a life of normal, unrestrained free eating, with one caveat - you must agree to one protein-only day (Dukan suggests a Thursday) every week for the rest of your life.

This lies at the heart of the great French slenderness secret. The French eat and drink with gusto and abandon, enjoying every morsel of their food, but now many of them atone for their enjoyment with one small sacrifice: eating only protein on Thursdays.

'By sticking to protein one day a week, you can lose 1.5lb to 2lb instantly and, in so doing, correct any excess that may have occurred during the rest of the week,' says Dr Dukan.

'The idea of protein Thursday has taken off in France to such an extent that if I find myself in a restaurant with my family on a Thursday, I very often hear other customers around me asking for their fish or meat to be served straight, without vegetables or salad.'

Having stormed France, the diet has taken off in other parts of the world, and now, for the first time, he outlines the principles of his innovative slimming plan for the English-speaking market.

The Dukan Diet starts with a short, sharp attack phase where you eat absolutely nothing but protein - just meat, fish, eggs and non-fat dairy products.

This is the kick-start that gives you the initial impetus, the dramatic weight loss, and sets the tone for the other diets in the Dukan plan.

Because it is extremely effective, this first stage of the diet produces obvious and immediate results - many people can expect to lose as much as 7lb in just five days.

You can dip your toe in the attack phase for as little as one day or stick with it for as many as ten days, but if your true weight is two or three stone away, then five days produces the best results.

If you have around a stone to lose, two or three days on attack works well; if you are looking to slim down only by 7lb, a single day in the attack phase (where you'd be expected to lose 2lb instantly) is often enough to get you started.

A short-term, protein-rich regime like this will purge the tissues of excess water, dull the appetite (if you eat only protein foods, your body produces ketonic cells that are powerful natural appetite suppressants) while maintaining muscle tone and skin glow.

**BODY IMAGE**  
Only one woman in four is happy with her weight and one in five is on a diet

Once for ounce, proteins are relatively low in calories (compared to fats and many carbohydrates) and their complex structure means they are hard work for the body to digest - you will burn up more calories processing proteins than any other food. Weight loss is inevitable and swift. After one to ten days in the pure protein attack phase, dieters move on to the cruise phase. This is the workhorse stage of the diet where you alternate pure protein days with days when you include a delicious array of unlimited vegetables to your wide selection of meat, fish and non-fat dairy products. You can start a meal with a salad or soup, followed by a meat or fish dish gently stewed with flavoursome and fragrant vegetables.



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Low-calorie proteins: The French classic moules mariniere is on the Dukan Diet menu

Weight will fall off at a rate of around 2lb a week, but you should be healthy and happy. And, with a wide choice of unlimited meat and vegetable options to choose from, you will definitely not be hungry.

When you reach your ideal weight - or your Dukan-prescribed true weight - the consolidation phase kicks in, gradually releasing dietary constraints and putting fruit, bread, cheese and starchy foods such as pasta back on the menu.

You are even encouraged to have two totally unrestrained celebration meals (with alcohol, butter, bread, chocolate ... whatever foods you truly love) a week.

This is not a tolerated indulgence, it is a doctor's recommendation, and an important part of the diet's acceptance that food, in all its variety, can be relished if you are going to stay slim for ever.

Not surprisingly, you aren't expected to lose weight in this phase, but nor will you gain pounds.

Consolidation has been designed to stop you rebounding straight back into your former eating habits, and to set your body's equilibrium with your new figure.

If you stick to the plan for five days, for every 1lb you lost in previous phases your body will be able to properly and permanently consolidate that weight loss.

When your time in consolidation is up, and your new slender weight has stabilised, you are free to live the rest of your life the French way, eating and drinking whatever you like without guilt or restriction, but adhering to that one remaining Dukan rule: protein only on Thursdays. For ever.

## TYPICAL DAY'S PROTEIN MENU

**Breakfast:** Coffee or tea (with skimmed milk and sweetener if desired), two small non-fat yoghurts or 225g non-fat cottage cheese, and one slice turkey, chicken or low-fat ham, or one boiled egg. **snack:** one small non-fat yogurt or 115g of non-fat cottage cheese.

**Lunch:** Crab sticks, chicken leg, poached salmon fillets or pepper steak with egg custard\* for pudding. **snack:** one non-fat yogurt and a slice of turkey.

**Dinner:** Prawns sauteed in herbs\* and tandoori chicken escalopes\* or moules mariniere and boiled beef and no-sugar vanilla creme\*. Plus an oatbran pancake.



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Recipe for success: Salmon fillets can be served for lunch (left), while oatbran pancakes are a concession to carbs

## FIND YOUR TRUE WEIGHT

One of the first keys to successful weight loss is establishing a target weight that is right for your body and that you can maintain effortlessly for the rest of your life.

This isn't necessarily the weight you'd most like to be or even a size you have been.

It has to be workable, taking into account your gender, age (with each decade, a woman's stable weight increases by 1.8lb and a man's by 2.6lb), any family history of obesity, your history of weight problems and your weight range (the difference between the least and most you have weighed in adulthood).

Your true weight calculation is fiendishly complex to work out, but go to [dukandiet.co.uk](http://dukandiet.co.uk) and put the answer to 11 simple questions into a special calculator.

You will instantly receive your expertly calculated true weight, when you can expect to reach it and a clear outline of how many days you should spend on the four different stages of the Dukan Diet.

## THE DUKAN DIET SECRET INGREDIENT - OATS

Throughout the Dukan Diet you can enjoy a carbohydrate respite in the form of a tablespoon of oat bran every day.

Oat bran is rich in sugars and protein, but its benefit lies in the high levels of soluble fibre, which absorbs water in the gut, swelling up to 20 times its size.

This helps you feel full and satisfied. It is also great for heart health and eases constipation (which can affect people in the early stages of the diet).

But once digested, it attracts fat molecules, sugars and toxins, and carries them out of the body before they can be absorbed into the bloodstream.