

# “What I Eat to Lose Weight” A Food Buffet Experiment

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## 1 Motivation & Method

In an obesogenic environment and due to the prevalent sedentary lifestyle, preventing over-nutrition is a challenge. However, people often choose inappropriate weight loss strategies, such as very strong calory limitation, meal skipping, or ban of certain food products. We examined whether people can successfully construct a menu for an entire day that is suitable for weight loss.

Our food buffet consisted of 152 food items (real and replicas). Participants selected foods for an entire day two-times

- 1) for a Normal Day
- 2) for a Weight Loss Day

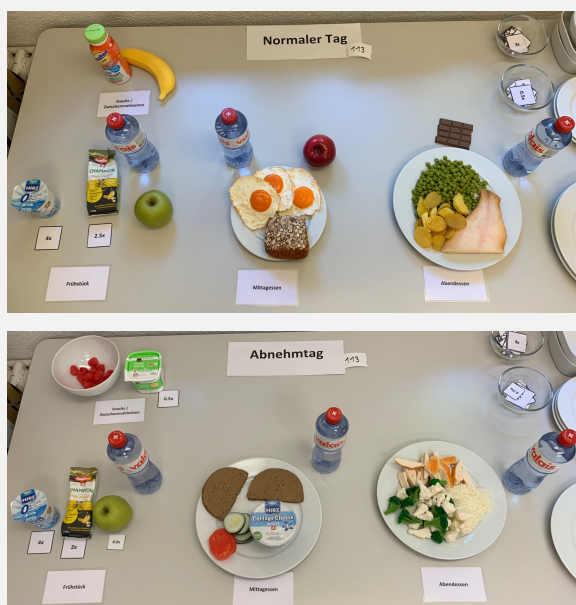


Figure 1. Food selection on a normal day with 2781 kcal (top) and on a weight loss day with 1526 kcal (bottom) of a female participant.

## 2 Results

- Compared to a normal day, a weight loss day had fewer calories, less salt, a higher proportion of sugar, SFA, fiber and protein, and a lower proportion of fat.
- Compared to a normal day, a weight loss day had less sweets & salty snacks, oils & fats, protein sources, starchy foods and more vegetables and unsweetened beverages.

Table 1. Comparing energy, macronutrients, sugar and fiber content between a normal day and a weight loss day.

	Normal Day		Weigh Loss Day		
	M	SD	M	SD	
Total Energy (kcal)	2342.21	916.93	1380.45	524.45	***
Carbohydrates (% of TE)	39.42	7.57	39.97	11.74	
Sugar (% of TE)	20.88	7.62	24.55	10.09	***
Fat (% of TE)	40.70	7.53	34.84	10.67	***
SFA (% of TE)	6.89	2.06	12.57	5.70	***
Fiber (% of TE)	2.44	0.84	3.60	1.30	***
Protein (% of TE)	17.64	6.00	21.91	7.79	***
Salt (g)	7.59	3.35	5.02	2.64	***

Note. TE = total energy served; SFA = saturated fatty acids. \*\*\* p ≤ .001

## 3 Conclusion

People seem to know how to compose a weight loss menu, which is healthy. The biggest hurdle is probably the self-discipline to stick to the menu plan over a longer period of time, as the caloric reduction is very high and unrealistic.

## 4 Contribution to Sustainable Food Systems

This study contributes to a comprehensive understanding of how well individuals can put together an adequate menu. This is crucial for developing effective interventions aimed at changing unhealthy eating habits and promoting successful long-term weight control in our obesogenic environment.

