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Low-carb buyer, beware

Sometimes the taste hits the spot; sometimes the box has more flavor

MEET THE EXPERTS



Dean Rothbart

Executive editor of *LowCarbiz*, a trade publication based in Denver. He has followed a low-carb diet for three years and estimates that he has sampled 7 products. His publication is one of the hosts of a low-carb summit today and Friday in Washington that will focus policy and regulatory issues.



Elaine Payne

President of www.low-carb.com, which sold low-carb products over the Internet since 1998. She also has two stores that specialize in these foods in South Carolina and estimates that she has tasted more than 1,000 products.

By Nanci Hellmich
USA TODAY

Low-carb products are showing up everywhere. More than 600 low-carb foods were introduced last year, varying widely in taste and texture. With such an avalanche, how are dieters supposed to figure out which ones are best?

They have two choices: Either they start trial-and-error tasting on their own, or they seek out good advice.

The first option is time-consuming and expensive. And unless they're very lucky, dieters will have to eat a lot of mediocre products before they find foods they

to lose weight. They will eat flavored carb-board if someone promises them it will help them lose weight."

But he doesn't believe carb-counting consumers will buy products a second time if the taste isn't worth the cost in terms of dollars and grams of carbs.

Payne gives the products higher praise. "Manufacturers have done a pretty good job keeping the carb count low and giving consumers a decent taste, although many products aren't exactly like the real thing."

Still, she says, there are some categories that need a lot of work.

"The taste and texture of some of the low-carb cake and cookie mixes

GeniSoy Low Carb Crunch peanut butter bar.

"The bars satisfy my need to crunch. They are a welcome change from the creamy bars of the past."

Candies

His pick: Asher's Chocolates.

Their sugar-free chocolate-flavored liquid caramel bar "tastes like a full-carb bar."

Her pick: Russell Stover offers the best-tasting low-carb candies with the widest variety, including toffee squares and jelly beans, which are her favorites.



Ice creams

His pick: The Keto Foods premium product, followed by Atkins Indulge ice cream.

"The reason is they're made with cream."

Her pick: CarbSmart by Breyers.

Pastas

His pick: Thumbs down on all of them.

"The finest, most gourmet low-carb pasta doesn't deserve to wear the name. It could wear the name glue or raw dough."

Her pick: Keto pastas, especially the fettuccine and spaghetti.

They "deliver a pretty good taste and texture."



Breads

His pick: Rudis Organic Bakery Low-Carb Bread and the Sara Lee Delightful breads.

Her pick: Natural Ovens Bakery Golden Crunch Lo-Carb Bread.

"It's a hearty whole grain bread. It's got flaxseed and a really good nutritional profile and great taste. On the other end of the spectrum, people looking for a more traditional white bread should consider Trene's Health Bakery White Gluten Low Carb Bread."

Other products

Her picks:
▶ Baja Bob's Low Carb Margarita and other mixes.

They give low-carb dieters a nice option to "feel like they're cheating when they're not."

▶ CarbSense Soy Tortilla Chips, which have a "nice hearty flavor."

▶ Mama Lupe's Tortillas.

They "are pretty much a staple of my diet right now for wrap sandwiches and quesadillas. They taste very close to regular tortillas and my customers love them."



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