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Your #1 Resource For Changing Your Lifestyle...Not Just Your Body!



Michi's Ladder



Michi's Ladder is a guideline, not a diet. Rather, it is a simple substitution plan. To lose weight, try swapping foods you eat with similar foods in Tier 1 and 2. The more you eat in tiers 1 and 2, the more you'll increase your chances of losing weight. If you only ate from Tiers 1 & 2, you would have a near-perfect diet!

There are some healthy foods in lower tiers, but they're either calorie dense or nutrient deficient. To lose weight, you want to maximize the nutrients in every calorie you consume.

Note on frying: Foods should be eaten raw, steamed, grilled, poached, baked, or broiled. Frying automatically drops even the best foods into tier 5.

Tier 1: The Pious Tier

Apples, with skin ●	Collard greens ●■	Mustard ●	Tea, green or black
Artichokes ●■	Cottage cheese, nonfat ■	Nectarines ●	Tempeh ●■
Arugula ●	Cucumbers ●	Oatmeal ●▲■	Tofu ●■
Asparagus ●	Egg whites ■	Olive oil ▲	Tomato sauce, no sugar ●
Avocados ▲	Endive ●	Olives ▲	Tomatoes ●
Beans ●▲■	Fish, cold water (salmon, mackerel, sardines) ▲■	Onions ●	Vinegar
Beets ●	Fish, freshwater ▲■	Pears, with skin ●	Water
Bok choy ●	Flaxseed ▲	Peas ●■	Yams ●
Boysenberries ●	Garlic, fresh ●	Peppers ●	Yogurt, nonfat, no sugar ●■
Bran ●	Granola, raw, no sugar ●▲■	Plantains ●	
Broccoli ●■	Hemp seed ▲	Prunes ●	
Broccoli sprouts ●■	Kale ●■	Radishes ●	
Brussels sprouts ●	Lettuce, romaine, green or red leaf ●	Raspberries ●	
Cabbage ●	Milk, nonfat ●■	Refried beans, nonfat ●■	
Carrots ●	Milk, soy ●▲■	Rice, brown ●	
Cauliflower ●■	Muesli, raw, no sugar ●▲■	Salsa, natural, no sugar ●	
Celery ●	Mushrooms ●	Seitan ●■	
Cereal, whole grain ●▲■		Spinach ●■	
Chard ●■		Squash ●■	
Cherries ●		Strawberries ●	
Citrus fruits ●		Sweet potatoes ●	

Tier 2: The Happy Tier

Apples, skinless ●	Cream cheese, nonfat ■	Milk, 1% ●▲■	Sunflower seeds ●▲■
Bananas ●	Duck, free-range ▲■	Nuts, raw ●▲■	Tortillas,
Blueberries ●	Eggplant ●	Ostrich ▲■	whole wheat ●▲■
Bread, whole grain ●	Fish, farmed ■	Pancakes, buckwheat ●■	Turkey breast ■
Cantaloupe ●	Granola or energy bar ●	Papayas ●	Vegetable juice ●■
Cheese, nonfat ■	Grapes ●	Peaches ●	Veggie burger ●▲■
Chicken, skinless white	Hummus ●▲■	Pineapple ●	Venison, free-range ▲■
meat ■	Juice, fresh-squeezed with	Plums ●	Watermelon ●
Coffee, black or	pulp, no sugar ●	Raisins ●	Yogurt, no sugar ●▲■
cappuccino with nonfat	Kiwifruit ●	Ricotta cheese, nonfat ■	Zucchini ●
milk ●■	Mangoes ●	Soy nuts ●▲■	
Corn ●	Meal replacement	Soy sauce ●	
Cottage cheese,	bar ●▲■	Squid ■	
low-fat ▲■	Melon, honeydew ●	String beans ●■	

Tier 3: The Swiss Tier

A1 Steak Sauce ●	Coffee, cappuccino with	Lamb, lean ▲■	Pretzels ●
Angel food cake ●	whole milk ●▲■	Lettuce, iceberg ●	Refried beans,
Applesauce ●	Crab ■	Lobster ■	low-fat ●▲■
Bagels ●	Cream cheese,	Mayonnaise ▲	Rice cakes ●
Beef, eye of round ▲■	low-fat ▲■	Milk, 2% ●▲■	Rice, white ●
Beef, London ▲■	Eggs, whole ▲■	Muesli ●▲	Sauerkraut ●
Beef, top round ▲■	French fries, baked ●	Oatmeal, flavored ●	Soup, canned broth ●▲
Canola oil ▲	Fruit, dried ●	Oysters ■	Steak, lean ▲■
Cheese, low-fat ▲■	Graham crackers ●	Pancakes ●	Sweet-and-sour
Chicken, dark meat ▲■	Granola ●▲	Pasta, plain ●	sauce ●▲
Chicken sandwich,	Honey ●	Peanut butter, raw ▲■	Veal cutlet ▲■
broiled ●▲■	Jam or marmalade ●	Popcorn, plain ●	Wine, red ●
Chicken taco,	Jerky, turkey ■	Pork tenderloin ▲■	Yogurt, frozen,
baked ●▲■	Juice, from concentrate ●	Potatoes, baked	nonfat ●■
Clams ■	Ketchup ●	or boiled ●	

Tier 4: The Dodgy Tier

Animal crackers ●	Coffee, iced mocha latte with nonfat milk ●■	Meat loaf ▲■	Sherbet ●
Beef, filet mignon ▲■	Coffee, latte with whole milk ●▲■	Mexican food ●▲■	Shrimp ■
Beef, lean ground ▲■	Coffee cake ●▲	Milk, whole ●▲■	Sloppy Joe, lean beef or turkey ▲■
Beef, sirloin ▲■	Crackers ●	Muffins ●▲	Soft drinks, diet
Beef Stroganoff ▲■	Grilled cheese sandwich ●▲	Nuts, salted or roasted ▲	Soup, canned creamy ●▲
Beer ●	Ham ▲■	Peanut butter, not raw ●▲	Spaghetti, with meatballs ●▲■
Bread, refined flour ●	Hot dogs, turkey ▲■	Pepper, stuffed ▲	Sub sandwich ●▲■
Buffalo ▲■	Ice cream, sugar-free or fat-free ●	Pizza, meatless or Hawaiian style ●▲■	Taco salad, with chicken ●▲■
Butter ▲	Jell-O ●	Popcorn, with salt and butter ●▲	Tortilla, refined flour or corn ●▲
Caesar salad, with chicken ●▲■	Juice, sweetened ●	Pork chop ▲■	Tuna salad or chicken salad ▲■
Canadian bacon ▲■	Lamb chops ▲■	Potato salad or macaroni salad ●▲	Vegetable oil ▲
Cheese (including bleu and goat) ▲	Lasagna, with meat ▲■	Pudding, with low-fat milk ●▲	Wine, white ●
Chili ●▲■	Macaroni and cheese ●▲	Reuben sandwich ▲■	Yogurt, frozen ●▲■
Chinese food ●▲■	Margarine ▲		
Chips, low-fat, baked ●			
Coconut ▲			

Tier 5: The Newburg Tier

Alcohol, hard liquor	Chips, potato or corn ●▲	Hot dogs ▲■	Salad dressing, creamy ▲
Bacon ▲■	Chocolate ●▲	Ice cream ●▲	Sausage ▲■
Baked beans ●▲■	Cinnamon bun ●▲	Jerky, beef, pork, or venison ■	Soft drinks, sugared ●
Beef, ground, regular ▲■	Coffee, mocha, macchiato, ice blended, frappé, triple caramel vanilla buzz bomb, etc. ●▲	Juice, sugar added ●	Tater tots ●▲
Beef taco, fried ▲■	Cookies ●▲	Lobster Newburg ▲■	Toaster pastries ●▲
Breakfast sandwich, fast food ▲■	Cream cheese ▲	Nachos ●▲	
Cakes ●▲	Creamed veggies ●▲	Onion rings ●▲	
Candy ●	Creamer, nondairy ▲	Pastries ●▲	
Cereal, sugared ●	Doughnuts ●▲	Pies ●▲	
Chicken a la King ▲■	French fries ●▲	Potato skins, fried ●▲	
Chicken, buffalo wings or nuggets ▲■	Gravy ▲	Potatoes, fried ●▲	
Chicken or fish sandwich, fried ▲■	Hamburger, fast food ▲■	Potpie ▲■	
		Refried beans, with lard ●▲■	