

The Watercress Soup Diet Plan

This version of the Watercress Soup Diet really can help you lose a stone in six weeks and if you are as dedicated as our star dieter, you could even lose as much as 3.5 stone! It has been designed by leading UK nutritionist, Sarah Schenker specifically to help participants lose the maximum amount of weight considered to be safe for health in a six week period. It is a balanced diet and provides all the essential nutrients needed to keep healthy. How much weight is lost will depend on how heavy the person is to begin with and how active they are during the trial. The average daily energy (calorie) intake is 1000 - 1200kcal and should not go below 800kcal.

A recipe for watercress soup is provided and participants should include it in their diet at least four times a week and up to seven times a week. In addition, other recipes are provided that contain watercress and are suitable for lunches and evening meals. There's no need to eat watercress for breakfast – unless you want to!

A list of suitable, well- balanced breakfasts are provided for participants to choose from each day. These have been specially selected to be high in carbohydrates to keep dieters feeling fuller for longer and so avoiding the need for morning snacks.

If participants have one breakfast, one bowl of watercress soup and one evening meal:
Total daily calories 300+ 100+ 400 = 800 kcal

On top of this (800 kcal) dieters are allowed the following each day:

- Half a pint of skimmed or semi-skimmed milk for use in tea and coffee. If sugar in drinks is required, please use a sweetener instead – 100kcal
- Two pieces of fruit or another bowl of watercress soup – 100kcal

It is recommended that the dieter uses the milk and fruit allowance every day to ensure a healthy intake of nutrients, however, if they feel they don't need an extra snack, this will help maximise their weight loss.

Breakfast

Ideas for breakfast (below 300 kcal)

- Bowl of instant porridge with a handful of blueberries
Small carton apple juice
- 3 tbsp of wholegrain cereal (e.g. oat clusters or granola) with 2 tbsp low fat yoghurt
with a tsp of honey and small handful of flaked almonds
Bottle of fruit smoothie
- Bowl (30g) of high fibre cereal (e.g. Shreddies or Shredded Wheat) with 200ml low fat milk
and sliced banana
Glass of orange juice
- 2 tbsp of low sugar muesli mixed with 3 tbsp low fat yoghurt
Small handful of dried apricots (4-5)
Glass of low sugar cranberry juice

- 1 slice of wholegrain toast with 2 tsp peanut butter
Slice of melon
Carton of apple juice
- Bowl (50g) of low sugar muesli or wholegrain cereal with 200ml low fat milk
Half a grapefruit
- 1 Oatibix or Weetabix with 200 ml skimmed milk, a banana and a 200ml glass of low sugar cranberry juice
- Strawberry yoghurt smoothie and a warmed Scotch pancake - blend a 200ml pot of low fat strawberry yoghurt with half a banana, 6 chopped strawberries and 200ml of skimmed milk.
- Toasted wholemeal English muffin with low fat soft cheese and a glass of apple juice.
- Sachet of instant microwave porridge, small pot of low fat fromage frais and a slice of Galia melon
- Melon and blueberry smoothie and a toasted crumpet with a teaspoon of peanut butter - take another large slice of the Galia melon and blend with a 200ml pot of low fat blueberry yoghurt and 200ml skimmed milk
- Greek yoghurt with honey, almonds and raisins and a glass of apple juice – take a 200ml pot of 0% fat Greek yoghurt and stir in 1 tbsp. of raisins and a tsp. of flaked almonds and drizzle over a tsp. of honey
- Scrambled egg on wholemeal toast and a glass of orange juice - scramble 2 eggs with a knob of olive oil spread and a splash of skimmed milk and serve on a slice of wholemeal toast.

Lunch

One bowl of watercress soup (provides 100kcal)

HOW TO MAKE WATERCRESS SOUP

Makes 3 bowls of soup – approx 100 kcal

Ingredients:

1 small onion, finely chopped
2 pints of chicken or vegetable stock
2 small potatoes, diced
3 x85g bags of watercress
A pinch of salt and freshly milled black pepper

Method:

In a large saucepan sweat the onion in two or three tablespoons of stock or water. Add the rest of the stock potatoes together with the seasoning and the pan. Bring to the boil and simmer until the potatoes are soft. Add the watercress, and stir for three minutes. Remove from the heat and blend in a liquidiser. The soup is delicious served hot or chilled.

Other Ideas for Lunch

No more than 300kcal

Watercress, Beetroot and Orange Salad

Serves 2

Ingredients:

For the dressing:
1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
2 tbsp. orange juice
2 tbsp. olive oil
Half a tsp. of brown sugar
Pinch of salt and freshly milled pepper

For the salad:

250g fresh golden beets

25g walnut halves

2 oranges

2 spring onions

1 red apple

Bag (85g) of watercress

Method:

Put all the dressing ingredients into a screw top jar and shake well until blended.

Pre-heat the oven to 200C/GM6. Put the beets in a roasting tin with half an inch of water in the bottom. Cover with foil and roast for 30 minutes, so they are tender when pierced with a knife. When the beets are cool enough to handle, peel off the skins, top and tail them and slice into rounds. Toss them in a little dressing. With a sharp knife, trim the top and bottom of each orange, pare off the rest of the peel and pith and slice thinly. Core and quarter the apple and cut into thin slices. Thinly slice the spring onions. Arrange the watercress in a salad bowl and then add the other salad ingredients. Drizzle with the remaining dressing and garnish with the walnuts.

Avocado, Fennel & Grapefruit Salad

Serves 2

Ingredients:

2 avocados

1 large pink grapefruit

Half a bulb of fennel

Juice of 1 lime

1 tbsp. olive oil

2 tsp. honey

Bag of watercress

Method:

Cut the avocados in half, remove the stone and scoop out the flesh. Cut each half into thick slices. Peel the grapefruit and separate the segments with a knife, catch the juice in a bowl. Thinly slice the fennel. Place the watercress, avocado, grapefruit and fennel in the bowl with the juice and toss together. Make up the dressing by mixing the lime juice, oil and honey together and pour over the salad.

Steak Salad

Serves 2

Ingredients:

1 jar of pepperdew sweet red peppers

1 tsp. honey

1 tbsp. olive oil

Knob of fresh ginger, peeled and grated

1 red chilli, deseeded and finely sliced

2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped

Juice of 1 lemon

2 lean steaks

1 tbsp. soy sauce

Quarter of a cucumber, diced

Bag of watercress
4 spring onions, sliced

Method:

Mix together the honey, ginger, chilli, garlic, soy sauce and lemon juice. Arrange the salad leaves in a large bowl and add the cucumber and peppers. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and fry on each side until cooked as you prefer. Transfer the steaks to a plate. Add the honey mixture to the pan with the spring onions, bring to the boil and boil for a minute, then remove from the heat. Slice the steak into thick slices, place on top of the salad and add the dressing and spring onions.

Warm Halloumi Salad

Serves 2

Ingredients:

350g bundles asparagus, trimmed
1 red peppers, deseeded and thinly sliced
Olive oil spray
100g light halloumi cheese
Bag of watercress
2 tsp. balsamic vinegar

Method:

Preheat the oven to 220°C/gas mark 7. Spread the asparagus and red pepper out on a large, shallow roasting tray and spritz lightly with oil spray to coat. Roast in the oven for 15-18 minutes, stirring halfway through, until the vegetables are tender and starting to caramelize. About 5 minutes before the vegetables are ready, preheat a large nonstick frying pan on the hob. Cut the block of halloumi into 12 slices and season with freshly ground black pepper. Coat the frying pan with oil spray, add the halloumi and fry for 60-90 seconds on each side until toasted brown. Divide the halloumi between 2 bowls or plates and top with the roasted asparagus, peppers and salad leaves. Drizzle a teaspoon of balsamic over each salad.

Pancetta and Broad Bean Salad

Serves 2

Ingredients:

1 garlic clove, peeled
150g podded broad beans
3 slices of pancetta
Handful of toasted flaked almonds
75g fresh peas
25g pecorino cheese, grated
A handful of fresh mint leaves
3 tablespoons virgin olive oil
Juice of 1 lemon
Freshly ground black pepper
Bag of watercress

Method:

Preheat the grill to its hottest temperature. Put the pancetta on a baking tray and grill crisp. Half fill a pan with water and bring to the boil. Add the garlic and beans and allow to boil for 3-5 minutes, until tender. When cooked, remove the skins and place the cooked garlic to one side. To make the dressing, place the raw peas

and boiled garlic into a pestle and mortar and bash till smooth. Add the cheese and mint and smash until creamy. Add the olive oil and lemon juice, season and mix well. Chop up the pancetta and mix with the beans, almonds and leaves, and drizzle over the dressing.

Mackerel with Broccoli and Avocado

Serves 2

Ingredients:

4 large handfuls of broccoli
Bag of watercress
1 avocado, diced
2 fillets of smoked mackerel, diced
8 cherry tomatoes halved
Juice of ½ a lemon
Handful of fresh dill, torn
4 teaspoons toasted mixed seeds
A dash of virgin olive oil
Freshly ground black pepper

Method:

Steam the broccoli for about 2 minutes, until tender but still crunchy. Rinse in cold water and chop. Put the rocket, broccoli, avocado, smoked mackerel and tomatoes into a large serving bowl. Squeeze over the lemon juice, add the dill, seeds, olive oil and black pepper and toss lightly together.

Feta, Apple and Walnut Salad

Serves 2

Ingredients:

Bag of watercress
1 ripe avocado, diced
Quarter of cucumber, diced
½ a fennel, finely sliced
Large handful of walnut pieces
50g feta cheese, crumbled
1 Cox's apple, core removed, cut into thin slices
Juice of half a lemon
2 tbsp. walnut oil
Freshly ground black pepper
1 small baton of French bread

Method:

Sprinkle the lemon juice over the apple slices. Place all the ingredients, apart from the oil and black pepper, into a large serving bowl. Drizzle with the oil and grind over the black pepper. Toss lightly but well enough to mix everything together.

Prosciutto with Melon and Watercress

Serves 2

Ingredients:

8 slices of prosciutto
1 tbsp. pumpkin seeds
Bag of watercress
1 ripe avocado, diced
½ a cantaloupe melon, diced
Half a cucumber, chopped into bite-sized pieces
Juice of half a lemon
Dash of olive oil
Freshly ground black pepper

Method:

First put the seeds into a non-stick frying pan and heat gently until they turn golden brown – be careful not to let them burn. Allow the seeds to cool and place the rocket, avocado, melon and cucumber into a bowl. Sprinkle over the lemon juice, a dash of oil, plenty of freshly ground black pepper and the pumpkin seeds. Toss and serve with 4 slices of prosciutto (remove any visible fat). Serve with a slice of pumpnickel bread if wished.

Salmon and Watercress Salad

Serves 2

Ingredients:

6 slices of smoked salmon
4 handfuls of watercress leaves
Half a cucumber, thinly sliced
Half of a bulb of fennel, very thinly sliced
1 ripe avocado, sliced
Handful of fresh dill, chopped
Juice of half a lemon
Dash of extra virgin olive oil
Handful of toasted pine nuts
Freshly ground black pepper

Method:

Simply mix all the salad ingredients together in a small salad bowl, season with freshly ground black pepper and serve with the smoked salmon and a slice of Wheaten bread (optional).

Recipes for Evening Meals

Each evening meal provides 400 kcal or less

One Small Oven Baked Salmon Steak with a Small Baked Sweet Potato and Peas

Ingredients:

90g salmon steak
1 sweet potato
100g frozen peas

Method:

Preheat the oven to 180C/GM 5. Place the salmon in a baking dish, season with a pinch of salt and plenty of black pepper. Squeeze the juice from half a lemon and sprinkle over the salmon. Pierce the potato and place on a baking sheet. Place in the oven first and bake for 45 mins. After 25 mins bake the salmon. Boil the peas according to the packet instructions and serve together with a wedge of lemon.

Chicken and Butternut Stir Fry (serve with 3 tbsp of noodles)

Ingredients:

1 spray of oil
200g lean skinless chicken
2 spring onions, sliced
½ butternut squash, peeled and sliced
1 courgette, sliced
150g mange tout
100g bean sprouts
2 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
1 tsp brown sugar
2 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 tbsp grated ginger

Method:

Heat the oil in a wok, add the chicken, garlic and ginger and cook for about 5 minutes. Then add the other vegetables and cook for a further 2 minutes. Finally add the soy sauce, vinegar and sugar and cook for another 2 minutes.

Turkey Mince Chilli Con Carne (3tbsp of chilli with 3tbsp of brown rice)

Ingredients:

1 spray of oil
225g red kidney beans
200g turkey mince
1 onion, diced
1 green pepper, diced
1 green chilli
Pinch of chilli flakes
1 tsp paprika
1 tsp cumin
1 cinnamon stick, snapped into 2
1 tbsp tomato puree
400g can of tomatoes

Method:

Dry fry the mince in non-stick frying pan until fully browned. Remove the mince. Heat the oil in the pan and add the onion, pepper and chilli, chilli flakes, paprika and cumin and cook until soft. Add the tomatoes, tomato puree and the mince, stir thoroughly then add the cinnamon stick and keep over a medium heat for 20 minutes. Add the kidney beans and cook for a further 5-10 minutes.

Grilled Small Lean Tuna Steak, Corn on the Cob, Broccoli & Green Beans

Ingredients:

100g tuna steak
1 corn on the cob
80g broccoli
50g green beans

Method:

Heat the grill to its highest setting. Place the tuna steak on a baking sheet. Season with a pinch of salt and plenty of black pepper. If you prefer, you can sprinkle on a tsp of soy sauce, a pinch of chilli flakes and ½ tsp ground ginger. Squeeze the juice from half a lemon and sprinkle over the tuna. Grill on each side for about 6-8 mins depending on how cooked you want it. Keep checking and turn regularly. Meanwhile bring a large pan of water to the boil, add the cob and simmer for 6 mins, then add the broccoli and beans and simmer for an additional 2-3 mins. Drain and serve with the tuna.

1 Small Grilled Tuna Steak with Ratatouille and Green beans

Ingredients:

100g tuna steak
1 ready-made ratatouille (or homemade portion)
50g green beans

Method:

Heat the grill to its highest setting. Place the tuna steak on a baking sheet. Season with a pinch of salt, plenty of black pepper. Squeeze the juice from half a lemon and sprinkle over the tuna. Grill on each side for about 6-8 mins depending on how cooked you want it. Keep checking and turn regularly. Heat up the ratatouille according to the instructions. Meanwhile bring a large pan of water to the boil, add the broccoli and simmer for 3-4 mins.

1 Fishcake, a Small Can of Baked Beans and Steamed Broccoli

Ingredients:

1 fishcake
1 small can of beans
100g broccoli

Method:

Cook the fishcake according to the packet instructions. Place the beans in a saucepan and gently heat through. Place the broccoli spears in a microwave dish and add about 1cm deep of water. Cook for 1-2 mins depending on how crunchy you like the broccoli. Serve everything together.

Mexican Chicken Tacos

Serves 2

Ingredients:

4 taco shells
½ shredded lettuce
1 small jar spicy salsa
200g skinless chicken - diced
225g kidney beans
400g tin chopped tomatoes

1 tbsp tomato puree
1 diced onion
1 red chilli
1 green pepper
spray of oil
2 cloves garlic
1 tsp paprika

Method:

Heat oil in a large frying pan and add onion, garlic and chilli, cook for a few minutes to soften, then add the peppers, chicken, paprika, tomatoes, tomato puree and beans and allow to simmer for 15-20 minutes. Warm taco shells for 45 seconds in microwave, fill with chicken mixture, top with lettuce and 1 tsp of salsa to taste.

Oven Baked Medium Sized Pork Fillet, Roast Carrots, French Beans and Fat-Free Instant Gravy

Ingredients:

100g pork fillet
2 carrots, peeled and cut into chunky strips
50g French beans
1 tbsp instant gravy

Method:

Preheat the oven to 180C/GM 5. Place the carrots into a pan of boiling water and simmer for 4 mins. Place the pork and the carrots in a baking dish, season with a pinch of salt and plenty of black pepper. Lightly spray with a spray oil. Bake for 30 mins. Place the French beans in a pan of boiling water and simmer for 3 mins and make up the gravy with boiling water according to the packet instructions. Serve everything together.

Spicy Prawns and Green Salad

Serves 2

Ingredients:

1 spray of oil
1 bunch of spring onions – diagonally sliced
5 cm piece of root ginger – grated
1 tbsp medium curry paste
125 g frozen peas
250 g cooked peeled prawns
soy sauce to serve

Method:

Heat a wok and spray with oil. Stir-fry the onions and ginger until softened. Stir in the curry paste and stir-fry for a further 2 minutes. Stir in the peas and prawns. Reduce the heat, cover and cook for 3 minutes. Serve with a splash of soy sauce.

Grilled Lean Lamb Chop, Peas and Sweetcorn

Ingredients:

100g lean lamb chop (fat removed)
200g frozen peas and sweetcorn

Method:

Heat the grill to its highest setting. Place the lamb chop on a baking sheet. Season with a pinch of salt, plenty of black pepper. Spray lightly with spray oil. Grill on each side for about 6-8 mins depending on how cooked you want it. Keep checking and turn regularly. Meanwhile bring a large pan of water to the boil, add the peas and corn and simmer for 6 mins. Serve with a tsp of mint sauce.

Vegetable and Bean Moussaka

Serves 2

Ingredients:

2 aubergines and 450g courgettes sliced lengthways

spray of olive oil

25g grated low fat cheese

Tomato and bean sauce:

400g tin of chopped tomatoes

1 tbsp tomato puree

1 diced onion

1 15g tinned black eye beans

1 clove garlic

1 tsp oregano

1 tsp allspice

150ml white wine

Salt and pepper

Method:

Pre-heat the oven to 180C/GM 5. Turn on the grill to its highest setting. Place the strips of aubergine and courgette strips on a baking tray, spray with a little oil and place under the grill for a few minutes each side until they start to char slightly. Heat a frying pan sprayed with oil, add the onion and garlic and cook for a few minutes to soften, add the tomatoes, tomato puree, wine, oregano and spice, bring to boil, reduce the heat and allow to simmer for 15-20 minutes, and then stir in the beans. In an ovenproof baking dish layer the aubergines and courgettes with tomato sauce and top with small amount of grated cheese, then bake in oven for 20 minutes

Turkey Burgers, Sweet Potato Mash, Wilted Spinach with Pine Nuts

Ingredients:

1 turkey burger

1 sweet potato

2 tsp. 0% fat Greek yoghurt

100g spinach

1 tbsp pine nuts

Method:

Bake or grill the burger according to instructions. Meanwhile, peel and chop the potato, add to a pan of boiling water and simmer for 10 mins. Drain and mash with the Greek yoghurt and season with salt and pepper. Place the spinach in a microwave dish and add about 1cm deep of water. Cook for 1 min. Drain, season with salt pepper and a pinch of nutmeg and stir through the pine nuts.

Baked Trout, 200g (5) Boiled New Potatoes, Broccoli, 3 tbsp. Sweetcorn

Ingredients:

200g trout
5 small new potatoes
80g broccoli
3 tbsp canned sweetcorn

Method:

Preheat the oven to 180C/GM 5. Place the trout in a baking dish, season with a pinch of salt and plenty of black pepper. Squeeze the juice from half a lemon and sprinkle over the trout. Bake in the oven for 20 mins. Meanwhile, bring a large pan of water to the boil, add the potatoes and simmer for 20 mins. Add the broccoli for the last 3-4 mins. Heat the sweetcorn on a separate pan according to instructions.

Grilled Lemon Sole Fillet with a Handful of Low Fat Oven Chips and Salad

Ingredients:

100g lemon sole fillet
50g low fat oven chips
40g watercress
6 cherry tomatoes, halved
1 spring onion, chopped

Method:

Preheat the oven to 180C/GM 5. Place the sole in a baking dish, season with a pinch of salt and plenty of black pepper. Squeeze the juice from half a lemon and sprinkle over the sole. Place the oven chips on a baking sheet. Place in the oven first and bake for 45 mins. After 25 mins bake the sole. Serve with the watercress, cherry tomatoes and spring onion.

Snacks

It is hoped that participants will not feel hungry between meals, but if they do they can have an extra bowl of watercress soup. If, however, they occasionally want something different, a list of suitable snacks has been provided that will reduce hunger pangs without disrupting the appetite:

- Watercress smoothies
- 2 heaped tbsp. guacamole dip with vegetable sticks (red pepper, cucumber, celery)
- Half an avocado
- Glass of soya milk
- 6 Brazil nuts
- Handful of mixed unsalted nuts
- Handful of mixed nuts and dried fruit
- 4 dried apricots
- 3 dried figs
- 2 heaped tbsp. reduced fat hummus with 4 breadsticks
- Pot of low fat fruit yoghurt
- Probiotic yogurt drink
- 4 wholegrain crackers with 2 tbsp. low fat soft cheese
- Rice pudding pot
- Small bar of dark good quality chocolate
- Pot of low fat fruit fromage frais

- Gin or vodka with slim-line tonic and handful of olives
- Glass or bottle of fruit smoothie
- 1 glass of red/white wine or bottle of lager
- Bag of low fat crisps (baked)
- 2 scoops of frozen yogurt with fresh strawberries

Smoothie Recipes

Watercress, Kiwi and Apple

- 150ml apple juice
- 2 kiwis, peeled
- 50g watercress

Watercress and Orange

- 1 (85g) bag watercress
- 150ml fresh orange juice
- 100ml carrot juice
- 100ml tomato juice
- dash of Tabasco sauce (optional)
- salt and ground black pepper
- carrot stick and watercress to garnish

Watercress, Melon and Pear

- ½ Galia melon, quartered with pips and peel removed
- 1 pear, peeled, quartered and cored
- 50g watercress

Watercress, Blueberry and Pineapple

- Small tin of pineapple in juice
- 50g blueberries
- 2 large handfuls (50g) watercress