

# **THE MARTINI DIET:**

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## **THE SELF-INDULGENT WAY TO A THINNER, MORE FABULOUS YOU!**

The author of this book is Jennifer "GIN" Sander the best-selling author of multiple books. Most of the books Sander has written have been a part of the self-help category. Sander does not have any credentials that are related to the nutrition field, and while her suggested methods for losing weight may work for some people, they are not nutrition based and following them are not necessarily in the dieter's best interests.

### **Rationale/Claim:**

The main idea of the Martini Diet is "indulgence balanced with restraint" (pg 15). The Martini Diet encompasses three concepts: eat only the very best, eat somewhat less of the very best, and eat the very best only at mealtimes. These three ideas can also be broken down into quality, quantity, and frequency.

Concept one pertains to eating only the very best meaning "the freshest, the finest, and the very best quality food" (pg 34). Unlike many other diets the Martini Diet doesn't encourage you to stop eating and avoid foods, it wants you to enjoy the foods you love but focus on controlling the portion sizes. Within the concept of eating only the very best the writer says to avoid consuming large amounts of foods containing trans fats and high fructose corn syrups.

Concept two suggests that the dieter eat somewhat less of the very best, and while concepts one and three are important, concept two is really the critical idea behind the book's namesake. A typical martini glass holds about 3 liquid ounces, which is the suggested portion size a person following the diet should indulge in. It is important to note that when using a martini glass as a size reference for portion control, the vessel is not meant to be filled to the top or overfilled.

Concept three says you should focus on eating the very best only at mealtimes. No snacking is permitted in the martini diet for a few reasons. The two main reasons for refraining from snacking are "snacking is simply not elegant" and "you just don't need the calories." Along with avoiding snacking they emphasize avoiding drinks such as sodas, juices, and even water in between meals. They state, "civilized and sophisticated people do not walk around in public carrying a drink of anything period."

When you follow these few diet rules, Sander claims that you will see results on the scale over a period of time. The Martini Diet also includes recommendations about physical activity, because as we all know, eating healthy alone will not generally show a person significant weight loss. Sander recommends that you participate in regular physical activity that is against the norm so that you will enjoy it more. She recommends a variety of cultured and dignified exercises such as: horseback riding, ice-skating, ballroom dancing, walking, ballet dancing, fencing and swimming. While doing these exercises she feels like you will also improve your posture, and consequently your poise.

### **Overview of diet:**

Analysis of a typical day's food on this diet was somewhat surprising. The total calorie count was only 820.37 kcals; less than half of what would generally sustain an average person's basal metabolic rate alone. About 21% of kcals in the diet came from protein, 27% came from fat, and 32% came from carbohydrates. The sample menu was low in fiber and many of the micronutrients including folate, vitamin D, calcium, iron and potassium.

### **Is it well-rounded and sustainable?**

The author of this book addresses all of the three aspects of weight loss, but in a different way. This diet encourages people to eat almost exactly what they would normally eat each day, but in smaller more dainty portions. This is easier to follow long-term than many other more restrictive diets, because cravings for specific foods can be satisfied easily. The one real restriction on the type of food dieters can eat is you can only eat the very best of what is available. While this can be hard on the wallet, many people find it easier to follow than the more traditional low kcal, low fat diets. For exercise, Sander suggests that instead of slaving away at the gym, you should participate in "more elegant athletic pursuits," like horseback riding, ballroom dancing and fencing.

### **Critical Comments:**

- The kcal count for the suggested menu is very low (820.37 kcal) and may result in the dieter feeling hungry and depleted.
- Enough protein is included in the diet to prevent ketosis, but the menu only includes about 65g of carbohydrates, which is very low considering the average person should be taking in about 100g each day.
- The sample menu is fairly balanced but not nutritionally adequate (lacks adequate CHO

and many of the micronutrients).

- The diet menu is up to the individual because it has no suggestions for ratios of protein, fat and CHO.
- The palatability of the foods eaten would be up to the individual following the diet, but since they get to choose what foods they eat, they are most likely palatable.
- Some may find this diet easy to follow since the dieter gets to eat exactly what they want but in smaller portions.
- One of the main principles of the diet is you are supposed to eat the very best quality of everything, so this diet would definitely not be thrifty.
- Another principle states that you may only eat or drink during mealtimes. This deprivation includes not drinking water unless it is during a meal, which isn't very realistic and could result in dehydration.

### **Overall Conclusion:**

After reviewing this diet, we cannot say that we would ever recommend it to anyone. While the concept for the diet may seem appealing to some individuals, in practice it would not be very safe or healthy. The kcal count on the sample menu is way too low to sustain bodily functions in most individuals, and it is severely lacking in CHO, fiber and most micronutrients. This diet severely restricts fluid (including water) intake except at mealtime in order to appear more "civilized and sophisticated." While this may make you appear more glamorous to some, this restriction could potentially be dangerous especially during workouts resulting in significant dehydration. There are no recommendations for fat, protein or carbohydrate intake mentioned, like you would find with most conventional diets.

While it may be glamorous to eat tiny bits of only the best foods, and drink fluids only at mealtimes so that you always appear posh, it is remarkably unrealistic for many, and could even be potentially dangerous in the worst-case scenario. The message of this diet book seems to suggest that the way you are perceived by others, namely the desire to appear elegant, is considerably more important than actual health and nutrition. A person may be able to follow this diet for a while, but if they do not pay attention to the nutrients they are taking in, it could ultimately result in severe deficiencies and a drastic decline in health.