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The Low-Carb Kitchen Manual

Grab a cup of coffee and a low-carb cookie or two, and settle down with this chapter, which will make the dos and don'ts of low-carb cooking easy to follow. Come back to it again and again, especially to the section that discusses the sweeteners used in the recipes. Most of what you read here is not repeated elsewhere in the book.

Your goal is to find ways to produce tantalizingly good breads, cookies, muffins, desserts, candy, and more while working around the two big high-carb troublemakers: sugar and flour. Sugar and flour may not seem to be closely related—sugar is sweet, flour is not—but both are cut from the same cloth; they are carbohydrates. Starch—flour is mostly made of it—is sugar in a dormant state and does not show its true colors until digestion begins. Eat it, and the sugar is promptly activated. A single slice of white bread can dump a tablespoon of sugar (glucose) swiftly into your bloodstream; it is no different from eating a small candy bar. What you will find in this book is how to avoid almost all sugar and flour by using foods that when properly combined—the secret is in the combining—will make your new low-carb diet as delightful as your old one. So, what foods will you be using in your low-carb recipes?

Nuts

Although nuts may be sliced and chopped, they are chiefly used as a finely ground meal. Nuts are nutritious and loaded with minerals, vitamins, and healthy oils. Most nuts are widely available, but prices

vary; it pays to shop around for the best deal. Check health food stores, the Internet, and vendors listed under Sources at the end of this book. Buying in bulk helps reduce the cost of nuts. Nuts should be kept cool or refrigerated, except for small amounts that you might want to keep handy in the kitchen for instant use. Be careful, though—all of the nuts listed below can be toxic to people who are allergic to them.

Almonds

Almonds, especially almond meal, will become a major food staple in your kitchen. You can grind the nuts yourself in a processor or a blender, but commercial almond meal gives you a finer, more even grind and also saves work. Whole almond meal is ground from whole almonds with the skin on; blanched almond meal is ground from nuts with the skin off.

Hazelnuts

Hazelnuts have a unique, delicious flavor. They are used fairly heavily in the recipes in this book, especially as a meal. Unlike almond meal, which is available from many sources, hazelnut meal is harder to find on the market and is often quite expensive. However, I finally found at least one vendor (Nutty Guys) who sells hazelnut meal in bulk for a reasonable price. You can find the information in the Sources section.

Walnuts, Pecans, and Macadamia Nuts

These appear in recipes, often as a meal but also toasted and coarsely chopped. All three are available as commercial meals. Macadamia nuts are also made into a lightly defatted "flour" (see Sources) that is good but expensive. Occasionally a recipe asks for it, but it is okay to substitute blanched almond meal.

How to Toast Nuts

To toast nuts, preheat the oven to 325ºF or 350ºF. Put the raw nuts in a shallow baking pan. It takes from 20 to 45 minutes to toast nuts, depending on the oven's temperature and the moisture content of the nuts. Nuts should only change color slightly; they should not get too dark.

Nuts tend to darken unevenly. A handful of nuts that are excessively toasted—even without actually getting burned—can spoil the whole lot with a strong, unpleasant taste. Be extra careful and check on them often. It is practical to keep a large supply of toasted nuts on hand. They keep well if they are stored in the fridge. They can also be frozen.

Vital Wheat Gluten

This is the protein fraction that remains after the starch (flour) has been removed from wheat kernels. With rare exceptions, vital wheat

gluten is used in this book only in recipes for raised breads. It has a high protein count (23 grams in ¼ cup), and the carb count is below 6 grams. Most vendors call this product vital wheat gluten. Red Mill (Bob's Red Mill) calls theirs vital wheat gluten flour, which may lead to confusion. Occasionally you may see a high-carb wheat (white) flour with small amounts of vital wheat gluten added to it that is also labeled "vital wheat gluten flour." This is a product to avoid. Check nutrition labels carefully before buying. Additional information about vital wheat gluten is found in chapter 2.

High-Fiber Ingredients

Inulin

Inulin is a fructooligosaccharide that is harvested from chicory root and many other vegetables and fruits. It is a natural white, tasteless, beneficial, and highly soluble fiber. It is said to increase the activity of good, active cultures in the gut and inhibits those cultures that are hostile. Inulin contains no carbohydrates that need counting. There are claims that inulin may aid in the absorption of calcium by the body. Much is being written about this interesting product; you can look up information about inulin on the Internet. Although it is expensive, prices vary. It is added primarily to recipes meant to have a high fiber load. It is also found in some stevia products (see the section on sweeteners). Four tablespoons of inulin contain 24.2 grams of fiber.

Oat Bran

This is a good source of soluble fiber. I use it only occasionally, chiefly because of its high carb count. Four tablespoons contain 5.3 grams of fiber.

Unprocessed Wheat Bran

This fiber, which is fairly low in carbohydrates, is used in many recipes. Four tablespoons supply 6 grams of fiber, chiefly insoluble. For a little extra zing, toast the bran. Preheat the oven to 325ºF. Spread the bran in a shallow baking pan and leave it in the oven for 30 to 35 minutes. Kretchmer's Toasted Wheat Bran is an alternative to toasting it yourself. Untoasted bran also gives excellent results, but if you buy unprocessed bran in bulk, make sure that it has almost no smell. It is best to refrigerate bran or to store it in a cool place.

Whole Psyllium Husks

The psyllium plant is native to Europe and Southern Asia. It contains soluble and insoluble fibers; four tablespoons have 14.8 grams of fiber. Psyllium husks appear in recipes that are specifically intended to provide a high fiber count.

Soy Products

Soy Protein Powder

Also called soy protein isolate or soy isolate, soy protein powder has no carbohydrates and is high in protein. It is part of many commercial soy products, such as vegetarian hamburgers. Some scientists are concerned that toxic substances may be created in the process of extracting the isolate. Although no risk facctors have been established, until more is known, whether to use soy protein powder is a personal decision. I like using soy protein powder, and you will find it in many of my recipes. If you wish, you can substitute equal amounts of either soy powder or soy milk powder in your recipes. There is a relatively small difference in taste and texture, but these ingredients are not carb-free. You will need to adjust the carb counts in the recipes accordingly.

Soy Milk Powder

This is made from lightly toasted, not raw, soybeans. This powder has no smell and no unpleasant taste. You can use soy milk powder in equal amounts as a substitute for soy protein powder. Count 5 grams of carb and 9 grams of protein in ¼ cup.

Soy Powder

This is similar to soy milk powder and created from toasted soybeans, but it does not have as fine a grind. The gram counts are the same. You may find that some stores do not know the difference between soy powder and soy milk powder.

Soy Flour

This is made from raw soybeans, unlike soy powder and soy milk powder. Soy flour has a strong taste and smell that many people dislike. It is not used in this book.

Soy Grits

These are commercially toasted, cracked soybeans that are used in some recipes to achieve a crunchy texture.

Whey Protein Powder

This concentrated powder, extracted from the watery part of milk, is said to be one of the best usable proteins. You will find it in many recipes in small amounts, principally for its high nutritional value. This powder has a beneficial effect on the immune system. It is a great way to get protein, especially for vegetarians or those who do not care to eat much meat. It comes plain and flavored, the latter usually being fairly high in carbohydrates. In this book, whey protein is used in a natural, unflavored form that is carb-free.

Look for natural, unflavored, zero-carb whey protein when you shop. Mix it with a touch of cream to create a good substitute for milk. You can also mix it with fruit for smoothies. Zero-carb whey protein can be found on the Internet, and it is also available from Vitamin Cottage (see Sources). As always, buying in bulk is more economical.

Seeds

Seeds are concentrated storehouses of healthy nutrition; they provide a big boost to a low-carb diet, adding texture, fiber, protein, and a variety of interesting and often intense flavors.

Flaxseeds

These little seeds contain important precursors to omega-3 fatty acids, which the human body transforms into the omega-3 fatty acids we all need. The direct sources for omega-3 fatty acids are certain cold-water fish, chiefly cod, salmon (not the farm-raised kind), mackerel, and sardines. The oils from either flaxseeds or fish are highly polyunsaturated and, thus, subject to turning rancid in a hurry. This is just as true of flaxseed meal (ground flaxseeds), an item used in many recipes. It must be carefully stored in the refrigerator or freezer.

Most often, when you add a nutrient to a food primarily for its nutritional value, the best you can hope for is that it will blandly meld into the food without becoming a detriment to the food's flavor. But foods made with flaxseeds and flaxseed meal taste terrific. The seeds come in two colors, dark and golden. Golden seeds cost slightly more; you can use either. Flaxseeds are rich in soluble fiber, folic acid, and magnesium.

You can buy flaxseed meal in sealed bags (Bob's Red Mill is one source) or you can grind the seeds yourself. Grinding is ideal for freshness, but it is a noisy affair that takes several minutes. Luckily, Salton has come out with a small mill dedicated to grinding these tough little seeds exclusively. It grinds up to 4 ounces, a handy quantity, in less than a minute. The mill is easy to clean and costs about $30.

Pumpkin Seeds, Sesame Seeds, and Sunflower Seeds

Many of the attributes listed for flaxseeds fit these seeds too. These seeds are always used hulled and are often toasted. Though less sensitive to rancidity than flaxseed meal, hulled seeds still need to be refrigerated in order to maintain their freshness.

How to Toast Seeds

You can toast seeds in the oven or in a skillet on the stove. As with nuts, it may be practical to toast larger batches at a time and then refrigerate or freeze them.

Preheat the oven to 325ºF. Spread the seeds in a shallow baking pan and leave them in the oven for 30 to 40 minutes. The seeds will change color unevenly. As with nuts, stop the process before any seeds get too dark.

If you prefer, you can toast small amounts in a skillet. Preheat a heavy skillet over medium heat. Add the seeds and stir constantly until the seeds are lightly toasted. It takes just a few minutes. Remove the seeds instantly from the hot skillet, lest some of them scorch before being transferred to another container.

Peanuts

Not a true nut, the peanut is a legume. Peanuts and peanut butter are used in several recipes for cookies, pies, and candy. Peanut butter has a relatively high carb count, but because of its concentrated flavor, you do not need to use large amounts. It is also high in protein. Buy only natural peanut butter without added sugar. Natural peanut butter usually has a layer of oil on top and must be stirred well prior to each use.

Wheat Flour, Whole Wheat Flour, Oat Flour, Rye Flour

Small to moderate amounts of some of these holdovers from the high-carb world (usually oat flour, dark rye flour, and whole wheat flour) are included in some recipes in this book. Unbleached white flour, by far the worst of the bunch from a health perspective, appears only in a few recipes where nothing else would do.

Sweeteners

Most recipes are so good you'd swear they contained sugar. This is great—but it can cause problems. The sweet treats in this book might tempt you to eat more of them than you should. Enjoy the sweets, but remind yourself that they are here principally to enable you to follow a healthy low-carb diet for the rest of your life, since you now can add coveted sweets, albeit with sensible restraint.

Because people's tastes for sweeteners vary, you may find you'll want to use less or more sweeteners than I recommend. Remember to adjust carb counts accordingly. The sweeteners used in this book are considered safe, though it is not known with absolute certainty what the result of steady use for many years or even decades may be. Equal (aspartame), hailed as safe when it first appeared, has been found to cause health problems and is not used in this book.

Splenda (sucralose), a recent and welcome addition to the existing sweeteners that was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1998, is used widely in the recipes in this book, but it is coming

under increasing scrutiny. We must wait and see about the effects that Splenda has on our health. Another sweetener is stevia, a sweet substance extracted from the leaves of a South American shrub. While all indications show that it is apparently quite benign, its drawback is that it can leave a bitter aftertaste. In recent years, though, the processing of stevia has been greatly improved. Finally, there are sugar alcohols. These are natural substances that are used commercially in sugar-free chocolates and other food products. They are believed to be indigestible. Each of these sweeteners is discussed individually below.

Splenda

Splenda (the generic name is sucralose) is made from real sugar but is chemically altered. In the process, it becomes extremely concentrated and sweet. It contains no carbohydrates. Because of its concentration, Splenda requires a carrier like maltodextrin, which does have carbohydrates. Splenda has a pleasant taste; you can bake with it too. Splenda is available in two forms, one is a granular sugar substitute that can be used, spoon for spoon—according to its manufacturer—in place of cane sugar (sucrose); it has 0.5 gram of carb per teaspoon. That translates to 6 grams of carb in ¼ cup and 24 grams in 1 cup. Splenda also comes in packets. One packet equals 2 teaspoons of sugar at 1 gram of carb. Both can be used for cooking or baking.

Sugar Alcohols

Sugar alcohols (polyols) occur naturally in a variety of fruits and berries, and in birch and other trees. The human body even makes small amounts of them. Sugar alcohols resemble regular cane sugar (sucrose), have the same weight as sugar, and taste and sweeten pretty much the same way too. You can use sugar alcohols just as you would use sugar.

Why the name "sugar alcohol"? Chemically, sugar alcohol is alcohol, but it contains no intoxicants and is derived from real sugar molecules. The main difference is that sugar has six carbon molecules in a chain and sugar alcohol has five. It is this molecular difference that has a huge impact on the body—and by extension, on the low-carb diet. Sugar alcohols are metabolized slowly, trigger little insulin or do so slowly, and cause no sudden rise in blood sugar (as do honey, molasses, and sucrose). Indeed, they are thought to pass through the digestive system pretty much like fiber. They are indigestible and hence are not counted as effective carbohydrates.

Nutrition labels list the carbohydrates in sugar alcohols, which are identical to those of regular sugar, but discount them to zero because they are supposed to be indigestible. This supposition is now being challenged, however. Scientists believe that some sugar alcohols may reach the bloodstream after all, thus becoming *effective carbohydrates*

that need counting. There is no clear indication of what that count should be. Individuals seem to respond differently to it too. Since nothing is gained by ignoring these findings, in this book sugar alcohols are treated as if they had an absorption (effective) rate of 15 percent. This may be a tad low and bears watching.

As in *The Low-Carb Comfort Food Cookbook,* the recipes in this book show only the effective carb count, that is, carbohydrates that actually enter the bloodstream, and ignore those that do not, such as fiber. The term ECC (effective carbohydrate count) was originally coined by the Drs. Eades.

Sugar alcohols—with names like mannitol, sorbitol, isomalt, maltitol, and xylitol—are considered to be both safe and even beneficial to your health. Xylitol (which may be the most beneficial) and some others have been shown to prevent tooth decay and also may help improve bone structure and more. Sugar-free chewing gums are often sweetened with xylitol.

In my recipes, I chiefly use xylitol, which is a little coarser than table sugar. I prefer the finer texture of table sugar, which is easy to create by running xylitol through a food processor. Keep the lid on while you do it to prevent the sugar dust from rising. A powdered sugar version of xylitol is also available.

The other sugar alcohol I use is a delicious brown sugar substitute that is sold under the name DiabetiSweet Brown Sugar Substitute. This sugar contains very small amounts of partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. This fat, prevalent in margarines, packaged cookies, and many other food products, contains unhealthy *transfats*. Such fats are not otherwise used in the recipes in this book, but DiabetiSweet Brown Sugar Substitute—used in small quantities—is an exception because a representative of the manufacturer, Health Care Products, assured me that the vegetable oil is in the process of being removed from the sugar. Call the company or check my Web site (LowCarbBakingandDessertCookbook.com) for updates. Meanwhile, if it concerns you, use xylitol in place of the brown sugar in any recipe.

Sugar alcohols are available in some health food stores, on the Internet, and from certain vendors listed under Sources in this book. Sugar alcohols are expensive; check the prices before you buy them.

Sugar alcohol may come with some unpleasant side effects. If you eat too much of it, its slow passage through the digestive system can generate gas, cramping, and even diarrhea. It usually takes a while before any symptoms show up, and every individual responds differently. A warning about the possible consequences of eating excessive amounts of sugar alcohol is included with all commercial products

containing it. So be warned. This may help strengthen your resolve not to overdo sweets.

Stevia

Manufactured from the leaves of the plant *Stevia rebaudiana,* a South American shrub, stevia has been used for eons by indigenous populations. It has not yet received FDA approval as a food additive and is sold as a dietary supplement. Stevia is widely available in health food stores and on the Internet. No adverse effects have been reported. It is intensely sweet; a few grains (1/32 of a teaspoon) equals about a teaspoon of sugar. It comes in liquid form and as a concentrated powder. There are some types of Stevia that are diluted with small amounts of inulin, the fiber discussed on page 7. One such powder goes by the brand name Stevia Plus, but there are others as well. Many people use stevia to sweeten everything and swear by it. If you are among them, you can continue that practice with most of the recipes in this book.

A ¼ cup of cane sugar has 48 grams of carbohydrates (as does sugar alcohol). The Splenda granular sugar substitute has 6 grams of carb per ¼ cup. Sugar alcohol—at a 15 percent absorption rate—has 7.2 grams of carb per ¼ cup (at least in this book). Stevia is the most difficult to pinpoint; the products vary and manufacturers make different claims. I tested the different sweeteners, using ¼ cup of cane sugar as the default. I used an identical recipe, first with cane sugar, then with the other sweeteners, each alone. (You can do this test yourself.) Sugar alcohol was right up there with cane sugar. Stevia came fairly close but tasted bitter when used by itself. Splenda came in last, sweetening less effectively than the other sweeteners. The Splenda packets fared only mildly better. So a teaspoon-for-teaspoon substitution does not really do it.

Sugar alcohol, though slightly higher in carb count, has greater sweetening power, besides increasing the weight of a recipe.

The results of this test, although approximations at best, are shown in the equivalency table on page 14. It shows the values given to Splenda by the manufacturer in the first column and is followed by the amount that is needed of each of the other sweeteners listed to equal the perceived sweetness of Splenda. Because stevia products are hard to pinpoint, I included only one, Stevia Plus.

How are sweeteners used in this book? Nearly all recipes use three different sweeteners: Splenda, xylitol, and stevia. I do this because Splenda, with its relatively weak power, drives up carb costs if used alone; sugar alcohol, a safe and effective sweetener, is troublesome for possible intestinal disturbances if used in excess; stevia, the best sweetener because it has zero carb and evidently presents no health hazard in the small amounts commonly used, is not a pleasant sweetener by

itself for most people. But the three together do a splendid job of sweetening.

This does not mean that you have to stick to the precise combination given in a recipe. If you want to leave out xylitol, double the amount of Splenda called for; reverse this if you wish to leave out Splenda. I recommend that you do not leave out stevia, though, because it is carb-free. If the amount of stevia in a recipe gives you a bitter aftertaste, try reducing it slightly or substituting other stevia products. Such experiments are well worth it. Today many choices are available. The recipes in this book call for Stevia Plus (or equivalent). If stevia works for you, you might even consider increasing it in the recipes beyond the amounts given and cutting back on Splenda and xylitol.

Approximate Sweetener Equivalents

Splenda, loose	CHO (g)	Splenda, packets	CHO (g)	Xylitol	CHO (g)	Stevia Plus	CHO (g)
¼ cup	6.0	5 packets	5.0	2.5 tablespoons	4.5	2 teaspoons	0
½ cup	12.0	10 packets	10.0	5 tablespoons	9.0	4 teaspoons	0
¾ cup	18.0	15 packets	15.0	7.5 tablespoons	13.5	6 teaspoons	0
1 cup	24.0	20 packets	20.0	10 tablespoons	18.0	8 teaspoons	0

Molasses and Honey

Hints of molasses and honey in small amounts are used occasionally for flavor in just a few recipes.

Chocolate

Sugar-free chocolate made with sugar alcohols is wonderful to use for making cookies, desserts, candies, and glazes. It is available from a wide variety of sources on the Internet or from your local candy store. There are many brands of chocolate; experiment to find out which chocolate you like best.

Chocolate is used in many recipes and often needs to be melted. Sometimes different types are combined, such as unsweetened baking chocolate and sugar-free milk or semisweet chocolate. Some chocolate comes in bulk or as bars; some as small disks or even chips. For more uniform melting, you may want to break or chop large pieces into smaller chunks, perhaps ½ an ounce or so. Always melt chocolate over very low heat. If you do it over hot water, keep the water at or below a simmer. In the microwave, choose the briefest period that will do the job. Suggested times are given, but the strengths of microwave ovens vary. To achieve the best flavor and texture, do not allow your chocolate to bubble up.

Dairy Products

Butter

I prefer unsalted butter, but you can certainly use regular butter if you wish. The consequences of using either are not that dramatic, except for the difference in saltiness. Usually, butter needs to be at room temperature. If it is not sitting out, use a microwave to bring it to room temperature. Don't worry if the butter gets a bit runny; no harm will be done to your recipe.

Cream

Heavy cream is called for in all recipes. If you want a lighter cream—to use over fruit or cereal, for instance—dilute the cream with a little water. Heavy cream is included in this book because it gives a little more body to the recipes. However, it is also slightly richer in fat than regular cream. Carb counts are about the same for both. If you prefer to use regular cream instead of heavy cream (heavy whipping cream), you can substitute this in most instances and still get good results.

Cream Cheese

Use full-fat cheese; it has fewer carbohydrates and tastes much better than lower-fat alternatives. You can keep cream cheese refrigerated until you are ready to use it, then soften it in the microwave. When the cream cheese is soft to the touch, it is easier to dispose of the tiny lumps that appear when you whip it.

Fats

In addition to butter, some of my recipes use coconut oil or light olive oil. These are stable oils and should not be refrigerated. I also use small amounts of peanut butter and tahini (sesame butter).

Eggs

Always use large eggs, which I used in developing the recipes. Although the designation "large" is not quite perfect (it applies to a fairly wide range of weights), it will help you select the right size. If you have a microwave, you can use it to bring the eggs to room temperature. You do not want warm eggs, only to remove the chill in a matter of seconds.

Fruits

I use dates, currants, blueberries, cranberries, and bananas in the recipes in this book. Though they are full of good nutrition, dates, currants, and bananas are very high-carb and must be used sparingly. Currants are preferable to raisins because of their small size. Two tablespoons of currants can really disperse widely—you would not get many raisins in 2 tablespoons.

Carb and Protein Counts

The setup for carb and protein counts in foods is the same in this book as in *The Low-Carb Comfort Food Cookbook.* Standard abbreviations, CHO (cho) for carbohydrate and PRO (pro) for protein, are used as column headers. The counts for individual ingredients are shown to help you understand what is in the foods you are preparing and to provide some flexibility and choice. So if you want to make changes, leave out an ingredient, or add one, simply adjust the carb or protein totals as needed. Also, having the actual counts available (something you generally do not find in other cookbooks) allows you to alter the size of individual portions. For example, if you make your cookies smaller or larger than suggested, you will still know exactly how many carb grams or protein grams are in each cookie if you divide the number of cookies by the total carb and protein counts. Sometimes you will be asked to add gram counts to a recipe. For instance, some pie recipes give you the gram counts for the filling only. You can choose which of several crusts you want to use. You will need to add the counts for the crust you select to those of the filling and use that number to calculate how many grams one piece of pie has—depending on the number of pieces you cut. This holds true for frostings and fillings as well.

As recommended in *The Low-Carb Comfort Food Cookbook,* if you are severely restricted in your intake of carbohydrates, just add 10 percent to the count totals for extra protection. As mentioned earlier, only effective carbohydrate grams (ECC) are listed here; the ones containing fiber have been deducted. Many recipes, as you may notice, contain a good deal of fiber. Fiber is not listed except in instances where a high-fiber product is the intent.

Sources for the counts are *The Complete Book of Food Counts,* 6th edition, by Corinne T. Netzer; *Bowes & Church's Food Values of Portions Commonly Used,* 17th edition, by J. A. Pennington; and the ESHA Nutritional Database Files. Counts do not always agree—they are difficult to pinpoint accurately—but they are close.

Utensils and Equipment

You probably already have most of what you need, but here is a list of some essential items.

Bread Baking

I prefer heavy-gauge, nonstick metal bake pans. Get a set of four small baking pans (about 3-by-6 inches) and two large ones (about 4-by-8 inches). A perforated French bread pan with a double channel is great for making oblong loaves that resemble French bread.

Cookie Sheets

Use heavy-gauge nonstick metal half sheets. Buy a couple of silicone-coated mats or liners (also called Silpat or Exopat mats). The liners help prevent cookie bottoms from browning prematurely. See Sources for information on where to purchase these items.

Pots and Pans for Cakes, Muffins, and Cupcakes

If possible, get two 8-inch springform pans and one 9-inch springform pan. They are ideal for most cakes, especially cheesecakes. Good quality pans (available at places like Williams-Sonoma), although they can be expensive, will pay for themselves in the long run. Cheap pans tend to lose their enamel finish quickly from repeated scrubbings, causing the batter to leak through the bottom. For making muffins and rolls, you will need 2-inch and 3½-inch muffin pans.

Appliances and More

A food processor (7-cup) is extremely useful, as is a portable electric mixer (get one that is cheap and lightweight if you need to buy it). A stand electric mixer is also nice—it is helpful for some recipes, such as cheesecakes, brownies, and meringues.

A digital scale is a necessity in the low-carb kitchen and a double boiler is also helpful. A microwave is extremely useful to bring ingredients to room temperature and to melt chocolate. Cooling racks are essential. If you don't have an ice cream maker, machines available for under $100 work beautifully. If you find that you are baking many breads, consider investing in a top-notch bread knife. They really do cut as if through butter. A small flaxseed mill will also be useful. For candy-making, a helpful tool is a marble slab. Finally, since you may be shaping not only breads but also many cookies, disposable gloves are a tremendous boon when doing these chores. You can buy them wholesale on the Internet, virtually for pennies.

Oven Temperatures

Oven temperatures can vary from oven to oven, sometimes considerably. If you find that the baking times given for foods in this cookbook at the suggested temperature settings consistently do not produce the results indicated within the allotted time periods, experiment a bit and adjust times or temperatures up or down as may be needed. Oven thermometers can help, but they are not foolproof, either.