



12 Diets in 12 Months The Final Edition!

April 2021: The Daniel Plan

by Rose Patient, RN, Nutritionist

Can Pastor Rick Slay the Diet Goliath?

I think he can. This diet plan sprang into life after Pastor Rick Warren had an epiphany one day when observing his congregation. “Wow! Everybody’s fat! But I’m fat too!” Then he decided to do something about it. I find that some amazing things happen when people decide.

He was wise enough to consult and design his approach with doctors and experts in nutrition. Dr. Daniel Amen, Dr Mark Hyman and Dr. Mehmet Oz. All of whom also happen to be excellent cooks. *The recipes by themselves are enough to convert you.*

Saving the Best for Last

Unintentionally, I have discovered my favorite diet plan at the end of this 12 Diets in 12 Months journey. I said, “Wow!” so many times this past month, I wondered if I needed a confessional.

As a Christian myself, I was curious. The fact that the plan itself is anchored on faith and community, immediately set itself apart from the others. *Their 5 Essential pillars of Faith, Food, Fitness, Focus and Friends is holistic and compelling.*



Honoring the Temple of the Spirit (FAITH)

Most people acknowledge a spiritual aspect to our world, and some of us have experienced unexplainable coincidences, which convince us that they're not happenstance. Like, thinking about an old friend that you haven't seen or thought about for years, and then, seconds later, the phone rings and they are on the line. We are connected and it's beautiful.



The Christian faith uses the Bible as their source of truth, and in many places, it urges us to take care of the temple of our spirit. But, as Pastor Warren noted, this is often pushed aside because of the larger call to serve. Shouldn't we do both? Yes. *Using food and fitness helps us to focus our faith at a higher level*, with the support of friends in our community.

Balancing the Message (FOOD)

The architects of this diet plan use the best of the available nutritional science to weave a delicious and sensible approach to food. Most of the food information is written objectively without any heavy-handed religious dogma. As a nurse, I appreciated this separation. As a nutritionist, I applaud their food philosophy. *Food has both the power to harm and to heal.*



What You Eat

- Low-fat: Minimize saturated fats by reducing animal products, and increase monounsaturated fats by using olive and avocado oils 🥑
- High fiber: Emphasis on vegetable and whole grains 🌿
- Protein: Sourced from both the animal and vegetable kingdom: tofu, tempeh, beans, lentils, fish and chicken. Shunning the red meats and processed soy which are harmful. 🍲
- Sugar Detox: A hallmark preparation step for intelligent assimilation

Exercise Drives Nutrition to Your Cells (FITNESS)

I have long been an advocate of this approach. We are designed to move. This movement benefits our health. Exercise expands our blood vessels, washing every cell with oxygen and nutrients. It offers an enhanced opportunity for cells to export toxins as well. As I have grown older, I've become less active, and suffered from back pain. Sometimes debilitating. Now that I've committed to an exercise program which includes cardio and strength training, my back pain has resolved. *This body, this temple of the spirit, is intelligently designed, and that design responds to movement.*



Exposome & Nutrigenomics (FOCUS)

We do not need to live in fear. *We need to step up, lean in, and take charge of our health.* It is up to each person to come to terms with how this plays out every day.

Exposome: The sum of everything you eat, breath, drink, think and feel, plus the toxins in our environment and even the 100 trillion bacteria that live inside your gut...the most important thing you do every single day to interact with your genes is eat.” – p. 77

Nutrigenomics: “The molecules in your food do much more than provide fuel for your body. They provide instructions that tell every cell in your body what to do every moment. More than 95% of chronic illness is not related to your genes, but to what those genes are exposed to in your lifetime.” -p.77.

Amen.

It's a Process (FRIENDS)

No man is an island. We need our community. They are an important part of our support system, both emotionally, physically and spiritually. Struggles are easier when the burden is shared. *Shifting your attitude and behaviors around food, however, takes time and it also requires support.* Here's where we lean on our friends. You're sure to know you have friends if they help you up when you trip and find a way to turn that mistake into a laugh and a hug.

“Be Kind to Yourself.” This is probably one of the best points that Pastor Warren makes in his book. Life happens, and so trying to be perfect is not possible. Stress descends, and sometimes we just need



to step back and reset with the help of our support system of friends and family. Regular group meetings are encouraged. When we are ready, we start again. This is how we all work, and it is absolutely lovely to hear the art of tolerance, patience, love and kindness practiced and preached.

Thank you, brother.

Getting Prepared

There is the *10-Day Daniel Detox* designed to flush out the junk clogging you up. Stimulants, Sugars, Processed foods, Artificial sweeteners, Dairy & Gluten. “Eat real, fresh whole food.” – p. 294 But of course, they don’t stop there. To help identify symptoms from inflammatory foods, there is a questionnaire and a toxicity scale. This is followed by a complete 10-Day Detox menu, complete with recipes.

What Just Happened?

Now the diet plan itself is a thing of beauty. A 40-Day Core Meal Plan. You eat 3 main meals, and 2 snacks, and a healthy treat if desired. It does not intend to drive a calorie deficit, in fact, avoids it. Because the meals are low-fat, they understand that you will process the foods quickly and be looking for more. I found eating every few hours on this approach to be easy and enjoyable.



Oh, the Numbers!!

I tracked every bite on www.cronometer.com. For 12 months I have religiously used this app. Every diet has deficits, and all of them require supplementation to help you meet the RDA. My calorie requirement is between 1500-1800 calories per day. My average on The Daniel Plan was 1863, and I lost 3 pounds. I made all my meals at



home, which provided an average of 27gm of fiber per day. The Daniel Plan provided 19% of Vitamin D, and 59% of Calcium, which are actually very good without relying on dairy. In fact, these percentages for Vit D and Calcium are on par or better with the other diets I have evaluated; it is my opinion that these are the most difficult RDAs to meet. All the other vitamins, minerals, healthy fats and essential amino acids were in excellent ranges. *This simply blows the nutritional lid off other diets.*

Mealtime

After analyzing the nutrition in 11 different diets that promise health - I have found most to not hold up. The Daniel Plan meals are designed to be nutritionally balanced - and Cronometer confirmed it. While other diets give examples, and give you a template for meals, and often recipes, this is the only one that provided a plug and go solution that you can trust. All you need to do is use their shopping list and start cooking. The proof is literally in the pudding. You will feel like a chef.



Hacks

- 1) Use your cell phone and take a picture of the meals plans and then print them out. This makes a great reference tool to keep you on track.
- 2) Read the entire book – it will guide you daily
- 3) Trust their recipes. Get in the kitchen. This is truly a shortcut. I was delighted with the flavor and ease of making their meals.
- 4) Prep veggies, hummus and baba ganoush. This is a perfect and satisfying snack.
- 5) When marinating, double the recipe and put extras in the freezer.
- 6) Think of dairy as a condiment. It can boost flavor but only here and there in small amounts.



12 Favorite Recipes



- Antioxidant Salad Dressing
- Artichoke Hummus
- Baba Ganoush Dip
- Chocolate and Walnut Dipped Frozen Banana Pops
- Citrus Marinade for Chicken or Salmon
- Crockpot Beef and Vegetable Stew
- Crunchy Mediterranean Salad with Grilled Shrimp
- Dr. Hyman's Black Bean Soup
- Dr. Hyman's Sun-dried Tomato Turkey Burgers
- Dr. Hyman's Walnut Pesto Chicken
- Grilled Mediterranean lamb Kofta
- Veggie, Lentil and Chicken Sausage Soup

All of these recipes are in the book

Like most of my dozens of recipe books, I have notes in the margins and rate each recipe on a scale of 4 stars. It's usually pretty tough to get a 4-star rating, but not here. Another bonus, is that none of these foods required me to go to a specialty store. My mind felt balanced, clear and calm throughout this month.

Supplementation Advice

I would recommend a whole food multivitamin.

That's it.

If you want to bump up your calcium intake, then drink an extra 8oz glass of fortified almond milk, which will give you another 450mg of calcium.



Summary

As a nutritionist, who wants to help guide clients through the deluge of misinformation and quick fix programs out there, I would confidently embrace this eating plan. They do everything right, and it's balanced nutritionally. You don't need to be a Christian to make food, get fit, get focused and do this with friends. But the faith component is a lovely addition and a compelling way to motivate you to take care of your body.

Thank you for taking time to hear about this 12 Diets in 12 Months Adventure!

Coming Soon: A book on this 12 Diets journey which will line them all up. I will be ranking them for nutritional quality, ease of use and much more!

If you are looking for nutritional help and need someone who has walked the walk – you can email me:

Rose@PatientTherapies.com

Follow me on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/PatientTherapiesllc/posts>

