

My mostly vegetarian Low Carbs Diet

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Background

The best way to view diabetes is to see it as an "allergy" to excessive carbs in the diet of a diabetic and the "allergic reaction" is **insulin resistance** which in turn results in increased blood sugar levels. Going low carb helps one avoid the "allergic reaction" thus bringing blood glucose in normal range.

I was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes in October'2010. Since then I followed all the advice on diet from doctors and health nutritionalists which can mostly be summarised thus:

- Minimise fat intake
- Eat healthy unprocessed carbs,
- Eat small portions but eat frequently.
- Eat fruits but try eating those with low glycemic index.
- Live an active lifestyle - exercise often, lose weight.

There were few variations to above advice but it generally follows this theme and except for one all others are just plain wrong advice for a diabetic. It did not help in the slightest to reduce my blood glucose reading and so I was to follow this diet along with Metformin - it started with 500mg and went all the way to 2000mg and when that did not help, I was to take this medication alongside Empagliflozin first 10mg and then 25 mg and then there was statin and Linagliptin added to the mix.

The approach that worked for me, as explained below, was complete antithesis of what I was told:

- Don't eat frequently and instead fast frequently.
- When you eat, eat foods with low carbs.
- Avoid fruits as they have fructose which does not help.
- Increase intake of good fat to be able to continue with low carb diet
- Include optimum protien in diet.
- Drink lots of fluids.
- Stay active especially on fasting days (Exercise / Walks).

While I was following the diet as recommended by professionals and exercising religiously it helped tone my body but that along with the cocktail of medication and being a complete teetotaler did not

make an iota of difference to my blood glucose readings. They were always way too high hovering between 80 to 100 mmol/mol on quarterly HbA1c results.

Then in October'2020 after another high 86 mmol/mol HbA1c result, I was told that I will have to start taking insulin. This is not where I wanted to be in my early 40s and so in deperation I started doing my own reading on trusty old Google and came across the book named ["The diabetes code" written by Dr. Jason Fung](#).

I am a scribd subscriber and the book is readily available there as part of my subscription and there was no barrier to entry and I started reading it. The book explains the concept of diabetes in a simple way and gives the approach of tackling it by means **intermittent fasting**. The concept was new to me but the more I read the more sense it made. Along with intermittent fasting, the book also talked about reducing the carb intake.

I decided that before I go for insulin, I would like to give this approach a try. So I talked with my wife and the diabetic team at my local surgery about what and how I wanted to proceed. We agreed to take a very careful approach around fasting and see how it goes one day at a time.

The book talks about Alternate Day Fasting (ADF), One Meal a Day (OMAD) and various other strategies but the ADF option appeared most logical for my use case, mainly because its simple to follow and I would be able to completely switch off food intake for a day rather than bother about cooking one meal each day or keep track of fasting hours and so on.

In order to prepare for ADF, I first had to ensure that my body reduced relying on Carbs for energy requirements. I started initially by reducing carb intake with various food group experiments but the list below can get one started fairly quickly. Once the body is on low carb diet, it starts relying on fat store within the body for its energy source and it is at this point that starting to fast will become easier.

After about 2 weeks of low carb diet, I started my Alternate day fasting and within a week my blood sugar readings were well within the good range (4 mmol/L to 7.5 mmol/L). At this point I was worried that the medication may get me into hypo, so I had a discussion with Diabetic Nurse and stopped medication altogether on 12/11/2020, atleast until my next HbA1c.

It will be worthwhile to mention that while I was doing all this, I also invested in [Freestyle Libre](#) and a transmitter called [miaomiao](#) which kind of converts the manual scan solution of Freestyle Libre into a full blown CGM (continuous glucose monitor) sending data to my phone every 5 minutes. This was important as I was constantly monitoring the effects of each food group on my BG to eliminate any food that would cause a spike.

So the final approach I followed comprised of two main objectives:

1. Fast every alternate day (minimum 36 hours fasting).
 - o On the day of fasting I ensured I was drinking lots of fluids (4.5 to 5 litres) in form of water, herbal tea, coffee and salted lemon water.
 - o On fasting days, atleast initially I would feel a bit lethargic but I aimed to walk atleast 1.5 miles (45 minutes) even if it was within the house itself. This became easier as my body got fat adapted and now am able to operate as normal and carry out extended workouts too.

2. On non-Fasting day eat a low carb diet with an aim to not exceed the carbs intake by more than 30gms.

- On the day I ate, I broke my fast after 36 or more hours with roughly 40g of extra mature cheddar cheese and then for the three meals during the rest of the day, I followed a combination of dishes in this document.
- I also tried to keep my non-fasting window between 7 to 12 hours. So if I broke fast at 08:00 AM, I would try to finish eating last meal of the day by 8.00 PM at the very latest.

I had my HbA1c after following this for 3 months and for the first time in 10 years my HbA1c was in normal range at 39 mmol/mol that too without any medication whatsoever. This diet with fasting has not only allowed me to avoid insulin, it has also resulted in weight loss. I am now about 14 Kgs lighter than when I started.

The fasting part of this process is something each individual will need to tailor to their needs based on how their body is responding but the aim of this document is merely to provide some useful vegetarian options that helped me stay low carb on the days I do eat. The nutritional part of concept is also explained succinctly on [this link](#).

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Prepare

Prepare by having key ingredients to help with keto / low carb diet. Following items must be in your pantry at all times. While these are easily available, I have provided links for the ones I use and from where I order - mostly Amazon.

Pantry

1. [Almond Flour](#)
2. [Unflavoured Protein Powder](#)
3. [Coconut Flour](#)
4. [Erythritol](#)
5. [Confectioners Swerve](#)
6. [Yeast](#)
7. [Sunflower Seeds Flour](#)
8. [Xanthum Gum](#)
9. [Avocado Oil](#)
10. [Virgin Olive Oil](#)
11. Eggs
12. [Celeriac](#) - 💡 *We are only able to get it at Waitrose*
13. Raddish
14. Aubergine

15. Extra mature cheddar cheese slices
16. Extra mature cheddar cheese - ⚠️ *Make sure to read ingredients on the back. Carb content should be less than 0.6g usually about 0.1g for extra mature cheddar cheese.*
17. Pink Himalayan Salt
18. Black Pepper
19. Unsweetened Peanut Butter both versions
 - a) [Smooth](#)
 - b) [Crunchy](#)
20. Clarified Butter (Ghee) - 💡 *Can be prepared at home by simply heating the unsalted butter in a pan until it starts bubbling and becomes clear.*
21. Blueberries
22. Raspberries
23. Strawberries
24. [Golden Flaxseed organic](#)
25. Almonds
26. Walnuts
27. Cashews
28. Pistachios
29. [Macademia nuts](#)
30. Full Fat Greek Yogurt - ⚠️ *Sainsburys brand is what I use. It must be used only sparingly as it does have about 4.5g carbs per 100gms*
31. [Seasme Powder](#)
32. [Psyllium Husk](#) - ⚠️ *Although a large number of dishes on net use this, I wouldn't be quick on ordering this as I don't find its taste great and none of the ideas below need this ingredient*
33. [MCT Powder](#)
34. [Electrolyte Tablets](#)
35. [Soya Flour](#)
36. [Sugar Free Tomato Ketchup](#)
37. [Keto Chocolate Bar](#)
38. [Low Carb Pasta](#)
39. [Soya Chunks](#) ⚠️ *23g carb per 100g - no adverse impact on my BG. Your mileage may vary.*
40. [Garam Masala](#)

Must have kitchen tools

1. Measuring Scale like [this one](#).
2. Air Fryer (Nice to have) The one we have and I can highly recommend is [this one](#).

3. A jar with measurement markings. Something like [this](#).
4. Standardized measurement spoons for 1 cup, 1/2 cup etc. Something like [this](#).
5. Microwave Egg Poach Cooker like [this one](#)
6. Mixer / Grinder. The one we have and I can highly recommend is [this one](#)
7. Microwave Oven(ideally 800 W and above)
8. Cooking Oven

Breakfast Options

Flaxseed Porridge

Take 4 tablespoons of golden flaxseed powder in a bowl and 4 Tablespoon of mixture of coarsely powdered and roasted nuts (Items 25 to 29 in pantry list above), mix 2 tablespoons of full fat greek yogurt and 3 to 4 tablespoons of water. Add 1 teaspoon of confectioners swerve and handful of blueberries and a handful of raspberries. Mix and eat. *You may want to check if the BG rises with use of blueberries and raspberries - I noticed it did so for me on some days so I stopped adding these.*

Benefit: A very good source of fibre. Helps the stomach ease into digestion phase and allows for better motion.

 **Tip:** Once used to it, you could try replacing confectioners swerve with Inulin (not insulin) syrup. Make sure syrup is good quality and does not have any added sugar or sugar replacement.

Almond Flour Bread, Eggs and Green Chilli Avocado

Use the [recipe from Joe Duff](#) for making a quick 5 minutes bread in microwave using Almond Flour. [YouTube Link](#)

Eat it with poached eggs - easiest way is to use the microwave poaching dish or can even use normal hard boiled eggs. Make sure you eat atleast two eggs and the whole thing, no discarding the yellow part. Its important for keeping you feeling full.

Now for Green Chilli Avocado, you peel and mash 1 medium sized Avocado, add some chopped onions, some garlic, some chopped tomato and chopped Green chillies. Add a dash of squeezed lemon, salt and black pepper. All to taste and eat either by itself or by spreading on Almond Bread.

 **Tip:** Instead of using a deep pan like its shown in video, use a plate and spread the batter about same thickness as that of bread and place in microwave. Once done just cut the size you like and it saves time in slicing it like bread slices later.

 **Tip:** I find the bread to be very filling and amount of bread prepared from the batter using same measurement as per the recipe actually goes for almost 2 to 3 days of my breakfast.

Peanutbutter Mugcake

A very quick [one minute recipe from Joe Duff](#) again.

[YouTube Link](#)

💡 **Tip:** Again the measurement used in recipe results in a cake that I can't eat fully and for our diets I think it can easily serve two.

Snacking / Breakfast Options

Keto Dhokla

1. Prepare the batter in the same way as for bread recipe except exclude adding yeast. Instead add one tablespoon of full fat greek yogurt and 1 tablespoon of Green chillies, coriander and green mint chutney.
 - Basic Green Mint Chutney: Grind a fresh bunch of coriander leaves, 3 green chillies, a fresh bunch of mint leaves, a clove of garlic and squeeze a full big lemon with some salt to taste into the freshly prepared paste.
 2. Once the batter is mixed place it in microwave for 4 to 5 minutes. Once out let it cool for 10 minutes and then slice it into dhokla pieces.
 3. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil and add a spoon of black mustard seeds and chopped greenchillies in a small pan. Then pour it over cooled down dhokla base.
 4. Now fill the same pan with 1/2 a cup of hot water and add two teaspoons of confectioners swerve. Mix it to dissolve.
 5. Pour the sweet water mixture over the dhokla base. Enjoy with Green chutney and sugarfree tomato ketchup.
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Protien Rich Cutlets

⚠️ **CAUTION:** Soya Chunks on label show about 23g carbs and 52g protien. However for me this item has never caused any spike in the BG readings but do take readings and monitor before you include this in your diet plan.

1. Soak [soya chunks](#) in boiling hot water for 10 minutes.
2. Once soft and spongy, rinse the water and squeeze as much water from the soya chunks as is possible and then put them in a mixer grinder and grind it.
3. Place the ground soya chunk into a pan and heat it till some of the water content is further reduced.
4. Boil celeriac and mash it coarsely and add to the ground soya chunk.
5. Add chopped onions, salt, red chilli powder, garam masala, chopped mint etc to taste and make cutlet shaped balls from this mixture.

6. Shallow fry the cutlets or if air fryer is available coat both sides of cutlets with avocado oil and air fry for roughly 15 minutes. Enjoy with Green Mint sauce / sugar free Tomato Ketchup.

Keto Potatoes

Thing is this is really radishes done in a certain way as shown by Joe Duff but honestly they do taste like potatoes and are so delicious as a side portion in dinner / salads or just as snacks on their own.

[YouTube Link](#)

Lunch / Dinner Options

Flat Breads (Roti/Parantha) #Indian

While the traditional wheat flour roti is not an option with low carb / keto diet it is possible to get closer to the taste using Soya flour. There are a number of recipes on youtube and internet using Pysllium husk and for me it ruins the taste. The following recipe works great though for my taste pallets.

In order to prepare traditional tava roti, take 60 gms (4 Tablespoons) of Soya Floor and 2 teaspoons (10 gms) of wheat four. Add about 4 to 6 tablespoons of warm water to create the roti dough. Leave it for about 30 minutes. Now make small balls of the dough and flatten them using a roller or tortilla press and cook for a minute or so on a flat pan. Once cooked, add ghee and keep aside for a minute and then they are soft and ready to eat with some curry.

This should result in about 6 rotis and each roti will have roughly 1.5 gms Net Carbs.

 **Tip:** Variations to above dry mix by adding spices, oil etc like done to prepare traditional Indian paranthas is possible and does result in good tasting dish although result was slightly crispier than the traditional ones. Still they will do justice to the dish as replacement food, just dont expect the exact same taste as the real thing. Taste of roti atleast for me is very close to real stuff.

Keto Gatte ki Sabji #Indian

The blog where I found this recipe is a treasure for people who love Indian dishes and has recipes reimaged the keto way but this is the one I have tried and it was delicious. The recipe and video is on [this link](#).

Net carbs in this dish are 4gms.

Baigan Bharta #Indian

Ingredients:

1 Aubergine (Baigan) Large (Black variety, about 500gms to 750gms)

Mustard Oil 1tsp

Ghee 2 tbsp

1 large Onion chopped
1 large Tomato chopped
3-4 garlic cloves chopped
1 inch ginger chopped
4-5 green chillies, deseeded and finely chopped
1 small bunch Green coriander chopped
Pink Himalayan Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Make holes using a fork on the skin of Aubergine.
2. Put the baigan on a gas stove or in any open fire and roast for 15 to 20 minutes, turn it in between; or in an oven roast for 30 minutes while turning in between. Slight burns are good and give it a smoky flavour.
3. Remove the Aubergine from fire / oven and let it cool, remove the skin and take out the soft pulp in a bowl
4. Mash the pulp and make a rough paste
5. Now add ghee in a frying pan and heat it
6. Add chopped onion, sauté for few minutes, and then add crushed garlic and ginger
7. Saute for some more time, till the aroma starts coming
8. Pour in the chopped tomatoes and green chillies
9. Add salt and cook till the tomato melts, keep stirring to prevent burning at the bottom
10. Now add the mashed aubergine and mix well
11. Start cooking over high flame while stirring till the mashed aubergine starts turning a bit brownish
12. Adjust seasoning
13. Garnish with chopped coriander and serve hot.

 **Tip:** It tastes very good with the soya flour flat breads.

Fried Bhindi (Ladyfinger / Okra) #Indian

For this recipe one can use fresh okra or chopped frozen okra that is available in some Asian stores. I use the latter version (500gms pack) as I am lazy.

1. If like me you are using frozen okra, its important that you **don't** thaw it else it will become watery.
2. While that is happening, put the frying pan on flame and add 4 tablespoons of Avacado Oil
3. Once its a bit hot add 1 teaspoon of:
 1. corriander powder
 2. [garam masala](#)
 3. cumin seeds
 4. salt

5. red chill
6. turmeric
4. If you like things spicy feel free to add 1 or 2 finely chopped green chillies.
5. Now add small chopped onion and saute it till onion turns slightly brown.
6. Finally, add the chopped Okra into the pan and cook until okra loses water and becomes crispy.
7. Serve hot.

💡 **Tip:** It tastes very good with the soya flour flat breads.

Fried Gobhi (Cauiflower) #Indian

Same as above but just replace frozen or fresh Okra with fresh or frozen Cauliflower.

Keto Gobhi Manchurian (Cauiflower) #Indian

I think it will be possible to recreate this dish using soya flour - Yet to try - I lack the motivation purely because of the caution below which most definitely applies to me.

⚠️ **CAUTION:** Cauliflower seems to work for most people but I tend to get BG spikes with it so do monitor your readings and work out if the dish works for you or not.

Low Carb Pasta #Italian

i Info: This pasta is very filling so to ensure it is not wasted try preparing about a third or a half of your normal pasta portion.

Using the [Low Carb Pasta](#) just create various pasta pesto dishes and enjoy with salad.

💡 **Tip:** Use Red Wine vinegar to cook the pasta. It goes very well with the salad below.

Salad to go with Pasta

1. Take 6 tablespoons of Extra Virgin Olive Oil in a big bowl.
2. Add about 2 to 3 tablespoons of chopped basil in the oil.
3. Add 1 teaspoon of:
 1. Oregano
 2. Rosemary
 3. Red Chilli Flakes
 4. Himalayan Salt
4. Add 2 tablepoon of Balsamic Vinegar
5. Mix these well and keep it aside for 20 minutes.

6. Meanwhile chop into big pieces:
 1. Different coloured Capsicum (Green, Red, Yellow and Orange)
 2. 1/4 Red Onion
 3. Cherry tomatos
 7. Put the chopped vegies into the oil mixture and mix well first with spoon and then with hand while giving gentle squeeze to vegies.
 8. Leave this to marinate while pasta is cooked.
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Celeriac Fries

1. Defrost the frozen chopped [Celeriac](#) or if using fresh celeriac cut it longer for having a french fries type shape.
 2. Add 6 tablespoons of Avocado Oil
 3. Add a a teaspoon of Pink Himalayan Salt.
 4. Mix it well so the surface of Celeriac is all coated with the oil.
 5. Transfer the celriac into Air Fryer basket and put it on air fry at 200 C for 22 minutes.
 6. Keep shaking the air fryer basket every 10 minutes so the celeriac is crisp on all sides.
 7. Once done, sprinkle salt, red chillies etc to taste.
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Scrambled Tofu (Tofu Bhurji) #Indian

1. Use a fork to mash the Tofu coarsely.
2. Chop:
 1. 2 to 3 Green chillies (finely)
 2. A red onion (small pieces)
 3. 1 tomato finely chopped
 4. Ginger (finely)
 5. 2 to 3 cloves of Garlic (small pieces)
3. Pour 3 tablespoons of Avocado Oil in a pan and put it for heating.
4. Add a teaspoon of cumin, turmeric and red chilli powder and keep stirring.
5. After 45 seconds or so add chopped items from step 2 and keep stirring.
6. After a minute add coarsely mashed tofu and keep stirring.
7. Add salt and pepper to taste.

 **Tip:** It tastes very good with Almond flour bread or as a wrap using soya flour flat breads.

Tandoori Paneer / Chicken #Indian

[Waitrose Chicken Breast](#) is what I recommend as the starting point but ofcourse any chicken will do.

For vegetarian version again any paneer can be used but I find the [one from Waitrose](#) is very good quality with right amount of softness to it.

Marination Mix

1. Prepare basic green chutney:
 - Grind a fresh bunch of corriander leaves, 3 green chillies, a fresh bunch of mint leaves, a clove of garlic and squeeze a full big lemon with some salt to taste into the freshly prepared paste.
2. Take 6 tablespoons of Full fat greek yogurt and add 6 tablespoons of Avocado Oil.
3. Add 6 tablespoons of [Tandoori Chicken Masala](#)
4. Salt to taste (1 teaspoon in my case)
5. 1 teaspoon of Ginger paste
6. 1 teaspoon of Garlic paste
7. Add 2 tablespoons of Green Chutney
8. Mix all this well, taste and add more salt as needed.

Marinate

1. Open chicken container and pierce the chicken with fork and make some cuts with knife and then add half of the mix into the waitrose chicken container OR for Vegetarian option, cut paneer into rectangular thin slices and add them into half of the the mix and let it marinate for 2 to 3 hours.
2. Chop big pieces of all colours of Capsicum (one per colour) and one red onion
3. Add chopped vegies to the remainder of the marination mix and let it marinate for 2 to 3 hours

Air Fry

1. Once marinated, air fry
 1. Vegies at 200 C for about 15 minutes on a sheet of Aluminium foil
 2. Paneer at 200 C for about 15 to 18 minutes on a sheet of Aluminium foil
 3. Chicken at 180 C for 22 to 25 minutes directly in the waitrose container.
2. Serve with sliced lemon.

Bottlegourd (Lauki) Halwa #Indian

Ingredients:

1. Double Cream - 2 Tablespoons
2. Bottlegourd (Peeled and grated) - 250 gms
3. Erythritol - 2 Tablespoons
4. Cardamom powder

5. Coarsely powdered mixture of roasted nuts (Cashews, Almonds and Pitachio) - 1 Tablespoon
6. Clarified Butter (Ghee) - 2 Tablespoon

Instructions:

1. Place the grated bottlegourd into a pressure cooker or steamer and steam it for 3 to 5 minutes.
 2. Heat a pan and put 2 Tablespoons of Clarified Butter (Ghee).
 3. Saute the steamed bottlegourd on medium heat until it turns slightly brown.
 4. Add 2 tablespoons of double cream and cook it for another 5 to 7 minutes.
 5. Now add 2 tablespoons of Erthritol and mix it well.
 6. Cook for another 2 to 3 minutes.
 7. Add cardamom powder and mix it well.
 8. Turn off the hob and garnish with Coarsely powdered mixture of roasted nuts.
 9. Server hot.
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Spicy Bottlegourd (Lauki) #Indian**Ingredients:**

1. Clarified Butter / Avocado Oil - 2 to 3 Tablespoon
2. Cumin Seeds - 1 Teaspoon
3. Corriander Powder - 1 Teaspoon
4. Turmeric powder - 1/2 teaspoon
5. Cumin Powder - 1/2 Teaspoon
6. Garam Masala
7. Asafoetida - a pinch
8. Fresh Corriander leaves - finely chopped
9. 1 medium sized Bottlegourd (Peeled and Diced)
10. Chopped onion - 1
11. Chopped tomatos - 2
12. Ginger paste - t teaspoon
13. Himalayan Pink Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Heat a pan and put 2 Tablespoons of Clarified Butter (Ghee).
2. Saute 1 teaspoon of Cumin Seeds, a pinch of asafoetida, chopped onion, chopped tomato and ginger paste
3. Once sauted, add 1/2 teaspoon of:

1. Turmeric powder
 2. cumin powder
 3. red chilli powder
 4. Add 1 teaspoon of coriander powder and salt to taste
 5. Mix well let it cook for another 5 minutes
 6. Add diced bottlegourd, mix it well, cover and let it cook for 15 to 20 minutes until it soft and cooked.
 7. Sprinkle 1/2 teaspoon of Garam Masala and mix well.
 8. Cook for another 2 minutes.
 9. Garnish with finely chopped coriander leaves.
 10. Serve hot.
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Piri Piri Paneer / Chicken Curry #SpanishIndianFusion

Ingredients

1. [Nando's Hot Peri-Peri Marinade](#) - 2 Tablespoon
2. [Nando's Garlic Peri-Peri Sauce](#) - 1 Tablespoon
3. [Nando's Lemon Peri-Peri Sauce](#) - 1 Tablespoon
4. Full Fat Greek Yogurt - 2 Tablespoon
5. Avocado Oil - 4 Tablespoon
6. [Kitchen King Masala](#) - 1 Tablespoon
7. [Tandoori Chicken Masala](#) - 2 Tablespoon
8. One pack of the following:
 1. [Waitrose British Cooked Chicken Flamegrilled Pieces](#)
 2. [Everest Paneer Indian Cooking Cheese](#)

Instructions

1. Add items 1 to 7 in a bowl and mix them thoroughly to prepare the marinade.
 2. Do one of the following depending on whether you are going the vegetarian or non-vegetarian route:
 1. Heat [Waitrose British Cooked Chicken Flamegrilled Pieces](#) in the microwave as per the instructions (1.5 minutes for 800 Watts microwave)
 2. Cut [Everest Paneer Indian Cooking Cheese](#) into thin rectangular slices.
 3. Mix chicken / paneer pieces into the marinade and let it stay for 30 minutes.
 4. Once marinated, air fry
 1. Paneer at 180 C for about 12 to 15 minutes on a sheet of Aluminium foil
 2. Chicken at 180 C for 15 to 18 minutes on a sheet of Aluminium foil.
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