



The Shangri-La Diet: The No Hunger Eat Anything Weight-Loss Plan

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As seen in the *New York Times* and on *Good Morning America*-now updated by the author.

Imagine a diet that's as easy as "a spoonful of sugar" (or extra-light olive oil) twice a day. A diet that actually reduces appetite and cravings. A diet that's based on a wealth of scientific findings but is simple enough for anyone to stick to. A diet with results that amaze almost everyone who tries it.

Psychology professor Seth Roberts asks a simple question most weight-loss experts haven't thought to tackle: *What makes people hungry?* Based on a new understanding of how the human body regulates hunger, *The Shangri-La Diet* presents a strikingly simple and surprisingly effective way to lose weight-without giving up favorite foods.

Simple and counterintuitive, this extraordinary new diet is changing the way the world thinks about weight loss-one success story at a time.

The Shangri-La Diet: The No Hunger Eat Anything Weight-Loss Plan Details

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Author : Seth Roberts

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From Reader Review The Shangri-La Diet: The No Hunger Eat Anything Weight-Loss Plan for online ebook

Two Readers in Love says

I was intrigued by the description of Mr. Robert's project in Slate's article on "How We Can Use Data Sets to Improve Our Lives." This book did not disappoint in that regard: the author performed a self-experiment with tasteless oil and flavorless sugar water to reset his metabolism, and this book shares his results. Anyone who has unthinkingly lost weight while their sense of taste was compromised by a bad cold will have had personal experience with the author's premise: the association between flavor and calories that drives appetite. The author takes it a step further by hypothesizing that this association between flavor and calories can reset your body weight "set point." Summaries of the studies on rats that helped lead the author to his hypothesis are also included.

Self-experimentation would seem to face the double whammy both the placebo effect and confirmation bias. You believe something to be true, you study yourself, and to no one's surprise - except perhaps your own - your data proves your hypothesis to be true (e.g. If you believe wearing a rubber band around your left wrist increases your balance, it does.) I suppose this may seem nitpicky to those who find success with such methods: if taking a sugar pill (or in this case, literally drinking sugar water) leads you to success, then who cares if the outcome is due to the placebo effect? It worked for you, and while sugar water has few health benefits the side effects are certainly likely to be less dangerous than that of many other diet drugs.

The author's evidence that these results translate more broadly across the human populace is even less convincing. Again, this is not to say his theory is incorrect, it is just difficult to judge from the scattershot comments from the (mostly pseudonymous) blog participants that had followed the diet at the time the book was published. The descriptive chapters of this slim book are interspersed with such 'user testimonials'; these sections seemed like redundant filler, and were mostly anecdotal. There was a bit of a mismatch between more circumspect claims of the author interspersed with the old-school fad diet style of the testimonial sections. However, I don't need to diet and so perhaps I'm not the target audience for those sections; if I was about to embark on a diet and was looking for a little blind hope in addition to the facts, perhaps I would have found all the blogosphere commentary more heartening (albeit still scientifically unconvincing.)

It would be nice if the graphs of his and other's weight loss against his consumption of the oil/sugar water were printed larger so that readers could analyze the data a bit more closely for themselves.

Gripes like these aside, this was a good, quick introduction to an intriguing, counter-intuitive concept.

Jon says

I've read a ton of diet and nutrition books and have learned to be disappointed with most of them. So I didn't come into this one with high expectations. But Roberts blew me away. Now whether the Shangri-La Diet is the cure-all for the global obesity epidemic, I don't know. But I do know this, it fundamentally changed how I feel diet and nutrition. Although I'm not convinced that Seth's diet is the healthiest option out there I think it's a fantastic way to help transition someone to more sustainable diet and I'm glad to have stumbled upon this one.

Benjamin says

I think Seth Roberts is on to something, but I feel like he undermines his credibility with the way he describes the diet. Calling it "The Shangri-La Diet" sounds silly to me. It's not even really a diet; it's a strategy to reduce your appetite. He writes sentences like "eating more food will cause you to lose weight" which make it sound like a scam; what he technically means is that eating more calories without flavor will reduce your appetite, allowing you to eat less overall.

If you like diet books by psychologists then I highly recommend *Mindless Eating*. If you prefer an engineer's perspective, I recommend *The Hacker's Diet*.

Steven Peterson says

I read this quite a while ago--and used it, too. I had lost 20 pounds on the Atkins diet and, after going to maintenance, the weight started coming right back. I tried this approach (using light olive oil) and it stopped the weight gain. Kind of yucky, but it appeared to work for me.

Jerry says

As a lot of people mentioned, you don't need to buy the book to get the diet plan. It's pretty simple and explained on the author's website. The book was mostly background on how Roberts got the idea, what he did to test it, and dieter testimonials. All in all, it was an interesting read. I admire Roberts' ability to think outside the box. If the testimonials are to be believed, this diet could be a magic bullet.

I don't believe in magic, unfortunately. I will try out the ideas and see what happens. It's not risky and the premise appeals to my supremely lazy attitude. I can't rate the book higher than three stars until I know if it actually delivers on its claim. The three stars reflect an easy to read book that clearly leads you through its ideas. Whether or not you believe any of it along the way is another thing.

Seymour says

Obviously there has been a buzz about this book on the back of *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*. Like other reviewers I found it a very quick read and interesting enough to read in one sitting. Yes, the basics could fit on three pages but the "padding" is lightly engaging although repetitive at times. I did skim the chapter on the problems of global obesity because that's not something I need convincing about. Like other reviewers I was impressed with the Seth's audacious self-experimentation and willingness to connect concepts in unorthodox ways.

So what about the "diet"? The concept at the core has this intuitive ring about it and resonates with some of the other bits and bobs that have crossed my radar recently, such as Michael Dowd's stuff on evolutionary psychology. The author is careful to include some examples of negative feedback he has had on the "diet"

not working for some people. If it works for me, it will be astounding, and it could be the answer I'm looking for - but the proof will be in the eating ...

It costs nothing to try and seems harmless so I'll be giving it a go and reporting back.

DK Simoneau says

The Shangri-La Diet: The No Hunger Eat Anything Weight-Loss Plan
by Seth Roberts

This was an easy read. And though I'm not sure I'm in agreement with the "science" behind it, I do believe Mr. Roberts may be onto something. I think our society has given sugar a bad rap. And yet when we are put into a hospital, one of the first things they often do is put us on an IV of salt and/or sugar water solution. I think our bodies need sugar. I think they need water. I think they need salt. And I think they need fat. So I'm interested in exploring his ideas- though I think they are discovering that some of these oils that he said would work fine as a substitute may not be so good. (I personally wouldn't use Canola, Sunflower etc. as I think they may do more harm than good!) And after a lot of other reading, I think maybe you have to be careful which brand of olive oil you might use. I'm thinking even coconut oil might be an even better choice. I like the ideas presented. I like the idea of adding something rather than depriving ourselves. So many people have had good luck with it, I would think it might be worth taking a whirl. Much of it matches up so many of the conclusions I had already come to in much of my other research. I just don't quite buy the "flavor" part of it.....but then again, maybe he really was onto something.

Kathy says

I gave this four stars, but I guess I should wait until I see if this really works. The author's premise is that there is a strong connection in our bodies between good tasting food and calories, that our bodies learn to associate strong, good tastes with calories that the body wants to conserve, making us fat. He experimented on himself to find ways to add calories without taste, thereby lowering his body's set point and causing one to lose weight. He finally hit upon ingesting plain sugar water or flavorless oils a couple of times a day. He found that his appetite decreased and that he effortlessly lost weight, going from 200 pounds to 160 pounds, and staying there. I'm going to give it a try!

Update: So, I tried the method. But it really didn't decrease my appetite. Didn't seem to "reset" my metabolism. Didn't work for me. So I stopped.

Jim says

I learned about this book from reading Freakonomics. The author, Seth Roberts, is a Berkeley psychologist who has his own ideas about why we gain weight. It's a quick read and worth a couple of hours if you are interested in different approaches to controlling your weight. Based on my experience, Roberts' setpoint

theory is right on target. As a practical diet regimen, though, the advice is hard to follow. I tried ingesting flax oil for a couple of days. My appetite went to zero immediately, but I developed an overwhelming dislike for the taste of flax. I will probably try a different oil at some point in the future, but this weekend I have to go to a BBQ!

Joshua Pitzalis says

This is one of the quirkiest books about fat loss I've read. I thoroughly enjoyed it because I didn't expect the author to be so involved. Most books in the genre follow a predictable format. Less than 10 pages in and I'm reading about mice getting their brains sliced open, how brushing your teeth at the wrong time makes you fat and drinking oil won't. The most worrying part is that it all made perfect sense once you acclimate to it.

This book is a wonderful adventure into the thrill of self-experimentation. Whether the whole drinking oil thing works for you or not is irrelevant. The author's relentless pursuit of self-evident learning is what this book is all about. The book makes me want to track everything about my life in the nerdiest way possible.

If I had to fault it, I would say that it could have explored the social implications of removing the need to eat from your lifestyle a little more. Eating is a highly social activity. Remove the need to eat had serious social implications for me and that took me by complete surprise. I guess that is the topic of a different book though.

To be perfectly clear, every claim this book made held water. It took about 5 days to work when I started but it worked phenomenally well. A radical book and I wholeheartedly recommend reading it.

Season Cluff says

This book has an interesting concept, but really could have been just 3 pages (if that). The rest is really just fluff. But I guess no one would pay for a 3 page book, so he had to add extra to fill it up. Here's the secret, 1 tablespoon of sugar mixed with water and 1 tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil every day at least one hour after and before a meal if you are trying to lose under 20 pounds, add one tablespoon of each to lose 20-40 pounds and 1 more of each to lose over 60 pounds. Read the book if you want to read the science behind it, but in my opinion, all you need to know is right there.

Lisa Greer says

Wacky stuff, but you gotta love an innovative guy who invents this kind of diet: drink oil or sugar water to stave off hunger. :) And it worked for a lot of people...

David Failing says

Mildly informative - the author advances the theory that eating small quantities of foods (ELOO and

fructose) with low "flavor-calorie association" will lower the body's set-point, which is the weight your brain WANTS you to be. In his view, backed by a few studies, weight which is above the set point will cause you to be less hungry (and hence lose weight), while a weight below your set point will increase hunger (and hence you will gain weight). This, he says, is why restrictive diets ultimately do not work - they lower weight while failing to lower the set-point. Interesting theory, perhaps worth a try.

Alicia Bayer says

The author died of a heart attack after writing this book. He was only 61 and his cause of death was heart disease.

Ironically, he had recently blogged: "I eat a half stick (60 g) of butter daily. It improves my brain speed. After I gave a talk about this, a cardiologist in the audience said I was killing myself. I said I thought my experimental data was more persuasive than epidemiology, with its many questionable assumptions. The new data suggests I was right — butter does not increase heart attacks. It also supports my belief that by learning what makes my brain work best, I will improve my health in other ways (such as reduce heart attack risk)."

This is obviously not safe dietary advice. Try Dr. Fuhrman's Eat to Live for better advice that's actually grounded in science and long-term studies.

Janine says

Started this very simple diet immediately and can only say one thing - it works.

I already have a healthy lifestyle and follow a strict diet. But I needed an answer to my cravings. No matter how healthy I was, I could not avoid these extreme sugar cravings that would overcome me from time to time and ruin everything. Knowing I was cheating anyway I would stuff myself endlessly with bad stuff.

With this diet, I feel full so quickly. So while I still cheat from time to time, I can restrict it to small amounts. I simply feel full quicker. Amazing!
