

The Martini Diet Diet Book Critique

Title

The diet book that was critiqued is called, *The Martini Diet*. Written by Jennifer “Gin” Sander, this book is based on the idea that you can “self indulge your way to a thinner, more fabulous you”! Jennifer Sander explains from the very beginning that she is not a “diet doctor”, a nutritionist, but rather a nonscientist. She is a self help bestselling author who has also written books titled, *Wear More Cashmere*, and, *Miracle Books*, to name a few. With the *Martini Diet*, she switched her focus from business and finance to a different subject matter: healthy indulgences. Sander is a graduate from Mills College and currently a business and financial writer. She owns and operates Big City Books, a book packaging company in Granite Bay, California.

Rationale/Claim

The rationale for the diet is based on the following – abandoning a restrictive diet and excruciating workouts while allowing yourself to indulge on high calorie foods while maintaining some form of restraint and awareness. Sander does not base her dietary habits on scientific research and evidence based analysis but rather her role model – Julia Child. Julia Child was able to incorporate good food into a healthy lifestyle and a normal weight and therefore, Jennifer wanted to follow suit. Sander’s follows Julia Child’s food philosophy - eat wonderful food, take modest portions, and skip the snacks and this is where the Martini Diet came to be. The Martini Diet is not just about how you eat, but also the way you feel about your body. If you are participating in the Martini Diet, it is necessary to increase the amount of activity in your life. The interesting point the author makes is that

instead of long and boring workouts, dieters will engage in elegant and graceful forms of exercise such as ballet, horseback riding and more.

Sander's philosophy - "Put your nose in the air" - is the thought that if we are snobs about food, it will be rather easy to give up junk food. She proposes the statement "eat well or not at all". You are to save moments of indulgence for the best foods life has to offer and not the tacky foods available in the supermarket. She sums it up in this theory, "the higher your nose is in the air about what you eat, the smaller your butt will be". The last rationale in this book is the notion that if you follow the Martini Diet, you will not only obtain just the weight and size you have been working towards, but also the life you have been longing for.

Overview of Diet

The Martini Diet utilizes Julia Child and the shape of a martini glass for inspiration to prepare to adopt a new food outlook. According to the Martini Diet, dieters are allowed to eat anything they want to as long as it is of the highest quality and made from real ingredients. The eating plan of the diet focuses on three main rules, which are said to be relatively easy to incorporate into your life without having to cut back or eliminate a whole food category. The three rules are:

1. Eat Only the Very Best
2. Eat Somewhat Less of the Very Best
3. Eat the Very Best Only at Mealtimes

This can also be looked at in terms of quality, quantity, and frequency. With these three basic rules in mind, Sander encourages dieters to become food snobs and to feel superior to junk food and processed foods to make the dieter avoid them.

Rule 1: Eat only the Very Best, explains what foods you will avoid while on this diet. These include: trans fat, high fructose corn syrup, and 9 tacky foods (Top Ramen, Chicken nuggets, fast food French fries, etc). When the dieter removes all processed and fast foods from their diet, Sander states that you will lose your taste for that food and you will never want to go back because only tacky people eat tacky foods.

Rule 2: Eat Somewhat Less of the Very Best, speaks about taking modest portions, eating slowly and savoring each bite, and to stop eating when you feel full. The dieting aspect of this plan is centered on portion control and this is where the martini's come into play. A technique given when eating out is to eat only 1/3 of the portion size you ordered because portion sizes have increase 2 - 5 times since the 1970's.

To determine the right portion sizes for a dieter to slowly lose weight, a martini metaphor is used to measure the correct amounts of food. The standard martini glass holds 3 oz. and this amount is used to determine portion size. Each part of a meal must be able to fit into a 3 oz. martini glass. For example, when serving a meal of salmon, brown rice and asparagus, the portion of each food should just reach the top of the glass. Once you can control your portion sizes, you can introduce indulgent ingredients into each of your meals. An example meal plan is listed below:

Breakfast

Café latte
Sour cream waffles
Fresh strawberries

Lunch

½ cup creamy vegetable soup
1 slice fresh baked bread

Dinner

1 glass of red wine
Rib-eye steak

½ cup garlic mashed potatoes
½ cup grilled vegetables
1 Lindt chocolate ball

This meal plan is the only option given to a dieter throughout the main part book, as well as a few other recipes listed in the back on the book. The Martini Diet does not talk about a balance between fat, carbohydrates, and proteins, as well as important micronutrients. Instead, it explains to the dieter a few different types of “mood boosting chemicals” such as caffeine and how it has a positive effect on our health. In the case of an actual diet plan, there is no plan or regime for someone to follow except just eating the “best foods” and less of them.

Rule 3: Eat the Best only at Mealtimes, is telling the dieter to exclude all snacks throughout the day. Sander says that you are able to enjoy small amounts of luscious foods during mealtime but NEVER in between. She explains that snacking is not elegant and you do not need those extra calories. The idea that snacking can snowball from having just a few chips to an entire family size bag is what makes Sander weary of having snacks.

After looking at these rules, the dieter will begin to adopt them and their memories of how they use to eat in the past will become a memory... or will they?

Is it Well Rounded and Sustainable?

This diet does not appear well rounded at all. First, Sander does not explain the importance of macronutrients and how protein, carbohydrates, and fat are important for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Secondly, there is no real meal plan for a dieter to base their meals off of as they are trying to lose weight. The only piece of advice given is to make sure that they eat a diet composed of whole foods while excluding all fast food and processed

food. The author is merely giving ways to change eating habits, not actual meal consumption.

The Martini Diet Book states that it is not an instant way to lose weight but rather a permanent change to your dietary patterns and lifestyle. As you are following this diet, you are supposed to see quick results on the scale because you are not consuming as much food and only food that is “good for you”. According to this diet, as long as you follow the three rules then you will have long term maintenance. The issue is that there will be times when people slip up and have a processed or fast food and this will prevent the Martini Diet from becoming a long term maintenance program. Experience has shown that most dieters cannot make this style of eating work as a lifestyle approach to weight management.

Weight loss and behavior modification are also addressed in this diet book. Beginning with exercise, Sander writes that exercise is an essential component of the Martini Diet but not in the usual way our society practices. Instead, elegant forms of exercise and indulging in these forms is the only way a dieter will be able to indulge in luxurious foods later on throughout the day. A person on this diet must have the mindset that exercise can be a way to indulge throughout the day. Sander gives some ideas of exercise, such as ice skating, horseback riding, taking dance lessons, or even fencing, to indulge in. The majority of readers will not be able to afford to maintain the lifestyle recommendations on an ongoing basis, which may impair the ability to stick with the plan.

Behavior modification involves the dieter believing that they should be snobby about the food they eat and that they should create the life and the body they want. This form of behavior modification has both its pro’s and con’s. In defense of Sander’s type of behavior change, she is asking people to refuse to eat certain foods and instead turn their

nose up in response. This can make them less acceptable of other foods and possibly encourage self-centered behaviors. If a dieter wants to create the life they want, as well as the body, Sander offers a variety of options for the dieter to indulge in other areas of their life, besides diet. They include buying expensive new clothes and lingerie, getting an expensive spa treatment, paying to have a cleaning lady come to your house, or just spending a day indulging on shopping. This can be a detrimental behavior change in creating the life you want because following Sander's advice could become very expensive when dieters use shopping and spa treatments as an alternative to overindulgence in food.

Overall, I do not believe that this diet is well rounded and sustainable. While there are some pro's, such as learning about portion control, it is only a successful method for a short period of time. Consuming small portion sizes can lead to hunger in between meals and if a dieter is not allowed to have snacks, they will feel more famished at mealtime. In the long term, this eating plan is unrealistic.

Critical Comments:

- The Martini Diet does provide enough calories. The only sample meal the book provides is listed above and based on that, one may be able to still consume to adequate amount of calories per day. The diet allows for high calorie foods, but these foods must also be whole foods. There is no necessary caloric restriction other than portion sizes of 3oz.
- This diet will not avoid feelings of deprivation and hunger. Restricting snacks may in the long run leave someone more famished and in response lead someone to

overeat. Also portion sizes may not be enough for some people.

- The Martini Diet provides enough protein and carbohydrate. Slight restriction of carbohydrates may be required due to the portion size restriction, but other than that protein and carbohydrate can still be components of the diet.
- The diet may be palatable and varied, but it does not seem to be nutritionally adequate, balanced, and especially not easy to follow. A diet like this would be extremely difficult to follow especially with all the restricting it entails.
- This diet is fairly pricey to follow if one follows the diet verbatim. Sander's instructs to "eat only the best" and that has potential to be expensive for the average consumer. It is unrealistic for the majority of society to be "food snobs".
- The basis of this diet seems to revolve around socioeconomic status. The food options for the diet seem to be expensive and the exercise choices are also exercise of the upper class. The average American would not be able to afford to follow this diet.

Overall Conclusion:

The Martini diet is overall a reasonable diet but not one that I would ever recommend. The diet's main tenets love the food you eat, eat the very best of it, and to indulge in elegant forms of exercise. Portion sizes should be based on what you can "fit in a 3-ounce martini glass." Diet participants are still able to eat whatever they want, which Sander's continuously states is always safe. It has been proven that diets like these are

extremely difficult to adhere to, especially where restriction is required. While the diet allows for personal choice in food options, it encourages foods that are whole and that are indulgent. However, this eating style is extremely unrealistic for anyone other than the elite upper class. Also, the indulgent exercise that Sander's suggests is unrealistic. Sander's recommendations are merely her own opinions on how to live an enjoyable lifestyle while sometimes being mindful of ways to adjust for more health conscience choices. Sander's observations are biased, unsupported, and inconsistent with nutritional guidelines that have proven to be evidenced based.