

A New Year's Diet

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In Britain, at the start of each New Year, many people make a resolution to go on a diet, in order to shed weight following excess eating and drinking over the Christmas and New Year breaks. I'm not sure if the same applies in North America and elsewhere.

My wife and I were listening to a local radio station during a car journey early in January when a particular deejay commented that a listener had recommended a diet where the dieter merely had to avoid any food or drink beginning with the letter C. As we continued our car journey, we began taking it in turns to name a food or drink beginning with the letter C. Although we didn't really have any hard-and-fast rules, we did try to avoid a welter of trade-names, except for a few well-known drinks. We surprised ourselves at how quickly we came up with a list of 100 foods and drinks beginning with C. Our initial list is below.

cabbage	cassis	chicken	cocktail	cornbread
Cake	catfish	chicory	cocoa	corned beef
calabrese	catsup	chilli	coconut	Cornish pasty
calamari	cauliflower	chimichanga	cod	Cos lettuce
calvados	cava	chips	coffee	cotton candy
Cambozola	celeriac	chocolate	Cognac	courgette
Camembert	celery	chokecherry	coho salmon	crab
camomile tea	cendol	chop suey	Cointreau	cracker
Campari	cep	chorizo	Coke	crackling
Candy	Chablis	chow mein	cola	cranberry
candyfloss	Champagne	chowder	coley	cream
cane sugar	chapati	chutney	conchiglie	cress
cannelloni	Chardonnay	ciabatta	confectionery	crisps
cantaloupe	Chartreuse	cider	conger eel	croque-monsieur
caramel	Chaser	cilantro	cookie	croquette
cardamom	Cheese	cinnamon	cordial	cucumber
Carrot	cherry	citrus fruit	coriander	cumin
Cashew	chestnut	clam	corn	cupcake
cassata	chervil	clementine	corn flakes	curds
Cassava	chewing gum	cockle	corn on the cob	custard

Once we had reached 100 items, some further thoughts occurred. How easy is it to extend the C list? A careful dictionary search would probably throw up many more. Is there another letter of the alphabet for which such a lengthy list can be so easily generated using reasonably familiar foods and drinks? How about the initial letters R, S and T? What's so special about the letter C?