

FACTSHEET

ALCOHOL

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Introduction

Remember alcohol is still 'a cheat' in Phase 2 - no alcohol is recommended regularly while you're still trying to lose weight. The recommendation for red wine to be the one you cheat with if you do have alcohol is because it ticks the health benefits box and is OK for insulin. Red wine has well documented antioxidant benefits (related to the polyphenol, resveratrol) and can help protect against heart disease and certain cancers. It is the *only* recommended fluid to consume whilst eating (even water washes away natural digestive juices and should be drunk between, not with, meals).

Below is a list of common alcoholic drinks with their carb and calorie contents and any relevant notes for The Harcombe Diet. The calorie information is only of interest, as it can give a guide as to how sweet a drink is. Other than that, calories are just fuel - we don't care much about them. The carb information is more interesting, as this is going to indicate how much you are going to wake up your pancreas, to produce insulin, with each particular drink. For example, brandy and whisky are practically zero carb and are therefore not bad drinks at all from an insulin perspective. (Unlike beer which can have 13g of carb for a 12oz glass, stout 20g and a shot of Amaretto can have a whopping 42 grams of carbohydrate).

However, distilled spirits are much higher in alcohol content - which introduces another hormone issue. Alcohol inhibits the operation of glucagon, which is a hormone that naturally elevates blood sugar, so drinking high alcohol drinks is likely to give you the munchies. Whisky is grain based (usually barley), which won't be great for anyone wheat intolerant and any varieties of brandy that are not distilled from wine (e.g. the fruit brandy like calvados) can be sweet. All sorts of other things need to be considered when you move away from real food.

Ingredients in common alcoholic drinks:

Beer is a fermented, hop flavoured, malt sugared liquid whose chief ingredients are water, malt, hops & yeast. (Malting is a process of bringing grain to its highest point of possible soluble starch content. This forms 'maltose' - a sugar - which is then metabolised into alcohol by the yeast).

Lager (from the German word "*lagern*" which means to store) is just beer kept in a cold dark place for thirty days or more.

With beer and lager, therefore, you are risking all three conditions discussed in The Harcombe Diet. You can be feeding Candida with the sugar and yeast, feeding Food Intolerance with grains and feeding Hypoglycaemia with the carb and sugar content.

Drink & Serving Size	Carbs	Calories	Notes
Beer (12oz)			
Regular beer/lager	13g	150	e.g. Heineken, Stella, Budweiser
Light beer	4.5g	116	e.g. Bud light, Miller Lite - will usually say "Light", "Lite" or "ultra"
Ale	7g	126	e.g. bitters, milds, golden ales and old ales - the pub's own pint on draught is in this category
Stout	20g	178	e.g. Guinness

Wine is primarily made from grapes which end up in a highly concentrated form (i.e. refined fruit). White wine is made from the fermented juice of grapes stripped of their seeds and skins. Red wine is made from the fermented juice of grapes with the skin and pips included – it is less refined, therefore. It is also slightly lower in sugar content. It contains more resveratrol – a plant anti-oxidant – than white wine. Wine is one of the best drinks to cheat with on The Harcombe Diet – either the occasional glass of red wine (the drier the better) with a main meal or a white wine spritzer as a long drink if you are out socialising.

Wine (5oz)	Carbs	Calories	
Dry white	3g	130	e.g. Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc
Medium Dry	5g	118	e.g. Reisling, Chenin Blanc
Dry red	4g	114	e.g. Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon
Red Bordeaux	4.5g	116	
Red burgundy	5.5g	120	

Champagne is made in the same way as wine – but then more yeast is added and it's left to ferment in the bottle a second time, producing carbon dioxide (fizz). It's also not too bad a cheat with The Harcombe Diet, but it can be 'more-ish', so do watch how much you drink.

Champagne (5oz)	Carbs	Calories	
Dry Champagne or Sparkling Wine	4.5g	116	
Sweet Champagne or Sparkling Wine	10g	138	

Liqueurs are essentially highly concentrated, highly fermented drinks, where a greater proportion of the water has been removed during the fermentation process making a much denser (and more alcoholic drink). Here is an example of the making of a specific liqueur, so that you can get an idea of what happens:

How Tequila is made: The agave plant is responsible for tequila, and all tequila is made in Mexico. Agave plants are harvested as large thick trunks; the spiny leaves are hacked off with machetes, and the plants are trucked to special hot houses where they begin the fermentation process. The plants are then cut up and the juices are fermented before moving on to their final form. Tequila is sold in a variety of styles – each is dramatically different, making the different types of tequila almost totally different liquors. The longer an aged tequila stays in the barrels the darker the colour and stronger the flavour becomes.

Liqueurs (2.5 oz. serving)	Carbs	Calories	
Amaretto	42g	266	Almond based – not suitable for nut allergy
Bailey's	18g	170	Watch out if lactose intolerant
Campari	20g	178	
Coffee Liqueur (e.g. Kahlua)	40g	258	Watch out if lactose intolerant
Cointreau	25g	198	
Creme de Menthe	35g	238	
Grand Marnier	17g	166	

Kirsch	15g	158	Cherry Liqueur
Ouzo/Sambuca	28g	210	This contains essential oils from star anise, which give the Liqueur a strong anise flavour. The oils are added to sugar and other flavouring.
Tequila	0g	160	Pure tequila has no carb content. When it is drunk as Tequila sunrise or mixed with other liquids, the carb content of the added liquids will count.
Triple Sec	27g	206	Triple sec (meaning "Triple distilled") is a strong, sweet and colourless orange flavoured liqueur. It is made from the dried peel of oranges found on Curacao, an island in the Caribbean. Curacao, Grand Marnier and Cointreau are popular triple sec's. The above entries for Grand Marnier and Cointreau show how varieties can differ in carb content and sweetness.

Distilled Spirits are also highly concentrated, highly fermented drinks, where a greater proportion of the water has been removed during the fermentation process making a much denser (and more alcoholic drink). Here is an example of the making of rum:

How Rum is made: Rum is generally made from molasses (a syrupy byproduct of the processing of sugar cane or sugar beets into sugar). However, some rums are made from raw sugarcane juice. Rum is mostly made in the Caribbean and South America, and is usually aged in wooden barrels depending on the style. Like tequila, rum can be either aged or not. And, like tequila, the longer the rum ages in the charred oak barrels, the darker and stronger the taste. Light rums are sweet and do not have much flavour, while darker rums have aged longer and have much bolder taste.

Whisky & Gin are grain based (barley, oats or wheat) and generally contain sugar in addition. **Vodka** used to be distilled from potatoes but is more typically grain based today. **Rum** has sugar cane as its key ingredient.

With distilled spirits, therefore, you are risking all three conditions discussed in The Harcombe Diet. You can be feeding Candida with the sugar and grains, feeding Food Intolerance with grains (especially any with wheat) and affecting Hypoglycaemia with the carb and sugar content.

Distilled Spirits (1.5oz servings)	Carbs	Calories	
Brandy	0	98	Brandy is a spirit distilled from red wine, so it has a high concentration of anti-oxidants.
80 proof Gin, Vodka, Rum, Whisky	0	98	
90 proof Gin, Vodka, Rum, Whisky	0	111	
100 proof Gin, Vodka, Rum, Whisky	0	125	