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Food
& Wine
2021

A photograph of Iron Chef Masaharu Morimoto. He is smiling and looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a dark blue patterned blazer over a white shirt and a dark scarf with light-colored polka dots. He is holding a large, sharp chef's knife horizontally in front of him with both hands. The background is a red and white patterned wall.

**Iron Chef
Masaharu Morimoto
brings his sharp skills
to Wynwood**

25 Dishes to Try Now + Locally Made Vodka + Caviar 101

{KETO QUEEN}

Michelle Areces

If you thought Keto was just for shedding pounds, the Keto Kitchen 2GO founder says think again.

When Michelle Areces got Lyme disease over a decade ago, the last thing she could have predicted was how it would change her life for the better, how it would open doors business-wise and how it would help so many people living in Miami.

But that's exactly what Lyme disease did for Areces. Desperate to find something, anything that could help with her severe condition, Areces turned to a Keto diet in 2017. Within days, her health improved, so much so that not even her doctors could understand.

Once friends, family and neighbors learned of her story, they began to reach out to Areces, the then owner of a catering company, with their own malaises. "Before I knew it I was cooking all these Keto meals in my kitchen to deliver to people," she says. Almost by kismet — and word of mouth — Keto Kitchen 2Go started in 2018. Today, the food delivery service has served more than 500 people and created a menu with more than 500 meals.

CUT THE (FEAR OF) FAT

So what, exactly, does one eat when they are on a Keto diet? Ketosis, also known as Keto, is a fat-burning metabolic state reached via low-carb, high-fat dieting. But Areces says it goes far beyond just eating bacon, eggs and avocado for every meal. And many times people may think they are eating Keto, but in reality, they are not. And then there's the boredom that sets in. "Many people aren't cooks and if they can't compose a beautiful receipt or have time to get creative, it gets redundant."



Areces' Keto Kitchen 2Go menu changes weekly and you must order a week in advance. You have until Fridays to commit to the program, which lasts for four weeks. Each day a fresh meal made with organic ingredients and grass-fed meat is delivered. The program consists of three-to-four meals a day. There are no snacks, because each meal is meant to satiate.

Standouts include the chicken pesto risotto, mushroom pizza and lasagna, which Areces says "is to die for." And fan favorites include burgers and brownies (made with pure cacao, of course).

Areces has had to overcome the obstacle of explaining to others what Keto is actually for. "It was very challenging because the trend was solely about losing weight. But it's about getting healthy. But if you don't do it correctly, you have a lot of negative consequences. This is a lifestyle. You cannot cheat," she says.

WEIGHING OPTIONS

In a time when the "quarantine 15"

became very much a part of our 2020, Areces says she understands the immediate attraction to Keto. But it's the long-term effects she hopes will encourage people to stick around. And yes, she has seen incredible weight loss, including one client losing 45 pounds in three months. But beyond that, the same person suffered from horrible knee problems and arthritis and with Keto, those conditions stopped plaguing his life. "He became medicine-free, his cholesterol went down and he no longer needed a knee brace or a cane to get around."

Some nutritionists have even suggested that the Ketogenic diet can help stave off COVID-19.

Areces says, "As with any disease, it lives off of sugar, weakens the immune system and causes inflammation. Keto, however, starves microorganisms and boosts your immune system."

Something to keep in mind as you consider leaving all of 2020 behind.