

real life weight loss

The chef who SMELT herself thin!



Overweight Emily Bell, 33, cooked up a new way of eating



Weight then: 15st 8lb
Weight now: 9st 7lb

Dipping my spoon into the oozing chocolate dessert, I delivered my verdict to Mum: 'It's perfect!'

But that didn't stop me from tasting the next two versions of the pudding – just in case they were even better...

I was 16 and sitting in my mum and dad's restaurant, helping them taste recipes. Instead of going to parties and flirting with boys like the other girls my age, I stayed at home, surrounded by my best friends – cake, ice cream and chocolate.

Working in the restaurant with my parents and big sister, Joanna, now 37, I had 24-hour access to gorgeous homemade puddings and delicious pastries. Surrounded by this temptation every day, who wouldn't give in?

I'd struggled with my weight since I was nine, and had drifted from one diet to the next. Atkins, the GI diet, a low-fat diet... I'd

tried them all but failed. Bullies taunted me at school, yelling: 'Piggy pants!' and I shied away from making friends or boyfriends. I turned to the one thing that never let me down – food.

Deep down, I knew I had to lose weight. But I dreamt of being the head chef of my own restaurant. How could I diet when my life revolved round food?

By 19, and at only 5ft 4in tall, I'd hit 13 stone. I hid my size-18 frame under frumpy black clothes, but just walking upstairs left me gasping for breath.

Then I set up my own business with Joanna, catering for private functions and parties. But the qualities that made me successful as a chef were ruining my figure.

I'd skip breakfast but sip a few full-fat lattes in the morning. Then I'd spend my day spooning into sauces

or eating chunks of fresh bread. Back home I'd feast on a huge plate of pasta or curry and go to bed feeling bloated. I was addicted to food and I was miserable.

At 27 I was a successful head chef – and a size 20.

Buying clothes was awful. I had to shop in plus-size stores, where everything looked dowdy.

Then, this May, my size-20 clothes started pinching me. 'I need the next size up,' I thought, horrified. At 15st 8lb, it was the wake-up call I needed.

'I wish I could lose weight,' I finally admitted to Joanna.

Trawling the internet, I came across the Exante Diet, which combines counselling with a meal replacement plan. One-to-one support and a plan I could fit around my work schedule sounded ideal.

There was just one problem – my job. How would I taste my dishes?

But as the aroma of my kitchen drifted towards me,

I had an idea – why not turn these powerful smells to my advantage?

So I started sniffing my dishes instead of tasting them.

And to my delight, my sense of smell was sharp enough to know just what ingredient was missing.

Helped by my new technique, after just a week on the plan I'd lost a whopping eight pounds. Inspired, I was soon dropping dress sizes.

Seeing the weight fall off was such a great motivator that I wasn't tempted to dip a spoon into my dishes any more.

Just four months on, I hit my longed-for target – 10 stone.

Since then, I've started to swim regularly and have dropped to 9st 7lb and a svelte size 8.

I've been held back by my size for so long that I'm determined to live life to the full. I love showing off my figure in trendy clothes and, best of all, I haven't had to give up my passion for cooking.

Now all I need is a dishy man!

DIET BEFORE

Breakfast Two or three full-fat lattes
Lunch Sausage, cheese or bread
Dinner Chicken Kiev or baked pasta

DIET AFTER

Breakfast Fat-free yoghurt with fruit compote
Lunch Salad with chicken or ham
Dinner Baked salmon with low-fat cream cheese and green vegetables



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● www.exantediet.com