

NEXTADVISOR BLOG

Like 0

Tweet

Testing Jenny Craig in the Real World: How Does the Diet Do?

by Jocelyn Baird January 22, 2015

Updated: Dec. 1, 2015



Every year for the past five years, NextAdvisor.com has performed a [blind taste test](#) of our top-rated diet delivery services to determine which one has the best-tasting food. [Jenny Craig](#) took the No. 1 spot in our 2015 Diet Taste Test. Although taste is certainly one of the most important

components of a successful diet, there are other factors that go into choosing whether a diet service is right for you. We decided to test out Jenny Craig for a whole week to see whether the food lived up to its taste test ranking in the "real world." As our resident diet expert, I signed up for an account, ordered one week of food and followed the program. What was my verdict?

Signing up and meeting my consultant

Jenny Craig offers two options to its clients: [Jenny Craig All Access](#) and [Jenny Craig As You Go](#). The All Access is designed for those who are committed to a long-term weight loss plan and intend to stick with the program for months, if not years. The cost for this option is \$19/month, plus a \$99 enrollment fee, and you must sign a service agreement (though you can cancel anytime). It offers unlimited consultations and in-depth support. As a bonus, members who stick with the plan for 12 months will be able to renew afterward for just \$49/year. Jenny Craig offers support for those with weight to lose, as well as those who want to maintain their weight, so the design of All Access is to provide an incentive for those who stick with the program for the long-term. As You Go is a month-to-month plan designed for those who only want to diet for one month or two. You will get one consultation per week with an As You Go plan. The monthly cost is a bit higher with this option — \$39/month — but there is no enrollment fee or service agreement.

Both plan options let you choose how you want to interact with your Jenny consultant. You can visit a Jenny Craig center to meet with a consultant face-to-face and purchase food, or you can receive support over the phone and order your food online to be delivered via FedEx. Deciding which plan is best for you will depend on your personal weight loss goals. It might be prudent, if you're unsure, to start with As You Go pricing and sign up for an All Access membership once you are sure that you want to make a commitment to Jenny Craig for the long haul. Either way, you will have to pay the monthly membership fee in addition to the cost of the food you buy.

Join Now & lose 10 lbs in 8 weeks or your monthly fees back!	Join Now & Pay As You Go
✓ \$19/month**	✓ \$39/month**
✓ \$99 Enrollment Fee	✓ No Enrollment Fee
✓ Unlimited Personal Consultations	✓ One Personal Consultation/Week
JOIN NOW »	JOIN NOW »

Jenny Craig pricing options

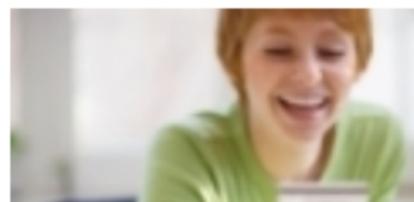
Because I was only intending to test the service for one week, I opted to pay the As You Go pricing and take advantage of Jenny Anywhere to schedule my weekly consultation over the phone. As a rail commuter, the ability to take the phone call during my evening commute rather than traveling to a center was quite convenient.

After you pay for your membership, someone will reach out to you by phone to schedule your first consultation. This initial consultation is also offered for free to those who are on the fence about joining, so you can always make a call and talk to a consultant (or visit a center and speak to someone in person).

Popular Posts



New: Earn a \$500 Bonus with the Capital One S Cash Rewards Credit



Top 7 Credit Card Offers for Those With Excellent



Pay No Credit Card Interest Until 2020



Top 7 Cards for Less-Than-Perfect Credit



Top 3 Low APR Credit Cards

Categories

Select Category

Subscribe to Our Newsletter

you can always make a call and talk to a consultant (or visit a center and speak to someone in person) before forking over your money. Your consultant will urge you to order food for two to three weeks at a time, which I avoided by ordering food myself online for one week before scheduling my consultation. If you'd like to test the food before committing to several weeks at a time, you can order the three-day sample kit — which sends three breakfasts, lunches and dinners as well as snacks to give you a taste.

Unfortunately, I ended up having to reschedule my first consultation because I didn't receive all of the materials I should have when I signed up. This was a little frustrating, but my consultant was kind enough to email me PDF versions of the membership guidebook and meal planning menu as well as order them to be delivered to me in person.

Eating the food



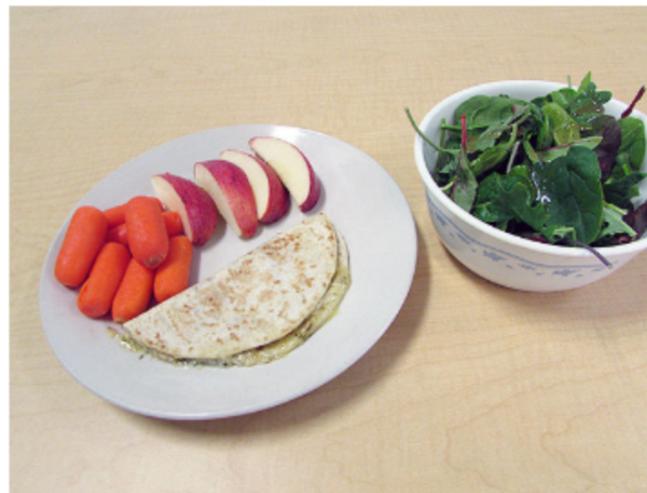
Breakfast: Florentine breakfast pizzas, milk and fruit

I placed my order for food one week and a half in advance for when I wanted to start Jenny Craig. Ideally, you want to begin a diet program right away, which is probably where visiting a center would come in handy. I was pleased to discover that, unlike delivery services such as [bistroMD](#) or [Diet-to-Go](#) which send you a set amount of meals every week, Jenny Craig allows a la cart purchases. You can buy individual items, as well as place an order for one full week (or more) of food by choosing from one of several preplanned menus. It's easy to order the food on your own, however, your consultant will push for you to place the order through them by using a special order form that they help you

complete.

One of the benefits for placing an order through your consultant rather than on your own is the ability to know ahead of time if an item is out of stock. For example, when I ordered Jenny Craig's "Week One" menu, it was supposed to come with a pepperoni pizza entree. My food delivery arrived with a note that it had been out of stock and swapped for the margarita pizza instead. If you order through a consultant, he or she will be able to let you decide what item you'd like to substitute if something you want isn't available.

In addition to the food that Jenny Craig sends to you, much of it frozen entrees and prepackaged, shelf-stable snack items, you will be required to purchase supplemental food from the grocery store. This adds to the overall cost of [dieting with Jenny Craig](#), something that is good to keep in mind. My trip to the grocery store to pick up the fruit, vegetable, dairy and other items (such as almonds for my "healthy fat" requirement) cost me \$55. When added to the \$140 I paid for my Jenny food, the total for a single week on the Jenny Craig diet topped \$200. Not exactly cheap! It is good to keep in mind that Silicon Valley prices are on the expensive side, so depending on where you live, you might spend less. I also didn't use up all of the supplemental food I purchased, so likely the cost for future weeks would roll over somewhat.



Lunch: Baja-style chicken quesadilla, salad, vegetable & fruit

Each day is structured with three meals and three snacks. It was a bit confusing at first, because I was given a calendared menu online to work from, but my consultant also provided a paper menu that I filled in to track what I was eating. There were a few discrepancies in these menus, which led to some confusion as to whether I was eating the right type and amounts of food. I chose to defer to the online menu when in doubt. Jenny Craig provides a handbook with tons of nutritional information, including lists of "free" foods which you are allowed to eat an unlimited amount of throughout the day — all non-starchy vegetables, such as beets, mushrooms, salad greens and even low-sodium vegetable juice. Although I never felt hungry with so much food, I also didn't always feel like the [Jenny Craig food](#) was satisfying on its own. The supplemental products, especially the fruit and dairy, were what I looked forward to eating the most.

But what about the support?

The area in which Jenny Craig sets itself apart from the competition is the level of support provided to clients. Not only do you get access to a whole array of online tools — including an in-depth tracker for what you eat as well as your activity and body measurements — but you are given a consultant who guides you through the process. After your initial phone conversation, your consultant will work with you to find a time once per week for a regular phone call. I found my consultant to be kind, courteous and encouraging. However, the consultant also seemed to be following a script during our conversations — one which she was hesitant to deviate from.

When I inquired during our first phone meeting about heavy exercise, she told me if I wanted to start exercising that was fine, but she couldn't talk to me about exercising until our third meeting. As someone with fitness and nutritional experience, this was somewhat frustrating. But one of the ways Jenny Craig works is to guide its clients step-by-step. The program is set up not to overwhelm those who have no experience with diet and exercise, and those who need structured guidelines to follow will benefit greatly from this kind of methodical, structured approach.

Track Today < JANUARY 15 >

Nice job! We've noticed you are tracking activity -- the more you move, the easier it becomes and the better you can feel.

Choose the area you want to track.

Food

- Breakfast
- Morning Snack
- Lunch
- Afternoon Snack
- Dinner
- Evening Snack

Body

- Activity
- Weight
- Measurements

Track Meal: Breakfast

Type the food or drink you consumed and select from the choices provided. Or select items from 'My Favorites' or 'Recent Items'

SEARCH My Favorites Recent Items

Add new food »

I ATE

FROM YOUR PLAN	Qty	Serving	Calories	Favorite	Remove
<input type="checkbox"/> Select All / None					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Florentine Breakfast Pizzas	1.0	1 svg	220	👍	✖
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fruit	1.0	1.0 serving(s)	60	👍	✖
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nonfat Milk	1.0	1.0 cup(s)	90	👍	✖

POWERED BY **esha** RESEARCH
©2013 ESHA Research, Inc.

SAVE

Online food, activity and measurements tracker

The online tools are great, especially the mobile app which allows you to see your daily menu as well as keep track of your food, activity and measurements on the go. The app is available for Android and iOS devices. Your dashboard on the [Jenny Craig website](#) can be customized to show different features, including recipes, in-depth analysis of your daily progress, an online journal and articles about healthy living. An online community message board lets you connect with other Jenny dieters, which can be great for those who can't make it to a center but want to feel like part of a team.

Was it easy to cancel?

Anytime you sign up for a service, it's good to know you can cancel if things don't work out. In order to cancel your Jenny Craig membership, you are required to call a toll-free number and speak with a representative. Although I did have to sit through a 10-minute hold where I listened to cheerful descriptions of various Jenny members' success stories, once I was connected to a representative the cancellation process was quick and painless. He inquired as to why I was canceling, but didn't push me to reconsider. When you cancel, you will be able to continue accessing your online tools and order food until your monthly membership is up. The representative will also check to see if you have any pending orders, in case you want to cancel those as well.

Does Jenny Craig deserve to be at the top?

My experience with Jenny Craig was for the most part a positive one. Although I personally don't need the level of structured support the program offers, I appreciated the dedication of my consultant and the extensive tools at my fingertips. The food itself wasn't bad, but the strength of the diet, for me, came from

the supplementary food I added to fulfill each meal requirement. My one concern is the lack of a strong fitness component, but Jenny Craig does urge clients to be active and provides a way to track that activity. The focus is on the food and developing healthy eating habits within a supportive framework. If you are looking for a program that is more hands-off, this might not be the best choice for you. Although the monthly membership on top of the cost of food does drag the cost up, it could be a worthwhile price for someone who is looking for a diet service that provides the total package.

If you're interested in trying it out for yourself, [visit Jenny Craig's website](#) to learn how, or read our full [Jenny Craig review](#) to learn more about the best-tasting diet service.

Related Posts



[3 Diet Delivery Services That Provide Extra Support](#)



[Diet Delivery Services That Let You Snack](#)



[4 Tips to Help You Stick to Your Diet During the Hol...](#)



[Which Diet Delivery Services Cater to Those with Dia...](#)