

Paleolithic diet: An overview

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Abstract

The Paleo diet is the healthiest way to eat because it is the only nutritional approach that works with genetics to help to stay lean, strong and energetic. Research in biology, biochemistry, ophthalmology, dermatology and many other disciplines indicate that our modern diet, is full of refined foods, trans fats and sugar, which are the roots of degenerative diseases such as obesity, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, depression and infertility. The paleo diet is based on emulating the diet of our hunter-gatherer ancestors. It includes whole, unprocessed foods that resemble look like in nature. Our ancestors were genetically the same as modern humans. They thrived eating such foods and were free of diseases like obesity, diabetes and heart disease. Several studies suggest that this diet can lead to significant weight loss (without calorie counting) and major improvements in health.

Keywords: paleolithic diet, disease prevention, weight reduction

Introduction

The Paleolithic diet is a weight loss plan based upon the premise of consuming only those foods available during the Paleolithic era (also known as the Stone Age). People at this time were hunter-gatherers, meaning that all animals were hunted and plants were gathered from nature. There was no domestication of animals or planting of crops for food. Milk products were also not consumed, except during the breastfeeding of infants. Although the diet of people in the Paleolithic Era varied by geographic region and availability of foods, most Paleolithic diets would have contained mostly meats, fruits, nuts, and vegetables with very little (or no) cereals, grains, or milk products. The Paleolithic diet (also called the paleo diet, caveman diet or stone-age diet) is based mainly on foods presumed to have been available to Paleolithic humans. Wide variability exists in the way the diet is interpreted. However, the diet typically includes vegetables, fruits, nuts, roots, meat, and organ meats while excluding foods such as dairy products, grains, sugar, legumes, processed oils, salt, and alcohol or coffee. The diet is based on avoiding not just modern processed foods, but rather the foods that humans began eating after the Neolithic Revolution when humans transitioned from hunter-gatherer lifestyles to settled agriculture. The ideas behind the diet can be traced to Walter Voegtlin, and have been popularized more recently in the best-selling books of Loren Cordain.

In the original description of the paleo diet in Cordain's 2002 book, he advocated eating as much like Paleolithic people as possible, which meant:

- 55% of daily calories from seafood and lean meat, evenly divided

- 15% of daily calories from each of fruits, vegetables, and nuts and seeds
- no dairy, almost no grains (which Cordain described as "starvation food" for Paleolithic people), no added salt, no added sugar

Paleolithic diet food for Indian non-vegetarian foods

- Meat and Fish
 - Beef
- Buffalo/Bison
- Eggs
- Lamb
- Pork
- Turkey
- Wild Game
- Bass
- Clams

Paleolithic diet for Indian vegetarian food list

- Almonds
- Avocado
- Broccoli
- Eggs
- Hemp Seed
- Pistachios
- Potatoes
- Spinach
- Spirulina
- Walnuts

Paleolithic diet food list for Indians

Foods should be excluded	Foods should be included
<p>Sugar and High Fructose Corn Syrup: Soft drinks, fruit juices, table sugar, candy, pastries, ice cream and many others.</p> <p>Grains: Includes breads and pastas, wheat, spelt, rye, barley, etc.</p> <p>Legumes: Beans, lentils and many more.</p> <p>Dairy: Avoid most dairy, especially low-fat (some versions of paleo do include full-fat dairy like butter and cheese).</p> <p>Vegetable Oils: Soybean oil, sunflower oil, cottonseed oil, corn oil, grape seed oil, safflower oil and others.</p> <p>Trans Fats: Found in margarine and various processed foods. Usually referred to as “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated” oils.</p> <p>Artificial Sweeteners: Aspartame, Sucralose, Cyclamates, Saccharin, Acesulfame Potassium. Use natural sweeteners instead.</p> <p>Highly Processed Foods: Everything labelled “diet” or “low-fat” or has many weird ingredients. Includes artificial meal replacements.</p>	<p>Meats: Beef, lamb, chicken, turkey, pork and others.</p> <p>Fish and Seafood: Salmon, trout, haddock, shrimp, shellfish, etc. Choose wild-caught if you can.</p> <p>Eggs: Choose free-range, pastured or omega-3 enriched eggs.</p> <p>Vegetables: Broccoli, kale, peppers, onions, carrots, tomatoes, etc.</p> <p>Fruits: Apples, bananas, oranges, pears, avocados, strawberries, blueberries and more.</p> <p>Tubers: Potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, turnips, etc.</p> <p>Nuts and Seeds: Almonds, macadamia nuts, walnuts, hazelnuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds and more.</p> <p>Healthy Fats and Oils: Lard, tallow, coconut oil, olive oil, avocado oil and others.</p> <p>Salt and Spices: Sea salt, himalayan salt, garlic, turmeric, rosemary, etc.</p>

Benefits of Eating Paleolithic diet

Health benefits

- 1. Balances Blood Glucose Levels:** Avoiding refined sugar helps to avoid spikes in your blood glucose levels, and also avoids feeling of fatigue you get from sugar crashes.
- 2. Leaner Muscles:** Because this diet plan relies heavily on meat a fair amount of protein to feed your muscles. This helps to promote a leaner physique, and can even help with muscle growth. When consider the physique of Stone Age man they didn't really have a lot of excess baggage in the form of a lot of fat and underdeveloped muscles. They were lean, mean, sabre tooth tiger battling machines, and this sort of efficient physique still helps out in our modern world. With a leaner body structure will be able to better handle life's challenges, including the stresses that occur with a busy 21st century lifestyle.
- 3. Avoid Wheat and Gluten:** There is plenty of evidence that suggests that gluten is problematic for the digestive system and for weight gain, even for those that don't have Celiac disease, or do not have a sensitivity to gluten
- 4. Keeps You Feeling Fuller Longer:** Most diets keep in a constant state of hunger, but with a Paleo diet focused on feeling full and feeling good, which means that it's easier to follow, and has lower instances of diet crashes and cheating because you're encouraged to eat when you feel hungry. It also contains a fair amount of healthy fats, helping you keep that full feeling and avoid food cravings.
- 5. No Counting Required:** Unlike a diet that has you watching points, or counting how many carbs you have in a day, the Paleo diet is intrinsically simple and easy to follow. The lack of rules and limitations on how much can have each day makes it fun and easy to stick to the plan. By not having to limit yourself you don't get your brain revolting against you or rejecting the plan resulting in self-sabotage. You're able to simply eat like a human should eat, and how we did eat before things got so complicated.
- 6. Could Prevent Diseases:** By following a Paleo diet, automatically eating more anti-inflammatory foods and cutting out a lot of foods that are known to cause inflammation. Eating more foods that contain antioxidants and phytonutrients which are always making the news because of scientific evidence that helping to ward off or battle back cancer, as well as prevent heart disease.
- 7. Avoids Processed Foods:** When you cut out processed foods you're cutting out a lot of synthetic chemicals that have just come about in the last century and that the body just hasn't adapted to yet. You may be startled by just how many foods get the no-go because of the processing involved, and how much you used to rely on these foods on a day to day basis. You may have a hard time giving up dairy products, or products that come out of boxes. There may be a period of both physical and psychological adjustment as you reach toward a more natural way of living, and you notice just how embedded you've become in modern conveniences.
- 8. Prevention of auto-immune diseases and infections:** Paleo diet can prevent immune diseases and infections like multiple sclerosis, systemic lupus and other auto-immune conditions that can greatly affect the quality of life. More likely to eat a clean diet without additives, preservatives, or chemicals. There are anti-inflammatory benefits from the plant nutrients in fruits, vegetables, oils, nuts, and seeds.
- 9. Gives You More Energy:** Combine Paleo-approved foods in the right way, it is easy to get well balanced meal with a protein, carb and vegetable from all-natural sources. This is the way to feel more energized and without having to resort to energy drinks, caffeinated beverages to get through the day.
- 10. Provides Detoxing Effects:** By stopping the intake of a lot of things that bring you down: trans fats, MSG, caffeine, refined sugar, gluten, and more, you're giving your body a rest. By getting more antioxidants from the fruit you'll be eating, and more phytonutrients and fiber from the vegetables you'll be eating you'll be purging your body of built-up waste and accumulation. Overall this provides a detoxifying effect to the body, and many Paleo followers report feeling lighter and more clear headed after several weeks. The nice thing about it is that it doesn't involve going to extremes like fasting or drinking nothing but juice, You get to eat meals like normal so it's a very lazy detox.
- 11. Increases Your Intake of Fruits and Vegetables:** If you're like most Americans you struggle to meet your daily intake of fruits and veggies. This is not surprising since for most these are labeled as “health foods” and make it onto the dinner plate as an obligatory side dish to make a meal healthier. But with Paleo they are given more of a starring role along with meat so you're going to be relying on them more than you were previously. You'll be wiping out the bottom layer of the standard food pyramid and replacing it with meats and vegetables and healthy fats as your base layer, sprinkling in some fruits to keep your taste buds in the game.
- 12. Increases Your Intake of Healthy Fats:** Fats helps to feel fuller for a longer time, which reduces food cravings and helps to eat at meal time only. But if you feel hungry, eating of foods that are on the approved foods list only.
- 13. By doing nothing else** but switching over to a Paleo way of eating will notice that the weight just starts coming off. This is because in addition to eating a meal that is more natural, cutting out a lot of foods that are unnatural.
- 14. Helps You Sleep Better:** By cutting out the chemicals and additives in typical food sources that the body naturally gets tired at night. This is because the serotonin that brain releases as a signal that it's time to sleep is not overridden by other chemicals from food. When you start to feel sleep you should

sleep. You might find that you're getting tired earlier at night, and that you feel energized and ready to wake up earlier in the morning. This is your body getting in tune with the circadian rhythm

15. Obesity and obesity related health issues: Obesity which is perhaps the root cause of a number of health issues like heart disease, hypertension and Diabetes. According to a latest survey, the top 3 causes of death in adults are cardiovascular issues, stroke and cancer that can be prevented largely by controlling weight and quality of nutrition. With paleo diet practices, the risk of obesity and other health issues is negligible.

16. Maintenance of digestive processes: Because paleo diet is totally unprocessed, the risk of constipation, metabolic issues or digestive ailments is negligible. Never feel full or bloated after meals.

- **Paleo diet is preventive against neuro-degenerative diseases:** Paleo diet is known to protect against neuro-degenerative diseases like Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and age related dementia problems. The primary cause of most degenerative diseases is the alteration in blood supply to brain due to clogging of blood vessels. However, paleo diet is low in cholesterol and delays the development of age related thickening of blood vessels.

Disadvantages of paleo diet

- A lot of potentially healthy nutrients like Vitamin D and Calcium (richly supplied in dairy products) that are known to prevent diseases like osteoporosis, fractures and other bone issues are not a part of Paleo diet.
- As a rule, paleo diet deals with decreasing the consumption of meat to less than 3 times per week. Moreover, since a lot of legumes and beans are also not preferred sources of nutrition according to paleo diet. The chances are fair that the follower of diet may be deprived of a lot of essential proteins that may lead to weakness; loss of muscle mass and may eventually increase the propensity to develop infections.
- Paleo diet preaches significant intake of salt that is in conflict with the research studies conducted in most parts of the world. Although normal doses of salt are required to maintain metabolic rate and to modulate thyroid functioning but higher doses are directly related to cardiac illness and high blood pressure.

Over-cooking destroys most essential nutrients that greatly affect the quality of calories consumed. However, under-cooked, raw or medium rare are known to cause parasitic infestation in consumers that may lead to chronic health issues.

Negative Effects of the Paleo Diet

- It can get expensive.
- Don't eat any grains or dairy which can be good for health and energy.
- This diet can be difficult for vegetarians, especially since it excludes beans.
- Most athletes need between 3 to 6 grams of carbs per pound of their body weight, per day. This would be very hard to do with just fruits and vegetables.

Paleo Diet Alternatives

- Eat three meals a day.
- Include some protein at every meal and snack.
- Include foods with color at every meal or snack.
- Include some grains at every meal and snack, such as

cereal, whole grain bread, rice, or pasta.

- Be selective with some of the less healthy foods.

Conclusion

Many people worldwide, due to different way of eating food, have accepted the Paleo diet. The Paleolithic diet is also best for both the vegetarian and non-vegetarian group. People in the busy life cycle with the lazy life style but Paleo diet requires 100% commitment to changing the lifestyle and eating habits long term and there are many outside sources that can help with recipes and support groups. This diet is not for everyone, as it can isolate a person from eating out and having a social life. The diet itself can be very time consuming as food preparation takes a long time and many people do not have the time and energy to spend hours in the kitchen. Because this diet is so broad, it can be great for some people, and terrible for others. Use own judgment when looking into a strict eating program like the Paleo Diet.

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