



Paleolithic Diet

The Paleo (caveman, primal, stone age, or ancestral) diet includes foods that mimic the diet and food groups of our pre-agricultural, hunter-gatherer ancestors. The Paleolithic era lasted about 2.5 million years and ended 10,000 years ago with the advent of farming.

The proponents believe that humans' metabolisms are genetically adapted only to Paleolithic foods like meat, vegetables, fruits, berries, nuts and tubers (Zimmer, 2015). The critics believe that human organisms are more flexible and adaptable and that cavemen could also have eaten unprocessed dairy and grains (Turner & Thompson, 2013).

The human body may have difficulties metabolizing the modern, highly processed grains and dairy and adapting to the excess of food calories that have been correlated with the development of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic degenerative conditions (Greger, 2015).

POSSIBLE HEALTH BENEFITS

- Short-term improvements in metabolic syndrome: waist circumference, triglycerides, and blood pressure (Manhiemer, van Zuuren, Fedorowicz, & Pijl, 2015)
- Improvements in total cholesterol, insulin sensitivity, and weight loss (Boers, et al., 2014)
- Significant weight loss in obese patients with diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic conditions, sometimes short term (Young, 2014)
- A modified Paleo diet that included colorful vegetables, animal and plant protein, nuts, soy and rice milks, nutritional yeast, kelp, algae, gluten-free grains, and starchy vegetables demonstrated improvement in multiple sclerosis symptoms such as fatigue and helped with weight loss (Bisht, et al., 2013)
- Reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and acne vulgaris (Masharani, et al., 2015)

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PALEO DIET

- High protein intake from organic, pasture-raised, grass-fed animal products
 - ▶ Meat: Beef, lamb, mutton, pork, turkey, chicken, duck, wild game
 - ▶ Organs: liver, heart, kidneys, tongue, spleen, cartilage, bone marrow
 - ▶ Wild fish: salmon, mackerel, herring, anchovies, sardines
 - ▶ Eggs
- Moderate to high fat intake
 - ▶ Monounsaturated fats: olives, coconut, avocado
 - ▶ Omega-3 fatty acids: walnuts, flaxseeds, chia seeds, pumpkin seeds, wild fish
 - ▶ Saturated fats: ghee, butter, lard, tallow
- Lower glycemic index and lower carbohydrate intake
 - ▶ Leafy and crunchy vegetables: artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chile peppers, cucumber, eggplant, garlic, green onions, arugula, beet greens, collard greens, dandelion greens, kale
 - ▶ Starchy vegetables: yams, sweet potatoes, parsnips, winter squash, rutabaga, jicama, turnips
 - ▶ Fermented vegetables: kimchi, sauerkraut, pickles, curtido

EATING FOR HEALTH® STAPLE PALEO FOODS

Making meals and snacks using high-quality foods that are fresh, organic, local, seasonal, whole, and unprocessed can ensure optimal nourishment and taste.

- Animal protein
 - ▶ 2-4 servings/day
 - ▶ 3-4 oz of meat, fish, poultry, or 1 egg

PALEOLITHIC DIET

- Oils and fats
 - ▶ 2-3 servings/day
 - ▶ 1 Tbs butter or 2 Tbs nuts or seeds
- Vegetables
 - ▶ 6-9 servings/day
 - ▶ ½ cup cooked (starchy or crunchy)
 - ▶ 1 cup raw (leafy)
 - ▶ 1-2 Tbs sauerkraut or kimchi
- Booster foods
 - ▶ 2-4 servings/day
 - ▶ 1 tsp-1 Tbs parsley or cilantro
 - ▶ 1 tsp seaweed
- Fruits and berries
 - ▶ 3-4 servings/day
 - ▶ ½ cup or one medium piece
 - ▶ ⅓ cup dried fruit
- Beverages
 - ▶ 7-8 servings/day
 - ▶ 8 oz water, herbal tea, or bone broth

FOODS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PALEO DIET

- Whole and refined grains and flours
- Pasteurized dairy products
- Commercial and processed meat, poultry, fish, and eggs
- Legumes: beans and peanuts
- Refined sugars
- Packaged and processed food products
- Commercial salt
- Refined vegetable oils
- Artificial flavorings and colors
- Commercial beverages: alcohol, soda, energy drinks, coffee

NUTRITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Common misinterpretations of the Paleo diet may include eating mostly commercial and processed animal foods and not enough vegetables and pasture-raised animal products. If a Paleo diet contains too many poor-quality foods and beverages, or if it is nutritionally imbalanced, it may not deliver enough important nutrients and may contribute to the development of nutritional deficiencies. This can lead to:

- Deficiencies in calcium, vitamin D, and fiber (Lowe, 2014)
- Osteoporosis due to limited intake of calcium and other nutrients (Zuk, 2015)
- Low potassium and high sodium intake associated with high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney stones and stroke (Cordain, 2015)
- Excessive acidity
 - ▶ A lifetime of excessive dietary acid may lead to bone and muscle loss, high blood pressure, and higher risk for kidney stones and asthma (Burke, 2013; Cordain, 2015)

Proper food choices provide a strong, life-long nutritional foundation. They help protect us from the health challenges we encounter and allow us to live up to our potential as dynamic, creative human beings. The key is that the foods are whole, seasonal, local, fresh and organic whenever possible to ensure optimal nutrition. Creating a Paleo diet food plan around high-quality foods and beverages can ensure adequate nourishment.

PALEOLITHIC DIET

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