

The Paleo Diet: An Introduction

Exactly what is the paleo diet? The paleo approach takes an age-old dietary regimen and adapts it to our modern-day lifestyle. This diet is simple, sustainable, but most importantly will help you achieve your best physical and mental potential.

From a dietary perspective, the paleo diet is low-carb, gluten-free, and provides a healthy amount of protein and fat. Simple starches and sugars are ubiquitous in the typical American diet that relies heavily on processed foods. The paleo diet “steps back in time” by removing grains and sugars and replacing them with the nutritionally-dense, simple foods like vegetables, fruits, free-range meat, and healthy fats that our ancestors ate. Replacing starches, preservatives, and unpronounceable ingredient names with real food can have a profound effect on the body. Besides weight loss, blood sugar remains more stable, and your body will appreciate the increase in phytonutrients; many people find that the paleo diet can reduce acne, dandruff, digestive problems, and moodiness. The increase in healthy fats and naturally-derived vitamins will help your hair and skin glow.

So How Does it Work?

There are four cornerstones to the paleo lifestyle:

- **Quality Ingredients & Great Flavor:** Grass-fed organic meats and wild seafood taste great and are full of beneficial Omega-3s. Organic, local fruit and vegetables have richer flavors and better textures.
- **Antioxidant and Nutrient Boost** from increased consumption of fruits, nuts, seeds, oils, and vegetables. Increased fiber intake and reduction of simple carbs means you'll feel fuller between meals and avoid the “afternoon crash.”
- **Simple and Easy Options:** Paleo doesn't have to be complicated. Flavorful, satisfying meals can be prepared within minutes.
- **Sustainable:** Bringing ingredients from organic farms straight to your table is better for the environment, and helps the local economy..

What Does The Term Paleo Mean?

“Paleo” is short for the paleolithic age, considered to be the dawn of humanity. Human anatomy as we know it today first appeared approximately 40,000 years ago. Since then, the evolution of our tools and technologies has continued at a rapid pace, leading to a drastically different lifestyle than that of our distant ancestors. On the other hand, 40,000 years is the blink of an eye in evolutionary terms; and our physiology remains more or less unchanged.

The Paleo diet uses this principle to advocate for a return to the foods available to humanity before any traces of civilization appeared. For most of our existence, grains, cereals, legumes, refined sugar, vegetable oils, and dairy were not widely available. The Paleo diet reasons that because these foods were not eaten, our bodies did not evolve ways to effectively process

them. Because our digestive systems have not caught up to our modern way of life, many of these foods could be triggering inflammation, wreaking havoc with blood sugar levels, and leaving us deficient of essential vitamin and nutrient needs.

“Paleo” is a low-carb, high-fat diet that provides a moderate amount of protein and is inherently gluten-free. Its validity and long-term effects are still being debated and studied. Peer-reviewed studies have, however, proven that cutting out highly refined carbohydrates can help with weight loss and stabilization of blood sugar.

Meat, vegetables, fruits, and some nuts form the pillars of this diet. Since most Americans do not hunt their own game, Paleo adherents are encouraged to buy grass-fed and wild-caught meat, poultry, and fish whenever possible. The nutritional profile of grass-fed beef, for example, is slightly different than that of a corn-fed animal: it is slightly lower in calories, contains more Omega-3 fatty acids, and is higher in vitamin content. Emphasis is also placed on dramatically lowering salt intake and avoiding processed materials that do not resemble anything found in nature, like aspartame.

For those willing to put in the work that comes with cooking from scratch, there are now Paleo versions of many beloved “forbidden” dishes. For example, do you love pasta? Spaghetti Squash is a great place to start.

<p>Paleo foods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Grass-fed meat● Fish/seafood● Tallow, avocado/flaxseed/coconut oil● Eggs, preferably local and free-range● Vegetables, preferably fresh and organic● Small amounts of fruit● Nuts and seeds, except peanuts	<p>Not Paleo:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Grains, cereals, and potatoes● Dairy● Refined sugar● Legumes (beans, lentils)● Excess salt● Vegetable oils
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