

# The Paleo Diet

**Know also as:** *The Stone Age diet; Primal Diet; Hunter-gather diet; Ancestral Diet*

**Type of diet:** *Lifestyle / Organic / Food Group Avoidance / Restrictive*

**Main Benefits:** *Clean eating/ A return to nature*

**Cost:** *Can be high in monetary and time terms*

**Difficulty:** *Can be high due to limited choice*

**Involves Exercise:** *Optional but suggested*

## What the Advocates Pitch

Paleo guidelines follow the premise of people living an ancient lifestyle in modern times. It is based on a return to the fruits, vegetables, meat, seafood and nuts that our Palaeolithic ancestors survived on, in other words “what a caveman would eat”. This way of eating (woe) is about returning to healthier practices before the agrarian age of agriculture and the raising of livestock took place. It involves the removal of all heavily processed, highly refined food of modern times. Going “Paleo” is for anyone interested in good health and eating nutrient-dense, real food that provides the body with the right kind of fuel to perform optimally. It is a way to lose weight and prevent disease without dieting or exercising.

Loren Cordin, author of *The Paleo Diet* and the founder of the Paleo movement, says that “by following these nutritional guidelines, we put our diet more in line with the evolutionary pressures that shaped our current genetics, which in turn positively influences health and well being”.

## Perceived Benefits of this Diet

There is no calorie counting for those with goals of weight loss as there is no limit to the amount of food eaten from the permissible food items. Rather than count calories, going Paleo encourages the eating of whole, natural foods until you have comfortably sated your hunger, only eating when you are hungry. Dietician Alexandra Caspero explains that the “benefit of eating less-processed, nutrient-dense foods is that the calories in them aren’t going to be that high” and will improve satiation as calorie for calorie, paleo food is more filling.

However this woe is more than just a “weight loss” regime and advocates maintain that it has many additional health benefits. Several major diseases - including cancer, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis and Alzheimer's - have been linked to chronic inflammation. With a Paleo diet however, the four major inflammation culprits (dairy, gluten, sugar, and alcohol) are eliminated. Also the healthy ratio of saturated-to-unsaturated fatty acids, increased vitamin and nutrient consumption and the eating of the optimal balance of calories suggested by research carried out by Emory University (protein at 35%, fat at 35% and carbohydrates at 30%) make for a more healthy way of eating. Too, when coupled with weight lifting and exercise, the relatively high consumption of animal protein fuels muscle mass gain.

## Food that is a part of this woe and food that is not

This way of eating is all about consuming foods straight from Mother Nature - those we would have hunted or gathered if we lived during the Palaeolithic era. Foods like meats, fish, eggs, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, herbs, spices, and oils are all permitted. Cooking with healthy fats and the right kind of carbs while eating organic is best. Omitting dairy is preferred but if you do take in small amounts of dairy, it's called Primal rather than Paleo. Honey (although not strictly given the tick) is preferred to table sugar or artificial sweeteners. An often overlooked piece of the diet is the use of organ meats, bone broth and other collagen sources, along with a high fat intake.

Of late the paleo community has evolved to now accept several different "versions" of the diet as being acceptable. This woe is looked on as not necessarily being a strict set of rules that must be followed but a template on which to base your diet. Many modern foods that science has shown to be healthy, including quality bacon from pasture raised pigs, grass-fed butter and even some non-gluten grains like rice have been accepted by some.

## The Downside and the Reality's

As a general rule, anything that comes in a box, jar, or bag should be avoided. This means avoiding processed foods, sugar, soft drinks, most dairy products, artificial sweeteners, vegetable oils, margarine, trans-fats and added salt. Additionally, items that are considered more main stream, such as all grains, legumes (including peanuts, beans, lentils and soybeans) potatoes, and their derivatives, such as pasta, fries, and cereals are also excluded. Alcohol is generally frowned upon too. Because rice is banned - sushi is also out. No more corn means no more Mexican and as there are no beans allowed - no coffee either!

For those who have tried this way of eating, it is reported to be "super time-consuming". This lifestyle is not for those addicted to grab-and-go foods, as fast food is not an option for people sticking strictly to the plan. There is also a lot of meal prep involved for at home dining, while if out, it can be difficult to choose from the menu with the limited foods allowed. Most people go into Paleo well aware that their grocery bills will increase at least a little, since organic fruits and vegetables, and grass-fed, antibiotic-free meats typically cost more.

## Adopting this Type of Eating

Some adoptees choose to take on a moderate Paleo diet by having Paleo "days" or assume a paleo diet at home but not strictly when eating outside of the home. As for exercise - there is no one-size-fits-all fitness regimen, particular to the Paleo lifestyle, but it does recommend incorporating movement into parts of your everyday life. It suggests taking an active approach by "moving" more through walking, cycling, swimming etc rather than just a periodic gym visit.

## What does the Scientific Research Say

At this stage the long-term health effects of eating a Paleo diet remain unclear and unproven but researchers said, despite the weight loss on a Paleo diet, they were cautious about advocating any diet that cuts out whole food groups. Some stress that just because our ancestors did not have modern diseases, this cannot only be put down to the type of food eaten. Still there are an increasing number of scientific research papers that view this diet in a positive light.

Australian research has found it to be more effective for weight loss than following the recommended Australian dietary guide, while an American study showed that a paleo-type diet, with unlimited eggs and no strict caloric limit, was safe and lead to better blood lipids, more weight loss, and greater calorie reduction than an official AHA heart-healthy diet. A small Diabetic research study, found that the diet improved blood sugar when compared to a Mediterranean one, and a further study showed that with a combination of moderately increased exercise and a moderate paleo diet, massive improvements in diabetic markers were observed.

Conversely the University of Melbourne issued a warning that following a low-carbohydrate, high-fat diet for just eight weeks can lead to rapid weight gain and health complications. Also, significantly, the Paleo diet markedly reduces the calcium intake relative to standard health guidelines because it excludes all dairy products. This could have a negative impact on bone strength, particularly in older people.

## Where to get more information

**Books:** Going Paleo by Peter Evans; The Paleo Diet by Loren Cordain; The Primal Blueprint by Mark Sisson;

**Facebook:** The Paleo Diet; The Paleo Way Tribe; Paleo Diet Lifestyle;

**Well Know Advocates:** Pete Evans; Jack Osbourne; Uma Thurman; Kobe Bryant; Matthew McConaughey

**Websites:** <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/paleo-diet-meal-plan-and-menu> ; <https://thepaleodiet.com/dr-loren-cordain/> ; <https://ultimatepaleoguide.com> ;

## References for this Guide:

<http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20786451,00.html>

<http://www.womenshealthmag.com/food/going-paleo>

<https://blog.paleohacks.com/paleo-diet-benefits/>

<https://www.marksdailyapple.com/is-the-paleo-diet-supported-by-scientific-research/>

[https://m.box.com/shared\\_item/https%3A%2F%2Fapp.box.com%2Fs%2F7zrxstxstzc6tdeizosmgcxrd4t07epb](https://m.box.com/shared_item/https%3A%2F%2Fapp.box.com%2Fs%2F7zrxstxstzc6tdeizosmgcxrd4t07epb)

<http://thenewdaily.com.au/life/wellbeing/2016/05/27/paleo-diet-better-thought/>

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/02/160218114753.htm>