

HUNTER GATHERER

by JIA SINGH

Conscious eaters, nutritionists and fitness professionals across the globe are touting the paleo diet as the biggest food trend. Paleo enthusiasts swear by its health claims of longevity, living disease free, improved immunity and weight loss. What is the truth behind these claims? Critics say that the predominantly protein diet devoid of much fiber can lead to health problems in the future. Is it really good for you?

Although it has been popular from the 1930s, Professor Loren Cordain has researched the Stone Age diet, its many implications, and published his findings in recent times. Cordain's students Mark Sisson (author of *The Primal Blueprint*) and Robb Wolf (author of *The Paleo Solution*) have published books, blogs, and research papers. They have a global fan following that includes A-list celebrities like Jessica Biel and Matthew McConaughey as well as elite athletes and nutritionists. The Paleo or Stone Age diet was popularized in 1975 by gastroenterologist Dr. Walter Voegtlin, who argued that humans were no different from carnivorous animals. Therefore, ancient man followed a diet that was rich in fats and protein, with carbohydrates kept to a minimum. Primal eaters believe that eating this way can ward off chronic conditions such as diabetes, obesity and heart ailments.

Nutritionist Laurie Brodsky says that the paleo diet is an ancestral way of eating that focuses on fish, seafood, lean meat, poultry, vegetables and a small quantity of nuts and fruit (note: low sugar/seasonal fruit). A typical day on the Paleolithic diet: eggs for breakfast, fruit and nuts mid-morning, salad for lunch and a salad and grilled fish/steak for dinner. Foods that are excluded from this plan include packaged foods, grains, legumes, milk, dairy products and of course, soy and its by products. Staying away from processed foods definitely makes for healthier choices but not everyone is happy about giving up on the milk in their daily cereal and coffee.

HEALTH CLAIMS

The Paleolithic diet, which seems to be the most popular diet trend at the moment, is a throwback to the Paleolithic era. Supporters of the paleo diet believe that you should avoid all processed fats and oils such as vegetable oil, soybean oil, sunflower oil and margarine. This is because they are not whole foods and have been shown to contribute to heart disease. However, they do

approve of several types of oil including flaxseed, walnut, macadamia, avocado, olive and coconut. Most sugar is also limited on this primal eating plan where only small amounts of berries and low GI fruits contribute toward the daily sugar quota.

Unlike other calorie-controlled diets, the paleo diet doesn't have you counting calories. It's based on the premise that modeling a diet around what our ancestors used to eat allows us to feel lighter and live longer, free of disease.

The paleo diet goes hand in hand with exercise. Crossfitters around the globe are embracing this primal way of eating to fuel their daily workout sessions. Crossfit and other functional workouts rely mostly on your body weight and often mimic movements in your daily routine (read: squatting, pushing, and lifting objects). Research suggests that a paleo diet followed in conjunction with body weight exercises and high intensity interval training delivers results, can slow ageing and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

What's the downside to this? Most versions of the diet eliminate milk and dairy products, an affordable and widely available source of calcium and vitamin D. The diet shuns all grains including oats, quinoa, and brown rice that are great sources of fiber, vitamins and minerals. Finally, the diet can be expensive (organic foods are more expensive) and inconvenient due to the limitation of food choices. It can also make going out a stressful affair, as you need to plan ahead and prepare food in advance.

VERDICT

Indians, by and large eat a diet that is extremely grain dependent with either rice or bread (rotis) for most meals. Unlike the modern western dietary habits- their starchy grains amount to more than half of the calories on the plate with just a smattering of vegetables and a bowl of lentils or legumes. Although avoiding grains, added salts, and sugars and processed food can't possibly be bad for you, adapting to the paleo diet to suit Indian meals is extremely hard. Those unwilling to join the paleo bandwagon worry about its dearth of carbohydrates, its cost and impracticality. Also, how good it is for reversing chronic diseases is still unproven. That being said, it can be sustained on a long-term basis if you include leafy greens and berries into your daily diet and limit the overconsumption of fatty cuts of meat. ❏

PALEO Chia Pudding

by JIA SINGH

INGREDIENTS

1/4 CUP CHIA SEEDS

+ 1 CUP ORGANIC ALMOND MILK

+ 1/2 TABLESPOON RAW HONEY OR STEVIA

PREPARATION

MIX chia seeds, almond milk and honey/stevia/agave together in a glass jar or bowl. Let it set in refrigerator overnight.

Note: Chia tends to absorb liquid and go up to twice its size. It gets the consistency of tapioca.

REMOVE it from the fridge, and make sure your pudding looks thick. Top with strawberries or low GI fruits and some almond slivers.

EAT CHILLED.

ENJOY!



PALEO GRILLED PEACHES

INGREDIENTS

3 MEDIUM RIPE PEACHES, CUT IN HALF WITH PIT REMOVED

+ 1 TSP. VANILLA ESSENCE

+ 1 CAN COCONUT MILK, REFRIGERATED

+ 1/4 CUP CHOPPED WALNUTS

+ CINNAMON (TO TASTE)

+ STEVIA (TO TASTE)

PREPARATION

PLACE peaches on the grill with the cut side down first. Grill on medium-low heat until soft, about 3-5 minutes on each side.

WHIP together coconut cream and vanilla with handheld mixer. Drizzle over each peach. Top with cinnamon and chopped walnuts to garnish.

EAT IMMEDIATELY!

BON APPETIT!

