

The **PALEO** Primer

FOR TRAIL RUNNERS

Shed Body Fat,
Raise Energy
& Stay Healthy
for Life



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Introduction

I have to tell you, when this Paleo thing first started, I really didn't pay much attention to it. It just seemed like another fad diet that didn't really apply to endurance athletes. After all, I lived on pasta and pizza, carbo loading for all the runs I was doing. I have run more than 50 Ultramarathons in the last 10 years. I was running a lot and eating right, but I just couldn't lose that last 5-10 pounds. Then I started learning more about the effects of sugar and starches on weight loss and healthy living. At the same time, I also started to see articles about utilizing fat stores for fueling long runs. So over the last year, I started to slowly wean myself off excessive carbs and added more whole foods into my diet. As a result, I have lost that last ten pounds, I feel better, and can run longer without the need for fueling.

I created The Paleo Primer to give trail runners an introduction to the low carb world of Paleo. This is important stuff for us since we are more likely to go out for multi-hour runs than road runners and need an efficient fuel source. I almost don't like calling it a diet, because it is more of a life style. This guide will introduce the concept, list common foods, and explain some of the benefits of the Paleo lifestyle.

What is the Paleo Diet?

For 2.5 million years, early man foraged and hunted for seafood, meat, vegetables, fruit, nuts, roots and seeds. This period of time before the development of agriculture is known as the Paleolithic era. The Paleo diet is also known as the Stone Age diet, hunter-gathering diet and the caveman diet. No matter what you call our ancestors, some things haven't changed. Man's digestive systems have evolved only the slightest amount in the 10,000 years since farming changed our diets. Shortened to Paleo, the modern diet is an approach to nutrition that mimics the early man's diet for ultimate health.

Our minds are modern, but our bodies and brains still need the same food. Gastroenterologist Walter L. Voegtlin first popularized the Paleo diet in the 1970's. He argued in, "The Stone Age Diet," humans as carnivores, chiefly needs fats, proteins and a small amount of carbohydrates for optimum performance. For the last 30 years, obesity has been increasing in the United States. Our modern diets are laden with preservatives, processed sugars, and fried foods. Today's health crisis has led to a renewed interest in Voegtlin's tested approach to healthy living.

The Paleo diet is based upon everyday, modern foods that mimic the food groups of our pre-agricultural, hunter-gatherer ancestors. The following seven fundamental characteristics of hunter-gatherer diets will help to optimize your health, minimize your risk of chronic disease, and lose weight.

Higher protein intake – Protein comprises 15 % of the calories in the average western diet, which is considerably lower than the average values of 19-35 % found in hunter-gatherer diets. Meat, seafood, and other animal products represent the staple foods of modern day Paleo diets.

Lower carbohydrate intake and lower glycemic index – Non-starchy fresh fruits and vegetables represent the main carbohydrate source and will provide for 35-45 % of your daily calories. Almost all of these foods have low glycemic indices that are slowly digested and absorbed, and won't spike blood sugar levels.

Higher fiber intake – Dietary fiber is essential for good health, and despite what we're told, whole grains aren't the place to find it. Non-starchy vegetables contain eight times more fiber than whole grains and 31 times more than refined grains. Even fruits contain twice as much fiber as whole grains and seven times more than refined grains.

Moderate to higher fat intake dominated by monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats with balanced Omega-3 and Omega-6 fats – It is not the total amount of fat in your diet that raises your blood cholesterol levels and increases your risk for heart disease, cancer, and type 2 diabetes, but rather the type of fat. Cut the trans fats and the Omega-6 polyunsaturated fats in your diet and increase the healthful monounsaturated and Omega-3 fats that were the mainstays of Stone Age diets. Recent large population studies known as meta analyses show that saturated fats have little or no adverse effects upon cardiovascular disease risk.

Higher potassium and lower sodium intake – Unprocessed, fresh foods naturally contain 5 to 10 times more potassium than sodium, and Stone Age bodies were adapted to this ratio. Potassium is necessary for the heart, kidneys, and other organs to work properly. Low potassium is associated with high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke – the same problems linked to excessive dietary sodium. Today, the average American consumes about twice as much sodium as potassium.

Net dietary alkaline load that balances dietary acid – After digestion, all foods present either a net acid or alkaline load to the kidneys. Acid producers are meats, fish, grains, legumes, cheese, and salt. Alkaline-yielding foods are fruits and veggies. A lifetime of excessive dietary acid may promote bone and muscle loss, high blood pressure, and increased risk for kidney stones, and may aggravate asthma and exercise-induced asthma.

Higher intake of, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and plant phytochemicals – Whole grains are not a good substitute for grass produced or free ranging meats, fruits, and veggies, as they contain no vitamin C, vitamin A, or vitamin B12. Many of the minerals and some of the B vitamins whole grains do contain are not well absorbed by the body.

Benefits of the Paleo Diet

The advantages of the Paleo Diet have been researched and proven in numerous academic journals. It is amazing how changing what we put in our mouths can cause dramatic changes in our quality of life.

- Lose fat- Though the Paleo diet is not designed as a weight loss plan, but people inherently lose weight. The foods that make up the Paleo diet are what we call fat burning foods. In fact, the Paleo diet allows you to eat large quantities of delicious food without restricting calories. The result is a lean, fit body.

- Fight Disease- The Paleo diet is proven to help prevent diabetes, Parkinson's avoid Parkinson's, cancer, heart disease and strokes.
- Improve Digestion- Many digestive problems such as, irritable bowel syndrome, Crohn's disease and indigestion can be avoided.
- Combats Acne- Eating the Paleo way means avoiding the foods that cause acne. When sebum is overproduced or obstructed the sebaceous glands enlarge and form pimples. Foods in the Paleo diet do not cause the insulin spikes that cause a sebum boost. As a result, you can expect smoother, more attractive skin.
- Feel Good- Not only does the Paleo diet help people healthier and look younger it also makes you feel better. Paleo supporters swear by the energy and confidence they experience is to try it for yourself.

Diet Basics

Don't Count Calories

Most diets emphasize counting calories to restrict food intake and thus lose weight. But calories are not calories. I hope by now you know that identical amount of calories of a fast sugar release, high glycemic index food has a radically different effect on your body than those of a slow sugar release, low glycemic index food. Studies show that sugary foods trigger food addiction symptoms and higher food cravings.

Here are three reasons why runners shouldn't rely on calorie counting.

1. Humans don't "Burn Calories" – Calories are a unit of energy measurement created by burning food in a metal oven. The process our body uses to convert food to energy is much more complex.
2. Calories are not the fuel we use – Our bodies do not burn calories. We are fueled by the nutrient-derived chemical adenosine triphosphate (ATP), not what we just ate.

- Nutrients are what really matter – If you just focus on the number of calories, you are missing the boat. Nutrient rich foods contain key vitamins and minerals that trigger the right hormonal and metabolic reactions for the most efficient use and storage of what you eat.

Paleo Guidelines

People assume the Paleo Diet is complicated and difficult to follow. It is actually quite simple. Eat real foods. For a guideline on portions, 56–65% of your calories should come from animals, 36–45% from plant based foods. Keep proteins high at 19-35% carbohydrates at 22-40% and fat at 28-58%.

What to Eat

Eating a Paleo Diet is more about experimenting than limitations. Mother Nature provides a large variety of delicious foods to explore. Instead of settling for a box of processed macaroni and cheese, feast on a meal that excites your taste buds and your energy level. Here is a small list of the many foods to incorporate into your diet.

PROTEINS

Meat	Game	Poultry	Fish	Shellfish	Eggs
Beef	Pheasant	Goose	Tuna	Lobster	Chicken eggs
Veal	Deer	Chicken	Salmon	Shrimp	Goose eggs
Pork	Duck	Turkey	Trout	Scallops	Duck eggs
Lamb	Wild Turkey	Quail	Halibut	Crab	Quail eggs
Goat	Rabbit	Duck	Sole	Clams	
Rabbit	Moose		Bass	Mussels	
Sheep	Woodcock		Haddock	Oysters	
Wild Boar	Elk		Turbot		
Bison			Cod		
			Tilapia		
			Walleye		
			Flatfish		
			Grouper		
			Mackerel		
			Herring		
			Anchovy		

VEGETABLES

Standards	Green Leafy	Squash	Root	Mushrooms
Cauliflower	Collard Greens	Butternut	Turnips	Oyster
Broccoli	Lettuce	Spaghetti	Carrots	Button
Celery	Spinach	Acorn	Beets	Portabella
Bell Peppers	Watercress	Pumpkin	Parsnips	Chanterelle
Onions	Beet Top	Zucchini	Artichokes	Porcini
Leeks	Dandelion	Yellow Summer	Rutabaga	Shiitake
Green Onions	Swiss Chard	Buttercup	Sweet Potatoes	Crimini
Eggplant	Mustard Greens	Crookneck	Radish	Morel
Brussels Sprout	Kale		Yams	
Artichokes	Turnip Greens		Cassava	
Asparagus	Seaweed			
Cucumber	Endive			
Cabbage	Arugula			
Okra				
Avocados				

SUPPORTING PLAYERS

Fats	Fruits	Nuts & Seeds	Flavor Enhancers	Fresh & Dry Herbs
Olive Oil	Apples	Brazil Nuts	Cayenne Pepper	Parsley
Avocado	Oranges	Pistachios	Chilies	Thyme
Coconut Oil	Bananas	Sunflower Seeds	Ginger	Lavender
Clarified Butter	Strawberry	Pumpkin Seeds	Onions	Mint
Lard	Cranberry	Sesame Seeds	Garlic	Rosemary
Tallow	Grapefruit	Pecans	Black Pepper	Chives
Veal Fat	Peaches	Walnuts	Hot Peppers	Tarragon
Duck Fat	Pears	Macadamia Nuts	Star Anise	Oregano
Coconut Flesh	Nectarines	Pine Nuts	Mustard Seeds	Dill
Nut Oils	Plums	Chestnuts	Fennel Seeds	Bay Leaves
Nut Butter	Pomegranates	Cashews	Cumin	Sage
Lamb Fat	Pineapple	Hazelnuts	Turmeric	Coriander
	Grapes	Almonds	Cinnamon	
	Papaya		Paprika	
	Cantaloupe		Nutmeg	
	Kiwi		Cloves	
	Lychee		Vanilla	

Foods to Eliminate

The main foods to eliminate are processed foods, the largest source of toxicity and malnutrition. Processed foods are the easiest items to eat these days, and we eat entirely too much. Grains that form the base of sandwich breads, cereals and pasta have no place in the Paleo Diet. Also, the processed fats and vegetable seed oils are also counterproductive to our health. Legumes, especially soy, and vegetable seed oils should be banished from your diet. There are no refined sugars little dairy and absolutely no processed foods in the Paleo plan.

Tips for the Paleo Lifestyle

Unfortunately, the cheapest and quickest foods available today are usually the least nutritious. Our busy lifestyles have our kids raised on a diet of processed and fast foods. The popular culture even makes eating real foods an odd concept. Even knowing the proven benefits, some never try the Paleo diet because they believe it is too difficult. Living a long, healthy fulfilling life is well worth a few small changes. While not as easy as stopping at a drive through, maintaining a Paleo lifestyle is realistic with a few tips.

- Stay Organized- The number one tip is to be organized and prepared. The biggest challenge will be to have Paleo foods available at your home and plan your meals. You are much more likely to eat healthy food choices if it is readily available at home.
- Change How You Shop- Find the best farmers markets, butchers and grocery stores in your area. Before going to the grocery have a list of items you plan to pick up. Also, shop the perimeter of grocery stores to avoid the aisles filled with processed foods. This may be difficult at first, but after a month or so you will know longer feel a need to peruse the sugar aisles.
- Clean Your Pantry- Clear your cupboards of all the cereals, pasta, and processed foods in your cabinets. Don't worry. You will replace these foods with much more satisfying fresh and healthy foods.
- Learn to Work the Kitchen- Unlike a diet based on grains, there are many foods to eat on the Paleo Diet you should never become bored. The best way to take

advantage of everything nature has to offer is to learn how to cook. By combining the diverse flavors, there is an endless amount of tasty dishes to excite your taste buds.

- Dress Your Food- Most of the condiments on the store shelves are filled with preservatives. However, you can enhance the flavor of your foods by making your own condiments at home. Ketchup, mustard, salad dressings and sauces can be made at home naturally with delicious results.
- Exercise- Just changing your eating habits will cause you to lose weight naturally on the Paleo Diet. As a trail runner, you will be amazed at how quickly you notice a difference. Your true, toned physique will come out as pounds shed. You will also notice the amount of energy increased compared to when you ate a traditional diet. Start feeling strong, energetic, mentally sharper and all around younger.
- Join Support System- Find chat rooms and forums where like-minded people meet. Participate at a gym where the Paleo Diet is the main lifestyle choice. It is nice to share ideas on the best Paleo books, and even give advice on keeping true to the diet plan. Joining a community online or in person is extremely motivating when you learn about how the other member's lives improved just from staying true to the Paleo way.

Paleo Friendly Desserts

One of the biggest stumbling blocks with the Paleo Diet plan is desserts. Most desserts have unnatural sweeteners and starchy carbs that spike insulin levels. Most sweet treats are a recipe for disaster. However, with kids, special celebrations and Birthdays sometimes a sweet treat is in order. There are some very tasty Paleo desserts that can help you transition fully into the Paleo lifestyle without indulging in bad choices or having a gluten stomachache. While it is not a good idea to eat desserts after every meal, Paleo friendly desserts can stop hardcore cravings from your pre-Paleo days.

Here is a list of whole food substitutions you can use to whip delicious Paleo friendly desserts together.

- Almond flour- Grinding almonds create nutritious, high protein flour perfect for making muffins breads and of course, traditional macarons.
- Raw Honey- Because honey can be eaten straight from the tree, it is considered a true Paleo sweetener. Though it is a whole food, honey is highly caloric and does spike the insulin level, so leave sparingly. However, honey is the perfect sugar substitute.
- Cocoa- Unsweetened dark chocolate has nutritious antioxidants and sticks to the limited dairy rules. Opt for the natural cocoa over the Dutch processed version that loses its benefits during processing.
- Pure Vanilla Extract- Pure vanilla extract is a staple in any bakers cupboard. Just make sure to buy the pure stuff not the cheap flavoring.
- Coconut Oil- Coconut oil is a medium chain fatty acid, which means it transfers directly to the liver where it is used for energy instead of being stored directly as fat. It also stimulates the thyroid gland helping speed up metabolism. Coconut oil adds a subtle sweetness to cobblers pancakes and other baked recipes.
- Coconut Milk- A great dairy substitute, coconut milk contains lauric acid. Lauric acid is proven to fight influenza, herpes, HIV as well as improve the immune system. Use coconut oil to make ice cream, hot cocoa, pudding, and even egg nog.
- Nuts- Nuts are loaded with good fats the bodies need. Hazelnuts, pecans, macademians and almonds are lifesavers in the kitchen. Use nuts for pie crusts, candies or even as simple spiced nut blend.
- Frozen Fruit- Freeze berries to make easy desserts. Use them to make rich frothy smoothies or sorbet. Frozen grapes and cherries taste delicious straight from the

freezer. Try frozen bananas on a stick or blended down for a creamy ice cream experience.

- Dates- Dates are natural sweeteners that do not add its own flavor like honey. They contain simple sugars like dextrose and fructose that are easy to digest and replenish your energy. Blend dates in the food processor with wet ingredients when baking. They also work well for binding snack bars.

Final Thoughts

The Paleo Diet is proven to shed pounds and create a healthier life. Despite popular belief, the Paleo lifestyle is not restrictive and can actually open your palette to a whole new world of culinary experiences. Now I'm not a 100% Paleo eater, and I'm not saying you need to drink the Kool Aid, but if you are still running on a high carb diet, you need to take a look at this. As a subscriber to Trail Run Crazy, you will learn more about healthy eating and how to leverage that into turning you into a fat burning running machine!

Take 30 days and give it a shot – cut out the grains and dairy, start eating more vegetables and fruits, eat more humanely raised and non-grain fed meat, cut out the liquid calories and sugar, and see how you feel after the month is up. You may be pleasantly surprised!

Resources

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