

# Eat Like A Caveman: The Paleo Diet

By Sam Erickson

By now, you've probably heard of it. You might even know someone that has tried it. It's the Paleo diet. The simple idea behind the diet is that human bodies haven't evolved enough since the caveman days to deal with the complex diets eaten today. By simplifying the diet, advocates say, human bodies can work more efficiently, leading to a reduction in weight and a healthier overall lifestyle.

Foods that were available during the Paleolithic era include meat, eggs, fish, roots, vegetables, berries and mushrooms. Natural drinks like tea or coconut water are acceptable.

Any food of human creation—based on agriculture, the domestication of animals or more recent processing techniques—is not permitted.

This includes sugar, dairy, grains, legumes and all processed food. The diet also excludes all alcohol. You could eat steak every day, but bread in any form is out. Compound foods like lasagna, pizza or even casseroles are out. Chili probably makes the cut, but only if

there are no beans in it.

While the Paleo diet has caused a recent revolution, not everything about it is revolutionary. The diet has much in common with other accepted dietary practices like the limiting of processed foods, the reduction in sugar and the exclusion of calories from beverages.

There is also an emphasis on eating whole foods rather than foods that have been torn apart and repackaged as something else in a processing plant. The diet has some similarities with the Atkins diet of recent popularity.

Many people who have followed the program see significant weight loss. Others report a change in the way they feel after eating, moving from a sluggish response with the modern American diet to a more active and engaged response with the Paleo diet. The focus is on reducing carbs, and many people see a benefit when they eat fewer carbs. People say they feel fuller, are less bloated and have a higher number of healthy fats in their diet.

There is some contro-

## ALPHA MALE TRIBE

It's taken 10,000 years, but the paleo diet is making a comeback. Originally modeled after the diet of primitive man, the paleo lifestyle is becoming more and more well known as authors and events are inspiring folks to give it a try.

## Paleo Diet 101

The diet originally became popular in 1970 by gastroenterologist Walter L. Voegtlin. It's since been promoted by a number of authors, researchers and gyms.

### Health Benefits

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versy over the diet. Experts say that the heavy reliance on meat leads to an excess intake of saturated fats and that eating grain-fed beef doesn't necessarily stick to the code of the diet. Citing similar points, some argue against the diet based on environmental concerns and cost.

Eating meat simply

takes more resources and is more expensive. Others say that the diet is just a fad and there is little or no evidence in support of the basic idea that human bodies haven't evolved to eat foods brought about through human development.

There is also the consistent argument that, no matter what people

eat, if they eat portions which are too large, they cannot possibly be healthy. A successful Paleo diet requires portion control, just like every other system of eating.

Many find the Paleo diet appealing because it is similar to what they grew up with—a heavy emphasis on meat and vegetables.

Others find the restrictions it imposes—no dairy and no bread, for example—as simply too restrictive.

Whatever your personal take, the diet certainly seems to be gaining steam through the Western world, particularly with those that are very health conscious.

## 7 ways to alleviate cabin fever

Long winter days can quickly bring on feelings of cabin fever. Although cabin fever is not a recognized medical condition, it can compromise well-being. Cabin fever can strike even the most optimistic people.

Cabin fever normally affects people during the winter months, when shortened days, longer periods of darkness and cold temperatures often force people to remain inside. These factors can lead to depression, boredom, anxiety, and an inability to concentrate. Alleviating symptoms of cabin fever requires making a few changes, including getting outdoors whenever possible.

1. Head outside. It may be cold and dreary, but getting outside can be healthy. Take advantage of daylight hours whenever possible. Plan a walk around the neighborhood before you go to work. Otherwise, spend your lunch hour outdoors soaking up the sun's rays. The sun is an instant mood-booster.

2. Brighten up the indoors. Choose energizing colors like yellow, orange and red to decorate the interior of your home. Invest in lights that offer a greater amount of wattage and brightness. Light-therapy lamps produce bright light that simulates the sun and provides broad-spectrum rays. Sitting in front of one of these lights can alleviate feelings of seasonal affective disorder, or SAD.

3. Grow more indoor plants. Plants can help filter out stale, stagnant air in the house and add moisture to the environment. Breathing fresh oxygen from these plants can provide you with energy and help you to feel revitalized.

4. Increase your exercise routine. Now could be the time to join the gym or become part of a walking group. According to The Mayo Clinic, exercise can boost mood, reducing immune system chemicals that can worsen symptoms of depression. In addition, exercise

increases body temperature, which may have calming effects, and releases feel-good brain chemicals that may ease depression.

5. Throw a party. The old saying is "misery loves company," so why not invite friends over and banish cabin fever together? Winter tends to be alienating, as people are more inclined to bundle up and stay indoors. Forcing socialization can brighten not only your own mood but that of others as well.

6. Get out of town. Cabin fever can be temporarily abated by a mini vacation. Head somewhere that is warm and sunny. If you cannot afford a trip to the tropics, a brief jaunt to a spa or relative's house may banish boredom and get you out of the house.

7. Try a new hobby. Attempt an activity that marries winter with getting active. Ideal activities include cross-country skiing, ice hockey, skating, or snowshoeing.

## H<sub>2</sub>O Myths

Tresa Erickson

Water is vital to life. Without it, very little can survive, including the human body. Obviously, you need to consume enough water to keep your body functioning well, but how much is enough? Eight glasses of water daily, right? Wrong. Although that may be the magic number for many people, including some doctors, there is no scientific evidence to support the fact that the body needs eight glasses of water per day. Water intake should be based on lifestyle. Here are some more myths surrounding the component vital to life.

### More water, fewer toxins

While some scientific studies show that water aids the release of toxins from the body, some don't. Drinking more water does not necessarily improve the function of the bladder and kidneys and speed up the excretion of toxins. What it does do is dilute the toxins and make them easier to excrete.

### More water, better organ function

Water is vital for organ function. No organ can function properly without the right amount of water for very long. Consuming more than the amount of water needed, however, will not improve organ function. The organs will use only what they need and the rest will be excreted.

### More water, lower weight

While it's true that drinking water might make a person feel fuller and eat less at the time, that doesn't mean the person won't feel hungry later and eat then. Drinking water to eat less does not necessarily translate into weight loss. The calories reduced by water intake might very well be made up later, reducing the chance of weight loss.

### More water, better skin tone

The skin needs water, just like every other organ in the body.

Drinking more water, however, does not guarantee great skin, as very little of the water consumed ends up in the skin. There are no scientific studies to prove a direct correlation between increased water intake and improved skin tone.

### More water, fewer headaches

While drinking water will prevent dehydration, which can cause headaches, drinking more of it will not ward off headaches indefinitely.

Headaches can arise from a number of conditions, from tension to health problems, few of which have anything to do with the consumption of water.

There is very little scientific evidence touting the benefits of increased water intake. Rather than push yourself to drink the magic eight, why not just drink the recommended amount for your lifestyle and stay hydrated and feeling good?

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