

GOING



THE 'CAVEMAN DIET' FEATURES MEAT AND VEGETABLES, NOT STARVATION

By Shari Talbot

Spring is the perfect time for decluttering and fresh starts, so why not clean some junk out of your diet too?

Many people are turning to a Paleo diet to do just that.

It's no secret that processed foods and uncontrolled sugar consumption are increasingly being blamed for obesity, skyrocketing rates of diabetes and general lack of wellness in today's society. Gluten-free diets are becoming more common as people are convinced that grains are having a negative impact on their bodies. Paleo-style diets go even further, removing processed foods, sugars and dairy too.

While some may turn to stricter versions of the Paleo diet for weight loss, most Paleo proponents seem to be focused on its other health benefits, especially those surrounding the gut. Some folks discover Paleo after a diagnosis of Celiac disease or other autoimmune disorders. Others choose to ditch the grains due to food intolerance or sensitivity and find their headaches, joint pain, skin conditions and other problems are eliminated.

THE PALEO LIFESTYLE

For many, the Paleo lifestyle goes well beyond nutrition. If you think about the way your ancestors lived, life was a lot less complicated. No digital distractions, no information overload and the world was a much smaller place. People focused on survival and likely had a fair amount of leisure time. When they travelled, it was on foot. They walked, ran, jumped and moved heavy objects when necessary. They worked and played in the sun and found shelter when the weather was cold or wet. When

the sun went down, they slept.

For most children, all of these things come pretty naturally. By imitating the natural behaviour of most of our kids, we probably wouldn't have any trouble eating well, moving our bodies, getting enough sleep, managing our stress and remembering to play.

WHAT TO EAT AND WHAT TO AVOID

The Paleo diet focuses on whole, single-ingredient foods that can be found in nature. Think foods that a caveman would have eaten – meat, eggs, seafood, fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds and natural oils. If you are used to a traditional diet based on Canada's Food Guide, you may be surprised to find that fat can be very healthy. In fact, Dr. Tara Gignac, a Naturopathic Doctor at StoneTree Naturopathic Clinic in Collingwood, believes the right kinds of fats, when they come from real foods, can be extremely nutrient dense. Since they fill you up, you are likely to eat less in the long run.

"The Paleo diet is very sexy right now, but the basic tenets of eliminating all of the pro-inflammatory agricultural products, sugars and processed foods, and eating a whole food diet, is something we have been advocating all along," Dr. Gignac said.

There is some controversy within the Paleo community, depending which book or expert opinion you choose to follow. Some versions of the diet eliminate legumes, dairy and potatoes, while others allow small amounts of these foods and even grains that do not contain gluten. Despite the controversy though, the Paleo community agrees on these things – get rid of gluten, refined sugars and oils and other processed foods!

There's no need to fret though, you won't be eating dry chicken breasts and steamed broccoli at every meal. Most versions of Paleo allow butter or ghee, sea salt and even indulgences that include honey, maple syrup and dark chocolate. A quick search

on Google or Pinterest will have you staring at mouth-watering recipes, wondering which ones to try first.

PALEO ON A BUDGET

How many times have you heard, “Eating healthy is so expensive!?” While buying organic produce and grass-fed meat can increase your budget, there are ways to eat whole foods without breaking the bank. Take advantage of local farmers’ markets and fresh produce cooperatives like The Good Food Box (find more at www.foodlinkgreybruce.com). If you’re eating whole foods, chances are you will be spending a lot less money on processed food and dining out. Additionally, it’s not necessary to make every change at the same time. By taking small steps toward eating healthier, you may also find that you are spending less money on prescription and over-the-counter medication. For many families, spending a little more on wholesome, healthy food is worth every penny.

PALEO AND KIDS

If you are considering a Paleo diet for your family, you may be concerned about whether your children will get the nutrition they need. Dr. Gignac suggests, because Paleo is about eating real food, it can be beautifully and healthfully done, but it’s going to take some work. Since a true Paleo diet focuses on whole foods that do not come in boxes, it can require more planning and time in the kitchen. You can buy Paleo snacks and convenience foods but these too can contain questionable ingredients. Even if they are pure, the cost can be prohibitive for families.

When transitioning your family to Paleo, you have two choices. Some families, especially those with immediate health concerns, go cold turkey, throwing out everything non-Paleo and starting from scratch. Other families might ease into it by eliminating gluten, then other grains, then dairy. In the beginning, you might want to seek out Paleo recipes that attempt to replicate family favourites.

One of the biggest concerns for families is what to pack for lunches, especially in nut-free schools and classrooms. Some easy lunches may include leftovers, homemade paleo bread or crackers, sliced meat roll-ups (filled with shredded veggies or tuna), dried or fresh fruit, grape tomatoes, sliced veggies, celery

with apple butter, apple sauce, homemade fruit gummies, olives and boiled eggs. Paleo treats can include paleo baked goods, gluten-free chocolate chips, banana or plantain chips, sweet potato chips, etc. At home or on the run, nuts and seeds are quick and tasty too.

With a little creativity, even picky eaters might be willing to try new foods. Don’t Brussels sprouts look just a little like dinosaur

“Nutrition really is very simple – eat foods that nature makes and cook them for yourself.”

Dr. Tara Gignac

eggs? How about using cookie cutters to cut sliced meat into shapes? Allowing choices and involving kids in meal preparation are also helpful for getting kids on board.

Of course, if you are taking on the Paleo lifestyle together, you will want to stay away from the ‘diet for weight-loss’ mentality. By framing your new lifestyle in a ‘healthy living’ perspective and being active together, you’ll be teaching your kids that nutrition can make all the difference when it comes to staying healthy and strong. Whether or not you believe that a meat-based, fat-based diet is particularly healthy, you’ll have to admit that eating whole foods, reducing genetically modified grains and eliminating processed food is definitely better for your health overall.

Like any new nutritional undertaking, the Paleo diet can sound a bit daunting at first, but it doesn’t need to be. “Nutrition really is very simple – eat foods that nature makes and cook them yourself,” Dr. Gignac said.

Tweaking the Paleo diet, based on your needs and those of your family, will help you stay motivated and reap the most benefits. Checking in with a health professional can save you the headaches of research and help you find a natural way of eating that works for you.

This article is for informational purposes only. It doesn't replace advice from a qualified health professional.

GIANT TIGER
— your save on everything store —

216 Goderich Street, Port Elgin

Store hours: Mon. - Fri. 8 am to 9 pm • Sat. 8 am to 6 pm • Sun. 9 am to 6 pm

Join us! | **GIANT TIGER**

Paleo recipes

PALEO BROWNIE BITES

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 oz dark chocolate
- ½ cup coconut oil
- ½ cup raw honey
- 2 eggs
- 1 tbsp vanilla
- ¾ cup blanched almond flour
- ½ tsp sea salt

DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 350 F and lightly grease a mini-muffin pan with coconut oil.
- In a double boiler, gently melt the chocolate, coconut oil and raw honey. Remove from heat, allow to cool, add the eggs and vanilla.
- In a medium bowl, combine the almond flour and the salt. Add the wet ingredients and mix well.
- Fill the mini-muffin tins nearly to the top. Bake for 15-25 minutes until golden and set. Allow to cool in the pan.

Recipe courtesy *Diana Keuilian* at realhealthyrecipes.com.



Image via www.paleogrubs.com

SWEET POTATO CHIPS

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large sweet potato
- 1 tbsp melted coconut oil
- 1 tsp sea salt

DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 375 F. Use a mandolin or very sharp knife to slice potatoes thinly.
- Place sweet potato slices on a parchment lined baking sheet and brush lightly with coconut oil.
- Bake the chips for 10 minutes. Turn and bake for about 10 minutes more. Transfer chips to a cooling rack when they begin to brown.


Resources to learn more about Paleo

Learn more about the Paleo Lifestyle at www.paleoleap.com.

For easy-to-understand overviews on how to get started visit www.paleomagazine.com.

For great boxed-lunch ideas (with photos) visit www.paleomama.com.

For Paleo information with an emphasis on autoimmune conditions, visit www.thepaleomom.com.

To discover sources of grass-fed meat and locally grown vegetables in Grey and Bruce counties, visit www.foodlinkgreybruce.com. 

SHARI TALBOT is a freelance writer and an Ontario Certified Teacher who now enjoys homeschooling her two children. You can reach her at www.shariwrites.ca.



**It's OK to have Problems.
It's OK to Ask for Help**

www.wesforyouthonline.ca

4 Park Street
Walkerton, ON, N0G 2V0
519-507-3737
office@wesforyouthonline.ca