



Starting A Paleo Food Plan

No doubt you've heard about the Paleo Diet® and similar programs. But is there more to this caveman plan than meets its name? Absolutely! As the name suggests, the Paleo foods are those that would have been available to early humans such as meat, fish, vegetables, nuts and fruit. Because Paleo plans eschew grains, sugars and all processed food, you rid your system of unwanted toxins and glucose that gets stored as fat, and restore the body to its natural genetic predisposition.

Most people who start a Paleo food plan quickly report they feel healthier, lose weight, and end typical cravings. However, a Paleo regimen demands adherence to strict tenets, diligent meal planning, and a stern commitment to avoid processed temptations. In other words, if it comes from a box, you shouldn't eat it. Here are some other tips to help you get started.

1. Keep your intake of carbs low and opt for more animal proteins and fats. Ideally, choose grass-fed beef, pastured poultry or pork, wild-caught fish and pastured eggs.
2. Add plenty of vegetables including leafy greens to every meal. Veggies can be cooked or raw, fresh or frozen, and should be organic or local when possible.
3. Feel free to add fats for flavor, including butter, coconut oil, olive oil, avocado and nut oils. However, stay away from hydrogenated or vegetable oils and margarine.
4. Other than butter or an occasional touch of cream, dairy products should be avoided on Paleo programs. So kiss that dairy cheese goodbye!
5. While you can have potatoes on most Paleo plans, you'll get more nutrients from sweet potatoes or yams. For a mashed potato substitute, steam cauliflower and blend with garlic, butter and salt.
6. Tree nuts are fine in small quantities, but avoid grains, rice, cereals, and legumes (including peanuts and soy).
7. Although fruit is allowed, eat it in moderation so you won't consume too much sugar. Choose whole fruit (rather than juice), and get your sugar fix from peaches, plums, cherries and berries rather than tropical fruits which are high in glucose.
8. Use sea salt rather than iodized salt, but again—in moderation. Better yet, add fresh herbs, spices, and garlic to perk up meals.
9. When you're craving pasta, make your own sauce served over zucchini or spaghetti squash noodles.

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10. In terms of vices, you can enjoy coffee (no sugar or sweetener), wine and even chocolate. However, all should be consumed in moderation.
11. Consider taking a daily probiotic and if needed, a vitamin D supplement.
12. Get plenty of sleep, optimally eight hours each day. For optimal rest, power off electronic devices two hours before bedtime.
13. Find time for exercise every day. Even simple changes like taking the stairs, lifting resistance weights while watching TV, and parking far from entries can make a difference.
14. Remember that a Paleo food plan is a lifestyle change so think ahead when visiting restaurants, shopping, traveling and dining with friends.
15. Nobody's perfect, so if you are tempted to cheat, try to keep indulgences to once a week!

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