



Featuring
Delicious,
Protein-Packed
Recipes

THE PALEO VEGETARIAN DIET

A Guide for Weight Loss
and Healthy Living

Dena Harris

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and Healthy Living

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Ulysses Press

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For anyone who has struggled with food. I hope this book makes it an ally versus an enemy.

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A Note from the Author

I had been a vegetarian for 20 years when I decided to give Paleo Vegetarianism a go. No beans. No soy. No dairy. No rice. No quinoa. No alcohol (um, yeah...we'll talk). No grains of any kind. And, obviously, no meat. Friends thought I was crazy. And for a while, I agreed. I mean, just what was a MorningStar breakfast patties addict like me supposed to *eat*?

My decision to try a Paleo Vegetarian diet came when I met a number of health-obsessed people eating Paleo and experiencing phenomenal results. Like the type A skeptic I am, I started researching Paleo and Primal diets and was intrigued by what I found. I started a website about my Paleo Vegetarian journey and was amazed at the response. It turned out that I wasn't alone. Tons of vegetarians, it seems, are interested in the benefits of a Paleo diet.

The biggest obstacle—obviously—is that consuming meat is at the heart of any Paleo diet. So what are a bunch of plant eaters supposed to do?

Answer: Go Paleo—only without the meat.

It wasn't easy. That means no beans, soy, rice, dairy, alcohol, or added sugars? That pretty much wiped out every recipe I'd ever made as a vegetarian.

But eating Paleo Vegetarian *can* be done. This book is a tool to get you started. Pay attention to what you eat and how you feel, and you'll quickly learn what parts of the diet do and don't work for you. Once you learn the basics, you can make adjustments. Maybe you're okay with the occasional inclusion of rice or beans. Maybe you find a bowl of morning oatmeal before a hard workout does you no harm. This will thrill some of you and make others cringe, but there are no hard-and-fast rules that apply 100 percent of the time—in life and especially in a diet. Instead, what's here is a foundation upon which you can build.

It's taken almost 30 years of dieting—and being heavier than I should be for most of that time—for me to get to a point where I feel like food is my friend and not an enemy to be combated, outmaneuvered, and outwitted at every turn. Making the switch to include Paleo eating in my life has been a big part of this mental switch. I hope what's outlined in these pages will do the same for you.

Some thank-yous are in order. If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes an army of understanding friends and family to see a writer through the draft of a book. To say I ran around frazzled would be a kind understatement. So a huge and heartfelt thank-you to all friends, family, and coworkers who were patient with me, calmed me, believed in me, and reminded me to feed my cat when I grew distracted.

In good health and good spirit,

—Der

What Is Paleo Vegetarianism?

Chapter 1

Paleo Vegetarian Health Benefits for Weight Loss and for Life

Paleo Vegetarian? Uh...isn't that an oxymoron? Kind of like "decaf coffee"? Aside from the fact that it doesn't exactly roll off the tongue to anyone with even a little bit of knowledge about the Paleo diet and vegetarianism, the pairing makes no sense. *Sooo... You're a vegetarian who follows a primarily meat-eating diet? Uh-huh. That doesn't seem like it would be a problem. At all.*

Fair enough. But the fact that it's a marriage of opposites doesn't negate the fact that multitudes of hardcore, in-it-for-life vegetarians are interested in exploring the possibility of adapting their diet to the Paleo lifestyle. Some, like me, came to the idea through the CrossFit phenomenon that has swept across our nation. Reading and witnessing how many of these super-strong, super-lean athletes were transforming their bodies through Paleo made a number of us do a double take and say, "Hey—I want that for me!" Others are hearing and reading more about the damage grains are doing to our bodies and wondering if there might be something to the notion of grain-free living. Still others are stymied by weight loss and baffled as to the cause behind their weight gain or inability to shed pounds.

Why Adopt a Paleo Vegetarian Lifestyle?

First of all, let's agree to call it "PV" for short. For vegetarians reading this book (and I assume most of you reading this book *are* already vegetarians, otherwise you'd be looking at a traditional Paleo diet), the "V" part of the equation is likely something with which you've already come to grips. Whether for moral, ethical, environmental, or a combination of reasons, you're clear on why you choose to eschew meat. This leaves the second part of the equation to be answered: Why are you interested in adhering to a Paleo diet?

Before jumping into Paleo, let's pause to examine the word "diet." It's a term fraught with emotion. For many of us, it conjures up memories of grapefruit and fiber, "replacement meal" shakes, and countless hours spent tracking and recording every morsel of food that went into our mouths. (Ask any woman over 30 the caloric value of anything from a frozen fruit smoothie to cream cheese brownies and she'll be able to spit out the answer before you can say, "Weigh in.")

Yet for all the fad diets, all the Weight Watchers and Jenny Craigs and days spent eating fat-free treats and low-sodium rice cakes, we're still not where we want to be. We yo-yo up and down on the scale. We surround ourselves with guilt around food. We give up on our goals, thinking they're unrealistic, too hard, or too far out of reach.

And maybe they are. Other than teenagers in love, there is no one as self-delusional on the planet as a would-be dieter. We know—*know*—that once we lose the weight our love life will improve, we'll get a better job, redecorate the house, become a more patient parent and altruistic spouse, volunteer to

help the homeless on weekends, write the novel that's been percolating inside our brain for the last ten years, and transform into the 5'10" natural blonde we were born to be. (Never mind that we're a 5'4" shaggy brunette and medical science has yet to document the spontaneous growth of six inches of toned legginess to any physique, no matter how many desserts you say "no" to.) Dieters, God love them, are probably the most optimistic people on the planet.

However, optimism and reality don't always occupy the same space. For that reason, I would encourage anyone starting this or any eating plan to understand what exactly it is they're after *before* they sauté the first vegetable.

Why is this important? I had an obese friend declare to me, one day out of the blue, "I'm eating nothing but small salads and working out twice a day until I lose 80 pounds!" And you could tell from her enthusiasm that in the moment she said it (sitting on her couch as we watched TV), she meant it.

As you would expect, her commitment to perfect health lasted less than 48 hours. There was a crisis at work that required long hours and, just like that, "Nothing will stop me!" was shelved for "I'll try again later when I'm not so busy."

Sound familiar? My friend's goal was optimistic, but not realistic. I'm an exercise enthusiast known around my office as the "Food Nazi" for my adherence to healthy eating, and even I wouldn't have lasted three days on my friend's plan. You have to take into account life and balance.

Runners spend a lot of time talking about fast-twitch and slow-twitch fibers. These are the muscle fibers that give a sprinter short, explosive bursts of power (fast-twitch) or marathoners and century cyclists the endurance to carry on aerobically for long periods of time (slow-twitch).

All of us are born with a pretty even mix of fast- and slow-twitch fibers, but most people find they're better at one type of activity than another (i.e., sprinting as opposed to running half-marathons). This is largely due to genetics. While muscle fibers can be trained (within reason) to convert, say, a fast-twitch sprinter into a long-distance runner, we each have a natural propensity toward excelling at one type of activity over another.

I bring this up to make the point that as much as we may want to make losing weight and gaining health a fast-twitch push, we'd do better to realize that dieting is about activating our slow-twitch mental muscles. We need to take a deep breath, focus, and settle in for the long haul.

Adding in Paleo: Ask Yourself What You're Hoping to Achieve

Setting a goal is not the main thing. It is deciding how you will go about achieving it and staying with that plan.

—Tom Landry, *National Football League coach*

Declaring, "I want to lose 20 pounds," is not the same as having a realistic plan you can follow to lose the weight. Saying, "I want to be toned in every inch of my body" with no working knowledge of weightlifting is not going to create lean muscle, no matter how much you may wish it so.

So the question before you is, where do you want to be? By following a Paleo Vegetarian diet, what is it you're hoping to achieve?

Yeah, okay, I hear you all screaming, "We want to be thin!" Thank you, *Cosmo*, for making every woman over a size four feel unworthy as a human being. I get it. Few people pick up a book with the word "diet" in the title solely to explore better health. And there are certainly weight-loss opportunities to be found within these pages. So if you're here solely for the weight loss, that's okay. As Socrates said, "Know thyself." But I hope as you work through this book that you'll embrace other reasons, such as the ones listed below, for eating Paleo Vegetarian.

- Sustained weight loss
- Eating whole, natural foods
- More energy and stamina
- Better sleep
- Reduced bloating
- Mental clarity and improved mood
- Increased fitness levels
- Fat burning versus sugar burning
- Reduced allergies
- Lowered risk for diabetes, heart disease, and cancer
- Feeling confident and in control of your diet, yourself, and your life

Eating Paleo Vegetarian offers the opportunities for all these things. I'm reminded of one of my favorite Facebook posts that circulates from time to time. It shows a "skinny-fat" woman (thin appearance but no muscle tone) and the caption reads, "This woman weighs 130 pounds." Next to her is a picture of a smoking hot, completely ripped woman, the kind whose body most of us dream of having. The caption here reads, "This woman weighs 145 pounds." Then underneath both pictures it asks, "Who would you rather look like?"

The point is that when most people say they want to lose *weight*, what they really mean is they want to lose *fat*. Many, many people transform their bodies on a Paleo or Paleo Vegetarian diet without huge weight-loss numbers. There's a big difference between a healthy and lean 150-pound frame and a bloated and saggy 150-pound frame. Same number, different body. Frankly, my advice is to throw away your scale. Now. Seriously, toss it. I haven't owned a scale for over ten years. "But wait," you say. "Without a scale, how will I know if the diet is working?"

You'll know. Measure inches or how you look and feel in your clothes. Or start counting the "You look great! What's your secret?" comments you'll soon be receiving.

Scale, schmale, people. It's just a number. Don't let it dominate your life.

Getting Real: Your Reasons for Eating Paleo Vegetarian

I promise—this isn't one of those touchy-feely books that asks you to write down the emotion you experience every time you eat a grape. Other than a fun quiz in a bit—in which you can choose to participate or not—this is the only writing-required portion of the book, so please play along.

In the spaces that follow, write down three reasons for wanting to try the Paleo Vegetarian diet. Be as specific (and realistic) as possible, but do not list a specific weight-loss goal. Instead, strive for statements such as “I will feel comfortable in my clothes and confident in my appearance.” Limit your range to one to three goals so you don't overwhelm yourself. Remember, as you achieve goals, you can always go back and add new ones.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How will you know when you have achieved these goals? You might say, “I'll know I've achieved the goal of being confident in my appearance when I can: wear a sleeveless T-shirt/wear my shirt tucked in/tighten my belt buckle a notch/accept a compliment because I think someone means it and they're not saying it just to be nice.”

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What is your timeline for achieving these goals? Remember—slow-twitch!

I will reach goal number 1 by _____.

I will reach goal number 2 by _____.

I will reach goal number 3 by _____.

What are some unrealistic expectations of which you may need to rid yourself? Example: “I'm going to lose 20 pounds and completely transform my body in one month.”¹

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Whom can you count on to support you in your pursuit of adhering to a PV diet? This is important. You want to surround yourself as much as possible with people who truly believe in you, who understand that this is a lifestyle choice and not a “fad diet,” and who won't engage in subtle sabotage, i.e., “Can't you cheat on your diet just this one time?” These people are hard to find, so think carefully. Then make an extra effort to engage these people in your life over the next several months. List names below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Oooh...you did so well! You answered all the questions! Ha. Kidding. I know you just read through everything and made a halfhearted promise to come back later and fill them in. Cheating already, huh? I'm on to you. Consider this the first test of your commitment to the PV diet. Put the book down, go find a pencil or pen, come back, and answer the questions above. You can do it—I believe in you!

Heads Up: It's Easier to Be Vegetarian Than It Is to Be Paleo

I used to laugh a silent laugh when meat eaters (did anyone else refer to them as “muggles” during the Harry Potter frenzy?) or pure Paleoists would look at me and say, “I don't know how you can be a vegetarian. I think it would be so hard not to eat meat.”

The truth is—and most of you know this—being vegetarian in today's world isn't all that hard. Here's why.

REASON #1: MORNINGSTAR, BOCA BURGERS, AND AMY'S KITCHEN

In 1988 I was living with my parents outside Dayton, Ohio, preparing to enter college. On more or less a whim, I decided to go vegetarian for 30 days. I never once missed meat, and while I never intended to stay vegetarian, the thought of eating meat after the 30 days were up was enough to turn my stomach. My 20-plus-year voyage into vegetarianism had begun.

I'm not sure about other parts of the world, but at least in rural Ohio in the late '80s, not eating meat was not looked upon favorably. Raised eyebrows, pursed lips, etc. There was also the question of *what* to eat. My meatloaf-loving Midwestern parents had no idea what to serve me other than pasta with plain marinara sauce. As a college student, beer² and pizza were my go-tos. After college I moved to a small (pop. 3,500) town in North Carolina where I was suspected of being an atheist, hippie, and potential communist, all because I didn't eat meat. The manager of our local grocery store literally thought I was making up a vegetable when I asked if his store could please carry edamame. As for prepared vegetarian meals, the freezer case held nary a soy burger in sight.

Change came eventually and life grew easier, for me and numerous other vegetarians. Being able to pop a “burger” in the microwave or make a quick sandwich from soy deli meats and soy cheese was a delicious luxury. And it led to the second reason being a vegetarian today isn't all that hard.

REASON #2: PEOPLE ARE MORE ACCEPTING

With everyone from movie stars to your local librarian shunning meat, being a vegetarian is no longer

seen as operating outside the social norm. Even die-hard meat eaters are forgoing meat with at least two to three of their meals each week. I have to think not being made to feel “weird” or like an outcast has opened up the door to many more people exploring the options of a vegetarian lifestyle.

REASON #3: A LINE IN THE SAND

For many—but not all—vegetarians, there is simply a moral line most won’t cross. Again, from the first moment I declared myself vegetarian, I was never tempted to eat meat. It was simply something I wouldn’t do. I never had to exert willpower to remain faithful to a vegetarian diet—especially once I educated myself about the treatment and processing of animals for the majority of meat consumed in this country. Now, eating a *healthy* vegetarian diet is something entirely different, and that did take some time and getting used to. But not eating meat? No-brainer.³

I haven’t had the same experience with eating Paleo. I still struggle on occasion with the decision not to eat grains, soy, rice, and dairy. Maybe it’s because I don’t picture sad cow eyes when the urge to eat a bowl of cereal hits. It also strikes me as unfair that wanting to chow down on some Moroccan couscous—something I used to tell myself was healthy—is now off-limits.

The bottom line is that while the muggles of the world wonder at the willpower required not to eat meat, most vegetarians would agree that when you have your reasons firmly in place for why you’re choosing not to eat meat, fish, and/or dairy, it’s easier to stay the course. It doesn’t mean the desire to eat meat may not still be there for some, but it’s easier to stay behind that hard line you’ve drawn in the sand and not stray.

Choosing to Eat Paleo

So let’s translate that mindset to the Paleo Vegetarian diet. What can we do—what can *you* do—to draw that mental line in the sand that says, “I choose to eat this way because I want to. Not because I have to, not because I’m forcing myself to, not because I think this is the only avenue left for me to lose weight and I’m desperate, but because this is the choice that makes sense for me, my life, my values, and how I choose to live and exist on this planet.”

Eating PV will be easier and become a lifestyle if you are clear upfront about why you’re making these choices. There’s nothing wrong with admitting you’re eating PV as a trial, or simply as a short-term measure to lose weight. If anything, telling yourself the truth will make it easier for the duration you decide to stay in. Personally, I know I’m more likely to stay committed to something—anything—if I know I’m only in it for a limited duration.

“Hold the squat for 30 more seconds. You can do anything for 30 seconds!” says my trainer at the gym. It’s the same thing with starting a new diet regime. Set your time frame and commit to it. Decide to eat PV for one day. You can do anything for one day. Then go for one week. You can tough anything out for one week. If that works for you, try two weeks. Then a month, and so on.

Where I don’t want you to falter is by declaring, “Starting tomorrow, I shall eat Paleo Vegetarian from now until the end of time!” and then instantly regret the decision as soon as you crave ice cream.

Although it may not always come across, I am a believer in balance. And if you tell me I can never, ever eat pizza, ice cream, or a slice of my Aunt Jo's hot-from-the-oven apple turnovers sprinkled in powdered sugar ever again...? Well, game over people.⁴

I'm guessing it's the same for you. You may try to eat PV for a day or two, but the eternal enormity of what you've undertaken will get to you sooner rather than later, and you will fail the diet and the diet will fail you. I'd prefer that *not* happen. So what's the solution? Keep reading.

Why Can't I Just Stay Vegetarian and Lose Weight?

I like a world of absolutes. Eat this, not that! Do this exercise and watch that muscle develop! Up is up and down is down!

Unfortunately, there are few absolutes in life and the “good/bad” argument for almost any way of eating can be made. The fact is, most diets out there will get you weight loss—IF you're able to follow them. That “if” is the downfall of many of us. We're a nation that enthusiastically embraced the liquid diet once we saw Oprah lose the weight. But none of us—including Oprah—could stick with it. I personally haven't tried a lot of the rogue diets, but I've read that even eating a diet of nothing but, say, cereal or an all-fruit diet will shed the pounds. Once again, this probably works only if you're able to stick to the diet's limitations, with what I would imagine is a drastically reduced calorie count. You'll lose weight on an 800-calorie-a-day diet of candy, but who can live like that?

Still, most people appear to be of the persuasion that eating a vegetarian diet is a good way to lose weight. I suspect that's because most people assume vegetarians are super healthy, but, as we've discussed, that's not always the case.

Once I started paying attention to people who did eat a seemingly *very* healthy vegetarian diet—low fat, whole grains, lots of fruit—I noticed something. These weren't the super-slim people of the world. In fact, most of them had girth, especially in the belly area. And what I saw happen body-wise to the children of a close friend truly made me start questioning the value of a vegetarian diet based on grains.

My former yoga instructor is a lifelong vegetarian, one of those granola people who converted when she was ten. She and her husband—a meat eater—have three kids, three years apart in age. Everyone was impressed by the diet regime of these kids. Voluntarily, they refused soda when it was offered to them. They snacked on cauliflower and fresh cherry tomatoes. They requested tofu for dinner. They loved couscous and bulgur and sprouted-grain bread. They were the models of healthy eating.

And yet.

I moved away from the town where my instructor taught but reconnected with her several years later via Facebook. At this point, her kids were probably 13, 10, and 7 in age. And when I saw pictures of the kids, my jaw dropped. All three of them were huge.

This is not due to apathy. These kids are involved in football and dance and soccer and all sorts of sports. The family is active and goes hiking and camping on weekends. I can't imagine anything

happened where my friend suddenly broke down and started feeding her kids fried food. And indeed, her Facebook page is filled with links to the vegetarian (all heavily grain-based) meals she's preparing each week.

My takeaway is that grains are bloating the hell out of these kids.

I've watched other friends go through a similar experience. Several of my running friends attempted vegetarian diet only to abandon it less than a year later because, even with all the running, they kept gaining weight. These are disciplined people running 50 miles a week—and they kept going up on the scale once they became vegetarians and replaced meat with grains.

Obviously this is a highly biased and unscientific sample, but my belief is that grains, soy, and dairy—but especially grains—are toxic to our bodies when ingested in large amounts. And most every vegetarian I know bases his or her meals on grains. I do think that the 80/20 principle, making sure we're only ingesting a bit of the bad with a steady diet of the good, is the most effective way to feel healthy, look good, and lose weight. Using this rule as a guideline (see [Chapter 8](#)), most any food can have a place in our lives.

-
- 1 Not to burst your bubble, but no, you're not. Here's a good test: If upon hearing your goals friends either laugh *or* give you a pitying look and place a hand on your shoulder and say, "Of course you will!" you may not have set a realistic goal.
 - 2 Don't judge me. This was before Google so there was no way to know most beer was nonvegetarian.
 - 3 This is not true of everyone. I have numerous committed vegetarian friends who admit they still find it hard to live without bacon and who look longingly at a steak while eating their braised tofu salad.
 - 4 Can you eat all these things and still stay lean and healthy? Yes, with caveats. We'll cover that in Chapter 8: [Cheat Days and the 80/20 Principle](#).

Chapter 2

How PV Do You Want to Be?

At one point in my life, for eight months, I went vegan. Even before that though, when I was a vegetarian who eschewed all meats and seafood but still indulged in honey, eggs, and cheese, I was pretty intolerant of vegetarians who weren't as devoted as me. Call it snobbery or elitism, but I refused to recognize that cutting red meat out of a diet but still eating chicken, turkey, and fish counted as being a vegetarian. Or, my favorite, a coworker who told anyone who would listen how much better she felt since she had switched to a vegetarian diet, but who could be counted on to order a hamburger every time we went out to lunch. (When I finally asked her about it, she explained to me that she was a vegetarian except for the times she ate meat. Swear to God.)

Even as I was looking down my nose at others, I recognized the hypocrisy of my actions. I personally came to vegetarianism in stages. For the first five years, the only foods I gave up were red meat and pork. Then—against the pleas and wishes of my then husband—I ditched chicken and turkey. After eight years of that, I gave up fish, sometimes wavering on whether or not shellfish counted.⁵ I finally abandoned all fish and, for a brief time, made the jump to vegan.

Vegan was hard for me. I simply didn't have the moral boundaries with eggs and honey as I had with thighs and wings. Chickens were going to lay eggs and bees were going to make honey whether I partook of them or not. I did stand behind the moral argument that the *manner* in which most consumer eggs and honey are collected from animals are, in a word, appalling. But when our neighbors up the street offered us fresh eggs from their chickens, Trudy and Lunch,⁶ and I could pick up honey at our local farmer's market from a man who, stating it mildly, LOVED his bees, I found my interest in being vegan waning.

These days, I'm much more of the mindset that everyone is doing the best they can. It's none of my business if someone is religious about sticking to their no-meat pledge or if they use it as a fluctuating guideline. Just as it's no one's concern if I still enjoy the occasional wheat- and sugar-laden bagel as a treat. (And for the record, oh yeah, I do.) My life, my rules.

Of course, reasonable people will disagree. I'm all in favor of educating people on the atrocious conditions animals in this country endure, but my hard-earned experience over the years is that in-your-face preaching and condemning does little to change people's actions. What *does* get people's attention is looking healthy, having energy, and enjoying an active life. Combine that with being willing to engage in reasonable, nonaccusatory conversations about diet choices and the reasons you chose to eat the way you do, and you have the makings of the type of conversations that can change minds and change lives.⁷

With that being said, just as there are different types of vegetarians, so too are there different levels of types of Paleo eaters. Where do you fall on the ladder? To help you decide, let's do a quick, cursory

overview of the variations found in both camps. We'll start hardcore and work our way back to the more flexible options.

Different Types of Vegetarians

VEGAN: The bane of chefs everywhere, vegans are nonetheless the badasses of the vegetarian world. Aside from no meat, fish, or fowl, most (but not all) vegans also forgo the use of animal products such as leather or silk.⁸

LACTO VEGETARIAN: No meat, fish, fowl, or eggs, but cheese and dairy are acceptable.

OVO VEGETARIAN: I could never be an ovo vegetarian just because I think of the word “ovulation” every time I see the term and erupt in a disheartening array of elementary-school giggles. Ovo (hee-hee-hee) vegetarians are the ying to the lacto yang. They do not eat meat, fish, fowl, or dairy. They do, however, consume eggs.

LACTO-OVO VEGETARIAN: This is what most people mean when they say they're a vegetarian. No meat, fish, or fowl, but dairy, eggs, and cheese are okay.

PESCATARIAN: Considered by some to be “pseudo” or “semi” vegetarians, pescatarians do not eat red or white meat or fowl but live to dine out at Red Lobster. Kidding. But this group is okay with eating fish and shellfish.

POLLOTARIAN: Again considered by some to be “semi” vegetarians (but not us, because we're not here to judge people, right?) the pollotarian does not eat red meat, fish, or seafood. Instead, they consume only poultry and fowl.

There are, of course, people who don't fit easily into any group. For example, there was a brief time period when I didn't eat red or white meat or fish or cheese, but I did eat shellfish and eggs. Or there are people who for the most part stick with a plant-based diet but occasionally see nothing wrong with eating a hamburger if they're craving one. Some people refer to these mixed plant-based diets as “flexitarian,” some don't consider them vegetarians, and some people who follow these mixed-vegetarian diets consider themselves full-fledged vegetarians.

As long as you have your own reasons straight in your head for choosing whichever path you're on, it really shouldn't matter if you fit directly into a single group or not.

Different Types of Paleoists

You may be surprised (or not) to learn there's a similar scale for people who practice a Paleo diet. The classifications aren't as defined or accepted as the vegetarian ones, but the trend is moving in that direction. For the purposes of this book, I've commissioned my own classification system.

HARDCORE: The vegans of the Paleo world, these are the people that follow a Paleo diet to the letter, including giving up all alcohol. All meat is grass-fed. All seafood is wild-caught. They buy their food in-season and do their best to live as our ancestors did on a true Paleo “caveman” diet. Would they go

so far as to club their own meat and bring it back to their man cave (if that were an option)? Quite possibly, maybe.

PRIMAL: Mark's Daily Apple (www.marksdailyapple.com) is the bible of the Primal world and well worth reading even for those following a PV versus a traditional Primal diet. (The level of medical physiology on the site behind how what we eat affects our bodies is as well researched and impressive as I've found anywhere.) Primal differs from Paleo in that it allows for limited dairy, including small amounts of goat cheeses and full-fat products such as butter and heavy cream (good news for coffee drinkers!). Limited alcohol with a preference for red wine is also tolerated and even encouraged. Primal is also more relaxed about eating saturated fats from things like coconut oil and eggs. The biggest difference is that the Paleo diet is almost 100 percent about diet while Primal followers consider the guidelines they follow more of a comprehensive plan for living that includes getting enough sleep, small movements throughout the day, stress management, etc.

MODIFIED PALEO: Some people modify a Paleo diet to reach certain goals. For example, people looking to get lean will often rule out Paleo-approved starches such as sweet potatoes or squash due to the higher carbohydrate count of these foods. Some Paleoists avoid fruits for the same reason: high sugar count that works against weight loss. Some eat a hardcore Paleo diet but make an exception for wine or beer.

THE "MORE OR LESS" PALEOIST: This group eats a primarily Paleo or primal diet but leaves the door open for hedging. Some people follow an "80/20" principle (which we'll discuss in [Chapter 8](#)) where they eat Paleo or Primal 80 percent of the time but don't lose sleep if they eat a piece of Mom's apple pie or pancakes every now and again.

As you can see, just as there is no "right" or "wrong" way to be vegetarian, there is no "right" or "wrong" way to be Paleo. The hardcore Paleoists will, of course, argue that point, but I'm going to go back to the "my life, my rules" options. A diet won't work for you unless it *works* for you. If you demand sheer perfection of yourself but find you're slipping off the diet every day by 3 p.m. because it's just too hard, then that's not the right diet for you.

What Kind of Paleo Vegetarian Do You Want to Be?

So now we get to it. What kind of Paleo Vegetarian diet will you follow? The answer is probably already predetermined by where you are now with your level of vegetarianism, but it's worth taking a moment to consider your answer for this reason: You're going to be cutting out a lot of your regular protein sources on a PV diet. Successfully sustaining a PV lifestyle will be immensely easier if you eat eggs and fish or seafood of some kind. That being said, I don't want or expect anyone to give up on firmly held principles. If you're a lacto vegetarian, then chances are you'll be a Paleo-lacto vegetarian or a Primal-lacto-ovo vegetarian. That's a little cumbersome, however, so for the intents and purpose of this book, we'll stick with the PV title for everyone.

WHY MEAT-EATING PALEO PEOPLE AREN'T THE ENEMY

I almost titled this sidebar, “Can’t we all just get along?”

For the life of me, I can’t understand why Paleo folks and vegetarians position themselves at opposite ends of the spectrum. I mean, okay, I *get* it, as meat is a big deal to both groups, for opposing reasons. But it turns out that we really aren’t that far apart. We might not be ready for the group hug, but we’re getting there...

Ask people what sort of person they think of when they hear the word “vegetarian,” and most likely what will come is the image of the hippie. Granola-loving, bell-bottomed, long-haired, peace sign-waving, carrying-spiders-out-of-the-house-instead-of-smooshing-them-with-their-shoe-like-normal-people hippies.

Would you say that’s an accurate description of you and your vegetarian friends? I know for a fact that the “live and let live” vegetarian stereotype doesn’t apply to me. I have a deal with all spiders, crickets, cockroaches, and ants: If I’m in their territory, out in nature, they have free rein to live long and prosper. The minute they cross the threshold of my condo, game on. I will squish a spider with the best of them. It’s called survival of the fittest and I won’t apologize. (I also wouldn’t be able to sleep if I knew I let a big hairy spider scurry away in my bathroom when it was in my power to stop him.) Does this make me a lesser person? Maybe. But it also means I’ve never conformed to the “hippie” version of a vegetarian so many uninformed people carry.

By the same token, Paleoists do not fit the stereotype of chest-thumping, meat-worshipping carnivores. When I started investigating Paleo, I was *amazed* by how much Paleoists and vegetarians have in common. That’s right, I said it.

The truth is, most true Paleoists, while obviously not eschewing meat, care a great deal about how the animals their meat comes from are treated and raised. They are as appalled by McDonald’s burgers and Oscar Mayer deli slices (full of nitrates and preservatives) as any card-wielding vegetarian. Many of them refuse to eat any meat that doesn’t come from grass-fed, humanely raised animals. Yes, there’s still a seemingly irreconcilable difference between the two factions, but as a whole, I’ve found the Paleo world to be filled with people who express sincere concern and dismay for the current treatment of animals for commercial-meat purposes, and who refuse to participate in the buying chain.

Bean-Eating PV?

While I leave it up to you to choose the level of vegetarianism you’ll engage in, I strongly suggest you abandon the hardcore Paleo plan, specifically for the reason that allowing some properly prepared beans into your diet will help form a non-animal protein base. Beans can go a long way in helping you find a quick and simple way to ingest some protein. It’s not textbook, but you know what? Neither is not eating meat on a Paleo diet, and we’re already breaking that rule so why not push the envelope? Besides, I’m willing to bet money the Paleo police don’t show up at your door.

To wrap up, you’ll notice in the recipe section that there are options for various levels of PV. Some of the recipes call for eggs or include fish or dairy, and several include beans. There are also recipes that are more stringently in line with a full Paleo Vegetarian hard-line diet. Modify as necessary to meet your PV needs. Remember, the reason you picked up this book is most likely because you want to lose weight in a healthy way, and there is nothing healthy about a lack of protein in a diet.

5 I pretty much decided it counted unless someone set a big ol’ platter of lobster or crab legs with a side of hot butter in front of me. Then it didn’t count. Hmm. Maybe I have more in common with my old coworker than I realize...

6 Trudy and Lunch were much-loved pets and pampered, to boot, with a chicken crib that would not have been out of place on *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. They also loved to be held and petted. Nothing cracked me up more than seeing my neighbor go into his yard and call out, “Here Lunch, here Lunch!” and watch this affectionate chicken come running.

7 As an aside, I’ll share that the more I try to withhold information, the more people want to know. When asked why I didn’t eat meat, I’d answer, “Oh, you don’t want to hear me get on my bandwagon about that,” and people who were standing with arms crossed would drop them and say, “No, I really would like to know.” Or I’d say, “I won’t go into details because it’s pretty bad, but once I found out what laying chickens in this country go through, I just couldn’t buy regular eggs,” and they’d say, “Really? Like what?” Let the education begin.

8 So maybe I was never a real vegan. We owned leather couches and at the time I was vegan I recall I had a *smokin’* hot pair of leather high-heeled boots.

Chapter 3

A Primer on Why No Grains, Why No Beans (and Answers to Your Most Pressing Questions on Other PV Foods)

These days it seems as if everyone is jumping on the gluten-free train. Walk down any grocery aisle in America and you won't get more than two feet before your eyes are bombarded with an excess of gluten-free packaging. Everything from frozen waffles to protein bars dangle before us the glittering allure of a gluten-free world.

Gluten-free is not grain-free, however. To illustrate the point, remember in the '90s when America was in the grips of a fat-free frenzy, stuffing SnackWell cookies down our throats at an unprecedented rate? The overindulgence (ten cookies in a sitting instead of two) actually prompted something called “The SnackWell Effect,” which is a term for how people go overboard when they think they're being given a free pass. We thought not having fat in our food was the answer, yet that was the decade when the American waistline seriously swelled up.

These days, we find ourselves in a similar situation with gluten. People read “gluten-free” and think they're home free. It's the SnackWell Effect all over again. Just because a food is labeled “gluten-free” doesn't make it nutritious. More importantly, it also doesn't automatically make that food Paleo-approved.

So what is Paleo and what are the guidelines? Below is a quick overview of the theories behind the most questioned “no grains/no beans” rules of Paleo, as well as rationale and guidelines on other foods often questioned on the Paleo diet. This is not a comprehensive list or scientific study. It's a general overview to get you started. As you enter the world of Paleo, I recommend a deeper dive into the science behind why certain foods are encouraged and others banned. Understanding how food works on our bodies is especially helpful for some of the Paleo gray areas such as white rice, potatoes, and green beans. When you understand and pay attention to how your body reacts to these foods, you have the information necessary to decide whether or not to make them a part of your diet.

If you take away nothing else from this book, take this: In order to more easily lose weight—without feeling hungry—you want to become a fat-burning machine.

What's Wrong with Grains?

Let's start with the big one, the concept that makes would-be Paleoists cringe: no grains. Cereals, whole-grain toast and bagels, steel-cut oats, quinoa (quinoa!), and all our other favorites are suddenly forbidden. But why?

Grains contain gluten, which is a sticky, water-soluble protein found in cereal grains such as wheat,

barley, and rye. But wait—gluten is a protein. Protein is good, right? So what’s the problem?

The problem is that gluten is an inflammatory protein. It causes irritation to the gut lining and can lead to the not-so-pleasant sounding “leaky gut syndrome.” In addition, grains such as wheat, barley, and rye contain antinutrients that prevent your body from absorbing the healthy nutrients you’re feeding it.

In the Paleo world, you’ll frequently hear grains referred to as “toxic.” This is usually a reference to the phytic acid (aka phytate) also found in grains. Phytic acid is one of the antinutrients that prevent the proper digestion of food. Diets high in phytic acid, such as your typical American diet with its emphasis on whole-grain foods, cause mineral deficiencies by blocking the absorption of calcium, iron, copper, zinc, and magnesium.

Toxicity aside, when it comes to weight loss, grains are a serious inhibitor given their high carbohydrate content. When carbohydrates enter the body, they are broken down into glucose or sugar in the blood, creating a giant leap in insulin production. This insulin leap not only leads to “crash and burns” (think of the 2 p.m. slump you have at your desk after a big lunch), but your body will store any excess glucose as fat.

If you take away nothing else from this book, take this. In order to more easily lose weight—without feeling hungry—you want to become a fat-burning machine. *Fat burning*. Most everyone walking around eating the typical “healthy” American diet—even the skinny people—are sugar-burning machines. Burning fat instead of sugar holds numerous advantages, including:

- Sustained energy throughout the day
- Lack of carb/sugar cravings
- The ability to exercise longer and harder
- No need to “carbo-load” before a workout
- The ability to miss meals without getting cranky, hungry, or crashing

How do you burn fat instead of sugar? You reduce the amount of sugar you put into your body. As sugar and carbs typically go hand in hand, reducing the intake of one typically leads to reducing the intake of the other.

Here’s the deal. The body can only store so much glucose, so it’s not a dependable energy source. Also, when glucose is gone, that’s when you find yourself ravenous. This creates a vicious cycle. Your body sends out cravings for carbs. You eat more carbs than you can store. The extra glucose created from the carbs is stored as fat. When you do exercise, the first thing burned is the small amount of stored glucose. This starts the cycle of hunger and carb cravings all over again.

When you’re a fat-burning machine, your body holds onto its small store of glucose for as long as possible, burning through fat *first* and only getting to stored glucose if it’s really needed, such as at the end of a high-intensity sprint workout. With your body looking to fat (instead of sugar) for energy, you’ll miss out on those insistent hunger pains, making weight loss easier.

How do you know if you're burning fat rather than sugar? Your hunger levels are the easiest measurement. People who are fat burners can easily go for hours without feeling hungry. Missed meals are no big deal. Sugar burners, when they miss a meal, will feel the very real pangs of hunger—those stabs in the stomach that let you know it's time to eat, NOW. Fat burners may think food sounds good, but if they miss a meal those hunger pangs don't occur.

Another way to measure fat-versus-sugar burning is through your workouts. One of the biggest myths out there is that we need to eat a good meal or snack before we exercise. The truth is, most people aren't doing anywhere near the level of exercise they'd need to have their glycogen stores replenished by the copious amounts of carbs they're eating. If you can get up in the morning and work out on an empty stomach, or do a hard workout without carbo-loading or in a fasted state, congrats. You, my friend, are a fat-burning machine.

If you're not there yet, don't worry. The good news is you can train your body to become a fat-burning machine, and the Paleo Vegetarian diet does just that.

PSEUDOGRAINS

Vegetarians have a closer relationship to pseudograins than most people, so we often have a harder time giving these up. Amaranth, buckwheat, couscous, and quinoa are staples in our kitchens. And let's not forget other grains like spelt, triticale, Kamut, farro, and oats. And yes, even though these were pushed on us as being “power foods,” they are all banned from the Paleo diet.

How do pseudograins differ from regular grains? Pseudograins are the seeds of broadleaf plants. Regular grains, by comparison, are the seeds of grasses. While these pseudograins are gluten-free (wait—make that GLUTEN-FREE!), they bring their own problems to the table, including chemical compounds that cause similar digestive and inflammation issues as cereal grains.

In addition, some of these grains (spelt, triticale, Kamut, and farro) still contain gluten. Oats are theoretically gluten-free but are subject to cross-contamination with wheat gluten from processing facilities. Oats also contain similar amounts of phytic acid as found in wheat, which, as we just learned, is a no-no. Bottom line? No grains.

Why No Beans?

If the lack of grains in a Paleo diet elicits the most sobs from carb lovers, beans run a close second, especially among vegetarians who see beans as the Holy Grail of protein.

“Why no beans? Beans aren't junk food!” exclaimed an indignant vegetarian friend when I explained the basis of the PV diet to him. He looked at me as if I'd just insulted his mother.

You can understand his outrage. It's easy to look at pizza crust as the enemy, harder to reconcile “lentil soup” as something harmful.

Let's first go broader in our understanding of “beans” and use the term “legumes.” In the broadest sense, a legume is a bean, pea, lentil, or peanut. (That peanut part will become important when we go

to the other Holy Grail of a typical vegetarian diet—peanut butter.) Beans don't contain gluten, so we're safe there. They do, however, contain phytates, the same antinutrient found in grains that prevents the absorption of healthy nutrients.

Like grains and pseudograins, beans are inflammatory to our systems. The quickest way to observe this is the gassy effect beans have on people. I used to joke that after 20 years as a vegetarian, I had a stomach of steel. I could eat a bowl of beans, follow it up with some eggs and still not have to excuse myself from the room. However, after following a Paleo diet and now eating only the occasional legume, I can see (bloat) and feel (gassy) the effect they have on my body.

Like grains, beans are also high in carbohydrates, making it a challenge to lose weight when large quantities are consumed. Many vegetarians who favor beans over bread are puzzled as to why the weight sticks around. It's not just beans themselves, but it's the quantity we eat. Nuts also contain phytic acid, but most people aren't subsisting on a meal of almonds, so the few carbs and phytates they get from a handful of almonds aren't overly impactful. It's not unusual, however, to have a cup more of pinto beans as a side dish or black beans as the base for the new vegetarian burrito recipe you just found. Beans deliver a wallop of carbohydrates because we eat them in mass quantity.

There's evidence that soaking, sprouting, or fermenting beans helps reduce the amount of phytates they contain. If you're following a PV diet for health and not weight loss, you may want to experiment and see how your system handles the inclusion of beans in your diet. Although high in carbs, beans do provide an easy source of protein. Just take care to read up on the processes available to break down the phytates before you consume the beans.

Commonly Questioned Foods

There are a number of non-Paleo foods that leave people scratching their heads. Are they allowed or aren't they? If so, how much? And if they're not allowed, why the heck not? Below we address some of the most frequently asked questions about common foods.

NUTS

As just mentioned, nuts contain phytic acid, that pesky inhibitor of healthy nutrients. In fact, nuts typically contain more concentrated levels of phytic acid than either grains or legumes. Say whaaaaat! So why are nuts allowed while beans aren't?

In a word, quantity. Nuts are meant to be snacks. Eating ten almonds or cashews a day is a lot different from tucking into a big bowl of black bean tortilla soup.

There are two things to understand about phytic acid. One is that although it's often demonized, humans can tolerate phytic acid in small amounts, e.g., in a small serving of nuts. The other point is that phytic acid has to come in contact with minerals and nutrients in order to prevent their absorption. So, if you're snacking on nuts, the best thing to do is to eat them separately from other foods. Have a handful of almonds or a couple of macadamia nuts as a midmorning snack, but don't eat them with your meals.

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