

# Clean and Unclean Foods In The Bible: Does Leviticus 11 Still Apply?

Annette Reeder

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Imagine if you could sit down with God and have Him explain, in detail, exactly what you should be eating – and not eating – in order to enjoy abundant health.

Wouldn't that be amazing?

You wouldn't have any confusion about your diet. You would approach each meal with joy and confidence, knowing you are truly nourishing and nurturing your body the way God intended.

What more, you would *know* that you were stewarding your body well unto the Lord, and would feel healthy, fit, and energetic as a result, operating exactly the way God made you to.

Does it sound too good to be true?

Guess what?

*It isn't!*

In fact, Scripture is *full* of just this type of conversation, weaving and threading through each verse and every chapter of the Bible.

And that's what I'll be showing you in today's article.

We'll look at:

- What Biblically clean foods to eat
- What foods the Bible says you should not eat – and why
- The most powerful, health-giving [foods the Bible talks about](#), and how eating them every day can bless your health and kickstart a Bible-based health plan.

Let's dive in!

## What Are Clean And Unclean Foods In The Bible?



Clean and unclean foods scriptures are found throughout the Bible, and range from brief mentions (Ezekiel 4:9, Proverbs 24:13) to broad and detailed lists of clean, healthy foods and harmful, unclean foods (Leviticus

11, Deuteronomy 14).

For instance:

In the beginning of Genesis, we learn that God created every plant yielding seed and every tree yielding fruit to be “clean” food (Gen. 1:29-30).

We see the conversation continue in Genesis 9:3 (post-flood), where God explained that everything that lived and moved about was to be food for us (Gen. 9:3).

He also graciously clarified the exception to that, which was meat that still possessed lifeblood – or living animals – as their life is existent in their blood.

And in Leviticus 11, He gave us *ultimate* clarity on what is considered clean when it comes to animals, fish, and even insects:

- *“You may eat any animal that has a split hoof completely divided and that chews the cud.*
- *“Of all the creatures living in the water of the seas and the streams, you may eat any that have fins and scales.*
- *“Of these you may eat any kind of locust, katydid, cricket, or grasshopper.” (Lev. 11:3, 9, 22)*

And He didn’t stop there.

## **What Food Did God Intend You To Eat?**





Scripture is positively bursting with examples of exactly what foods are clean, safe, and wholesome for us to eat... and what foods aren't.

For instance, in reading the Bible we find that men and women throughout ate a mostly plant-based diet with plenty of **herbs, lentils, beans, wheat, barley, fruits, and vegetables** (2 Samuel 17:28-29, Ezekiel 4:9, 2 Samuel 16:1).

They also ate **fish** (those with fins and scales), **nuts, and natural oils**. (Matthew 14:19, Deuteronomy 8:8, Genesis 43:11)

**Raw honey** was their natural source of sugar (Proverbs 24:13). They made their oil from the fruit of olive trees. And we see rich, healthful foods mentioned like **figs, pomegranates, and dates**. (1 Samuel 30:12).

They also ate meat. But because God had specified that they were only to eat cud-chewing animals with split hooves (Leviticus 11:3, Deuteronomy 14:6), they only consumed meat such as:

- Sheep (lamb, mutton)
- Cattle (beef)
- Goat
- Deer
- Bison



- Gazelle
- Ibex
- Antelope

**Turkey, chicken, and pheasants** were considered clean as well since they aren't found on the list of unclean foods – plus, we read how the Israelites ate **quail** in the desert (Exodus 16:13) – so we can conclude that people in the Bible ate them, too.

All these foods together created what we like to call [the Bible diet](#) – wholesome, nutritious, clean foods, created by God for you to enjoy and nurture your health with.

In fact, the more you learn about eating according to God's plan for health, the more you will see that food does more than just nourish your physical body:

It impacts all areas of your life, including emotionally, spiritually, and mentally. (For a deep-dive Bible study on this very concept, [click here](#).)

But just as God tells us what foods are good and safe to eat, He also shows us which aren't:

## What Foods Are Unclean That The Bible Says Not To Eat?



If we open up the Bible back to Leviticus, even a quick glance at chapter 11 makes it abundantly clear that not all food was created equal.

Many of the animals that God described as “unclean” were and continue to be exactly that: unclean or unfit for human consumption.

Why?

Well, take the scavenger animals for an example.

As many of us know, animals like lobsters and crabs are known as bottom dwellers.

They scavenge for dead animals along the ocean floor.

And shellfish such as mussels, oysters, and clams (all named as unclean fish in the Bible) consume dead, decaying matter as well as any sewage that sinks down to the ocean floor.

From these animals alone – which are on God’s list of forbidden foods in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 – we get a clear picture of why God didn’t intend us to eat them.

Here are a few more.

### **Unclean animals in the Bible:**

- *Pig*
- *Camel*
- *Rabbit*
- *Shellfish*
- *Eagle*
- *Vulture*
- *Falcon*
- *Raven*
- *Owl*
- *Hawk*
- *Bat*
- *Lizard*
- *Rat*

It’s quite an eye-opening list, isn’t it?

But why did God have to call them unclean?

## Why Did God Forbid Certain Foods In The Bible?



The truth?

While God didn't give us a word-by-word explanation as to *why* He called these animals unclean, rest assured: He had a good reason for it!

In fact, we know now that these animals do actually carry diseases and consume unclean diets themselves.

And in eating these "unclean" foods, you are eating everything that they consumed... from sewage to carcasses to decaying matter.

Crazy, right?

This *does* in fact have an effect on the body and it can inhibit the abundant physical life that God intended you to have.

And that's why He said to avoid them!

He's *that* good of a Father and *that* good of a Lord.

And His goodness doesn't stop there.

Remember how I said that Scripture is bursting with examples of clean, safe, wholesome foods to eat?



Let's discover some more of them!

## 15 Clean Foods To Eat Every Day



To get started, here's a list of some of the most powerful, health-giving foods the Bible mentions.

These are all **clean foods**, and can be eaten every day to ensure your body is getting all the necessary nutrients it needs.

Check them out:

- *Figs*
- *Dates*
- *Olives*
- *Pomegranates*
- *Grapes*
- *Bread*
- *Cruciferous vegetables*
- *Nuts*

- *Fish oils*
- *Lentils*
- *Leafy greens*
- *Apples*
- *Pumpkin seeds*
- *Fish oils*
- *Berries*

Unsurprisingly, each and every one of these foods are packed full of vital nutrients, minerals, and vitamins.

## The health benefits of clean Biblical power foods

For example, **figs** are a powerful source of fiber, magnesium, vitamin K, calcium, and potassium. They also have potent [anticancer and antioxidant properties](#)!

And **dates** – which people in Bible times made into honey – is a great natural sweetener. Use it instead of traditional sugar in things like cakes and smoothies. They are a rich source of **vitamin C, B vitamins, potassium, zinc, phosphorus, and calcium** as well.

**Olives** – a symbol of peace and God’s love for His people – are one of those magnificent foods the Bible talks about left and right, and one that has [amazing health benefits](#) to boot! They are natural antihistamines and help neutralize free radicals as well.

**Bread** too has a powerful background in the Bible and we find it mentioned all over Scripture. In fact, when the Lord visited Abraham in Genesis 18, *bread was among the foods that Abraham served Him to eat!*

Amazing, right?

And wheat berries, from which bread is made, is an incredible source of **minerals, antioxidants, and vitamins**, including **zinc, manganese, iron, phytic acid, vitamin E**, and more.

I know, it almost sounds too good to be true. But you know what?

These are only a *few* of the ways that eating foods according to God’s Word can bless your health and get you on God’s health plan.

In fact, the more you learn about the foods God meant for us to eat, the more amazed you’ll be at our wonderful Father.

He truly has provided all we need to experience abundant health!

# Getting On A Biblical-Based Health Plan



So, how do you get on God's health plan?

It's simple.

You *pattern* all aspects of your life according to His ways and His Word.

And yes, that includes the foods you eat!

This means **studying why God called certain foods unclean**, and learning which ones He intended mankind to eat and enjoying those instead!

You can get started in a free Biblical-health [crash course by clicking here](#).

## Conclusion

Let the Bible be your blueprint in discovering God's heart toward His children and the infinite care He has for every part of our lives, my friend. Diet included!

Remember David's timeless declaration: "**Your word is a lamp to my feet**, and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)

May it's illumination guide you into abundant health!

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## ANNETTE REEDER

Annette holds a B.S. in Nutrition plus a Diploma of Biblical Studies. She has been studying food, nutrition and medical science for over 30 years. *"I am here for one purpose, to awaken you to the simple vibrant health that God has designed for you!"*

### Older comments



Diane

June 8, 2024 at 9:41 pm

Hello, Diana. I agree that chickens (as well as turkeys) are not Biblically clean. After doing some extensive research, I recently discovered a few months ago that they are actually of the grouse family kind, which the Scriptures say in Leviticus are unclean (which, would make their eggs unclean as well).

Turkey, Chicken & Their Eggs Are Not Kosher

Apparently, (as with other things we learned growing up out of traditional ignorance) we grew up believing that chicken was considered 'food'. But, as we have discovered, according to Scripture, it appears that it is not.

Chickens (*Gallus Domesticus*-scientific name) are descendants of the red jungle fowl (*Gallus Gallus*-scientific name) who were domesticated. The original Hebrew word for lapwing in Leviticus 11:19, Strong's H1744 has as *dukiyphath*, which the definition has as: Of uncertain derivation; the hoopoe or else the grouse. When I looked up the family kind for grouse, both turkeys and chickens were listed as well as a few other named birds, including the jungle fowl, in that specific family. *Gallus* is Latin for rooster, which include the order of galliformes (the word derived from the Latin *gallus*).

## Annette Reeder

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