Back to Basics: The Paleo Diet and the Case for Eating Like Our Ancestors

By Laura R Poche

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# Chapter 1: The Evolution of the Human Diet

For most of human history, we were hunter-gatherers. We ate what we could hunt, fish, or forage—meat, fish, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds. Our bodies evolved on this diet over millions of years. Then came the Neolithic era, around 10,000 years ago, and everything changed.

The invention of agriculture introduced grains like wheat, rice, and corn. We began eating foods that required processing, storing, and cooking in new ways. On the surface, it looked like progress. Populations grew. Settlements became cities. But our bodies didn't evolve as fast as our farming techniques.

Grains were calorie-dense but nutrient-poor. They introduced anti-nutrients like lectins and phytates, which interfere with mineral absorption. Our shift from a diverse, whole-food diet to a grain-heavy one brought problems: tooth decay, shorter stature, reduced bone density, and signs of chronic illness not seen in earlier humans.

Later, the Industrial Revolution made things worse. Processed sugar, refined flour, and vegetable oils entered the food supply. We stopped eating real food and started eating products. Rates of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and autoimmune disorders climbed—conditions almost nonexistent in traditional hunter-gatherer societies.

The Paleo diet isn’t a trend. It’s a return to the foods our bodies were built for.

# Chapter 2: What the Paleo Diet Is—And What It Isn’t

The Paleo diet cuts out foods that humans didn’t eat before agriculture. That means no grains, legumes, dairy (in most versions), processed sugar, industrial seed oils, and highly processed foods. Instead, it focuses on:

- Meat (preferably pasture-raised, grass-fed)
- Fish (especially wild-caught, fatty fish)
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Nuts and seeds (in moderation)
- Natural fats (like olive oil, coconut oil, and animal fats)

Paleo isn’t about mimicking cavemen with stone tools—it’s about eating foods that don’t need ingredient labels. If it wasn’t available 10,000 years ago, it probably doesn’t belong on your plate.

That means ditching:

- Grains: Wheat, oats, corn, and rice.
- Legumes: Beans, lentils, soy, and peanuts.
- Refined sugar: Found in most packaged foods.
- Seed oils: Like canola, soybean, corn, and sunflower oil.
- Factory-farmed meat: High in omega-6 fats, raised on grains and hormones.

Paleo is not zero-carb or high-protein by default. It’s flexible, depending on your needs. What matters most is food quality—and removing the junk.

# Chapter 3: Why Modern Foods Are Making Us Sick

Most supermarket shelves are stocked with food-like substances. They're made to be addictive, shelf-stable, and cheap—not nutritious.

Processed Foods: Stripped of nutrients, loaded with additives, and designed for overconsumption. They're easy calories but empty ones.

Seed Oils: These highly refined oils (canola, soy, corn) are cheap, unstable under heat, and packed with omega-6 fats that drive inflammation. They didn’t exist in the human diet until about 100 years ago—and now they’re in almost everything.

Refined Sugar: Your ancestors might have found honey once or twice a year. Today, the average American eats over 70 pounds of added sugar a year. Sugar spikes insulin, drives fat gain, fuels cravings, and disrupts metabolic health.

Grains and Gluten: Grains are often marketed as health foods, but they spike blood sugar and can trigger inflammation. Gluten, in particular, damages the gut lining in sensitive people and may contribute to leaky gut and autoimmune disease.

Conventional Meat: Meat is not the problem—how it’s raised is. Factory-farmed animals are fed grains, pumped with antibiotics, and raised in cramped conditions. Their fat profile is unhealthy, and their nutrient density is lower than animals raised on pasture.

The common thread here: we’re eating foods our bodies don’t recognize, and we’re paying the price.

# Chapter 4: Living Paleo in the Modern World

Eating Paleo isn’t about being perfect—it’s about making better choices, most of the time.

Start simple:
- Base your meals around protein and plants.
- Buy the best quality meat you can afford. Grass-fed, pasture-raised, and wild-caught matter.
- Ditch industrial oils. Cook with ghee, butter, coconut oil, or olive oil.
- Cut out added sugars. That means sodas, sweetened snacks, and most boxed goods.
- Read ingredient lists. If you can’t pronounce it or picture it in nature, skip it.
- Batch cook and prep. Make Paleo meals easy and available, especially on busy days.

This isn’t about restriction—it’s about eating in a way that fuels you, supports your health, and respects your evolutionary biology.

You don’t need to be militant. You need to be intentional.

# About the Author

Laura Poche is a Certified Holistic Health Coach with a focus in Gut Health based in Ayurveda and author of “For the Love of Gut, an Introductory Guide to Loving Yourself from the Inside Out”. Laura’s battle with the autoimmune disorders described as Fibromyalgia and Hashimoto’s Hypothyroidism forced her to find a path to self healing that led her to the basis of her first book. Since 2012 Laura has sought healing through traditional western medicine, which only led to more disease caused by surgeries and prescriptions. In 2017 she started her holistic journey which led her to several different holistic professionals that helped her achieve a level of wellness she hadn’t experienced her entire life. Since finding some relief, Laura dove into finding the root cause of autoimmune disease that led her to a focus on gut health. Through tireless research she has found answers that has helped heal her own gut issues, silence the affects of autoimmune and given her the opportunity to share this information with others through holistic health coaching. Naples, Florida based health coach spends half the year in the Verde Valley of beautiful Arizona, it is here she is able to focus on writing, hiking and enjoying outdoor music festivals. She is a lifelong music and literature lover spending as much time writing and listening to music as possible, while still juggling her professional careers in coaching, writing and cooking.

# Resources & Further Reading

Loren Cordain – The Paleo Diet

Robb Wolf – The Paleo Solution

Chris Kresser – The Paleo Cure

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