



In recent years, the Paleo Diet trend has been gaining popularity - compelling us to reminisce on our caveman (and cavewoman) ancestors and how they lived. But does the trend really merit the hype?

In 1975 gastroenterologist Walter L. Voegtlin published "The Stone Age Diet," becoming one of the first modern advocates of this dietary approach. Since then, other scientists - such as Dr. Staffan Lindeberg from the Department of Medicine at the University of Lund in Sweden - have published research citing the wonders of The Caveman Diet. Dr. Staffan recently studied a tribe in New Guinea where the habitants live by the Paleolithic diet and have long, disease-free lives.

But what is this Paleo diet? Here are some of the main rules:

DO:

1. **Eat Fruits, Veggies and Nuts** - for vitamins, minerals and healthy fats.
2. **Eat Animal Protein** - e.g. organic, free-range chicken.
3. **Get Adequate Sleep** - to improve the immune system, and promote hormone release for healthy brain and endocrine function.
4. **Move frequently** - cavemen spent several hours each day moving around; this helped develop strong bones, joints, and connective tissue.
5. **Get outside** - this helps us two-fold: (1) It gets us regular sun exposure and vitamin D, and (2) It allows us to spend time outdoors, playing and relaxing with friends and loved ones – a perfect environment for mental stress relief.

DON'T:

1. **Eat Poisonous Foods** - Such as chemically altered sugars, salts, processed and chemically preserved foods, items with additives and grain oils.
2. **Eat a lot of grains** - Yes, that's right. The cavemen (and women) didn't have bread and pasta. They ate meats, fruits and vegetables.

Despite the seemingly strict rules of the Paleo diet, most people report losing 10 or more pounds in their first month and say they no longer feel bloated and sleepy after meals. Just ask Mark Sisson, an athlete, coach, and author of "The Primal Blueprint." At 55, he is 165lbs and 8% body fat. Mark eats as much food as he wants, and rarely gets sick. He says he's healthier, fitter, happier and more productive than ever.

But before you go all in, jumping on the bandwagon only to fall off after two days, I'd say start slowly. Here's how:

1. **Make Plants and Animals the Focus of Your Diet:** This will quickly lead to weight loss and increased energy. A plethora of colorful vegetables with your meals will do the trick.

2. **Eliminate Processed Food:** The simplest way to promote weight loss and to encourage good health is to eliminate processed foods from your diet. Replacing processed foods with fresh produce will give immediate results.

3. **Exercise:** You will need an outlet for all that extra energy, so acquire a new hobby that gets you moving. Cavemen (and women) weren't lazy - they had to hunt, gather and build fires to survive. So making exercise a part of your lifestyle is a must.

In today's society it may be tough to escape the chemically altered, deep fried, sugar laden foods – especially around the holidays – but it *can* be done and the benefits far exceed the effort. Give it a try and you be the judge.