



JJ VIRGIN'S

SUGAR IMPACT DIET

PALEO GUIDE

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INDEX

| | |
|--|-----------|
| What is a Paleo Diet? | 2 |
| Sugar Impact Diet Cycles | 5 |
| What Do I Eat? | 6 |
| The Sugar Impact Plate for Paleos | 13 |
| What Doesn't Belong in a Paleo Diet | 15 |
| Supplement Plan for Paleo Diets | 19 |
| Recipes | 21 |

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Welcome to The Sugar Impact Diet Goes Paleo!

Unless you've lived under a rock the past few years, you know a Paleolithic diet has become huge for fat loss and great health.

"How does The Sugar Impact Diet stack up with a Paleo diet?" someone will occasionally ask me. I'll explain a few key differences in this guide, but overall their philosophies merge seamlessly. Eating whole foods becomes the driving point behind both plans.

If you're doing a Paleo diet, implementing the principles in *The Sugar Impact Diet* can help you take things up a notch and maybe even break through a stubborn fat-loss plateau.

On The Sugar Impact Diet but remain curious about what a Paleo diet entails? This guide will help you better understand its philosophy without dogma or confusion.

As I often say, The Sugar Impact Diet is completely agnostic. Whether you are a vegan or strict Paleo, the plan's low-Sugar Impact foods will help you overcome weight loss resistance, break your monotony, and help you attain fast, lasting fat loss.

Let's get started!



What is a Paleo Diet?



For hundreds of thousands of years, we were hunters and gatherers. We ate raw nuts and seeds, wild animals that were not domesticated or fed grain, and wild fish. We also ate fruits and vegetables, depending on the season. If we could find an egg, we ate it too, but that didn't happen on a consistent basis.

Granted, our hunter-gatherer ancestors ate things we wouldn't eat today like dirt and worms. They didn't just go for the white meat either: When they slaughtered an elk or other animal, they typically ate the whole thing, even brains and hearts.

About 10,000 years ago, we introduced grains into our diet. We also started keeping domesticated animals, which meant that some cultures were eating dairy and eggs on a regular basis. Soy came into our food supply only about 2,000 –3,000 years ago.

That may sound like an eternity ago, but in the bigger picture, it's just a blip in the radar. Many nutritional experts argue this is why many of us have trouble digesting grains, dairy, soy, and even eggs: We just haven't had time for our bodies to adapt to that way of eating.

We certainly haven't had time to adapt to the processed, high-Sugar Impact Frankenfoods so prevalent in the modern American diet. Your ancestors wouldn't recognize cupcakes, whole grain crackers, and the zillion other concoctions that line supermarket shelves today and pass as food.

A Paleo diet mimics the diet your Paleolithic, or hunter-gatherer, ancestors ate thousands of years ago. While historians have a pretty good clue about what Paleo humans ate, they aren't entirely certain, nor would we eat certain things today like worms or insects. (At least I hope you don't!)

In other words, there's no Paleo "gospel," and depending on whom you ask, you'll get slight variations of the diet. On what nearly everyone agrees is what hunter-gatherers didn't eat: Wheat, soy, and corn would not be Paleo foods. Obviously, neither would high-Sugar Impact foods, artificial sweeteners, and other twentieth-century inventions that benefit manufacturers even as they jeopardize our health.

My friend Dr. Jonny Bowden gives the best definition of a Paleo diet that I've heard. "In the ideal diet," he says, "you would eat only what you could hunt, fish, gather, pluck, grow, or otherwise milk... The closer a food is to the way nature created it, the better it is for your health."

Benefits of a Paleo Diet

A Paleo diet incorporates the whole, unprocessed, low-Sugar Impact foods nature intended us to eat. Because you bypass high-Sugar Impact foods, you eliminate added sugar, trans fat, preservatives, and other ingredients that wreck your health.

Healthy fats, protein, and fiber in a Paleo diet help balance blood sugar, optimizing insulin and other hormonal levels. Efficiently running hormones mean your brain gets the message to stop eating, you don't have cravings, and you have the lean, muscular physique Paleo humans maintained.

Studies show a Paleo diet superior to other diets. One found a Paleo diet could improve [glycemic control and several cardiovascular risk factors](#) in people with diabetes compared to a conventional diabetes diet.

Another showed [even doing a Paleo diet for a short time](#) "improves blood pressure and glucose tolerance, decreases insulin secretion, increases insulin sensitivity and improves lipid profiles without weight loss in healthy sedentary humans."

A Paleo diet can even help you lose fat faster. One study found that, calorie for calorie, eating Paleo can [keep you fuller better](#) than a Mediterranean diet. As the Paleo diet gains popularity, further studies will likely validate these and other benefits.

How Does a Paleo Diet Compare with The Sugar Impact Diet?

You'll quickly find The Sugar Impact Diet overlaps significantly with a Paleo diet. Sure, you'll find some key differences, but overall the modus operandi in both plans involves real, whole, unprocessed foods and steering clear of high-Sugar Impact foods.

"Eat real food" ultimately becomes the motto for a Paleo diet and The Sugar Impact Diet. "In my experience, everyone who eats this way has their own variation of a caveman-like diet and I say that's fine," writes Leanne Ely in *Part-Time Paleo*. "The one thing that everyone agrees on is that it's real food all the time – no pseudo foods."

Most Paleo plans do a great job maintaining Sugar Impact principles: keeping fructose in check, sticking with low-glycemic foods, choosing high-fiber foods, and implementing the most nutrient dense choices. These qualities determine a food's Sugar Impact, and you'll find many Paleo-approved foods make the low-Sugar Impact list in *The Sugar Impact Diet*.

A few minor deviations exist between the plans, which I want to briefly clarify. Theoretically, a Paleo diet would allow unlimited amounts of whole foods like bananas and potatoes; foods that, depending on what cycle you're doing, I want you to limit or eliminate on The Sugar Impact Diet. I'll discuss these deviations more fully in the appropriate sections.

Especially as you enter Cycle 2, you'll want to become cognizant about what fruits, starches, and other foods fall into medium- and high-Sugar Impact categories. These foods may be "Paleo legal," but they might contain too much fructose, have a higher glycemic load, or otherwise knock them out of the low-Sugar Impact category.

Key differences aside, I've long called my plan "Paleo with benefits." The whole foods philosophy of a Paleo diet beautifully meshes with The Sugar Impact Diet, yet decidedly un-Paleo foods like legumes offer too many benefits to eliminate.

Overall, you'll find whole, unprocessed foods become the basis for both plans. You'll have no problem applying Paleo principles to The Sugar Impact Diet, which combines the best of both worlds to add variety and nutrients to your plan.

Low-Sugar Impact: The Goal for Both Paleo and Sugar Impact

The foundation for both Paleo and Sugar Impact is a focus on low-Sugar Impact foods. That means steering clear of processed, high-Sugar Impact foods that make you fat, tired, and sick. When you eat real foods, you might get some naturally occurring sugar but you also get nutrients, fiber, and antioxidants in the ratios nature intended.

You eliminate obvious high-Sugar Impact foods (chocolate cake or Cheetos do not belong on the Paleo or Sugar Impact plan, right?), but also sneaky sugars that hide in vinaigrettes, meat sauces, and other foods that jeopardize fat loss and keep you sugar addicted. If you wonder what I mean by sneaky sugars, [check out this blog](#).

Unlike other plans, I'm not going to completely pull you off sugar at once. Instead, you'll gradually taper onto low-Sugar Impact foods. If you've ever completely eliminated sugar all at once, you know the miserable aftermath. Headaches, fatigue, and mental fogginess are among the symptoms that usually follow going cold turkey.

Especially if your current diet consists of those and other sneaky-sugar sources I discuss in The Sugar Impact Diet, you don't want to go completely off the wagon at once. I've developed a saner strategy that helps you gradually transition off sugar. You get all the benefits of removing unhealthy sugars in your diet without the miserable crash.

I've explained the 7 food categories in my book and the 4 factors that account for a food's Sugar Impact: Fiber, nutrient density, fructose, and glycemic load all contribute to this impact. Briefly, the plan falls into 3 cycles. If you haven't already, please read *The Sugar Impact Diet* so you know you're doing each cycle correctly.



Cycle 1: Taper

- Take the Sneaky Sugar Inventory to identify how much sugar you are actually eating
- Take the Sugar Impact Quiz to identify the impact sugar is having on you
- Trade your high Sugar Impact foods for medium Sugar Impact foods
- Take your starting weight and measurements
- Focus on following the portions of the Sugar Impact Plate and eating by the Sugar Impact Clock



Cycle 2: Transition

- Trade your medium Sugar Impact foods for low Sugar Impact foods and avoid any low Sugar Impact foods that are asterisked (i.e., most fruit)
- Hide or toss the medium and high Sugar Impact foods
- Take the Sugar Impact Quiz weekly
- Take your weight and measurements weekly
- Check in with the Sugar Impact Quiz at the 2-week mark to determine if you should stay in Cycle 2 or shift into Cycle 3



Cycle 3: Transformed!

- Swap 3–4 low Sugar Impact servings for medium Sugar Impact servings; 1–2 of these servings should be from fruit
- Have one high Sugar Impact serving at the end of the week
- Weigh, measure, and retest at the end of the week. Decide whether you can stay in Cycle 3, or you need to return to Cycle 2

Once a year, repeat Cycles 1 and 2 to ensure you're retaining your sugar sensitivity, and to bust any plateaus. You should also do Cycles 1 and 2 again if you "fall off the wagon."

The Sugar Impact Diet gradually transitions you from high-Sugar Impact foods to low-Sugar Impact foods. You don't do this overnight, and skipping Cycle 1 can leave you in the same dead-end as when you went cold turkey.

What Do I Eat?

Designing The Sugar Impact Plate entails lean clean protein, healthy fats, loads of leafy and cruciferous veggies, and slow-release high-fiber carbs. [This blog](#) provides a more comprehensive breakdown about what the Plate looks like, and you'll also want to check out the diagram later in this guide. Let's briefly look at each component.

High-Quality Animal Protein

Even though grain has no place in the diet of most animals, cows, chickens, and even fish eat a diet heavy in grain and genetically modified (GMO) corn to fatten them up quickly. They are also pumped full of hormones, and when they become sick, given antibiotics. What a sad existence, mercifully cut short because they're often slaughtered for meat prematurely.

It wasn't always this way. Cows and wild game once grazed on grass, chickens ate dirt, worms, and other icky things chickens eat, and fish consumed algae, plankton, and even smaller fish.

When animals eat their natural diet, they produce higher-quality meat. Besides being higher in nutrients, studies show grass-fed beef is richer in anti-inflammatory [essential fatty acids as well as cancer-fighting conjugated linoleic acid \(CLA\)](#).

And according to Dr. William Sears, compared with farm-raised fish, [wild-caught fish contain](#) higher level of omega 3 fatty acids, lower total fat, no chance of containing antibiotics, and in ocean fish, fewer pesticides and environmental pollutants.

While Paleo humans occasionally consumed eggs, they certainly weren't the mass-produced eggs we eat today laid by chickens fed soy and corn and pumped full of hormones and antibiotics. Eggs were one of my top food sensitivities in *The Virgin Diet*, and I highly recommend that you challenge the 7 foods on that plan of you suspect any degree of intolerance.



If you don't have egg intolerances, you can occasionally incorporate eggs into your diet, but as with meat, quality is key. Barnyard eggs are richer in vitamin D and other nutrients than conventional eggs.

When I say "high quality protein," I mean protein from animals raised humanely and fed their natural diet. It's more expensive and sometimes harder to find, but it's absolutely essential from a Paleo-health perspective.

Ideally you will aim for:

- 20–30 grams of protein per meal
- 10–20 grams of protein per snack

This will vary depending on your size and gender, and whether you're doing heavy training or recovering from an injury, surgery, or under high stress. You can get a comprehensive list of protein sources and my favorites in *The Sugar Impact Diet*.

Keep in mind healthy fats will often overlap with protein. That grass-fed steak or wild-caught salmon meets your protein quota, but it also contains healthy fats.

Vegetables

Leafy and cruciferous veggies were mainstays in the Paleo diet. Rich in nutrients, fiber, and antioxidants, they help alkalinize your meals, keep you fuller for fewer calories, and add variety and flavor to your diet.

Like many other Paleo foods I'll discuss, leafy and cruciferous vegetables are high-fiber powerhouses. Studies show our Paleo ancestors got over [100 grams of fiber](#) a day. We're not anywhere near that number today. We get less than half the recommended amount today, and if you're on a low-carb diet, probably [even less than that](#).

Whenever possible, choose organic produce. Paleo humans lived in a cleaner world than we do and didn't have to worry about pesticides, herbicides, and other contaminants that saturate conventional produce today. If that's not always possible, consult the [Dirty Dozen and Clean 15](#) to determine how contaminated a particular food is.

Non-Starchy Vegetable Goals for Paleo/ Sugar Impact Diets

I've never met anyone who ate too much spinach or broccoli, so leafy and cruciferous veggies are unlimited. Ideally, you'll get 5 – 10 or more servings a day. Please refer to *The Sugar Impact Diet* to determine what vegetables work for every cycle.



Fruit

Fruit provides a great example about how the Paleo and Sugar Impact Diet can differ. Theoretically, you could eat unlimited fruits on a Paleo diet, even if the fruit our Paleo ancestors ate were bitterer than what we eat today.

Fruits we're told to eat every day like apples can actually be some of the worst offenders for sneaking more sugar into your diet than you ever imagined, especially because you're probably giving yourself a pass to eat up.

Many fruits have more fructose than glucose, and some have even more than others. Plums have less than half as much, but apples and pears have significantly more fructose than glucose—in fact, twice as much.

Too much sugar is never a good thing, even from foods we consider healthy. The increased sugar load you punish yourself with when you eat a 3-banana smoothie doesn't behave any differently in your system than it would if you ate a candy bar.

If too much sugar is bad, too much fructose is worse. In *The Sugar Impact Diet*, I explained why fructose can become so damaging. Despite having the lowest glycemic index (GI) ranking of any sugar, fructose is more easily and quickly turned into fat (usually belly fat) than glucose.

Fructose is naturally occurring in many foods, and it's the primary (but not the only) sugar in fruit. Our consumption of it went up 19% from 1970 to 2005. That's dramatic, and it's not because we're inhaling 19% more fruit. You'd be surprised at the ways fructose may be sneaking into your diet.

On *The Sugar Impact Diet*, you'll want to remain especially vigilant about what fruits fall into the low-Sugar Impact category and which don't. In Cycle 2, most fruits are off-limits (don't worry, it's only for 2 weeks), so you'll want to closely adhere to the rules so you aren't going on fructose overload.



Legumes and Other Starchy Carbs

Lentils, black beans, and other legumes are decidedly not Paleo. I call The Sugar Impact Diet “Paleo with benefits” because legumes provide fiber, protein, nutrients, and are low-glycemic so they don’t spike and crash your blood sugar like some starchy carbs.

One issue some Paleo followers have with legumes is their lectin and phytate content.

Lectins can bind to insulin receptors, potentially creating insulin resistance. They can also bind to your intestinal lining, altering gut flora, and trigger leptin resistance. (Leptin is the hormone that tells your brain to stop eating. Except when you become resistant, your brain doesn’t get that message and you may overeat.)

Phytates (or phytic acid) chelates, or binds with many key minerals, including calcium, iron, magnesium, and zinc, making them virtually impossible for your body to absorb.

You can reduce lectin and phytate content in legumes by soaking them or sprouting them. These processes reduce the anti-nutrient loads to make legumes much easier to digest. Soak your beans overnight in very warm water, approximately 140 degrees. If you buy canned beans, those have already been soaked. You can purchase a sprouting unit to sprout your beans.

Legumes are tops among high-fiber slow-release starches, but you’ve got other, decidedly un-Paleo choices on The Sugar Impact Diet, hence my “Paleo with benefits” philosophy. These low-Sugar Impact starches are just too loaded with nutrients and fiber to leave out, plus they add more variety to your plate:

- Lentils
- Legumes
- Butternut squash
- Hummus
- Wild rice
- Kabocha squash
- Sweet potatoes
 (keep in mind these are medium-Sugar Impact, making them off limits for Cycle 2)

Low-Sugar Impact Starch Goals for Paleo/ Sugar Impact Diets

Aim to get 1–2 servings of high-fiber starchy carbs per meal or snack (using 1/2 cup cooked as a serving). Larger or more athletic men can have 3 servings per meal.



Fiber: Your Best Fat-Loss Friend

Low-Sugar Impact plant-based foods often come loaded with fiber, my favorite weapon to stay full and burn fat. Fiber is a carb, and it's the only carb our body doesn't turn into sugar. It's the part of plant-based foods that our bodies can't digest, and it doesn't provide us with any nutrition or calories. It's simply roughage.

High-fiber, water-rich foods slow down stomach emptying and take longer to move through our digestive tract, so they make us feel full on fewer calories than foods with very little fiber, like refined grains.

Fiber does some other good deeds, too, like helping fat move smoothly through our digestive system without loitering, so less of it is absorbed. Fiber also keeps blood sugar on an even keel, which helps feed a steady supply of energy to your brain. And fiber feeds the healthy bacteria in your gut, which supports a strong immune system and beats back the bad kinds of bacteria.

When sugar is served up in a healthy fiber wrap, as with the pulp in an orange, that fiber is designed to slow down our absorption of sugar and have us burn some energy in the bargain as our metabolism works to get at the sugar it wants.

Things change dramatically when whole food is "unwrapped" from its fiber packaging; the amount of sugar we get from that food soars (as does the speed at which it spikes our insulin), and there is often added sugar in processed foods, to boot. Nature-wrapped foods are a staple of Paleo diets and a great example about why processing often destroys key nutrients and fiber.

That 15 grams of sugar in a processed protein bar has a completely different effect on your blood sugar levels than natural, whole foods with the same amount. Seemingly healthy foods like dried fruit or fruit juices also count as processed food. Why? Even if you get a little fiber in them, you're not getting enough nutrients and antioxidants to offset the impact of concentrated sugar on your insulin.

So you get it. Fiber is that important. On a Paleo diet, you have ample opportunities to work fiber-rich foods into your diet with leafy and cruciferous veggies, low-Sugar Impact fruits, legumes and other starchy carbs, and nuts and seeds. You can get a list of my [fiber favorites here](#).

I want you to work you to work up to 50 grams of fiber a day. That might sound high, mostly because if you're like most people, you're probably currently only getting 5 to 14 grams a day. Be patient and increase your fiber intake slowly, and drink plenty of water while you do—it may take you 1 to 2 weeks to get there. If you ramp up too fast, you could find yourself dealing with gas, bloating, diarrhea, or constipation.

[A protein shake](#) makes an excellent way to get more fiber. Leafy greens, frozen berries (unless you're in Cycle 2), chia seeds, and freshly ground flaxseed all provide an excellent fiber boost.

If you eat plenty of fiber-rich foods yet struggle to meet your quota (don't feel bad; we all do sometimes!), toss a scoop of [Extra Fiber](#) into your shake or stir into a glass of water. Every serving provides an impressive 4 grams of high-quality fiber from 12 sources that mimic what our Paleo ancestors got and that mixes easily.

Healthy Fats

In *The Sugar Impact Diet*, I discussed how inflammation could stall fat loss and contribute to nearly every disease on the planet. Depending on the source, dietary fat can increase or reduce inflammation.

A Paleo diet is rich in healthy fats. Fat comes in 3 flavors: Saturated, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated. None are inherently good or bad; rather, it depends on their source. Keep in mind too that animal protein, such as grass-fed beef or wild-caught salmon, also contains high-quality fat.

Rather than demonize saturated fat, you want to choose high-quality sources. Getting saturated fat from coconut oil has a far different effect than getting that fat from a fast-food cheeseburger.

Avocado, almonds, olives, and olive oil are among the healthy monounsaturated fats. Studies show that especially for people with diabetes and other blood sugar imbalances, a high-monounsaturated fat diet can [help lose fat and maintain fat loss](#).

Polyunsaturated fat comes in 2 types: Omega-6 fatty acids become inflammatory compounds in your body, whereas omega-3 fatty acids become anti-inflammatory compounds. Researchers estimate [Paleo humans got an approximately equal ratio](#) of omega 3s and omega 6s in their diet, and you should too.

Unfortunately, the modern American diet contains way more omega 6 polyunsaturated fats, primarily from processed foods and so-called healthy vegetable oils, wrecking balance and creating inflammation.

A Paleo diet, then, will incorporate more omega 3s to balance your fatty-acid ratio. Anti-inflammatory omega 3-rich foods include:

- Wild-caught seafood
- Walnuts
- Freshly ground flaxseed and chia seeds
- Professional-quality omega fatty acid supplement
 (especially if you're not eating wild-caught fish 3 – 4 times a week)

The only truly bad fats are trans fat and damaged fats. Trans fats sometimes occur in baked and processed foods, and scrambled eggs sitting under a heat lamp at a brunch buffet would be an example of damaged fat.

When you stick to a whole-foods, Paleo diet, you needn't worry much about trans or damaged fats. Because you'll choose healthy oils rather than vegetable oils, and you'll incorporate a variety of omega 3-rich foods, you reduce inflammation and maintain the healthy omega balance your Paleo ancestors had.

Fat Goals for Paleo/ Sugar Impact Diets

Ideally, you should have 2–4 servings of healthy fats at every meal. This is where the Sugar Impact Plate will come in really handy, because it will lay it out for you.

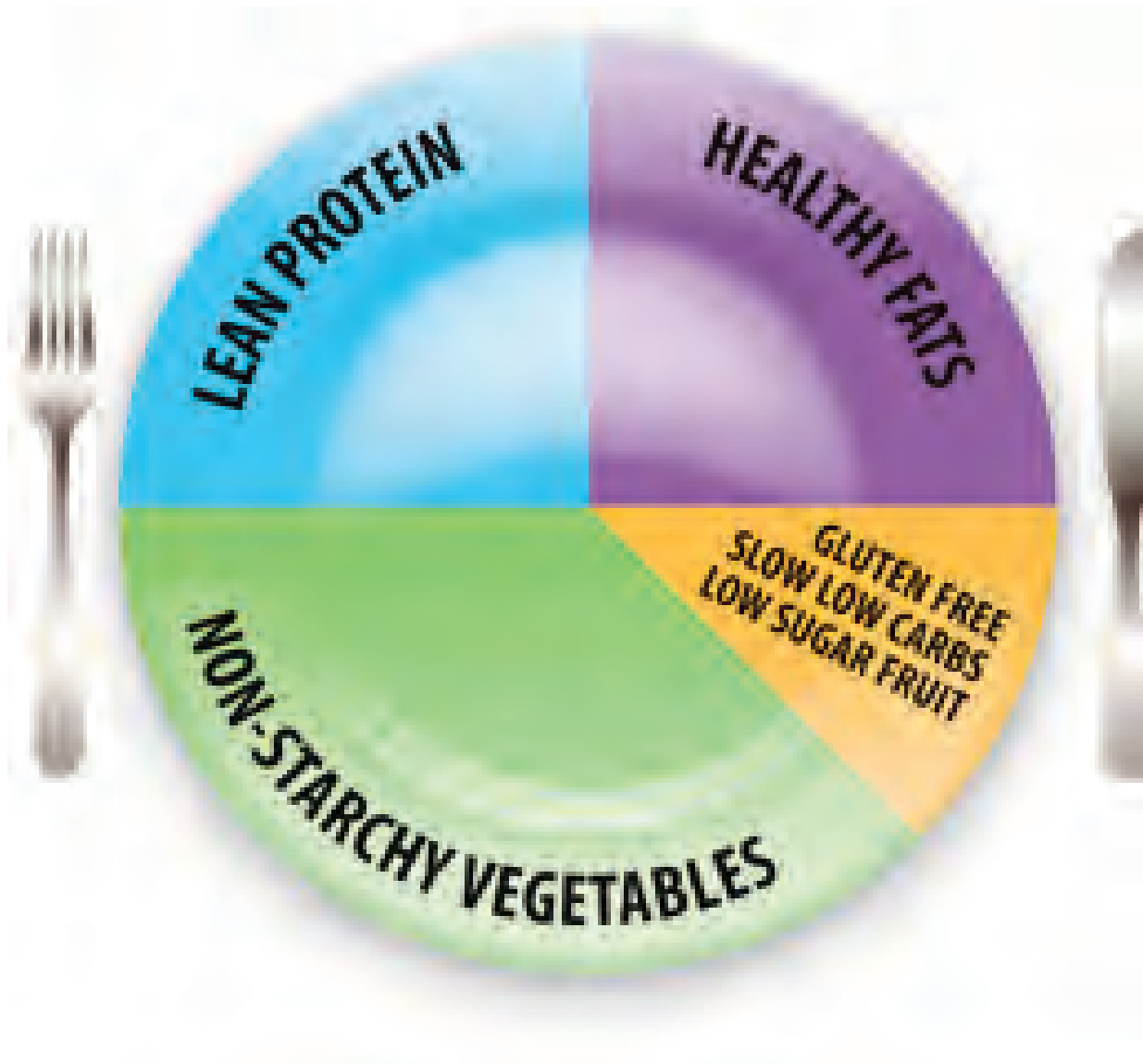
You'll meet the mark with things like:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/4 avocado
- 5–10 nuts
- 1 tablespoon nut butter
- 10 olives
- 4 ounces wild-caught salmon



Pulling the Plate Together

You don't need complicated mathematical formulas to design The Sugar Impact Plate for Paleo diets. Simply use this diagram:



The No-Brainer Breakfast

A [protein shake](#) makes a fast, filling, fat-burning breakfast that takes minutes to prepare but keeps you full for hours. Done correctly, a protein shake mimics the nutrient- and fiber-rich foods your Paleo ancestors ate. Lucky for you, you don't have to go out at 5 a.m. to forage or hunt those foods!

Here's the basic **Sugar Impact Diet Shake** recipe. Feel free to improvise with other low-sugar impact ingredients.

- 8 - 10 ounces unsweetened coconut, cashew, or almond milk (I like So Delicious brand)
- 2 scoops [Virgin Diet All-in-One Powder](#)
- 1 - 2 scoops [Extra Fiber](#)
- 1 - 2 tablespoons freshly ground flaxseed or chia seed
- Raw kale or spinach
- Avocado
- Low- or medium-Sugar Impact fruits in Cycles 1 and 3

Eating By the Clock

On the Sugar Impact Diet, you'll eat by the Sugar Impact Clock. You'll begin to slowly stretch your time between meals and snacks and shift your eating routine to a solid three meals and one optional snack a day.

Most historians agree Paleolithic humans weren't noshing all day. They ate when food was available, which oftentimes became infrequent. They most certainly weren't eating the processed, high-sugar impact foods many folks graze on throughout the day.

I want you to have a substantial breakfast within an hour of waking up. Then you'll eat every 4 - 6 hours. That doesn't mean you need to go hungry. Adding fiber, fat, and protein to your meals will help keep you full longer, as will having more water between meals.

If you do snack, getting off high-Sugar Impact foods and replacing them with healthy, whole, low-Sugar Impact snacks will have a dramatic effect on your energy, blood sugar levels, and fat-burning.

If fat loss is your goal, you'll want to limit or eliminate snacking. I'm [not anti-snacking](#), but too many people do it habitually or because they don't do meals correctly. My favorite snacks include slow roasted or dehydrated nuts and seeds, nut butters with celery, and my [Virgin Diet Bars](#).

You can also help yourself de-snack by brushing or flossing your teeth when you're done eating. You'll first work on getting yourself to 3 hours between stops for food, then 4. If you've trained

yourself to eat every 2–3 hours, it may take you 2 weeks to make this shift.

Have a substantial dinner and then close the kitchen. You'll want to stop eating 2 – 3 hours before bed, and no, that does not mean going to bed later.

If you get up at 7 a.m., here's what your eating schedule might look like:

8 a.m.: Breakfast

12 p.m.: Lunch

3 p.m.: Optional snack

7 p.m.: Dinner

What Doesn't Belong in a Paleo Diet?

High-Sugar Impact Foods

Paleolithic humans won't recognize many of the processed, high-sugar impact Frankenfoods prevalent in the modern American diet. Neither does your digestive tract, which is about 99% similar to that of your Paleo ancestors.

High-Sugar Impact foods are biggies that don't belong in a Paleo diet or The Sugar Impact Diet. The only sugar that hunter-gatherers ate was honey, which was infrequent because it wasn't readily available and, well, those bees could be hard to fight off.

According to Dr. Mark Hyman, Americans eat an average of about [152 pounds of sugar and 146 pounds of flour a year](#). That's almost a pound of sugar and flour per person per day!

If you're currently doing a Paleo plan, you're probably off the sugar roller coaster. If you're just starting The Sugar Impact Diet, please follow the cycles sequentially and gradually taper off sugar. Going cold turkey becomes a disaster, so don't make this hard on yourself.

Artificial Sweeteners

Artificial sweeteners are no better than sugar, and certainly not the free pass some people once considered them to be. Needless to say, Paleo humans were not dumping packets of sucralose into their morning dark roast! (Neither were they tempted with high-Sugar Impact foods that line modern-day coffee shops and pass as breakfast.)

Food Intolerances

I've discussed other highly reactive foods – including corn and peanuts – in *The Virgin Diet*. Because these 3 are so prevalent in our modern-day diet, I want to briefly talk about gluten, soy, and dairy. For the most part, these were decidedly not part of a Paleo diet, nor do you need

them today (despite brilliant marketing from the deep-pocketed dairy and grain industries claiming otherwise). As I'll explain, some people expand that "Paleo with benefits" definition to include a small amount of healthy grains, soy, and dairy.

Let's take a look at each of these separately and how they might fit into a Paleo plan.

Grains

You'll remember in *The Sugar Impact Diet* that gluten wreaks havoc on our health. Among other problems, gluten-filled grains trigger leaky gut and numerous other health issues.

Grains are relatively new to our food supply—we only started eating them 5,000 to 10,000 years ago—and we can exist perfectly fine (and, I believe, better) on vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds and clean animal and fish protein.

If you're doing *The Sugar Impact Diet*, you can incorporate small amounts of gluten-free grains like brown rice and amaranth. They aren't Paleo, nor are they necessary, and many people do just fine without them. But they also provide variety to your meals, so swapping grains for more nutrient-rich starches like sweet potatoes or quinoa gives you a better bang for your buck. Please refer to the list in *The Sugar Impact Diet* to choose low-Sugar Impact grains.

Soy

Soy has really only been prevalent in the American diet for the last hundred or so years. Manufacturers have craftily marketed soy as the miracle food of all time, maybe because it can be produced cheaply and some big companies have invested in its production and modification.

I've discussed soy's numerous problems in *The Virgin Diet* and *The Sugar Impact Diet*. Among them, soy can be an anti-nutrient, much of it is genetically modified, and it's low in the amino acids methionine and lysine.

But what about Asia, people often ask: They've eaten soy nearly forever and for the most part they stay pretty darn healthy.

Soy is indeed part of the traditional Asian diet, but they do not eat a big pile of it. You have a little miso soup, some tofu in a stir-fry or some soy sauce with your sushi. You don't drink a big soy shake in the morning, have a soy yogurt at lunch and have soy cheese or tofu stir-fry at dinner. Basically, in Asia, soy is a condiment. It is not a replacement for animal proteins.

If you're not soy sensitive, you can incorporate small amounts of fermented, organic soy like miso and tempeh. Just remember soy "dogs," soy ice cream, and other processed Frankenfoods that line your "health food" stores don't fall into that category and most certainly aren't Paleo.

Dairy

Like soy and wheat, dairy didn't really come into the scene [until about 9,000 years ago](#).

Maybe in some ideal, alternate, organic universe—or even just 50 years ago—we could all be eating our dairy in peace and quiet. But the way today's cows are treated—and then, the way today's milk is treated—creates a whole host of new problems.

Pasteurization is a process that kills bacteria, which includes some bad bacteria that we don't want. But it also destroys the good bacteria that we do want, as well as some other vital ingredients in the milk: probiotics, vitamins and enzymes.

Besides antibiotics, cows are often given recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH), a genetically modified hormone that basically forces them to give milk far more often than nature ever intended. rBGH amplifies levels of IGF-1, a growth hormone that promotes cancerous tumors in the breast, colon and prostate.

Simply put, commercial cow's milk is liquid pumped full of hormones, lots of dead pus cells, and a whole load of antibiotics.



Some Paleo-minded folks consume raw dairy. Finding raw cow's milk and cheese can be a challenge depending on the rules in your state. If you can get some, it's definitely worth it if you're not dairy sensitive. Other alternatives include goat's milk and sheep's milk, which seem to create less reactivity than cow's milk.

Fermented dairy is another smart option. Fermenting has been around for thousands of years, and traditional cultures, including some in Russia and Europe, still rely on it heavily. The fermentation process increases the shelf life of dairy products, makes them much more tasty and a whole lot easier to digest.

Once Americans enthusiastically embraced pasteurized dairy products over raw or fermented forms in the early part of the 20th century, we lost a lot of powerful, immunizing probiotics and enzymes right along with any potential pathogens.

Too bad, because fermentation, in particular, has some near miracle drug-like powers—it can make food that was once inedible or even dangerous not only edible, but nutritious.

You can do just fine without dairy, and if you're strict Paleo you'll probably choose not to include it. That's perfectly fine. You can do just fine without dairy, and over-relying on dairy can create food intolerances.

Whether or not you go dairy, remember that despite what milk campaigns suggest, dairy is not essential or even necessary for a healthy diet. [Lots of non-dairy foods provide calcium](#), and you needn't ever touch cow's milk again to have strong, supple bones.

What About Intermittent Fasting?

As I mentioned earlier, Paleolithic humans didn't constantly graze, and sometimes they went long periods without eating. They didn't have the conveniences of Whole Foods or Chipotle, and sometimes food could be hard to come by. Intermittent fasting (IF) mimics the feast-and-fast cycle of earlier humans by going many hours or even days without eating.

I want you to have a substantial breakfast within an hour of waking. If you're doing IF, you probably skip breakfast. Personally, I think that can become a bad idea since breakfast skippers tend to make up those calories later in the day, and they aren't with wild salmon and Brussels sprouts either.

I have a better strategy if you're doing IF. A few days each week, have a substantial breakfast and lunch with The Sugar Impact Plate guidelines. Skip dinner, and resume breakfast the following morning. You'll hit that approximately 18-hour fasting window with minimal hunger and deprivation.

IF could be the needle mover to break a plateau, but your mileage will vary. I've provided the pros and cons of IF [in this blog](#), whereas this [blog discusses](#) 5 reasons why it could become a bad idea.

Exercise and the Paleo Diet

Paleo humans didn't have gyms or elliptical machines, nor did they exercise in Lululemon attire, yet they maintained lean, fit physiques. At least most of them did: Survival of the fittest meant if you didn't have strength and stamina, you could become a saber tooth tiger's lunch.

Walking wasn't considered exercise for Paleo human; it was absolutely necessary and something they did every day. (Even those Flinestones cars required some fancy footwork!)

Paleo exercise often meant short, intense bursts of activity. Burst training – also called high-intensity, interval training (HIIT) – mimics the exercise hunter-gatherers got and is your best option to blast fat, optimize hormones, and prevent disease. I love bursting because it's [fast, efficient, and gets results](#).

Paleo humans also lifted heavy. They had to be fast and strong to survive. With our mostly sedentary lives today, most of us don't have to lift heavy objects; we do it at the gym instead with free weights.

I want you to walk wherever you can. Park your car further away from the door, get off a few subways stops ahead of your destination, and take the stairs at the mall. Just remember that walking is mandatory, not exercise.

To really get a good workout, you need to sweat. It should hurt a little bit. Burst training and weight resistance makes the perfect combo for a fast, efficient, butt-kicking workout. I've combined both in my free [4X4 Workout here](#) which you can knock out in just 20 minutes, 3 times a week.

Can Vegans & Vegetarian Do a Paleo Diet?

Yes, though you'll need to be more creative. Legumes, quinoa, nuts, and seeds can provide plant-based protein. If you're not egg-sensitive, vegetarians can occasionally have barnyard eggs. Healthy fats include avocado, coconut, nuts, and seeds. And you'll want to incorporate plenty of leafy and cruciferous veggies as well as lower-glycemic fruits.

My one caution is to not overdo highly reactive foods like gluten, dairy, and soy. (If you're sensitive to these foods, don't do them at all.) For more strategies and great recipes, grab my free [The Sugar Impact Diet Vegan Guide](#).

A Supplement Plan for Paleo Diets

Even if you're eating a whole, unprocessed, mostly organic diet, too many obstacles – from top-soil erosion to transit time – mean you're probably not getting optimal nutrients.

Our Paleo ancestors didn't use supplements, but they also didn't deal with the chronic stress, environmental toxicity, and other factors that plague modern-day health. That's why I recommend everyone use this intelligently designed supplement plan as an inexpensive, fill-in-the-dietary-gaps insurance plan.

[Virgin Diet Daily Essentials](#) - super-easy and portable, Daily Essentials combine essential nutrients in one grab-and-go packet. Each convenient packet contains 4 capsules of a high-potency Complete Daily Multi along with 2 Omega Plus softgels, making them an easy, affordable way to cover the nutrient bases you're probably not always getting in food.

[Microbiome Balance](#) – your gut has its own community, called a microbiome. A probiotic helps repopulate this community with healthy gut flora, while prebiotics feed that healthy flora. Microbiome Balance combines prebiotics and probiotics in one non-GMO, all-vegetarian formula. Microbiome Balance will be available [here](#) beginning in November.

[Virgin Diet All-in-One Shakes](#)– whether you choose plant-based or defatted-beef powder, these truly all-in-one great-tasting shakes combine high-quality plant-based protein with nutrients, antioxidants, and fiber that mimic the nutrient-dense foods your Paleo ancestors ate.

[Green Balance](#) - if meeting your green-vegetable quota becomes a challenge (hey, it happens to us all!), this unique formula can fill in the gaps. Green Balance combines a proprietary vegetable/ fruit blend with 6 grams of fiber in every serving.

[Leaky Gut Support](#) - my go-to all-in-one formula to fix your gut. Leaky Gut Support combines therapeutic doses of L-Glutamine, N-acetyl-glucosamine, MSM, DGL, slippery elm, marshmallow, chamomile, okra extract, cat's claw, and quercetin in a delicious-tasting, peach-flavor powder that blends well in shakes or water.

Digestive Enzymes - this unique formula combines enzymes that break down protein and fat with Phase 2 Carb Controller, which slows or blocks carbohydrate absorption. Especially if you've over 30 or chronically stressed, digestive enzymes can help reduce post-meal gas, bloating, and other misery.

Extra Fiber - meeting your 50-gram fiber quota couldn't be easier with this easy-to-mix powder that combines 12 types of soluble and insoluble fiber without any irritants like many commercial fiber powders can contain. Extra Fiber mixes easily into protein shakes or water.

Hydrolyzyme™ - a proprietary blend of protease enzymes that helps optimize protein breakdown. If you experience gas, bloating, or other problems after a protein shake, Hydrolyzyme™ is for you.



A Few of My Favorite Paleo Recipes

You'll find tons more Paleo-friendly, low-sugar impact recipes in my upcoming *The Sugar Impact Diet Cookbook*, out in 2015.

Breakfast

Mixed Berry and Avocado Protein Shake

The Virgin Diet Cookbook

Makes 1 serving

- 2 scoops Virgin Diet All-In-One Vanilla Shake Powder
- 1 cup unsweetened coconut milk (such as So Delicious)
- 1 cup frozen organic mixed berries
- 1/2 small ripe avocado
- 1 to 2 tablespoons freshly ground flax meal
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup cold water

Combine the shake powder, coconut milk, mixed berries, avocado, flax meal, and 1/4 cup water. Mix on high until smooth. Thin with additional cold water if desired.

Rise and Shine Mocha Espresso Protein Shake

The Virgin Diet Cookbook

Makes 1 serving

- 2 scoops The Virgin Diet All-In-One Chocolate Shake Powder
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk (such as So Delicious)
- 1 tablespoon raw or homemade almond butter (see page xx)
- 1 to 2 tablespoons freshly ground flax meal
- 1 teaspoon instant espresso or coffee powder
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup cold water

Combine the shake powder, almond milk, almond butter, flax meal, espresso powder, cinnamon, vanilla extract and water in a blender. Mix on high until smooth. Thin with additional cold water if desired.

Add a few ice cubes before blending to make a thicker shake

*If you don't have instant espresso or coffee powder on hand substitute 1/4 strong brewed coffee



Main Dishes



Kale & Shiitake Stuffed Chicken Breast

The Sugar Impact Diet 2-Week Cookbook

Serves 4



- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 cup chopped red onion,
- 3 teaspoons chopped garlic
- ¼ lb. shiitake mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 3 cups chopped kale leaves
- 1/3 cup pitted Kalamata olives, halved
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- Sea salt & pepper to taste
- 4 six-oz. pastured boneless, skinless chicken breasts, pounded to ¼" thickness
- 1 tablespoon ghee
- ¼ cup chicken broth

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in large oven-proof skillet over medium heat. Add leek and cook until beginning to soften, about 3-4 minutes. Add garlic and shiitakes. Continue cooking until shiitakes are browned, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes.

Add kale, olives and smoked paprika, tossing to wilt the kale. Once kale is wilted, remove from heat and transfer mixture to a bowl. Season to taste with salt & pepper. Wipe the skillet clean and return to stovetop.

Preheat oven to 350° F

Lay pounded chicken breasts on work surface and season both sides with salt and pepper. Place filling in the middle of the breast and begin rolling from short end, tucking in the filling as you go. Secure end with toothpicks. Repeat with remaining breasts.

Heat remaining tablespoon oil in same (oven-proof) skillet over medium heat. Place chicken, in skillet and cook until lightly browned on one side, about 4-5 minutes.

Flip chicken over and transfer to preheated oven. Bake until heated through to 165°, about 10-12 minutes. Transfer chicken to serving platter, remove toothpicks and tent with foil to keep warm.

Return skillet to medium high heat on stovetop and add ghee. When melted add chicken broth, scraping up any brown bits on the bottom of the pan, bring to a boil and let reduce slightly.

Pour pan sauce over chicken and serve.

Broiled Rosemary and Fennel Lamb Chops

The Virgin Diet Cookbook

Serves 4



- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds, crushed
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground coriander
- 8 grass fed lean bone-in 3/4-inch thick loin lamb chops, about 1 1/4-1 1/2 pounds
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Combine the oil, rosemary, fennel seeds, garlic powder and coriander in a medium bowl. Add the lamb chops and toss well to coat; let stand at room temperature 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat the broiler and lightly oil a broiler pan.

Season lamb with the salt and pepper; place on prepared broiler pan. Broil lamb 4-inches from the heat, turning once, for a total of 5-6 minutes for medium rare.

Side Dishes



Cauliflower "Rice" Pilaf

The Sugar Impact Diet 2-Week Cookbook

Serves 4

- 1 head cauliflower, cut into florets
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- ½ cup diced red onion
- ½ cup diced carrot
- 2 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- ½ cup frozen peas
- 2 tablespoon broth (or water)
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ cup slivered almonds

Working in batches, ½ head at a time, pulse cauliflower in food processor 12-15 times until it resembles rice.

Heat 1 tablespoon coconut oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and carrot and cook 4-5 minutes, until onions are softened and carrots are crisp-tender. Add garlic and cook 1 minute, stirring often. Add cauliflower and turmeric, stirring to combine. Add peas, broth, salt and pepper and cook 1-2 minutes until heated through.

Top with slivered almonds.

Roasted Acorn Squash Puree

The Virgin Diet Cookbook

Serves 4

- 1 acorn squash, about 2 1/4 pounds, cut in half and seeds removed
Other squash, including butternut and kabocha, may be substituted
- 1 tablespoon macadamia nut oil
- pinch ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Lightly oil and 11 x 7-inch baking dish.

Place squash cut side down in the prepared baking dish. Cover with aluminum foil and roast until very tender, about 55-60 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool 10 minutes.

When cool enough to handle, use a spoon to scoop out flesh and transfer to a food processor. Puree the squash; transfer to a medium nonstick skillet over medium-high heat and cook, stirring, until squash mixture is somewhat drier, about 4 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the oil, salt, and pepper.



Salads



Shaved Vegetable Salad with Dijon Vinaigrette

The Sugar Impact Diet 2-Week Cookbook

Serves 4

- ½ cup walnuts, rough chopped
- 1 lb. asparagus, trimmed
- 3 medium carrots
- 5 watermelon radishes (or regular radishes)
- 4 cups arugula

Dijon Vinaigrette

- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon chopped shallot
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- Pinch fresh black pepper
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil

Heat a small skillet over medium heat and add walnuts. Cook, tossing often, until lightly toasted, about 4-5 minutes. Remove from skillet immediately to prevent over-cooking.

Bring a pot of salted water to boil. Prepare a large bowl of ice water.

Remove tips from asparagus and place in pot of boiling water. Cook 1-2 minutes until bright green, strain and plunge into bowl of ice water.

Using a vegetable peeler, thinly shave the asparagus stalks and the carrots into thin strips and place in a bowl.

Thinly slice the radishes and add to bowl with asparagus and carrots.

Prepare vinaigrette: In a small bowl, mix vinegar, mustard, shallot, salt and pepper. Slowly whisk in the oil.

Place arugula in a separate bowl and toss with a little of the dressing. Divide arugula between 4 plates and top with asparagus, carrot and radish mixture. Drizzle a little more dressing over vegetables and top with blanched asparagus tips and toasted walnuts.

Flank Steak Bistro Chopped Salad

The Virgin Diet Cookbook

Makes 2 servings

- 8 ounces grass fed flank steak, trimmed
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 5 teaspoons olive oil, divided
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper, divided
- 1 small head romaine lettuce, chopped, about 4 cups
- 1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 1 medium red bell pepper, cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 2 celery stalks, cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 3 radishes, cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon white balsamic vinegar

Combine the steak, mustard, 1 teaspoon oil, and rosemary in a medium bowl. Heat a grill pan over medium until hot. Season steak with 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper and add to pan; cook 4-5 minutes per side, for medium rare or to desired doneness. Transfer to a cutting board and let stand 5 minutes. Cut steak diagonally across the grain into thin slices.

While the steak cooks, combine the lettuce, cucumber, bell pepper, celery, radishes, onion, vinegar, the remaining 4 teaspoons oil, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/8 teaspoon pepper in a separate bowl. Top salads with steak.

Note: Other vegetables, including broccoli, zucchini and green beans, make lovely additions to the salad

Snacks & Dessert



Roasted Jalapeño Guacamole with Toasted Pumpkin Seeds

The Virgin Diet Cookbook

This amount of heat in this slightly smoky guacamole depends entirely on how hot your jalapeños are; taste them first to determine how much you want to use.

Makes 4 servings

- 6 tablespoons raw pumpkin seeds
- 2 medium jalapeño peppers
- 1 avocado, coarsely mashed with a fork
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped red onion
- 1 small plum tomato, seeded and chopped
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 teaspoon lime juice
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt

Preheat the oven to 300°F.

Spread pumpkin seeds on a medium baking sheet. Bake, stirring occasionally, until lightly toasted, 10-12 minutes. Spread on a plate and cool 5 minutes. Preheat the broiler.

Place the jalapeños on the baking sheet. Broil 4-inches from the heat, turning occasionally, until the skin is blistered, 4-5 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool 5 minutes. Peel off and discard charred skins; remove seeds and stem and finely chop.

Combine the pumpkin seeds, jalapeños, avocado, onion, tomato, cilantro, lime juice and salt in a bowl; mix well.

Mocha Protein Popsicles

The Virgin Diet Cookbook

Makes 6 servings

- 2 scoops Virgin Diet All-In-One Chocolate Shake Powder
- 10 ounces unsweetened coconut milk (such as So Delicious)
- 3 ounces brewed espresso or strong coffee
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Whisk together the shake powder, coconut milk, espresso, and cinnamon in a bowl until well blended. Pour into 6 popsicle molds and freeze overnight.

Dip mold into warm water to remove. Store in a re-sealable plastic container in the freezer.

Note: Instant espresso works just as well as brewed coffee in these refreshing protein popsicles.

