

Meal Guide Part I: What to buy and how to balance it in your life

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I can see you, walking through the grocery store trying your best to recall what you learned at the Paleo Seminar. Wandering around the perimeter of the grocery store filling your cart of meat, veggies, nuts/seeds, some fruit & little starch, thinking to yourself, “How how do I make all *this* into good tasting meals??” Here is a guide for planning your meals.

Meal Guide Lesson 1: What to buy

Meat (Your high quality protein source)

First, you’ll want to get some lean high quality protein. This includes poultry, fish, eggs, lean beef and pork. Poultry (including eggs) should be free range; beef should be grass fed; fish should be wild. The package should read “no added hormones,” “no antibiotics.” For example, when a chicken is free range it is allowed to eat vegetation, bugs, worms, etc; it is free to get the right amount of exercise. These things all affect the health of the chicken and the quality of that chicken as *your food*.

Non-Starchy Veggies (Your low Glycemic Index (GI) carbohydrate sources)

Non-Starchy veggies are the predominate carbohydrate in the Paleo Diet. Non-starchy veggies include but not limited to: spinach, kale, chard, lettuce and salad greens, carrots (moderate GI), cucumbers, tomatoes, bell peppers, okra, celery, onions, green onions, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, endive, bok choy, zucchini, yellow squash... and the list goes on.

Starchy Veggies

Starchy veggies are to be eaten sometimes, no more than a few times per week. They are higher on the GI scale because they have more starch and therefore metabolized into a large amount of glucose. Sweet potatoes, pumpkin, acorn squash, butternut squash, spaghetti squash are the best starchy veggies. This list does not include white potatoes (which are like eating white bread), corn (grain), beans, green beans, peas (all legumes).

Fruit

Fruit is a great snack and a great carbohydrate at breakfast. Lower glycemic fruits (berries, green apples) are to be eaten more often than high glycemic fruit (bananas, pineapple, mango, oranges, papaya). I’m not saying, don’t eat an orange. I’m saying make the lower glycemic fruits an everyday food, whereas the higher glycemic fruits should be eaten no more than a few times per week, like starchy veggies.

Nuts, seeds, Oils (your fat sources)

Fat is good. Say it with me, “Fat is good. Fat will not make me fat. Overeating makes me fat.” Are you more comfortable with this category now? We need a variety of fat for our bodies to function. Meat is

one source of fat (fish and omega-3's, the skin on chicken, and the marbling in a steak). Nuts and seeds make a great snack and they can also be used as substitutions in recipes. Example: I found a Paleo Pumpkin Pie recipe in which the crust was made from hazelnuts and pecans (EverydayPaleo.com). The best oils to cook and prepare food with are coconut oil, olive oil, avocado oil, & sesame oil. Not to mention, avocados! Avocados are a great addition to a salad and can be a base for sauces and dressings.

Don't forget to buy items to give your meals flavor and character. Fresh herbs, some dried herbs, fresh or dried garlic, fresh ginger, onions, and spices. Think about different combos... fresh thyme, rosemary and marjoram go really well with poultry. Mix together coconut milk, red curry, and cilantro and you've got a thai sauce.

Where to buy locally: Farmers market (lots of options for veggies, fruit and meat), Laughing Chicken farm, Publix Greenwise, Wards, Mother Earth, Northwest Seafood, Fresh Market

Meal Guide Lesson #2: The Paleo Diet does not have to Rule your life!

We eat Paleo because we look, feel, and perform better when we're on it. Plain and simple. No one wants to live their life feeling like crap. With that, we don't want to live our lives with a "diet" ruling us either! You've got to find a delicate balance.

You don't have to go 100% Paleo. A strict Paleo Diet excludes grains, dairy, sugar, alcohol, legumes and anything fermented. Stay clear of these 90% of the time. I like almond milk in my coffee. I like honey in my tea. I also love to make a white wine garlic sauce for my shrimp and scallops. I have 3 types of vinegar in my refrigerator. I love, love, LOVE CHOCOLATE! Getting the picture?

When it comes to salad dressing, you can easily make yourself. Start out with an acid (lemon juice or vinegar). Add honey or orange juice to sweeten it up. Add a drop of Dijon mustard as an emulsifier. Whisk in double the oil. Done. You can make tons of variations. There are recipes all over the internet. Google "Paleo Recipes" or "Paleo Salad dressing." If you like to save time on salad dressing, I recommend *Annie's Organics* or *Organicville*. They have tons of options and no high fructose corn syrup or hydrogenated fats. Yes. Conventional dressing is that bad.

Restaurants aren't so bad either. Do the best you can with the menu, and if you're eating in a decent place, they'll make the modifications you ask for. Don't sit there and try to figure out what percent of fat or carbs this meal has, just go with it! Forget about it and have a good time. Your friends will most likely make fun of you for eating this way; but after they start to see the change in your body composition and energy levels, they'll shut up and ask, "Okay, I'm ready to do what you're doing. Where do I go and what do I have to do?"

Keep your eye out on the GatorCrossFit.com/TodaysWOD Blog for Everyday Paleo Part II for meal preparation guidelines and a sample meal plan.