

## Chapter 1

# Becoming Paleo Smart

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Getting an overview of the nuts and bolts of Paleo
  - ▶ Losing weight, sleeping better, feeling better, and healing conditions with the Paleo approach
  - ▶ Flipping your inner health switch
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**W**hen I discovered the power of Paleo, my life changed, and I'm certainly not alone; Paleo has changed the lives of countless others as well. So much buzz surrounds Paleo because of its success in helping people lose weight, boost immunity, fight aging, heal conditions, and perform better. And who doesn't want to look and feel their best?

I wrote this book to help you discover the Paleo principles, getting you the best nutrition possible and showing you all the ins and outs on everything from what foods to buy (and what to toss) to where to get your food to how to cook the tastiest meals. The recipes you find in this book are from the absolute best Paleo culinary experts out there. All have different flairs and special touches to match your personal style. These recipes will entice you with their flavors and simplicity while providing you the best nutrition on the planet.

*Paleo Cookbook For Dummies* is your road map to the world of cooking and eating Paleo.

## *Surveying the Paleo Blueprint*



The Paleo foods are your foundational foods — the foods your body is designed to have. The key concept behind Paleo is that nature determined what the human body needs before agriculture or modern food processing. In fact, DNA evidence shows that our genes have changed less than 0.02 percent in 40,000 years. Many of the foods that seem like common, everyday foods, such as grains, starchy carbohydrates, and drinks with sugar added, are really quite new compared to what was available when those genes were hard-wired.

## My Paleo success story

I first became aware of the affects that food has on the body when I decided to do a fitness/bodybuilding contest in my 20s. In order to be contest-ready, I had to work with trainers on both my workouts and my nutrition.

The first tweak my trainer made to my diet was pulling out wheat/gluten. This approach wasn't at all a mainstream concept at that time like it is now. I and everyone around me were shocked at what happened to my body: I lost body fat, gained energy, and — what really surprised me — saw certain health conditions completely vanish.

Needless to say, I never went back to eating gluten again. I began eating what I thought was “clean” from then on, meaning I shopped only at natural health food stores and made sure everything I ate was organic and gluten-free. I continued to train regularly and followed my diet of “health foods.”

This way of eating worked, until it didn't. As the years went on, I no longer got results. This shift was incredibly disheartening because I spent

my life helping others with nutrition and made eating well an important part of my life. But I was at a crossroads. I could keep doing what I was doing and keep getting what I was getting, or I could find solutions. This desire led me on a path to find answers.

The solution I found seemed like an oversimplification. It wasn't a complicated program or a bunch of rules to follow short term. It was simply to *put real foods first*. To eat the foods with the highest *nutritional density* (high nutritional content relative to the calories it contains). Simple, back-to-nature foods that I was actually designed to have. When I did so, the magic happened. My body started de-aging and became fueled with energy; my eyes sparkled, and my skin glowed. It was as if my body was screaming out “I'm healthy!” I had no aches, pains, or conditions that were holding me back. As a clinician, I knew immediately that whatever was happening to me was happening on a deep, cellular level and that I needed to share this message of living Paleo with as many people as I could.

The foods on the Paleo plan are those that work best with your body. By really tuning into your body and your feelings about food, you start to instinctively become aware of which foods make you feel good and which don't.

## *Perusing Paleo foods in a nutshell*

The Paleo diet is based on simple, easy-to-understand nutritional principles. What I love the most about eating Paleo is that it eliminates food confusion; it's simply about eating the foods that work best with your body.

Paleo-approved foods are whole, unprocessed foods: Meat, eggs, and seafood; non-starchy vegetables and Paleo-approved starchy vegetables; healthy fats; and some (but not a lot of) fruit, nuts, and seeds (see Figure 1-1).

**Figure 1-1:**  
A Paleo  
meal may  
look like  
this.

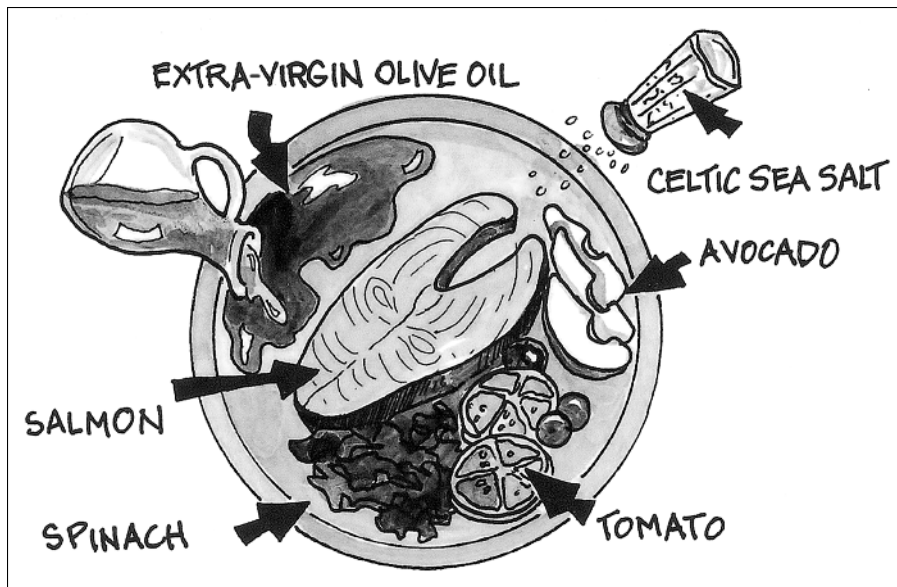


Illustration by Elizabeth Kurtzman

Paleo principles support avoiding foods with sugar, grains (even whole grains), legumes, and any processed, unhealthy oils. If you're going to be a straight-laced Paleo convert, then dairy's out because it can cause a host of problems for many people. However, some folks can enjoy some full-fat, organic, antibiotic-free dairy options (which seem to present less of a problem because of their source) like yogurt, *kefir* (a fermented dairy product), and *ghee* (clarified butter).



Think of it this way: If the food can be hunted or gathered, it's probably a safe bet. If the food has been processed or is presented to you in colorful, crinkly plastic packaging, it's probably a Paleo no-go.

Stick to the food choices that lead to optimal health in a modern world. You have to keep individual variation in mind. Some people may do okay on dairy; most others (about 80 percent) don't. Some can thrive on fewer carbohydrates; others need more. That's why eating a basic Paleo diet is the foundation; you adjust the basics in a way that works for your life.

## *Getting quick results by eating Paleo*

I always say that if I had a football field full of patients and they told me what ailed them, the root of their problems would boil down to one of three sources: blood sugar problems, chronic inflammation, and gut disturbances. That's why so many health practitioners love Paleo: It provides the solution to these problems.

If you've been eating a lot of foods such as grains, processed foods, and sugars that have been causing inflammation, blood sugar problems, and gut irritation, you may just perk up in a flash. For some, that bloated feeling goes away after the first few meals.

Even if you don't currently have one of these ailments, know that all the nutrients in the Paleo-approved foods can really make you come alive, especially if you're coming from a place of nutrient deficiency. When you go from a state of deficiency to one of sufficiency, results can come pretty immediately.

## *Making Paleo work in your busy life*

In modern-day life, speed seems to be the goal: How much can you get done in the shortest amount of time while trying to balance family and career? So the question becomes, how do you add one more layer — finding time to eat well and prepare meals — to this intensity?

In one way, you save time almost immediately because you're no longer aimless about what and where to eat. This sense of direction is pretty liberating. Shopping even becomes easy because you quickly learn exactly how to hunt and gather for Paleo foods (see Chapter 6 for more information on shopping).

You start developing food values; as a result, you become very clear on what you will and won't eat. Just like you go back to your moral values whenever you make a decision on anything — even if you aren't aware of it — you refer to your food values when making eating decisions. When you get into eating Paleo, you get a solid understanding of what works for you and what doesn't.

You can find other tips throughout this book on becoming organized and reallocating some of your time to help Paleo fit into your world. For example, *batch cooking* (preparing several days' worth of staple or convenience foods at once, such as hard-boiling eggs, precooking meats, and cutting and chopping veggies) saves a tremendous amount of time. After you get the hang of batch cooking, you get really fast and it becomes no big deal.

You can make eating Paleo practical in the modern world; in time, this lifestyle will become second nature to you.



I started a Paleo meal delivery service for folks who need just a little extra help having Paleo meals at the ready. Go to [www.livingpaleofoods.com](http://www.livingpaleofoods.com) for more info on how you can get grass-fed, wild, organic prepared Paleo foods delivered right to your door! All meals are made with the highest food quality and cooked in the healthiest way. You just heat and eat.

## Paleo success story: Krystle

I initially started living Paleo to help get rid of the last five to ten pounds that I had left to lose from being pregnant and nursing my daughter, who is now a year old. As I was starting to eat real foods, we found out that I was pregnant again with our second baby! I'm a pregnant, working mom and wife, and I find it important to have dinner ready when my family gets home so we can spend quality time together. Cooking a 20-to-30-minute meal is so easy by quickly steaming vegetables and preparing a salad while baking fish or chicken in the oven. Even a simple stir fry is so quick and delicious. I actually find cooking Paleo meals to be easier than any other kinds of foods.

I've cut my grocery shopping and cooking time by planning out my family's meals and snacks and being sure to only shop for the foods that are on that list. Knowing what the Paleo foods are makes shopping so easy because I'm not floundering around in the grocery store wondering what I should buy. If you're hesitant to try Paleo because you fear you don't have time, don't worry! Cooking Paleo will take you no more time (even less) than preparing traditional meals, and you'll look and feel so much better! I know I'm being a good role model for my family and helping them all to be healthy as possible. It feels good to be Paleo!

## Reaping the Rewards of a Paleo Diet

Paleo often has a reputation for having magic effects because its benefits are so powerful for so many. The backbone of Paleo is really about getting you healthy. Everything in life rises and falls on your health, so when you get healthy, everything else falls into place.

Being healthy means giving your body the right raw materials so they can flourish. This raw material goes beyond eating certain foods to truly embracing a lifestyle — paying attention to why and how you eat and to other factors such as the amount and quality of your sleep, your stress levels, your sunlight intake, your movement level, and your thoughts. When you really go Paleo, you get lasting positive consequences, and the magic unfolds.



How long feeling this switch go on takes is different for everyone. For some, it's immediate; for others, it's a few days or maybe a few weeks. But if you stick to Paleo, it will go on for you, so hang tight!

Most people get started on Paleo to lose weight, but they end up getting more in return: reduced inflammation, lower blood sugar, better sleep, and cleared-up skin and gut issues, all of which I cover in the following sections.

## *Losing weight and looking younger*

Losing weight happens because your body recalibrates or resets to a healthy weight. You lose stored fat because you actually use that stored fat for energy, making you lean and strong.

Here are five reasons you lose weight with Paleo foods:

- ✔ Where there is waste, there is weight. When your body has a lot of toxins, it naturally harbors more fat as a protective mechanism to store the toxins and protect your organs from them. When you're toxic, you're tired, sluggish, and much less active than you'd normally be. Therefore, the fewer toxins you have in your body, the healthier you are, and a healthy body stands the best chance of losing weight and burning fat. Paleo foods aren't refined and processed; therefore, they're very low in toxins. You're eating *nutrient dense* foods, which are filled with nutrition without all the toxic calories and additives
- ✔ Inflammation leaves the body, so that bloated, puffy look disappears. When this puffiness disappears, your intracellular and extracellular water balances in your system; you lose that extra water weight and begin to get a lean, healthy look.
- ✔ Many suffer from weight loss resistance because of food sensitivities. The Paleo foods are low-allergen foods, so they cause fewer sensitivities and associated weight issues.
- ✔ Paleo foods help you maintain a healthy blood sugar, so you're less likely to get that so-called muffin top around your waist.
- ✔ You achieve your body's *set point* (the weight set by your genetics at which your body naturally tries to settle) by eating foods that regulate your hormones along with the signals associated with hormones.

### **Paleo success story: Noel**

Noel started eating Paleo for one reason: She wanted to lose that "freshman 15." She lost the 15 pounds with ease and was surprised at all the other benefits that came with eating Paleo. Noel says, "I focus better than ever, so I know it has made me a better student. I also didn't realize that the refined carbs and dairy were making me feel so bloated and heavy and were the cause of all my stomach problems. I

have lots of energy to work out now, whereas before I was too run-down — and my skin looks so much better. I'm so thankful for discovering *Living Paleo For Dummies* (Wiley) and am thrilled to hear about the accompanying cookbook! I love the Paleo lifestyle, and my sister and I are having a ball making Paleo recipes. This college girl is definitely Paleo for life!"

## Clearing up gut and skin issues

Beauty really is an inside job. What you see on your face is a mirror image of what's happening on the inside, and when your intestines are damaged, it shows.

What causes this damage is typical modern-day lifestyle patterns. Many modern foods lack nutrients and fiber, are filled with toxins, and don't have the healthy bacteria you need to create healthy intestinal cells. If you have acne, rashes, eczema, psoriasis, poor skin tone, and so on, *leaky gut* (where the cells of your small intestine lose their integrity and become porous, creating inflammation and havoc in your body) may be the problem.

Here are some of the offenders in this typical scenario of leaky gut:

- ✓ Grains, including whole grains and grain-like seeds such as wheat, barley, oats, spelt, brown rice, quinoa, and corn
- ✓ Beans and legumes
- ✓ Anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDS)
- ✓ Refined foods
- ✓ Alcohol
- ✓ Sugar
- ✓ Dairy
- ✓ Poor-quality fats and oils

If you've consumed any of these items over the years, you may be facing a problem of leaky gut.



The good news is that this condition can be reversed fairly easily. Paleo creates healthier intestinal cells. Eating the nutrient-rich Paleo foods helps heal your intestinal lining, which makes your skin look beautiful and keeps you well. Avoiding the offenders and sticking to Paleo foods infuses your body with good nutrients and bacteria to heal your gut. (Flip to Chapter 3 for information on choosing Paleo foods.)



For additional healing nutrients for your gut, make sure you eat foods such as raw sauerkraut and kimchi, which provide good bacteria, and foods such as sweet potatoes and butternut squash, which contain good soluble fiber. If you have an illness you're trying to reverse or a stubborn skin condition that you suspect stems from leaky gut, you may want to remove eggs, coffee, nuts, and seeds as well until your gut has time to heal. You may even want to consider supplementing with a probiotic in a pill or powder form.

## Paleo success story: Julie

Living Paleo and loving it! I decided to go Paleo and take the family with me. I gave them no choice after hearing Dr. Kellyann speak — and they're thanking me now.

What convinced me I really needed to take the plunge was my psoriasis. What I didn't expect was that after the first week, my entire family felt better, and we couldn't believe the food we ate had such an impact. Best of all, no one was hungry. My husband and I both lost at least five pounds immediately, and that was a welcome bonus. We made our weekly menu like we

always did with a few adjustments. I have to admit the Paleo recipes were a needed change. I quickly learned what meals were good for weeknights and what needed to be made on the weekend. My psoriasis is now markedly improved in only eight short weeks, and I can't tell you how exciting it is to see those changes in my body! I've suffered with this condition for so long. I loved the weight loss, the clear skin, and most of all the energy I have. My family didn't miss a beat, and we are all better for it! Eight weeks now, and well on our way to what I call the Paleo lifestyle!

## *Sleeping better*

Better sleep is my motivation behind sticking as closely as I can to the Paleo foods. All Paleo followers have a personal Paleo barometer that tells them when they've gotten too far off track and need to pull back and reset their bodies with strictly Paleo foods. For some, it's pains or weight gain, but for me, it's sleep. If I go off the rails too much, my sleep suffers, and I know that it's time to pull back. I actually know many folks who fell in love with Paleo when they discovered it would make them sleep better.

Here are some reasons Paleo helps you sleep like a baby:

- ✔ Paleo foods are packed with minerals, a great natural sleep aid.
- ✔ Balanced blood sugar causes fewer sleep disturbances.
- ✔ Eating Paleo helps balance your hormones and signals associated with hormones to provide a feeling of stability and calm, which helps you feel better and thus sleep better.

Some additional tips to get better sleep include making sure you avoid all sweeteners (including artificial and Paleo-approved natural sweeteners) as well as caffeine because they can really cause blood sugar disturbances, which in turn affect sleep. After you have avoided sweeteners long enough to reset your body and are able to sleep naturally, you can add some Paleo-approved sweeteners such as honey back into your diet. Keep in mind that alcohol, stress, and chronic exercise (overtraining) all can negatively impact sleep, too.

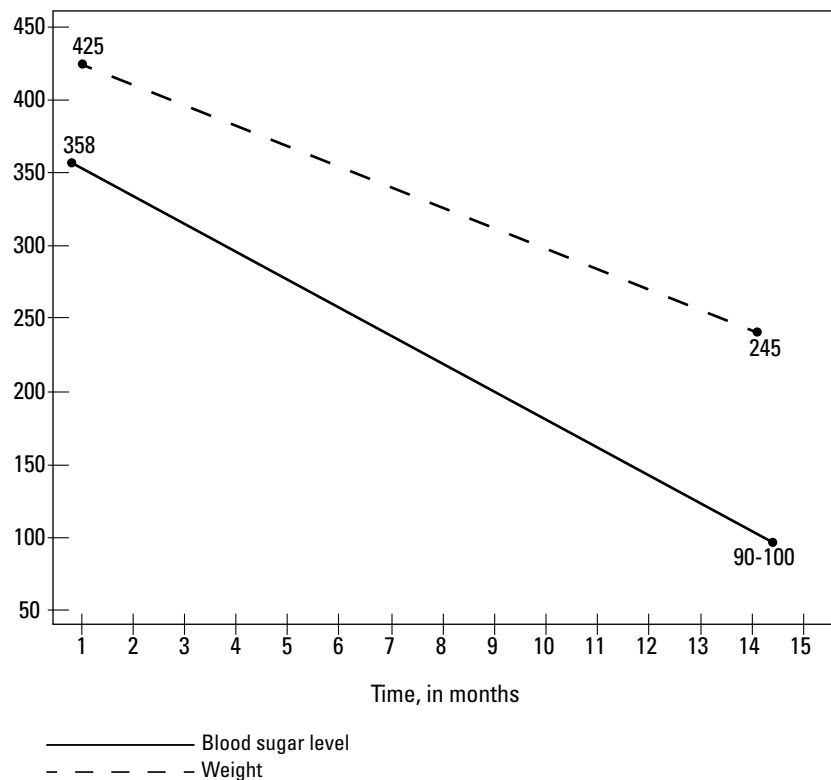


## Balancing your blood sugar

If you have problems maintaining your blood sugar, eating Paleo foods (and the recipes in this book) is a great place for you to get the help you need to move toward health. Yes, Paleo can even improve/heal blood sugar problems.

When you eat a well-balanced Paleo meal of lean meats, Paleo-approved carbohydrates, and healthy fats, you don't have all those blood sugar swings that you once had. Your body is no longer forced to constantly release insulin, and your blood sugar stabilizes.

Consider Drew, a 56-year-old horticulturist whose blood sugar went from 358 down to the 90–100 range in just four months of strict Paleo (see Figure 1-2). His story has inspired many to give Paleo a shot.



**Figure 1-2:**  
An example of how eating Paleo can greatly reduce blood sugar and weight.

## Paleo success story: John

John noticed that his vision began to get a bit blurry and he couldn't see as well as he had. This change prompted a checkup that revealed he had a blood sugar of 220, much higher than the normal range of about 90 to 120. He began eating Paleo foods, and his blood sugars plummeted to approximately 115! His vision sharpened, and he could see clearly once again. He was surprised to find himself

feeling more energized (he said he was always lethargic before); he felt stronger — as if his muscle mass was improving. He also found himself healing much more quickly.

John's story is a perfect example of the healing effects of Paleo. When you allow your body to get truly healthy, it has a domino effect on all of the structures and functions of the body!

## *Reducing inflammation*

A lot of the problems people have today are caused by inflammation in the body. Short-term inflammation is actually a part of a normal healing process. When your immune system overreacts and shifts into high gear, that's when you have a problem known as *chronic inflammation*.

Here are some of the conditions associated with chronic inflammation:

- ✓ Acne
- ✓ Arthritis
- ✓ Asthma and allergies
- ✓ Celiac disease
- ✓ Colitis
- ✓ Crohn's disease
- ✓ Eczema
- ✓ Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)
- ✓ Leaky gut
- ✓ Migraines
- ✓ Multiple sclerosis (MS)
- ✓ PCOS
- ✓ Thyroid disorders
- ✓ Ulcerative colitis

When you begin eating Paleo foods, you kick to the curb a lot of the processed foods and grains that cause this inflammation. Paleo foods are by nature anti-inflammatory and keep your immune system strong, so you effectively prevent and heal inflammatory conditions.



Make sure you're not just eating Paleo but also living Paleo. Exposure to toxins, stress, medications, overtraining, and sleep deprivation can all affect inflammation.

## *Undergoing the Paleo Transformation*

You live longer, stronger, and more healthfully when you start eating and living Paleo because you move toward health. When you're truly healthy, your immune system is solid, protective, and strong. Your body works for you, not against you, and transformation happens.

I love to see what I call *the Paleo transformation*. People usually start Paleo to lose weight. Then layers and layers begin to peel back. Their waists get smaller, their skin and eyes glisten, and their hair may get shinier. They notice conditions healing, and before long, they get the most amazing part of the transformation — a mental, spiritual kind of change. They start thinking more clearly and enjoying a more positive outlook. When I see this start to unfold in the Paleo progression, I know healing is happening on the deepest level. I always call it “watching the de-aging process” because eating Paleo reboots the body by flooding it with vitamins and minerals. This healing is possible for anyone who decides to commit to living Paleo!

### **Choosing health with the Paleo Manifesto**

To really look and feel your best for life, the Paleo principles are a template that works. Keep in mind the following tenets, which are woven throughout living Paleo:

Our bodies are really an energy matrix, and we should think of ourselves as electrical beings, not just structural ones. We are atoms and molecules, not just skin and bones.

Your genes express themselves according to your lifestyle. The way you eat, move, and live has everything to do with the outcome of

your health. Living in a way that most closely matches your blueprint is most congruent with health and happiness. Finding time to play, get sunshine, exercise, connect with others, disconnect from electronics, and manage your stress all matter.

Most importantly, health is a byproduct of your choices. Living and eating Paleo is the healthiest template I have seen in all of my years of practice and helping people and other doctors find solutions. Results are typical with living Paleo.

## *Identifying why Paleo works better than other approaches*

Paleo is more effective than other approaches because it centers on the food that works best with your body. Most importantly, Paleo foods have one purpose, which is what truly defines Paleo: to nourish the body and get you healthy.

That's right, the objective behind eating Paleo is to get you healthy. Period. Everything else that comes along the way just follows the natural progression. It's against natural law not to lose weight, boost immunity, fight aging, heal conditions, and perform better when you're healthy.

## *Switching on your healthy genes with Paleo*

You're in the driver's seat of your health. Your lifestyle choices and the environment in which you choose to live have the biggest impact on the quality of your life. This science is called *epigenetics*. If you feel as though you can't lose weight or get well, no matter how much Paleo food you eat, because of your genes, you can erase all that thinking. Epigenetics is proof that how we look and feel is the result of our choices. Think of epigenetics as your ambassador of health. Epigenetics sends messages to your genome (genes) telling it to flick on the switch of health — or not — depending on your lifestyle choices.

If you're living Paleo, your body will flip the switch to health, and your genes will express this choice. You'll be healthy, lean, strong, and energetic. If you aren't making healthy choices, your genes will express sickness, fatigue, or obesity.



A Paleo diet and lifestyle create the raw material your genes need to flip the switch to health. You find that you look and feel your best — naturally.

### **Have a Paleo party**

If you want to enroll others in living Paleo, start by having a Paleo party! Ask everyone to bring a recipe from this book. Discussing what's in some of the dishes is fun, and when your guests taste Paleo food for themselves, they're intrigued by how good it is with healthy Paleo

ingredients. It's a fun and enlightening way to get people loving Paleo. My sister and I did this kind of event one New Year's Eve to celebrate the launch of *Living Paleo For Dummies* (Wiley), and it was an absolute blast.