

DANA CARPENDER
Best-Selling Author of *1,001 Low-Carb Recipes*

500 PALEO RECIPES

Hundreds of Delicious Recipes for
Weight Loss and Super Health



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Weight Loss and Super Health

DANA CARPENDER



FAIR WINDS
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BEVERLY, MASSACHUSETTS



This book is dedicated to my volunteer recipe testers:

Lynda Vander Voort, Heidi L. Bayer, Lisa Meagher, Arleen Skidmore, Julie McIntosh, Saskia van der Zanden, Regina Mulligan, Yvonne Mitchell, Lisa E. Gonzalez, Mary H. Erickson, Katy Kopczynski, Lisa Coker, Tammera Lowe, Wendy McCullough, Rebecca Jaxon, Heather Doiron, Kathryn Hanft, Robert and Jennifer Larrabee, Kim Eidson, Mary Braun, Michelle Gylanders, Ashley E. Durgin, Kimberly Carpenter, Nancy A., Deb O'Connor, Mary Braun, Brian E. George, Burma Powell, Carmen Ganter, Kay Ideker, Heather Westerberg, Keri Bucci, Lisa Gonzalez, Sherri Attoe, Marilyn McCormack, Mary Erickson, Amy Dungan, Amy Alexander, Jillian Tully, and Maria Vander Vloedt.

I couldn't have done it without you. I always knew my readers were the best, and you have proved it. Your hard work and enthusiasm made this possible, and you have my sincere gratitude. Guys, you rock.

And, as so many times before, to my husband Eric. From grocery store runs and taste-testing, to editing and proofreading, to bailing me out of computer trouble yet again, his contributions to my work are not just invaluable, they're indispensable. All that, and he's just plain nice to have around the house.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 6

CHAPTER 1: **FOUNDATIONAL RECIPES** 26

CHAPTER 2: **APPETIZERS, SNACKS, AND PARTY FOOD** 32

CHAPTER 3: **EGGS** 54

CHAPTER 4: **GRANOLA, PANCAKES, CRACKERS, AND THE LIKE** 76

CHAPTER 5: **SIDE DISHES** 84

CHAPTER 6: **SIDE DISH SALADS** 116

CHAPTER 7: **MAIN DISH SALADS** 147

CHAPTER 8: **FISH AND SEAFOOD** 164

CHAPTER 9: **CHICKEN AND OTHER POULTRY** 184

CHAPTER 10: **BEEF** 210

CHAPTER 11: **PORK AND LAMB** 231

CHAPTER 12: **SOUPS** 252

CHAPTER 13: **CONDIMENTS, SEASONINGS, AND SAUCES** 272

CHAPTER 14: **DESSERTS** 295

CHAPTER 15: **BEVERAGES** 314

ABOUT THE AUTHOR 327

INDEX 328



INTRODUCTION

Why This Book?

It's no secret that I've been a low carber for the better part of two decades now. My story and my recipes are out there for all the world to see (and thank you very much to all of you who have taken a look). So why a paleo book?

It's been clear to me for a while that, despite occasional turf wars, the low-carb movement and the paleo movement are kissin' cousins. Both focus on animal foods. Both avoid grains, potatoes, and sugar. Both make liberal use of vegetables.

The difference has been that low carbers, especially newbie low carbers, often use "crutch" or "bridge" foods—low-carb breads and tortillas, bake mixes, pastas, protein bars, and the like. These products are generally highly processed and often sources of gluten, soy, or both. While I felt, and continue to feel, that some of these products have a place in helping to wean people from their old, carb-laden diets, I know them to be a double-edged sword. I suspect that many cases of low-carb "failure" have occurred because people have relied on these products as staples, instead of basing their diets on those foods that are naturally low in carbohydrate.

(I will insert, parenthetically, that Dr. William Davis, in his excellent book *Wheat Belly*, asserts that there are proteins in gluten that are opioids, and physically addictive. The difference between these opioids and the ones we consider “drugs” is that instead of getting you high, wheat opioids make you hungry. This makes low-carb bread, tortillas, and pastas dangerous double-edged swords indeed.)

But my email, my blog responses, and my Facebook encounters with low carbers around the world tell me that there is a shift occurring. I hear from more and more people who are shunning soy products, who avoid gluten, who are seeking out grass-fed meat and dairy and wild-caught fish. More and more, I hear from people who have quit using artificial sweeteners. (The Sweetener Wars are the bane of my existence, quite honestly. No matter what sweetener I use in a recipe, someone will complain.) Huge numbers of people have dropped processed protein bars, soy-based cereals, diet soda, and are “eating clean.”

In other words, low carbers are trending toward paleo.

Many of the recipes in my previous books are paleo-friendly, but many are not. Indeed, my own eating habits have shifted over the years, to the point where there are recipes in my own books that I would no longer be willing to eat. I’ve gone gluten free, no longer eating even low-carb bread or tortillas, yet quite a few of my old recipes call for these items, or ingredients such as vital wheat gluten, wheat germ, and wheat bran. Some use canola oil, which I haven’t touched in years. Others use commercial mayonnaise, but I now make my own, because the jarred stuff is replete with soy oil and other such nastiness.

Not so with this book. Here you will find no gluten, no grains of any kind, no soy, no omega-6-heavy processed oils, no processed specialty products. You will find animal protein and animal fats in many guises, bushels of vegetables, and quite a lot of fruit. Nuts and seeds, too. And, of course, herbs and spices galore. Have fun exploring!

What Is Paleo?

There was a learning curve to this book, and quite a lot of the problem was that there is no clear definition of *paleo*. With low-carb recipes, there is one simple metric: How many grams of carbohydrate per serving? But there is considerable disagreement as to which foods are paleo and which are not. I had to make a few decisions regarding what I thought constituted the modern paleolithic menu.

It bears pointing out that unless you eat only locally hunted and gathered wild foods, you’re not really eating the same as Ogg. (Or Grok, with a tip of the hat to blogger and author Mark Sisson, of *The Primal Blueprint*. His prototypical caveman is named Grok, and his excellent blog, *Mark’s Daily Apple*, has the cheer “Grok on!”) Given that most of us are going to eat cultivated foods, and may very well eat foods that are not local to our area (she said, a cup of tea at hand—not many tea bushes in southern Indiana), it behooves us to define our terms.

The first paleo nutrition book I read—possibly the first written—was *Neanderthin*, first self-published by Ray Audette in 1995, coincidentally the year I went low carb. Audette had suffered from rheumatoid arthritis and diabetes but found that with his paleo diet all symptoms vanished. His rule was simple and straightforward: *If you can’t gather a food with a sharp stick and a rock, and eat it raw, it’s not really food.* Audette said that the big shift in the human diet came when people started using a new technology—cooking—to render otherwise toxic foods fit to eat. Or at least, make them nontoxic enough that people didn’t immediately get ill. To Audette, that was the real line—can you eat it raw?

Note that Audette didn’t say that you must eat all your food raw, but rather that you shouldn’t eat things that are toxic when eaten raw. Most of us cook our meat, but steak tartare, carpaccio, and sashimi have been enjoyed for centuries. Despite recent hysteria regarding eggs, as

recently as my childhood, eggnog made with raw eggs was considered a healing, strengthening food for invalids and children. (Be honest: Did you ever refuse to lick the cookie dough off the beater because it had raw egg in it? Didn't think so.)

On the other hand, if you eat any quantity of uncooked grain, raw legumes, or potatoes you'll get a good bellyache. It was only the discovery of cooking that put these into the category of "food," starting the Agricultural Revolution. That revolution, in turn, gave us civilization, but it did so at the cost of degrading our health in numerous ways and shortening our life spans. (It also was the beginning of environmental degradation, but that's a discussion for another book.)

"Can you eat it raw?" has been a guiding principle while exploring this way of eating.

While the shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture, and hence from a diet of meat and vegetables to one of grains and beans, can be seen as the first, and perhaps greatest, nutritional "sin," there are a couple of other, far more recent dietary shifts that have had a drastic, deleterious effect on health.

It was about 300 years ago that European colonization of tropical islands, and slavery, made mass, commercial sugar production practical, and sugar cheap enough for the masses. It was disastrous for the slaves, for ecosystems, and for human health, all three.

Defenders of sugar like to point out that it's "natural," and that our bodies can use glucose for fuel. This is true. But the first rule of toxicology is "dose is everything." Ask yourself what would happen if you increased your water intake 3,700 percent? (Don't try it. You can die from hyperhydrosis, because—like sugar—it is possible to get too much water.)

3,700 percent: That's roughly how much our sugar consumption has increased over the past 300 years, from 4 pounds (1.8 kg) per person per year in 1,700, to over 150 pounds (68 kg) per year, or a little under a half a pound (227 g) a *day*. (And someone's eating more, folks, because I'm eating less.)

Even more jaw-dropping, I've seen estimates that paleolithic man ate roughly 20 teaspoons (117 g) of sugar per year, one assumes in the form of honey, since there was no refined sugar. If this is so, the average American is eating more sugar in a day than our hunter-gatherer ancestors ate in a year, and consumes more sugar in six weeks or so than Ogg ate in a lifetime.

Accordingly, another basic principle of paleo nutrition is to shun separated, concentrated sugars, especially table sugar and corn syrup.

Even more recent has been the switch from traditional fats like lard, tallow, schmaltz (chicken fat), coconut, and palm oils to vegetable oils. This really only occurred in the twentieth century, when oil-seed interests promulgated the ill-conceived notion that these oils, previously foreign to the human diet, were somehow safer and more nutritious than the fats humankind had been eating since the caves.

This was a drastic mistake. Rather than preventing heart disease, it turns out these oils promote inflammation in the body, causing a host of ills, from cancer to arthritis to—ironically—heart disease. The great problem turns out to be an imbalance in unsaturated fatty acids, especially the omega-6 versus the omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids. This is why omega-3-rich fish oil has shown so many beneficial effects: It helps to balance out the omega-6/omega-3 ratio. However, it's just as important that we stop flooding our bodies with excess omega-6 fatty acids. Hence, a paleo diet eliminates polyunsaturated vegetable oils. (And no canola oil, because it's highly processed, and anyway, it's a genetically manipulated version of a toxic oil long used for varnish—*varnish*, fercryingoutloud.)

These, to me, are the core principles of a paleo diet:

- No grains, beans, or potatoes, nor anything that must be cooked to be edible. Especially no gluten and no soy.
- No refined or separated sugars.
- No polyunsaturated vegetable oils.

These, which Kurt Harris of the *Archevore* blog calls “neolithic agents of disease,” are the don’ts. Add one “do”:

- Eat plenty of animal protein and animal fats. There is no such thing as a vegetarian paleo diet.

Similarly, Robb Wolf, author of *The Paleo Solution*, lists his dos and don’ts:

DO EAT

Fruits

Vegetables

Lean meats

Seafood

Nuts and seeds

Healthy fats

DON’T EAT

Dairy

Grains

Processed food and sugars

Legumes

Starches

Alcohol

There are refinements, and we’ll get to those in a moment. But I confidently state that if you do these things, and these things alone, you’ll improve your health. To bring up the old ⁸⁰/₂₀ wheeze, this is the 20 percent of the change that will bring you 80 percent of the results. Yes, I made those percentages up. I stand by the statement that these are by far the most important dietary changes you can make.

Now, for those refinements:

- As much as possible, eat fresh, rather than packaged, foods—fresh meats, poultry and fish, fresh vegetables, fresh fruits.
- Avoid additives—eating fresh foods will dramatically reduce your intake of additives right there.

- Choose grass-fed beef and lamb, pasture-raised pork and chicken, pastured eggs, and wild-caught fish as much as you can. Some of you will have issues with availability, others with cost. Still, these foods are nutritionally superior to conventionally raised foods. In particular, they have a vastly better omega-6/omega-3 ratio than their conventionally raised counterparts. Animal fat from grass-fed or pasture-raised animals is health food.

- Similarly, choose organically raised fruits and vegetables as much as possible. Of course, if you have the time and space, gardening is the ultimate way to get fresh organic produce. If you have a local farmers’ market, they are a wonderful source of organic produce, offering all sorts of varieties that you won’t find at the grocery store. And let me stick in a plug here for backyard poultry farming—we love our chickens. They lay wonderful eggs, they’re endlessly amusing, and they turn ticks into food, which around here is no small thing. Backyard chickens are rapidly growing in popularity for a good reason.

- Gauge your carbohydrate intake by your waistline and your blood sugar. Paleo isn’t strictly low carb, allowing for starchy root vegetables, winter squashes, and a wider variety of fruit than most low carbers eat. This does not mean that if you’ve got blood sugar and/or obesity trouble, you can throw caution to the winds and say “It’s paleo! That means I can eat all the (insert high-carb food here) I want!” You may be able to fool your mind, but you will never fool your body.

- Get some sun. Without fortification, food sources of vitamin D are rare. It’s really more a hormone than a vitamin, and your body’s trigger to make that hormone is sun shining on your skin. America’s obsession with sunscreen has led to a host of vitamin D deficiency-related problems, from depression to cancers. Your ancestors ran around in the sun all day, naked or mostly naked.

- Get enough sleep. I say this as a lifetime insomniac, and I know all too well that for some it's more easily said than done. But if you're staying up late to watch TV or catch up on housework, cut it out. Create a proper sleep environment, as dark and quiet as possible, and consider an eye mask and earplugs if you live in the city. Remember that Ogg not only didn't have a television, he also didn't have much in the way of light once the sun went down, so he went to bed. Extending the day with artificial light has had consequences we understand poorly, if at all.
- Exercise, but think about how your ancestors used their bodies. Ogg didn't run marathons. He probably didn't run much at all, except when chasing prey or being chased *as* prey, and then he didn't jog, he ran like hell, but quit as soon as he safely could. On the other hand, Ogg walked a lot—looking for food, stalking prey, following the herds with the seasons. He lifted and carried, because how else are you going to get the antelope back to the cave? He climbed, both to access food and to get out of harm's way.

Paleo or Not Paleo?

As I said, there is a lot of disagreement on what is and is not paleo. Please understand, I come to the whole thing, as I did to low carbing, from the perspective of a cook. I want the widest range of flavors and textures I can possibly get while enjoying the benefits of dietary discipline. Here are some things that some people accept as paleo, and others do not:

Fatty meat. Loren Cordain, one of the pioneers of the paleo movement, originally insisted on lean muscle meats only, recommending that you discard the fat, the skin, and any other rich bits of the carcass. Quite honestly, this boggles me. I cannot imagine that having done the work and taken the risk to hunt and kill a mammoth, a deer, a bear, a wild

boar, that our ancestors didn't eat every scrap of the thing. Yes, game is leaner than farm-raised meat, but we know that hunter-gatherers prized the marrow, the brain, the spinal cord, the kidney fat—every fatty bit they could find. And not all game is naturally very lean, especially in the autumn “grease season.”

The fatty parts of the carcass have nutritional value not found in the muscle meats. Skin, for instance, is a rich source of gelatin, very nutritious stuff. Discarding the skin skews the amino acid balance that would be gained by eating the whole carcass. Gelatin is fantastic for your bones and skin, and is anti-inflammatory to boot. So eat your chicken and turkey skin, and your pork rinds and cracklings. Skin is paleo.

Marrow is a terrific source of fat-soluble vitamins, not to mention brain-building DHA and EPA. (That it basically tastes like meat-flavored butter only sweetens the deal.) There's a reason why predators go for the marrow first.

From a personal perspective, I have seen my health improve as I have increased fat as a percentage of my calories. Accordingly, I have not shunned fatty cuts of meat in this book. Loren Cordain, by the way, has said that he's reconsidered his position regarding fatty meat.

Salt. Some paleo peeps shun salt altogether. But despite demonization, salt is an essential nutrient; a serious deficiency will kill you. The question is, would our hunter-gatherer ancestors have had access to salt?

Surely they would have been aware of mineral-rich areas. Places where the soil is salty, known as “salt licks,” draw game from far around, and would have been prime hunting grounds. Seeing animals licking the ground, Ogg would have tasted the soil. I find it likely that salt deposits would have been discovered this way.

Anyone who lived near salt water would have known that the white stuff left behind by drying tide pools had the coveted flavor. For that matter, those who lived by bodies of salt water would have gotten plenty of salt eating raw clams, mussels, oysters, and other shellfish.

I suspect that anywhere that salt could be found, our ancestors found it and ate it. We know that salt was one of the earliest trade commodities. Is it so hard to believe that nomads whose travels brought them near a salt cave or salt water would take salt along, both for their own use and to trade with other tribes?

Like the omega-6 fatty acids, the question is quantity. By avoiding processed, packaged foods, you will automatically remove most of the salt from your diet. There is also the issue of balance; sodium needs to be balanced with potassium. If your intake of vegetables, fruits, pork, and fish, all rich in potassium, increases, you will need enough sodium to balance it to balance it. Too, while high-carbohydrate diets cause the body to retain sodium, carbohydrate restriction allows the body to eliminate sodium properly. In *The Art and Science of Carbohydrate Restriction*, researchers Stephen Phinney and Jeff Volek state that people who cut out concentrated carbohydrates often find themselves weak and tired, not from lack of carbs, but from lack of sodium.

I see little reason to ban the saltshaker, and while I have kept added salt to the minimum needed to get the flavor I wanted in these recipes, I did not leave the salt out altogether. Blame my cook's instincts. Feel free to omit the salt if you like.

Be aware that my stance on salt is informed by the fact that my husband, Eric, has actually been diagnosed—twice—with *hyponatremia*, too little sodium in the blood. He had been sprinkling salt on his eggs and meat,

but we eat so little processed food, and so few carbs, that apparently he wasn't keeping up with his body's need. Counterintuitively, his hyponatremic state was accompanied by slightly *elevated* blood pressure.

We eat our salt. However, we eat good salt—see the Ingredients section for more information.

The exception seems to be the Inuit. They lived on an Ornish-defying diet of fatty meat, blubber, and fish, and did very well on it, but they disliked salt. I have only a guess as to why this might be—that eating saltwater fish as a staple of their diet gave them all the sodium they needed. That is, I repeat, a guess.

Alcohol and vinegar. Some paleo folks allow for alcohol and vinegar, some do not. I have used them here, though I have avoided, for the most part, grain-derived alcohol and vinegars. (I have one recipe that calls for a teeny bit of bourbon. But I'm telling you, it's wonderful, and the distilling process leaves little of the grain lectins and none of the carbohydrate behind.)

Wild yeasts are everywhere; carbohydrates ferment. Park rangers tell stories of bears finding fruit that has fermented on the bush or vine, and eating enough to get drunk. If bears did it, so did Ogg. He didn't have bottles of the stuff around the cave, but they are not foreign substances that are toxic unless cooked. (Alcohol is toxic if you drink enough of it, but half a cup of wine in a dish to be shared by four people does not strike me as dangerous.)

Vinegar is the natural end-product of alcohol, unless it is distilled first. At my old house, we had an apple tree in the backyard, and there is no question that some of the apples that fell to the ground smelled of vinegar. Do you think a hungry caveman would have passed them up? I don't.

I have used a number of kinds of vinegar in these recipes, most apple cider vinegar, red and white wine vinegars, and both dark and white balsamic vinegars. In particular, there are numerous recipes where a little balsamic vinegar lends the touch of sweetness needed without additional sweetening. I hadn't tried white balsamic vinegar before this book, and it has become one of my favorite ingredients. My favorite moderately priced balsamics are from Colavita.

Dairy. My email tells me that the biggest exception people are making to the paleo plan is including dairy products, especially raw, grass-fed dairy. Mark Sisson's "primal" diet is largely paleo-plus-quality-dairy.

The argument against dairy in a paleo diet is that Ogg probably didn't chase down and milk wild buffalo and sheep. The argument for dairy is that human beings are mammals, so the components of milk are not foreign to our bodies, and also that milk is edible raw. Paleoanthropologists believe mankind was a herder before he was a farmer, and that makes sense. It's not a huge leap from following a flock as prey to controlling that flock. I wonder, too, if the first discovery of cheese didn't happen when someone killed a suckling animal, and discovered coagulated milk in its stomach. That could have happened long, long before anyone started dairying, and might well be where humankind got the idea that ruminants kept for milk could provide food over and over, rather than just once.

I am of the unshakeable opinion that butter and cheese make everything taste better. Further, I myself have never noticed any health problems from eating dairy, though I should mention that I am from English and Dutch stock, both with a long, long history of dairy consumption. Grass-fed dairy products are an excellent source of many nutrients, especially the fat-soluble vitamins A, E, and K. The fat in butter includes lauric acid, which kills yeasts

and fungi, and conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), a cancer fighter that also helps lessen abdominal obesity. I will very likely continue to include butter, cream, and cheese in my diet, especially raw, grass-fed, local dairy.

But I've published a whole pile of recipes that include dairy, and that otherwise suit a primal plan. In this book, I've gone dairy free, for all of you folks who have decided you're better off without it. If you are more primal than paleo, feel free to sneak some butter, cream, and cheese into these recipes. I certainly won't be hurt.

How Paleo Is Paleo?

I am not a purist. Indeed, one of my most popular blog articles is titled "Why I'm Not a Purist." As I said, I think that if you skip the grains and especially gluten grains, eliminate separated sugars, shun polyunsaturated vegetable oils, and avoid soy and other legumes, you'll get at least 80 percent of the value of a paleo diet. Remember, we're not going to replicate the caveman diet; we can't. We're not going to replicate the caveman lifestyle, either. Most of us have jobs that call for the same actions or inaction at least 40 hours a week, something Ogg never imagined. Most of us wouldn't give up central heat, air-conditioning, or artificial lighting, either.

What we're trying to do is avoid those parts of the modern diet that actively and profoundly have metabolic effects we consider negative. (Keep in mind that Ogg probably thought putting on a few pounds was a *good* thing.)

With this in mind, I used, in some of these recipes, ingredients that have minimal quantities of nonpaleo stuff, on the theory that a teaspoon of hot sauce that has a little sugar in it is not going to mess me up. I also used coconut milk that is organic, but contained guar gum, technically not "paleo kosher." (I thank That Nice Boy I Married for this useful term.) I did not use all grass-fed meat.

However, I avoided even tiny quantities of gluten, substituted for grain-derived ingredients like rice or malt vinegar, and made quite a few of my own condiments, especially ketchup—the commercial stuff is loaded with sugar. Ketchup is often used in quantity in recipes, potentially contributing a lot of sugar to the diet, so I've been making my own for years, anyway.

It's up to you how pure you want to be. My only worry is that if you get really obsessive and make this too difficult, you may get fed up and quit. Don't let the perfect become the enemy of the good.

The exception here is gluten. If you are gluten sensitive, you must avoid even traces of the stuff.

About the Word *Natural*

The cultural meme is that “natural” equals “healthful.” Over and over, I hear, “But it's *natural!* It must be good for me!” People say this about whole grains, honey, all sorts of things.

Wake-up call: Many of the most toxic things on the planet are natural: rattlesnake venom, death angel mushrooms, tobacco. Natural stuff can ruin your health at least as quickly as artificial stuff. I whole-grained-and-beaned my way up to a size 20.

So don't get sucked into “But this sprouted whole grain bread is *natural!*” All sorts of natural things can and will hurt you. The gluten and opioids in that whole-grain bread are among them.

Meat is natural, but it's not part of the diet of a rabbit. Grass is natural, but it's not part of the diet of a tiger. The question for paleo peeps is, “Is this food natural for human beings?”

Is This a Low-Carb Cookbook?

Lower carb than your average cookbook, certainly, but not as low carb as my previous cookbooks. You'll find very-low-carb meat and egg recipes here, absolutely, and recipes for nonstarchy vegetables, nuts and seeds, and other low-carb favorites. But you'll also find recipes for sweet potatoes, winter squash, and other starchy vegetables. You'll find more fruit than I have hitherto used, and recipes including honey (see my notes about sweeteners), which is pure sugar.

Just as many low-carb folks don't eat paleo, many paleo folks are not strictly low carb. Most low carbers were drawn to their diet because of obesity, blood sugar problems, or a combination of the two. Many paleo folks, though, have always been slim and athletic, with robust metabolisms that can tolerate a little more carbohydrate.

As always, you need to pay attention to your body. If you have blood sugar problems, your glucometer is your friend. Pay attention to your body and pick and choose the recipes that work for you.

How Are Nutrition Counts in These Recipes Calculated?

The nutrition counts have been calculated using MasterCook software, a very useful program that allows the user to enter the ingredients of a recipe, and the number of servings it makes, and then spits out the nutritional breakdown for each serving. MasterCook does not, however, calculate for such things as skimming the fat off a soup or draining and discarding a marinade.

The nutrition counts for these recipes are as accurate as we can make them. However, they are not, and cannot be, 100 percent accurate. MasterCook gets its nutritional information from the USDA Nutrient Database. MasterCook also lets the user enter new ingredients in the database, and I have done this with ingredients such as coconut aminos and unsweetened coconut milk. In these cases, I have taken the nutritional information from the labels.

Every stalk of celery, every onion, every head of broccoli is going to have a slightly different level of vitamins, minerals, and carbohydrate in it, because it grew in a specific patch of soil, in specific weather, with a particular kind of fertilizer. You may use slightly meatier chicken than I do. You may be a little more or less generous with how many bits of chopped green pepper you fit into a measuring cup.

Don't sweat it. These counts are, as the old joke goes, near enough for government work.

In this spirit, you'll find that many of these recipes call for "1 large rib of celery," "half a green pepper," "a clove of garlic." This is how most of us cook, after all. These things do not come in standardized sizes; they're analyzed for the average. Don't sweat it. The important thing here is eating appropriate foods for your body, and skipping the toxic modern interlopers.

Ingredients

Most of the ingredients here are familiar and need no explanation, but there are a few that bear elaboration.

ALMOND MEAL AND COCONUT FLOUR

These are the flour substitutes I have used. Both are widely available in health food stores, and often in regular grocery stores as well. The widely distributed Bob's Red Mill brand includes both.

I often make my own almond meal, simply by running shelled almonds through my food processor until it reaches cornmeal texture. This can be subbed for the commercial version, but it takes a decent food processor. (If you don't have a really good food processor, consider buying one. I've had a \$30 Black and Decker, and a \$125 Cuisinart, and there's no question which is the better, more powerful, more versatile machine.)

Coconut flour is milled from coconut that has first been pressed for its oil. Putting shredded coconut through your food processor will not give you coconut flour. You'll have to purchase it.

COCONUT AMINOS

Brewed from coconut sap, coconut aminos are a soy- and wheat-free substitute for soy sauce. They are interchangeable with soy sauce in cooking, giving substantially similar results. All my local health food stores carry these, but if you can't find coconut aminos locally, like everything else, you can order them online. They're pricier than soy sauce.

I'll say here, though, that of all the forms soy takes, I consider soy sauce to be the most benign. The fermentation process breaks down the soy estrogens, and the mineral-binding phytates are filtered out. In fact, for me the most questionable parts of most commercial soy sauces are the wheat and sugar most of them contain. When I do use soy sauce, I use San-J brand wheat-free soy sauce. Depending on how strictly paleo you want to be, you could substitute this for the coconut aminos.

COCOA POWDER AND BITTER BAKING CHOCOLATE

Obviously sugary chocolate candy is not paleo, but what about chocolate itself? It seems to me that the antichocolate sentiment comes from chocolate's sugary reputation, and perhaps from the conviction that since people love and crave it so much, it must be bad. The

cacao fruit and bean (not a legume, but the seed of a fruit) are eaten not only by humans but by wild animals as well. That strikes me as paleo.

Better, chocolate is a tremendously rich source of antioxidants. It also is surprisingly high in fiber, if that concerns you.

Accordingly, I've used unsweetened cocoa powder and bitter baking chocolate in a few recipes here. Enjoy.

EGGS

If you have a source of pastured eggs—eggs from chickens who are actually allowed to run free, eating grass and clover and worms and bugs—pony up the extra buck or two a carton. They're so totally worth it. Be aware that “free-range eggs” come from chickens who have a door to a pen outside, but may very well never actually venture into the sun, much less have access to the grass, bugs, and other stuff that are the natural diet of a chicken.

If you're getting proper eggs, the yolks won't be lemon yellow, they'll be golden-orange. I know, because I have thirty chickens running around my backyard as I write this, eating grass and bugs (and ticks, bless them). The yolks in their eggs are so brilliant it's practically blinding.

Ever see those eggs that say “From chickens fed vegetarian feed?” That phrase never fails to make me sad. Chickens are not vegetarians. Not even a little bit. My birds will eat almost anything, but they fight over meat scraps, and heaven help any bug or salamander or baby snake that gets in their way. Living with chickens, I'm pretty sure I know what dinosaurs were like. Among the eggs from chickens forced into vegetarianism are those from Eggland's Best, which are advertised as being rich in omega-3 fatty acids. This, apparently, is from being fed flaxseed. Nothing wrong with that, but be aware that eggs from pastured hens are extraordinarily rich in omega-3s, plus all kinds of vitamins and antioxidants.

You will find many recipes in this book calling for raw eggs. This runs directly counter to the food safety information we've had drummed into our heads for the past couple of decades. However, it has been stated that only one out of every 16,000 uncracked, properly refrigerated eggs is actually contaminated. I had a conversation with a public health and food scientist who said, “The risk is less than the risk of breaking your leg on any given trip down the stairs.” And that's with factory-farmed eggs; I consider small-farm eggs—or the eggs from my backyard—even safer.

It's not that there's no risk; there's a risk to everything. But I'm increasingly convinced that people worry about the wrong things, getting panicky about raw eggs or raw milk while consuming Coca-Cola, Lucky Charms, and Wonder Bread. For what it's worth, I've never gotten sick from a raw egg. But your risks are your own to take.

If you're really unhappy about raw eggs, you can pasteurize them. You'll need a digital thermometer. Put your eggs in a saucepan and cover with water. Put them on a high burner and bring the water to 140°F (60°C). Hold them at that temperature—and no hotter—for 3 minutes. Then immediately pour off the hot water, and flush the eggs with several changes of cold water. Store in the refrigerator until needed or use right away.

FATS

Fat has been reviled for so long that it can take a while to wrap our heads around the idea that proper, traditional fats are one of the most valuable foods we can eat. Most of the vegetable oils we've been told are “healthy” are anything but. I have used only a few, carefully chosen fats in this book:

Lard. For a very long time, lard was the most widely used cooking fat in America. It was only in the twentieth century that the marketing of vegetable oils moved lard out of its central position. It deserves a place in your kitchen.

Proper lard, that is: unprocessed lard from pastured pigs. Even if you're eating grocery store meat, seek out a source of proper lard. Don't even consider the stuff in the grocery store. Not only does the grocery store junk have a less favorable fatty acid balance, but it's been bleached, and usually hydrogenated—you know, the process that creates trans fats.

Proper lard, on the other hand, is a lovely blend of mono-unsaturated and saturated fats, as healthful as can be. It's also one of the best dietary sources of vitamin D. Turns out pigs make vitamin D in their skin on sun exposure, just like we do, and that vitamin D is stored in the fat.

I buy lard in five-pound buckets from a local small farmer. At this writing, I'm paying \$14, or just under \$3/pound. Absolutely worth it. Any time I want a bland fat—for sautéing, pan-broiling, basting, or what-have-you—I reach for my lard. I keep the main bucket in my deep freeze, to keep it fresh, scooping out enough for about a week at a time into a smaller jar that I keep by the stove.

Bacon grease. If you've spent the money for nitrate-free bacon from pasture-raised pigs, do not, for the love of all that's holy, throw away the grease. That's manna from heaven, as delicious as it is good for you. Similar fatty acid profile to lard, of course.

Coconut oil. Coconut oil is one of the most saturated fats available. Despite propaganda, that's a good thing. Why? Because saturated fats are extremely stable. Unlike polyunsaturates, they don't go rancid easily—coconut oil will keep a year without refrigeration, even when open—and do not cause inflammation in the body. Interestingly, they also help remove fat from your liver—this, according to Drs. Michael and Mary Dan Eades, of *Protein Power* fame, and I have no reason to doubt them.

Coconut oil has other benefits. It's loaded with lauric acid, a fatty acid that kills yeasts and fungi. Indeed, coconut oil is used to treat systemic yeast infection. It stimulates the thyroid, which can help with weight loss. It also has a very high content of medium-chain triglycerides, or MCTs. These fats can be used directly as fuel by the muscles, and so can be used for quick energy, without the letdown sugar brings.

There are two kinds of coconut oil: extra-virgin coconut oil and just plain coconut oil. The extra virgin is simply pressed from coconut meat, with no processing. It is extremely healthful, but it also has a distinct coconut aroma, which may or may not work with the recipe you're planning. There is also just plain "coconut oil," widely used in Indian cuisine. It's more processed, but still resists rancidity, will clear fat out of your liver, and provides quick energy to your muscles. It's also quite bland, which makes it suitable for a wider range of cooking purposes. It's up to you how strict you want to be. Personally, I think both are useful to keep on hand. (Of course, I write cookbooks for a living and have a remarkable variety of ingredients in the house.)

Olive oil. Olive oil is not authentically paleo, but it has a very long history of use and appears to be pretty benign. The paleo community has, for the very most part, embraced it. It is useful because more-saturated fats are not liquid at room temperature, making them unsuitable for salad dressings and the like. Too, if you're looking for a Mediterranean flavor, olive oil is essential.

I have called for two grades of olive oil in this book: Extra-virgin olive oil and "light" olive oil. Extra virgin is more nutritious, but it does have a pronounced flavor. This is wonderful in many uses, but occasionally I wanted a blander liquid fat. In these cases, I used "light" olive oil. The fatty acid balance, which I consider essential, is not substantially affected by the refining process used

to make light olive oil. However, it is up to you whether you wish to use this more refined oil, and to decide if the stronger flavor of the extra-virgin olive oil will suit you in, say, mayonnaise.

There are other paleo fats. Indeed, the fat of any grass-fed or pastured meat is healthful and valuable for cooking. Tallow (beef dripping), chicken fat, fat from roasted marrow—it's all worth keeping and using as cooking fat. I didn't use them in these recipes because, for the most part, they can't be purchased, but rather have to be rendered in your kitchen. I'm guessing most of you don't want the hassle.

MEAT, POULTRY, AND FISH

It doesn't come any more paleo than game. If you have a hunter or fisherman in the house, thank him or her, and enjoy. However, I have only one game recipe in this book, a very nice venison chili. Why? Because neither my husband nor I hunt, and selling game is illegal in Indiana.

Most of us will be buying our meat. You can buy elk, venison, etc., at the specialty butcher, but it's sky-high, and around here it's farm raised, which makes it less than wild. So I've been cooking beef, pork, lamb, chicken, and turkey, and chances are you will, too.

Whenever possible, choose grass-fed or pasture-raised meat and poultry and wild-caught fish. Why?

For the past couple of decades, we've been given to believe that fish is better for us than red meat. This, we're told, is because fish is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, while red meat has less omega-3 and more omega-6. Not to mention those "dangerous" saturated fats. (Nice, stable, noninflammatory saturated fats. Saturated fats such as stearic acid, abundant in beef, which lowers LDL and raises HDL, just like olive oil.)

Turns out that this is only sort of true. *Wild-caught* fish is higher in omega-3 fatty acids than *feedlot* beef or pork. This is because fish, in the wild, eat their proper evolutionary diet—fish paleo, if you like. In the meanwhile, the steers and pigs are being crammed full of grains, soybeans, and other things nature never intended them to eat. They are, of course, fed grains and beans because those foods make them fat. Cows are natural grass-eaters. Their proper place in the food chain is turning grass into more concentrated foods—and, I might add, in the process fertilizing the grass. Pigs in the wild are omnivores, but certainly never evolved in tandem with huge fields of Roundup-soaked corn and soy. Acorns, beechnuts, windfall fruit, eggs, any small animal that gets in their way, and any carrion they can scavenge, but not corn and soybeans.

It turns out that if you feed cows and pigs their proper diets, they're leaner than feedlot animals, but what fat there is has a high concentration of omega-3 fatty acids. Conversely, if you farm fish and feed them corn and soybeans, they're fatter than their wild-caught counterparts, but far less of that fat is omega-3.

It's not mammal versus fish. It's a question of animals eating the diet they evolved for, versus the same grains and beans the agricultural industry is trying to shovel into us.

Grass-fed beef and lamb and pastured pork and chickens are pricier than meat raised in controlled animal feedlot operations (CAFOs). After all, CAFOs exist because they can raise a whole lot of meat, very quickly, with minimum work. They're bad for the animals, the environment, and your health, all three, but they do produce cheap meat.

And, frankly, I think that cheap meat is more healthful than grains. A lot of people have made a lot of mileage, health-wise, simply by dropping grains and beans for meat, even the cheap stuff. I would sooner eat CAFO beef or pork than organic whole wheat bread and pasta.

That said, grass-fed and pastured meats and wild-caught fish are dramatically better for your health and the planet than the cheap stuff at the grocery store. If you can possibly afford them, buy them. Many people find that the most economical way to do this is to buy a deep freezer—an investment, to be sure—and then purchase grass-fed beef by the half or quarter steer. I live in farm country, and many local small farms only sell their meat this way, direct to the consumer. All of their animals are spoken for before slaughter, then they have the meat processed and wrapped for the freezer. At this writing, prices hover somewhere between \$4 and \$5/pound. That sounds high for ground chuck, but it's cheap for prime rib and porterhouse, so these things balance out.

Buying pork in bulk is not a winning a proposition. Pork simply doesn't freeze as well as beef. After about six months in the freezer it develops an off-taste all the spices in the world can't disguise. Still, it's worth negotiating bulk prices for as much pork as you're likely to eat in 6 months.

Chicken freezes well, but a side of chicken isn't going to last you long. See if a local small farm will cut you a deal if you buy, say, a dozen chickens at a time. They'll be cheaper if you buy them whole than if you get them cut up. Consider investing in a poultry shears—cutting a chicken into quarters isn't hard.

Lamb is virtually all grass-fed, so the grocery store stuff is comparable to the small-farm stuff. Still, you may be able to get a deal if you buy a whole lamb, processed for the freezer.

Where do you find these small farmers? Around here, we have an excellent farmer's market on Saturdays, almost an embarrassment of riches. As with everything else, you can also find small farms online. Google "grass-fed meat" or "pastured pork" and your region, and see what you find.

A wonderful option is community supported agriculture, or CSAs. These are popping up around the country. You buy a share in a farm's annual yield in advance, then receive regular "shares" of whatever they produce, with the cost averaging out to lower than retail. Many CSAs specialize in produce—nothing wrong with that—but others also offer grass-fed meats or pastured eggs. Take a look at www.localharvest.org/csa to see if there is such a farm near you.

About bacon. Processed meats are not particularly paleo, and most of them are injected with solutions that contain sugar and nitrates. Accordingly, I have left out most cured meats, including ham and commercial sausages. The exception is bacon. Why? Because everybody loves it, of course, and because a modest quantity of bacon can elevate a run-of-the-mill dish to superstar status. Anyway, all the paleo folks I know eat bacon.

If all you've ever had is grocery store bacon, you're in for a treat. Get yourself some small-farm bacon from pastured pigs. Expensive, but insanely good, and free of the usual chemical additives.

Nuts and Seeds

Kurt Harris, of the *Archevore* blog, feels that nuts should be eaten sparingly, because many of them are rich sources of omega-6 fatty acids. He has a point, but I respectfully disagree.

I suspect our hunter-gatherer ancestors ate all the nuts they could gather. After all, they're a rich source of calories, and they naturally keep well. Gather all the

nuts you can find in the autumn, and on winter days when it's too nasty to go hunting you can sit around the fire, cracking nuts and telling stories. Too, nuts neither run nor fight back, qualities I suspect our ancestors greatly appreciated.

So you will find nuts used throughout this book, particularly almonds, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, and pistachios. Generally I started with raw, shelled nuts that I purchased in bulk at the health food store. The exception is pistachios, which I could only purchase locally already roasted and salted. If you can find raw pistachios, grab them! You can easily toast them in the oven.

I have also used coconut quite a lot. Coconut is one of the ultimate hunter-gatherer foods: They don't run or fight back, they're big, they contain a lot of food for the effort, they provide both food and drink, they're loaded with calories, and they keep well. Add to that the notable benefits of coconut oil, and the exceptional fiber content, and coconut has to be considered a superfood. You can, if you like, buy whole fresh coconuts, crack them, and shred the meat, but I confess to taking the easy route: I buy shredded, unsweetened coconut in bulk at a local health food store. At this writing, it costs me \$3/pound. Look for a place that sells coconut in bulk and has a good turnover for the best deals and the freshest product.

The "nuts" you will not find in this book are peanuts and cashews. I love them both, but neither are true nuts, and neither is edible raw. In fact, raw cashews contain the same chemical irritant found in poison ivy! (The "raw" cashews you see at the health food store have actually been steamed to destroy the toxin.) Peanuts are a legume, not a nut.

The seeds I've used most in this book are sunflower and pumpkin. Both of these are New World foods and were used by Native Americans. I've used flaxseed meal in a

few recipes, but feel that it's actually unlikely hunter-gatherers ate much flax. The seeds are too small to make them worth gathering, and the hulls so tough that, unground, they pass whole through the digestive tract. I've used a few sesame seeds here and there, and the occasional splash of dark sesame oil for flavor, but again, sesame seeds are so tiny it seems unlikely that hunter-gatherers would have bothered with them very often.

NUT MILKS

Almond milk. Some paleo cookbooks call for almond milk, but all the packaged almond milk I have found is replete with additives. I did not use it for this book. I have, however, occasionally used Silk and Blue Diamond brands of unsweetened almond milk in the past, and can tell you they are good-tasting products. If the additives are acceptable to you, have at it.

Coconut milk. It is entirely possible to make coconut milk at home; I did it a few times while writing this book. If you want to be seriously paleo kosher, you certainly may do this; you'll find instructions on page 28. You can use this homemade coconut milk for any recipe in the book that calls for it, though you'll find it's a bit thinner than canned.

I overwhelmingly used canned coconut milk. Indeed, it was the only canned product I used regularly, and I went through several cans per week. That's why I bought it—I used a *lot* of coconut milk, enough that making my own was a hassle. So I bought organic coconut milk a half-a-dozen cans at a time—mostly Thai Kitchen brand, but any organic coconut milk should be fine. Confession: Thai Kitchen Organic Coconut Milk contains guar gum, which is not "paleo kosher." There are a few brands of canned coconut milk that contain nothing but coconut and water; if it matters to you, read labels.

All of these recipes were developed using full-fat coconut milk. Coconut oil is very healthful stuff, and my body

is happiest on a high-fat diet, so low-fat coconut milk simply made no sense. You can try it if you prefer, but I can't vouch for the results.

Some coconut milk comes in 13.5-ounce (400 ml) cans, and some in 14-ounce (425 ml) cans. A half ounce more or less is not going to make a difference in any of these recipes, so don't sweat it.

Just recently I have seen thinner, more pourable coconut milks, meant for drinking. These are packaged in cartons, like dairy milk. So Delicious company makes one, and so does Silk. These do have additives, though the So Delicious sugar-free coconut milk doesn't have anything that strikes me as really obnoxious. Silk coconut milk has added evaporated cane juice, a.k.a. Sucanat, which explains why it has 7 grams of carbohydrate per cup. Of the two, I'd take the So Delicious brand. But be aware that these are substantially thinner than canned coconut milk, and not what these recipes were standardized on.

SALT

As I mentioned in the "Paleo or Not Paleo" section, I'm not in favor of eliminating salt. I am, however, in favor of eliminating standard grocery store table salt, which bears little resemblance to the salt available to our ancestors. Grocery store salt is refined to eliminate all minerals except for sodium and chlorine, often with iodine added as well. Other stuff is added, largely to keep the salt from caking in damp weather. One popular brand of table salt includes sodium silicoaluminate, dextrose, potassium iodide, sodium bicarbonate. Yep, dextrose, as in sugar. Yuck.

Sea salt, on the other hand, contains a wide variety of trace minerals. It shouldn't contain any noxious additives, either. Just one problem: Our seas and oceans are sadly polluted. There is, however, a way around this: mined sea salt. All around the world, there are deposits of salt that

are remnants of ancient seas. This salt was deposited long before mankind was around, much less had a chance to dump chemicals in the oceans. This is the finest and most nutritious—and most paleo—salt you can use.

I use a brand called Real Salt, mined in Utah, while friends of mine favor salt from deposits in the Himalayas. (And how long ago does an ocean have to have dried up to have left salt in the Himalayas?!) Any salt from ancient deposits should be fine, so long as nothing is added. Your ancient sea bed salt will not be pure white—the stuff I get is pale pink, as is a lot of Himalayan salt. Pure white salt is suspect.

Good salt is more expensive than table salt; at this writing I pay \$7 for 26 ounces of Real Salt. I pay it gladly; I consider good salt a very important part of my nutritional plan, and I have been using it for many years.

Be aware that unadulterated salt will clump in damp weather. The only solution I have is the old tradition of the salt dish, in place of the saltshaker—just put a small dish of salt on the table, pinch up a bit, and sprinkle as needed.

SWEETENERS

There aren't a lot of paleo sweeteners. Our paleo ancestors simply didn't sweeten things much. The most paleo thing you can do is to stop expecting to eat sweet stuff with any regularity.

That said, there are a very few sweeteners that at least some paleo folks would have been acquainted with, and that I have used in this book.

Honey. I mention honey with trepidation, because it has a good reputation it does not deserve. It's sugar. Yes, raw organic honey has some enzymes and a little pollen in it, but it's more than 99 percent sugar. It will spike blood sugar and cause an insulin release just like table sugar will.