CONTINUING WITH PALEO

4-WEEK REINTRODUCTIONS




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REINTRODUCTIONS OVERVIEW

Have you completed the 4-Week Paleo Reset? If so, it's time to begin **reintroductions.** Before you do, let's see what you have achieved in the last 4 weeks! **You have:**

- Cut out a lot of crap from of your diet
- Introduced more nutrient-dense foods and lots of vegetables
- Started drinking lemon water and more water in general
- Given up alcohol for a month
- Reduced caffeine - and even went without for a week
- Monitored your sleep and implemented some new sleep improvement habits
- Started moving regularly
- Learnt how to cook new dishes
- Cleaned out your pantry, started weekly meal prep and met your food vendors
- Tried a new vegetable and a different type of protein
- And started taking charge of your own health

Remember that everyone's journey is completely different. While some people experience weight loss or improved digestion, others relish in the fact that they can now walk more, sleep a little better and know that their willpower is stronger than they ever thought it could be.

If weight loss is your primary goal, don't be discouraged if it's not dropping off as quickly as you want. Our nutrition expert Jad Patrick asked me to remind you that **slow and steady = more permanent weight loss.** So give it time and gauge your success by how YOU FEEL rather than what the scales show. In fact, maybe it's time to throw away the scales.

Feeling more motivated to continue?

You can choose to follow the reset phase with **Reintroductions,** using my guides and additional meal plans. I have devised **4 weeks of reintroductions**, during which you can get more in tune with your body. Each week you can introduce some of the foods that were eliminated in the 4-week reset program and learn how your body reacts to them. I recommend adding 1-2 new foods and monitor your symptoms.

You can also learn more about these 'grey area' foods and how to prepare them to be more digestible and less harmful to the body. You can start to drink some alcohol and enjoy a few more pleasure foods. I recommend the Reintroductions phase as a way of setting up a personalised eating framework that you can continue with after the program is finished.

If you already know your sensitivities, feel free to omit those foods from the meal plans. If you try any of the foods and you suspect that it's not agreeing with your body, feel free to remove it going forward.

EXPERT Q&A – REINTRODUCTIONS BASICS

Ah, the reintroductions ! This stuff can get tricky. That's why I picked our expert **Claire Yates'** brain on what you need to know before and during your food reintroductions. Claire is a nutritional medicine practitioner and a former lecturer in nutritional medicine, so she has a deeper understanding of the food we eat and its interaction with the body. She is also the author of Optimal Health The Paleo Way.

What is your best advice when reintroducing foods that were eliminated during the reset phase?

The general rule of thumb is to reintroduce one to two ingredients/foods items a week at a time, starting off with a small amount on the first day and increasing the amount over the course of the week, while monitoring any reactions or changes in your mood or symptoms.

Make sure you are reintroducing individual ingredients or foods and not whole groups – as you might react to milk, but not some other dairy that has a higher fat content, like say cheese or butter.

This is also the time people should really look into **'mindful eating'.** As they start to expand their range of foods, they will get excited and may overeat, so by slowing the process down and really enjoying the experience they are less likely to overindulge.

If weight loss starts to stall, they may want to **watch their portions of food**, and stick to the recommended amounts of sauces and condiments, which can sneak up on people if they overdo them.

What kind of symptoms should people watch out for? Is there a timeframe during which these symptoms might appear?

You will usually notice symptoms over the course of the week and they may resemble the 'detox' symptoms – look out for things like headaches, bloating, skin irritations, mood changes, changes in bowel movements etc.

Cheese may bring on some reactions with people: obviously yoghurt and cheese may bring on 'lactose' type reactions – gurgling in stomach, runny or urgent stools, bad flatulence etc. However, hard cheeses like parmesan may also cause other reactions such as sinus congestion and histamine type reactions such as rashes on the skin, itchiness or a runny nose. This can also occur with alcohol reintroduction. This may not indicate an 'allergy' per se but is an indicator not to overdo these foods.

Cheese is very rewarding (in the biological sense, rewarding means 'reinforcing' – it has qualities that make you want to have more), so people may notice they start to crave it more as they reintroduce it. This is okay if they aren't bothered by this, but for those with weight loss as a goal they may wish to add the cheese back in very slowly.

Occasionally, dairy can also have the opposite effect and cause constipation, so if people notice their bowels are more sluggish with dairy then they may wish to consume less of it and keep up their fibre intake.

If you are not sure about your symptoms or what foods might have caused them, you can always seek out professional help.

Why do some people have food allergies or sensitivities?

True food allergies and food intolerances are very different and it is a very complex subject. A true food allergy is an immune response and can have very sudden and severe symptoms, such as anaphylaxis.

A food intolerance can be delayed and very subtle, and is caused by reactions to things like food additives, but also to natural chemicals in foods. These reactions can manifest as headaches, sleep disturbances, behavioural problems, skin irritations, and stomach upsets.

Food intolerances and allergies are on the increase due to changes in microbial exposure, compromised gut health and an increased pro-inflammatory diet. A perfect example of how to develop increased intestinal permeability!

Is it possible to eliminate sensitivity to a certain food after it's been taken out of the diet for a period of time? Can your body's reaction to a particular food be reset over time?

It is possible to reduce food intolerances (not true food allergies) but I would recommend working with a health professional that specialises in gut health. It would involve testing gut microflora for imbalances, working on gut integrity and then slowly re-introducing the offending foods. Much like if a person reacts to foods containing FODMAPs – it is not about eliminating FODMAPs forever, but working on gut health and integrity so that those foods can be slowly reintroduced, as they are also beneficial for maintaining microbial diversity in the gut.

What are some foods that people should avoid full stop, even if they are not sensitive to them?

It is really hard to talk in absolutes when dealing with the body and individuals. Most foods are really up to the individual to see how they respond – even particular grains when prepared traditionally may be all right for some people to consume, especially if it has been in their culture for a long time. However, I would obviously say I see no real need for anyone to consume junk food or overly processed foods!

How much caffeine or alcohol is healthy and why?

Caffeine does cause a **stress response in the body**, causing cortisol to be released. It should be consumed in moderation (a maximum of 1–2 cups per day) and generally before lunch so as not to disturb your sleep. If you are using caffeine for an 'energy boost' or you are having ANY issues with your sleep, I would eliminate caffeine and see if it is the culprit.

The consumption of alcohol has been shown to adversely **impact the tight gap junctions in the intestine**, which may be implicated in the incidence of leaky gut – so again it will really depend on the individual. It also causes **impaired absorption of nutrients;** primarily B group vitamins and fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K, and deficiencies in these vitamins can promote premature ageing.

Alcohol is also usually associated with **excess empty calorie consumption**. People drink mindlessly and when you actually start to track your alcohol intake...it is usually a lot higher than you imagined!

Drink occasionally and drink mindfully; and if you are going to enjoy a drink, make sure it is a really nice wine or beer that you love, and really savour and experience the flavours.

FERMENTED DAIRY VS MILK

As we dig deeper into reintroductions, we have a LOT to cover. When it comes to dairy, there's simply more to it than just milk and butter. While many individuals will find that they don't tolerate a cold glass of cow's milk in the morning, those same people might fare quite well with fermented dairy products.

TYPES OF FERMENTED DAIRY

- **Yoghurt.** This is probably the most common type of fermented dairy. A quality yoghurt product will contain 2% milk fat and nothing else besides bacteria. Most commercial products are sweetened with added sugars in addition to fruits. Furthermore, most "healthy" yoghurt products are 0% milk fat. When searching for yoghurt, it's best to seek out those with minimal ingredients. Another tip is to make sure that the product contains active cultures and the *L.acidophilus bacteria.* The fermentation process eliminates many of the natural sugars found in milk making yoghurt a dairy choice with a lessened insulin response. 'Pot set' yoghurt is best.
- **Kefir.** Kefir is cultured milk made using a starter culture in the form of kefir grains. You can make this at home by letting the milk ferment over 24 to 48 hours. It's much like yoghurt, but the result is a thicker milk drink rather than a food. Kefir grains are colonies of beneficial yeast and bacteria that lend themselves to milk, or even water, when left to culture. When buyin kefir, you'll likely come across the same dilemma as yoghurt: many brands have added sugar. Seek out a plain variety or make your own at home. Kefir contains a lot more strains of beneficial bacteria than yoghurt.
- **Sour cream.** Most fermented dairy products are moderately sour which may be where sour cream gets its name from. This product is just what it sounds like – fermented heavy cream. Unlike yoghurt and kefir, both of which can be made from milk of any fat content, sour cream is very fatty – around 14% milk fat. You can make your own at home with a starter culture and grass-fed heavy cream or raw cream (if legal). If dairy is well tolerated, this fermented food can add a healthy boost of fat to your meal as a condiment.
- **Aged cheeses.** All cheeses are essentially made up of cultured milk, but aged cheeses have a longer fermentation process adding more flavour and nutrients. Non-fermented cheeses are simply made by adding acid to heated milk while fermented cheeses require ageing and live cultures. These cultures feed on lactose in milk, making these cheeses easier to digest. Think Parmesan, aged Cheddar, Pecorino, Manchego or Comte.

COMPARISON: LACTOSE CONTENT

As a rule, the higher the fat content in the dairy, the lower its lactose content. This means that whole-fat yoghurt, kefir made from whole milk, sour cream, and most aged cheeses contain far less lactose than commercially made, reduced-fat/fat-free, non-fermented dairy products.

Furthermore, fermented dairy contains less lactose. The live cultures used to produce these foods feed on lactose (the sugars found in dairy), which lessens the amount found in the final product. For example, Greek yoghurt contains far less lactose than fat-free plain yoghurt, since much of the whey is strained resulting in its thick, creamy texture. Most hard cheeses contain very little lactose as well.

The more time a dairy product has to culture, the more lactose is removed. This means the end result will likely be quite tangy, tart, or sour (due to the lack of milk sugars). Consuming fermented dairy – kefir, in particular – has even been shown to reduce symptoms of lactose intolerance in some individuals, and even *improve* lactose digestion. The reasoning behind this is that some of the bacterial cells in the intestine release enzymes and digest lactose.

BENEFITS OF FERMENTATION

Fermented foods including fermented dairy products contain loads of benefits from the healthy bacteria and probiotic content.

- Fermented foods **balance stomach acid**, which helps digestive upsets caused by having either too little or too much acidity.
- Fermentation makes those not-so-easily digested properties of dairy **highly digestible.**
- Fermentation **preserves the nutrients** in foods. When we seek out quality foods that are naturally fermented, we're receiving both quality and quantity nutrition.
- The **probiotics** can help to improve digestion, slow and reverse disease, improve immunity, and keep good bacteria thriving in the gut.
- The **digestive enzymes** help you to absorb nutrients more efficiently by increasing their bioavailability. In conjunction with a healthy diet, this helps you to maximize the nutrition benefits from the food you eat while eliminating the need for supplements and vitamins.
- Fermented foods **have a longer shelf life**. While this isn't necessarily a health benefit, it does benefit your budget and fridge, especially with easily perishable foods like dairy.

REINTRODUCTION

Reintroduce fermented dairy separately from other reintroduction foods.

- **Avoid dairy with high lactose content.** Instead, experiment with lactose-free milk varieties if available, and goat dairy, which inherently contains less lactose.
- **Compare the effects of dairy versus those of fermented dairy;** if you are lactose intolerant, compare symptoms or digestive distress from consuming plain dairy and consuming fermented dairy.
- Be aware of symptoms **over the course of the next few days**; they can occur within minutes for up to 72 hours afterwards.
- The most common reintroduction symptoms are minor discomforts such as bloating and gas. It has been shown that fermented dairy, specifically kefir, can lessen these symptoms, even in lactose intolerant individuals.
- If you experience severe symptoms, consult a medical professional.

REINTRODUCING BUTTER

Ah, butter. There isn't much that butter doesn't make better. Hopefully, throughout the past couple of weeks, you've grown to love its clarified form – ghee! As you know, the difference in clarified butter is that the lactose and casein are removed, therefore causing no reaction to dairy. The water and milk solids are removed, leaving you with a source of pure, healthy fats.

Butter *does* contain a little dairy, which is why we eliminated it in the first place. In order to gauge your reaction to it, you should introduce it on its own. This means if you're reintroducing rice and butter, you shouldn't cook them together. Got it? But it's fine over veggies or with foods that cause you no issues.

WAYS TO USE BUTTER

Here are some healthy ways to include butter in your diet:

- **Bulletproof coffee.** Add ½ tablespoon of unsalted butter and ½ tablespoon of coconut oil to your coffee. Blend with a splash of dairy-free milk and enjoy! The butter and oil add healthy fats, creaminess and texture, and help to slow down the release of caffeine (less jitters).
- **Sweet potato.** Or a regular potato – that's up to you. It's no secret that melting a pat of butter in a potato is the ultimate comfort food. The pairing of fat and starch makes for a lovely dinner side, and the fat helps to lower the glycaemic index of the starchy potato.
- **Greens.** Sauté your favourite greens lightly in butter to add creaminess and a rich, deep flavour.
- **Scrambled eggs.** There's nothing like a breakfast of scrambled eggs cooked in butter. Consider keeping the heat lower so as not to burn the butter as you whisk the eggs. This will make them fluffy and luscious.
- **Steamed veggies.** If you've steamed your veggies, they're lacking healthy fats! This isn't a problem if you melt a pat of butter over the top. It takes boring, tasteless veggies to the next level in one fell swoop.
- **Sauces.** Whip up an herby butter sauce with fresh or dried herbs and use on meat after cooking.

GRASS-FED BUTTER VS. GRAIN-FED BUTTER

You should choose the best quality butter available. Kerrygold brand is a grass-fed butter that is widely available in most grocery stores. If you can source local, grass-fed butter, it's likely worth the splurge. If you're in the U.S., you can use this handy tool to find a farmer to purchase healthy butter from. While perusing the dairy section, look for words such as "pastured" and "organic".

To further my case, grass-fed butter contains **five times more CLA's** than standard butter sourced from grain-fed cows. What is CLA, you ask? Conjugated linoleic acid, of course! In its pure form, CLA is actually marketed as a fat-loss supplement. It also contains **plenty of omega-3 fatty acids**, which we need to balance out the more inflammatory omega-6's.

Grass-fed butter is a **fantastic source of vitamin K2**, which is attributed to lowering your risk of heart disease and decalcifying arteries. Overall, it's a very protective vitamin. Butter is also an anti-inflammatory food due to the nutrient butyrate (a short-chain fatty acid). Finally, in countries where butter is sourced primarily from pastured cows, the heart disease risk is substantially lower.

All in all, butter isn't so evil. Despite health claims that state saturated fat is bad for the heart, we're defying logic all over the place the more and more its effects are studied. If you can tolerate butter, it's a fantastic source of real food nutrition.

CASEIN AND LACTOSE

A standard dairy product contains a perfect balance of fat, protein, and carbs. Conceivably, this means that you could live on the stuff – although nobody is likely to recommend it. Butter falls under this category due to casein and lactose. These make up the 20% of the nutritional content in butter that isn't fat. Casein is the protein found in dairy, and lactose is the sugar (carbohydrate).

Butter contains very little lactose while fermented, cultured, and clarified butter contain even less. The lactose content in butter may or may not be an issue for those who are intolerant, but the general consensus is that butter and goat dairy are often more easily digested than cow's milk when it comes to lactose.

Casein, the protein, is often poorly and slowly digested. This is where you might run into problems. It contains growth and immune factors, which can negatively impact your health. It's one of the main reasons we choose to eliminate and reintroduce butter as it causes many of those problems we're trying to identify: digestive distress, autoimmune flares, and inflammation. It's similar to whey, considering both are dairy proteins.

COMMON REINTRODUCTION SYMPTOMS

Grass-fed butter is amongst the foods that are least likely to be problematic – unless you have a casein allergy. In that case, you may already be aware due to experiencing symptoms prior to our elimination. Even if you are sensitive to dairy, butter doesn't contain all of the same properties as cow's milk. Even so, it's more likely to be consumed in lesser amounts; unless of course you're into drinking butter by the cup (we do not condone this!).

- Digestive upset
- Bloating
- Acne breakouts
- Rashes or hives
- Brain fog
- Fatigue
- Mood swings
- Joint pain
- Autoimmune flares

Some of these symptoms indicate intolerance while more severe symptoms might indicate an allergy. If you have trouble breathing or experience vomiting during reintroduction, you should seek medical help and avoid foods you may be allergic to. The only way to test allergies is through a skin prick done with your doctor.

If you DO have a minor negative reaction, you should consider eliminating butter for good. There are plenty of other sources of healthy fats that we have been using, and ghee can help to replicate that buttery flavour you miss out on.

REINTRODUCING CHEESE

When it comes to cheeses, the way our bodies react is highly dependent on the type of cheese. Of course, you can go to the supermarket and pick up plenty of products disguised as real food, especially in the cheese section. If they come in individually wrapped slices, you should probably avoid them. On the opposite end of the spectrum, fine cheese-making is an art including the fermentation process and careful ageing. In any case, cheese should not be instant.

These are the **factors** that go into making all real cheeses:

- The starter culture of which the cheese is born. This determines the bacteria that ripen the cheese.
- The type of milk used (cow, sheep, goat, etc.), and the conditions under which the animal was raised. When we talk about grass-fed cheese, this means that the dairy was raised in its natural environment – pasture! You are what you eat, so think about what your dairy eats.
- Methods of curdling, cutting, cooking and forming the curd.
- Temperature, humidity, and ageing which are all parts of the ripening process.
- Whether the cheese is made with raw milk or pasteurised. Raw milk cheeses are typically easier to tolerate, however they are not available or legal in all countries.

While reintroducing cheese, you should consider these things! One of the main differences is the type of animal the dairy comes from. For example, **goat's cheese and sheep's cheese are often less problematic**, even to those who are lactose-intolerant. Why? Well, the fat molecules in goat's milk are shorter than in cow's milk which may account for easier digestion in some people.

Since aged cheese goes through **the fermentation process**, most lactose is removed. After all, bacteria feeds on sugar which is the lactose found in milk. Therefore, choosing an aged cheese versus a young cheese will make your reintroduction more likely to be successful. Think Parmesan, aged Cheddar, Pecorino, Manchego or Comte. This is the main reason why the same people who can't drink milk can often eat a bit of cheese. Speaking of bits...

Your success in reintroducing dairy may **rely on portion size.** We can all recall times when we felt a bit sick after indulging at the cheese table, maybe even accompanied by wine and crackers. Cheese is meant to **add flavour to meals**, and we discourage eating half a wheel of brie at a time, even though it's tempting. A sprinkle of Parmesan goes a long way.

Some clear benefits of cheese include:

- Grass-fed cheese contains conjugated linoleic acid which has been shown to help reduce body fat.
- Grass-fed cheese has the perfect omega-3 to omega-6 ratio.
- It is high in calcium, magnesium, beta-carotene, and vitamins A, C, D and E.
- It is a high quality source of amino acids and protein.
- Cheese contains high amounts of vitamin K2, which is an essential nutrient for blood coagulation, is strongly associated with a reduced risk of heart disease, promotes bone and dental health, and helps to fight cancer.

REINTRODUCING PEAS

This grey-area food isn't so evil at all. Sure, peas are technically legumes as they are found in their pod, but they're a bit different to say, garbanzo beans.

First of all, you'll be eating peas that are **fresh, not dried.** The same goes for green beans. You don't have to soak these foods to bring them back to life, which is half the harm of the traditional legumes. Peas have actually been bred to be a highly digestible food.

So, what makes peas so different?

- **Phytates** aren't as high as in most legumes to begin with, but they are significantly reduced when the peas are cooked, making them a non-issue.
- **Carbohydrate content** is lower in peas than most legumes, which inherently makes the glycemic index lower (aka happy and stable blood sugar).
- **The lectins** found in garden peas are less toxic than lectins found in dried legumes.

Oh, and there are plenty of benefits to peas. They are **packed with protein** at 8 grams per cup. This makes them a perfect addition to a Meatless Monday dinner or a suitable source of protein in **powdered form**. They're also packed with vitamin C, vitamin A, some iron, and some magnesium. Like most veggies, they're mineral-rich. Finally, they're a great source of fibre, which will help keep you full and enhance your digestive health.

As always, I recommend that you follow the guidelines for reintroduction at the pace scheduled in your meals. Consult your physician if you experience any unusual or alarming symptoms.

REINTRODUCING WHITE RICE

Let's talk about **white rice and full-fat cream.** Remember, these foods are meant to make up small portions of your meal while using them. They are tasty additions to a balanced diet, but I recommend that you follow the serving suggestions from here on out for the best results.

Why do we avoid grains in the first place?

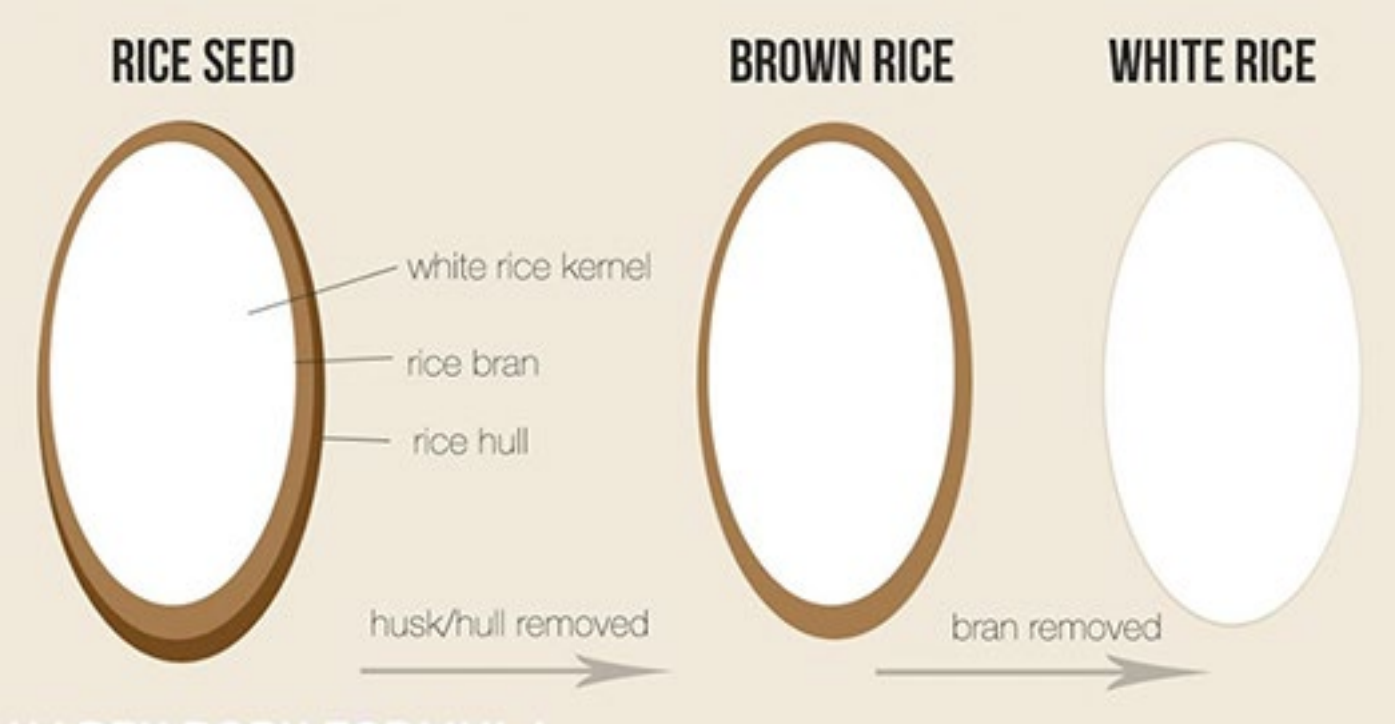
- Grains, especially refined grains, are **high in carbohydrates.** Over-consumption of carbohydrates can lead to insulin resistance, various metabolic dysfunctions, and weight gain. I must point out, again, that a healthy diet is not about cutting out carbohydrates completely, but instead it focuses on moderate-to-lower consumption and on getting them from more nutrient-dense sources like veggies and fruit.
- Grains, and legumes, contain a **variety of toxins and gut irritants** (also referred to as anti-nutrients) that can compromise the integrity of our gut lining and gut health in general (aka lectins), prevent certain nutrients from being absorbed by the body (aka phytates or phytic acid), and inhibit the production of certain enzymes that we need to digest the protein in the food we eat (aka trypsin inhibitors).
- On top of that, grains contain **little nutrition,** when compared to meat, fish, eggs, vegetables, and fruit.

Why white rice?

You may have heard that brown rice is superior when it comes to clean eating. It's a choice food for plant-based dieters, bodybuilders, and the health-conscious community in general. Brown rice isn't all bad, but we're talking white. You know, the inferior rice. Let's not get ahead of ourselves, though. White rice ain't so bad.

Here's why I recommend this "safe starch":

- **Lower in phytic acid.** Because the bran is removed, so is the high phytic acid content found in brown rice. This also gives white rice its colour.
- **Higher digestibility.** Because there's almost no phytic acid, the rice is more easily digested by the body as it doesn't contain much as much grain-based fibre as brown rice.
- **Less arsenic.** Brown rice has a higher arsenic content (yikes!) because it's often found in the bran of the grain.
- **Naturally gluten-free.** All rice varieties are naturally gluten-free, so it's easier to incorporate rice into a diet than whole wheat products.
- **Historically healthy.** Countries with high white rice consumption (Thailand, Bangladesh, Indonesia) have very low rates of diabetes.
- **Easy source of glucose.** Athletes, women, and carb-lovers can rejoice. This is a safe way to get your daily dose of starch or glucose – what the body runs on – and a great meal for post-workout glycogen restoration.
- **Less fibrous**. Dietary fibre is a good thing, but we don't need to supplement with grains like brown rice. A real food diet rich in fruit and veggies provides plenty of fibre without digestive distress.



My tips for including white rice:

- **Consider your goals** and current health when deciding to include white rice in your diet. Ask yourself these questions. *Do I have a healthy metabolism? Am I trying to lose weight? Am I lean and active?* Then work out if you should eat rice AND how much.
- **Pre-soak the rice** in some salted water for at least 2 hours before cooking (4-6 hours is ideal), **rinse well under cold water** and then cook as usual. This will help to remove any remaining toxins.
- **Use rice as a carrier for nutrient-dense foods** rather than the main portion of your meal. For example, it can be a vehicle for healthy oily fish in sushi, you can serve rice noodles cooked in nutritious bone broth with beef and vegetables like in a Vietnamese Pho, or it can be stir-fried with prawns and lots of crunchy veggies or served as a little side with turmeric and coconut oil.
- **Consider what oil the rice is cooked in** when eating out and maybe avoid fried rice and opt for steamed instead.
- Add protein, vegetables and fat to rice **to reduce the glycemic index** of the overall meal.
- Some people can be allergic to rice so obviously it should be avoided.
- Wild rice, although more nutritious then white rice, is more similar to brown rice and would need to be soaked, sprouted or fermented, and cooked to partially break down some of the present anti-nutrients.
- Different varieties of rice have a varying glycemic index. **Basmati rice is considered to have the lower GI** (43-65), compared to other types.
- My favourite ways to enjoy rice: with oily fish (sushi, kedgeree, fish rice cakes), broth soups with rice noodles, rice paper rolls.

REINTRODUCING FULL-FAT CREAM

High-fat foods, such as double cream, should ideally be served alongside protein and lower carbohydrate fruit and vegetables. Remember that if you give your body both fats and carbohydrates, it will use the glucose first before utilising the energy from the fats. If you're having a vegetable-based dish and would like to increase the caloric value for extra satiation, add some extra fats – like I did with the hearty mushroom stew in one of the meal plans.

Why full-fat dairy is healthy

Surely, we're all over the fear of fat that boomed in the 90's. Fat is back in style, and I kinda sorta like it. Full-fat dairy is a flavour bomb adding consistency and creaminess to everything from soup to dessert. Whipped cream anyone?

- **It's satiating.** Feeling hungry between meals is no good, and having enough fat is vital. Adding some cream to meals can be just the boost you need.
- **It's nutrient-dense.** All creams made from milk contain vitamin A, calcium, and riboflavin to name a few.
- **More digestible.** High-fat dairy is just that – it's fatty! Considering most of the carbohydrates and proteins are removed, so are the common allergens (casein and lactose).
- **Stabilises blood sugar.** One study linked consumption of heavy cream to a lessened risk of diabetes. Even if you're not at risk, it can help keep your blood glucose stable.
- **Conjugated linoleic acid.** CLA, which we talked about while reintroducing dairy, can be found in full-fat milk products. It can help enhance fat loss and is thought to fight cancer.
- **Heart disease prevention.** A 16-year long study of women who ate full-fat dairy reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease.

Convincing stuff, eh? While reintroducing dairy products, I've chosen the types of dairy which are **least likely to cause adverse reactions.** Again, high-fat dairy is generally low in the most common allergens, casein and lactose, because of its high-fat content. Like fermented dairy, these are often incorporated into a healthy person's diet without many issues. Those looking to heal autoimmune disease or individuals with severe allergies or sensitivities should avoid dairy altogether.

REINTRODUCING PSEUDOGRAINS

As you might have learnt during the plans, pseudograins include things like quinoa, buckwheat and amaranth. These are nutrient-dense, grain-like foods that sit somewhere between 'good' and 'bad'. You will introduce quinoa in one of the meal plans but you can also try buckwheat or amaranth to see how they make you feel. First, let's review the pros of these foods.

Quinoa

- Though quinoa looks like a grain, it is actually a **pseudo-cereal** – technically a seed.
- 1 cup of cooked quinoa contains **8 grams of protein.**
- 1 cup of cooked quinoa provides you with 58% of your daily value of **manganese.**
- Quinoa contains quercetin and kaempferol which are **flavonoids.** They can be anti-inflammatory, protective against cancer, and can have antidepressant effects.
- Per 100 grams of cooked quinoa, this seed packs in **10-16 grams of fibre** which can boost healthy digestion and increase satiety.
- Quinoa and all other pseudograins I refer to in this article are inherently **gluten-free**, making them less susceptible to being prone to adverse reactions.
- This pseudo-cereal is a **complete plant protein** which means that it contains all of the essential amino acids.

Buckwheat

- Buckwheat consumption has been linked to **lower cholesterol** due to flavonoid rutin.
- This pseudograin is a good **source of magnesium** which many people are deficient in.
- Its high **insoluble fibre** content can help to prevent gallstones.
- Studies have shown that eating buckwheat groats can significantly **lower blood glucose** and lessen insulin response.

Amaranth

- Amaranth contains **anti-inflammatory** peptides and oils.
- The **protein** in amaranth is more easily digested than that found in most other grains.
- Those same **peptides** are thought to protect against cancer cells.
- This food is **rich in vitamins and minerals,** giving it an abundance of antioxidants and potentially making it a great anti-aging food.

How to use these foods

- **Cereal and porridge.** Quinoa and buckwheat in particular make a great alternative to breakfast oatmeal.
- **Flour for baking.** Muffins, cakes, cookies, and loaves of bread can all come to life with these gluten-free flour options.
- **Popcorn.** Amaranth seeds can be popped much like popcorn providing you with a healthy alternative to corn.
- **In place of rice.** If you don't tolerate rice well or are looking for a more nutrient-dense option, quinoa especially can be a lovely addition to a stir-fry or a bed for curry.
- **Energy bars.** Quinoa, popped amaranth or buckwheat groats can easily replace puffed rice or oats in a homemade granola.

REINTRODUCING LEGUMES

Generally, legumes are not the easiest foods to digest and they should certainly be avoided if you suffer from an autoimmune condition or digestive distress. However, these foods feature prominently in many cultures known for their good health and longevity, so I believe there is a reason why legumes are also 'good' and 'bad.' The key is knowing when and how to eat them, and which kind is best for your body. I decided to try chickpeas in our Week 8 meal plan, but feel free to give something else a go.

The wild and wonderful world of legumes! We've got quite a variety here, including black beans, garbanzos, kidney beans, peas, lentils, and even peanuts – yes, they are a legume and not a nut!

Sometimes, different legumes (say lentils versus black beans) might have a different effect. I certainly don't think legumes need to be included to have a balanced diet, but they are a suitable choice to incorporate more variety and promote a sustainable, healthy diet.

What's so buzzworthy about beans

- **Great source of protein.** While the macronutrient profiles of legumes lie largely in their carbohydrate content, they do provide protein if you're looking to cut back on meat or sub out steak for Meatless Mondays.
- **Low glycemic index.** Also, much like the pseudograins we mentioned, legumes are low on the GI in terms of foods containing carbohydrates. This means you'll likely be able to incorporate these foods without impacting blood sugar levels much. In fact, these foods are touted for helping to manage it.
- **They're fibrous.** Like most pseudograins, legumes contain a lot of fibre. The fibre content is compelling as a lot of centenarians around the world feature legumes in their diet, and the benefits are attributed to that fibre content.
- **Folate / vitamin B9.** Lentils can pack in 89% of the DV for this nutrient.
- **Some beans are better than others.** Chickpeas, for example, contain three times less phytic acid than soybeans while Navy beans are among the most difficult to digest, even after soaking and sprouting. Choose wisely.

The cons of both grains and legumes

- **Not easily digested.** Lectins (essentially a plant's defence mechanism) cannot be broken down by the body. They can even cause microscopic tears in the intestine. Read more below to learn how to reduce lectins found in grains and legumes.
- **Potential additives.** Legumes are often sold in cans, which makes them both easy and affordable. When purchasing legumes, it's best to purchase dried varieties to avoid additives and BPA's.
- **Phytic acid.** This is found in both grains and legumes which soaking breaks down. Phytic acid binds minerals to the gut which lessens absorption of all the potential health benefits of foods it's found in – specifically iron, zinc, and manganese.

Lessening the blow

With both pseudograins and legumes, much of the cons remain the same. On the same note, the negative effects of these foods can be lessened by preparing them the correct way. While cooking these foods, here are some quick guidelines to follow.

- **Buy organic.** You should purchase these foods from the best source possible to have the healthiest and most wholesome product on hand. You can often find pseudograins and legumes in the bulk section, so you can buy what you need for relatively cheap prices.
- **Soak and sprout.** Soaking and sprouting both fresh beans and grains is beneficial. It increases their nutritional value, loading them up with live enzymes, minerals, and nutrients. It breaks down phytic acid and anti-nutrients, making them close to non-existent and transforming these foods into more digestible forms. Find out about soaking and sprouting times for different seeds, nuts, beans and grains here: https://greenfieldfitnesssystems.com/soak-time/
- **If you don't have time, skip sprouting.** While soaking doesn't lessen the blow quite as much as sprouting, sometimes, we're short on time. Soak for an appropriate amount of time and drain before cooking to eliminate some of the wait.
- **Eat moderately.** While these foods can add variety to the diet and provide nutrient-dense sources of inexpensive, quality meals, it's important to eat them in moderation. While both pseudograins and legumes have protein, essential amino acids, and antioxidants, those benefits are more easily processed by the body in the form of animal products, fresh vegetables, and fruits.
- **Be attentive to your reactions.** Like with all reintroductions during our recalibration phase, we want you to remember that food choices are highly individual. These foods may not sit well with you even if you're soaking and sprouting away. Be aware of any digestive issues these may cause.

DESIGNING YOUR OWN MEAL PLAN

Once you finish with initial reintroductions, it will be tempting to add more foods back into your diet. Take care when you do so, and make sure to introduce one thing at a time so you can recognise any reactive symptoms. It's all about being more in tune with your body and learning what it likes and doesn't like.

With no new meal plans or recipes, it is up to you to design your own, healthy, well balanced meal plan for the following weeks. Here are some tips to help you along the way. You can download a blank meal template included in your PDF files.

As you know by now, we need a range of nutrients to stay healthy, and ideally, most of them should come from real food. **Variation equals balance** so when you plan your weekly menu (and you should!), here are some nutritious foods to include regularly:

- A rainbow or fruit and vegetables
- Mushrooms
- Berries
- Red meat
- Offal
- Oily fish
- Eggs
- Shellfish
- White meat
- Safe starches
- Healthy fats – oils, butter/ghee, nuts, seeds, avocado, coconut milk or cream
- Seaweed
- Fermented foods
- Some pleasure foods (dark chocolate, red wine, aged cheese)

When you look at your shopping basket, ask yourself some of the following questions:

- Do I see a rainbow?
- Do I see a cut of meat I haven't tried before?
- Do I have some green leafy vegetables as well as starchy root vegetables?
- Do I have some fish or seafood?
- Do I have fresh herbs?

When planning your meals try to include the following:

- **Cooked and raw dishes** – try to have some raw vegetables and fruit every day.
- **Bone broth** – have it as is, in stews and soups, in sauces and gravies, or with braised vegetables.
- **Slow cooked meat dish** – slow and wet cooking are the healthier ways to cook meat, so think curries, stews and braises.
- **Soup** – nourishing and comforting, this is a great way to get more vegetables in your body.
- **Fish dish** – grilled, steamed or roasted are all great ways to incorporate more fish, and don't forget that tinned sardines, tuna or salmon are easy and cheap options you can add to a lunch salad. Seafood is also a healthy weekly addition.
- **Vegetables sides** – every dish you eat should have some vegetables on the side, whether cooked or as a side salad. Alternatively, you could have some fresh fruit.
- **Salads** – these are great as stand alone meals – just add some protein and healthy fats.

Are you ready to design your own meal plan? You can use recipes from the mealplans or adapt dishes and ideas from your favourite cookbooks and blog. Share your sample meal plans with me on Facebook or Instagram.