

PLAY LEO project summary

Adam Miller 4-19-11

A song inspired by one man's experience with the paleolithic diet.

This song was inspired my friend Tom who is attempting to follow a Paleolithic Dietary plan. The idea behind this diet is to replicate the eating conditions by which our African ancestors evolved. Carbohydrates are shunned, and all forms of post agricultural food processing are advised against. Lean meats high in desirable fats and proteins are meant to take up roughly half of ones caloric needs, with fresh fruits and vegetables making up the other half.

Tom is tackling this diet with a certain measure of commitment; he has made fruits and vegetables a main staple of his diet. On top of this, he now eats lean cuts of grass-fed steak, a healthy but certainly expensive option. He has, however, allowed bacon to become a staple of his diet as well, something which goes against the ideas of the Paleo Diet, with its high saturated fat and salt content. He also continues to drink beer on occasion, despite alcohol being expressly prohibited as a post agricultural invention, and beer essentially being liquid bread.

Rule bending aside, He has managed to improve his standing health dramatically. His blood pressure and standing heart rate are down, his good cholesterol is up and bad cholesterol down, and he is losing weight steadily while maintaining his standard workout procedures. All this leads to my friends certainty in this diet's success, flaunted in the face of his doctors skepticism.

The general narrative of this song goes as such: The verses discuss the various implications of the diet, both arguments for and against, while the choruses tend to follow Tom's personal successes and challenges with the diet.

The first verse covers a simplified argument for the merits of the diet. The general point is that industrial processing of foods is the diet's cardinal sin. Fresh foods are to be enjoyed, representative of the gathered nutrition available to our ancestors in the paleolithic era, between 2.5 million and 10,000 years ago.

The second verse covers what read to be the common arguments against the strict dietary regiment. Starting with the oversimplified certainty with the exact data determining what we ate in the paleolithic age; we can certainly make educated inferences based on solid science, but it is naive to think we know exactly what the dietary lifestyles of our ancestors were, down to the exact percentages of what they ate. The closest we can get is looking at modern hunter gatherer tribes, but this still only serves to inform the soft scientific data. I touched on the idea of someone wanting to play lion and be a carnivore, and proceeding to justify their actions with a diet criticized by some as a fad. The main criticism of the diet is its claims to reduced rates of "diseases of civilization," when observation of modern hunter gatherer societies shows that their lack of a sedentary lifestyle and reasonable consumption of food, as much as the food itself, contributes to their good health.

The short break verse before the final chorus is a hint at humans ability to evolve biologically since the advent of agriculture, and is a subtle hint at the degree of our potential to adapt to our changing food sources. This is swiftly followed with a notion held by Tom, that the diet is in fact doing his health a favor.

The three choruses of the song focus on Toms personal experience with the diet. First, his honest attempt at sticking to the diet, even if he is not being completely true to its tenants. Secondly, I focus on his health improvement, and his doctors reaction to a patient becoming healthier by eating broccoli, steak and bacon.

Lastly, in the long final chorus, I hilight the apparent conflicts the diet faces in a modern world; It is neither cheap nor easy to keep up such a lifestyle, and on a global scale, it is impossible to support. Therefore, this style of diet is limited to those in the developed world who can afford it. Lastly, I restate his focus on the core ideas of the diet, how they are well in his mind, despite the personal necessity to break from it to lead what he feels is a comfortable lifestyle.

PLAY LEO Annotated Bibliography
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1. Cordain, Loren (2006). "Implications of Plio-Pleistocene Hominin Diets for Modern Humans (PDF)". In Ungar, Peter S. *Evolution of the Human Diet: The Known, the Unknown, and the Unknowable*. Oxford, USA: Oxford University Press

This paper, published by Oxford University, gave a very balanced argument about the validity, and uncertainty associated with the Paleo Diet. Cordain backs up all claims with a substantial amount of relevant data, which is applied in a clear and straightforward matter. This article was especially helpful for figuring out the precise composition of both our modern western and supposed paleolithic diets. This article made well to illuminate the disparity between our ancient dietary habits and those of the post industrial world. A strong critique of the diet he brings to light is the lack of sustainability; the fact is without grains farmed and processed on a large scale, there would be no way to feed the caloric demand of the world population, and the diet could therefore never be implemented on a global scale.

2. Milton, Katharine (March 1 2000). "Hunter-gatherer diets—A different perspective". *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*

In this article, Katherine Milton focuses on the ideas of the Paleo Diet in the context of modern hunter gatherer societies, and questions the diet as the answer to "diseases of civilization" such as heart failure and obesity. Ultimately, she cites the generally sedentary lifestyle combined with the high rate of consumption of energy dense foods that is so standard in modern western culture to blame, more than the type of foods themselves. She notes the active lifestyles and limited consumption of food seen among modern hunter-gatherer populations as more significant than the particular foods that they consume.

3. S Boyd Eaton, Melvin J Konner, Loren Cordain, (january 2010). "Diet-dependent acid load, Paleolithic nutrition, and evolutionary health promotion" *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*

In this article, Eaton argues that while certain traits have evolved since the human diaspora out of Africa, such as lactase retention and pigment change, the core metabolic mechanisms could not have changed significantly, and we should form a diet around that which paleolithic hunter gatherers lived on as a means of preventing disease. Eaton cites some of the same data tables as seen in the Oxford paper, but ascertains much firmer claims that the study of paleolithic diets will directly inform the causes and prevention of modern "diseases of civilization"

4. Lindeberg S, Cordain L, Eaton SB (September 2003). "Biological and clinical potential of a Paleolithic diet" *Journal of Nutritional and Environmental Medicine*

This article makes the straightforward argument that including lean meat and fish, rich in omega-3 fatty acids, can do more to help prevent cardiovascular disease and diabetes than a vegetarian diet alone. By reflecting the high meat consumption of our paleolithic diet, we can better serve our bodies needs than replacing all intake with plant life which was simply not as readily available to our hunter-gatherer ancestors.

5. O'Keefe, James H.; & Cordain, Loren (January 2004). "Cardiovascular disease resulting from a diet and lifestyle at odds with our Paleolithic genome: how to become a 21st-century hunter-gatherer" *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*

O'keefe aims to propose practical implementations of the overarching theories proposed in his, and the rest of these articles. In particular, he advises avoiding trans-fats and saturated fats, and increasing intake of omega-3 fatty acids; a critical component of our ancestors diet. He argues that while it is impossible to transplant a paleolithic lifestyle into our modern lives, we should use the knowledge gleaned from research on the matter to inform a template for healthier modern living.

Play leo by **Adam Miller**

Song inspired by a first-hand experience with a modern-age paleolithic diet.

verse1

Argument for

Keep the refined away from my maw
As ancient foods strike the jaw
Gathered maize, nutritional slight
Just dont enjoy in syrups light
The food we had one million years before
Made disease free hunters and gatherers grow

chorus1

Trying

Manufactured is not prepared
Accuracy now stretching thin
The alpha meal; omega fair
I'm the paleo man, least when I can

verse2

Argument against

Certain how we filled our maw
Predetermined ratios, potential flaw
Lean meats; you want to play leo?
Strike the grain, lose our hope in neo change
But look at them, theyre healthy, see!
Off their asses eight hours each day of the week

chorus2

Success

Some doctors say, not you it seems
That this is what my bloodstream needs
The pressure dropped down, prime heartrate near
I do not like, what you're proving here

(solo)

verse 3

Justification

Lactic europeans plant doubt's seed
But this savannah diet is fixing me

chorus 3

Conflict with modern society

Trying reprise

the Simple does not make for easy
A world that cannot live by these means
Middle class chance for health in my life
These broken rules, hard to apply
Manufactured is not prepared
Bending the oath, brew here and there
My grain free gain, bloody steak rare
Industry's bane

ten thousand years of life