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Dietary Experiment: 24/7 McDonald's wreaks Havoc. **Quote of Month:** Plants Build Bones (Thoreau). **Human Origins:** How we Looked 6,000 Generations Ago. **Q of Month:** Lifespan Prolongation. **Recipe:** Grilled Lime and Pepper Ocean Trout. **Q & A:** No Alibis for Fat Child's Parents; Choosing Fine Tuning Priorities; Fructose Drawbacks; High Fructose Corn Syrup; All About Jerusalem Artichoke; Pink Lady Apples, Fruits and Blood Sugar; Sustainability of World Food Supplies. **Hints:** Leave Some on Plate for Later. **Nutri-Anthro Briefing:** The Sweet Tooth Curse – Part 4 Conclusion. **Food Policy:** Genetically Modified Food Labels in Europe. Organic is Still Not Perfect.

Dietary Experiment**24/7 McDonald's Wreaks Havoc**

Morgan Spurlock the film director, 33, recently spent a month living entirely off McDonald's - with dire consequences. Spurlock is a normally healthy New Yorker, and the doctors monitoring the project were unprepared for the ruin that the fast-food diet wreaked on his body.

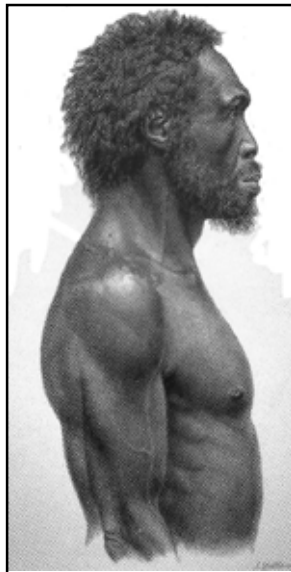
Within days he was vomiting, suffering headaches and depressed. His sex drive vanished. He gained nearly two stone (28lb, 13kg) and his cholesterol level soared from 165 to 230. "I got desperately ill," he told the New York Post. "My face was splotchy and I had this huge gut. It was amazing - and frightening."

Spurlock had the idea for the project called *Super Size Me: A Film of Epic Proportions* - when he heard about two girls suing McDonald's for making them obese.

Quote of the Month**Plants Build Bones**

'One farmer says to me, "You cannot live on vegetable food solely for it furnishes nothing to make bones with"... walking all the while behind his oxen, which, with vegetable-made bones, jerk him and his plow along...' *Henry Thoreau, Walden, 1847*

Thoreau mercilessly puts his finger on the flaws in human logic. We often use the Thoreau argument to cast doubt on the platitude that 'milk and its calcium are essential to build strong bones'.

Human Origins**How We Looked 6,000 Generations Ago**

This is an artist's reconstruction¹ of 150,000-year-old skull and bones found in the Awash area of Ethiopia. Everybody on the planet is descended from humans who lived in this area at the time, so your far-off ancestor looked something like this.

Sophisticated computerized photo-fit techniques provide an authentic reconstruction of facial features. So we can be quite sure that the inhabitant of these bones had this physical form.

However, we cannot infer skin color, hair color or hair type. Contrary to the picture, we now think that humans of this era had an 'apricot' skin color – rather like the San bushmen who still live in southern Africa.

Question of the Month**Lifespan Prolongation**

Q. *What is the true longevity of the human beings? If we follow your precepts, will we increase our life-spans?*

A. All creatures have a genetically programmed maximum lifespan. Humans have one of the longest that we know of, yet how do we put a figure on it? We have to look at circumstantial evidence.

We know that Hong Kongers, Japanese and Cretans have longer average lifespans than Americans. We also know that as soon as they migrate to America and adopt its way of life, their life expectancy drops to that of an American.

More importantly, these people have much greater 'health expectancy' – that is, they can expect to live much more of their lives in good health.

According to the World Health Organization², the Japanese have the highest 'health expectancy' of 74.5 years; that is, they live the greatest the number of years in "full health". In comparison, the British come 14th with 71.7 years and the Americans come 24th with 70.0 years. You die earlier and spend more time disabled if you are an American.

The Japanese, Hong Kong and Cretan lifestyle comes closer to the naturally adapted lifestyle of the African savanna than does the American. **Cont: Page 4.**

1. Scientific American, August 2003
 2. W H O report; June 5th 2000.

Recipe

Grilled Lime and Pepper Ocean Trout



Ingredients

- o 4 ocean trout cutlets (800g)
- o olive oil spray
- o 2 teaspoons finely grated lime rind
- o ½ teasp.. freshly ground black pepper
- o 2 tablesps chopped fresh chives
- o 1 large (300g) red onion
- o 2 medium (160g) limes (thin skinned variety)

Method

Coat fish lightly with cooking oil spray, then toss in combined lime rind, pepper and chives. Cover; refrigerate 1 hour.

Cut onion and limes into wedges.

Cook fish, onion and lime in heated grill pan; (or grill or barbecue) until onion and lime are browned and fish is browned both sides and just cooked through.

Serve the fish with the onion and lime.

Comment:

This is delicious way of preparing many kinds of white fish. Here we use ocean trout. Serve with extra vegetables such as stir-fried green beans.

Questions

All these questions come from readers. We welcome this opportunity to bring clarity to the application of Natural Eating principles. Contact us at info@naturaleater.com

No Alibis for Fat Child's Parents

Q. *I was painfully impressed by the photo of the 4-year old weighing 112 lb (1-cwt, 50kg) in last month's newsletter. Was something wrong with him? Is his condition genetic or is it a question of character?*

A. No – there are no alibis. This article provoked a number of readers'

comments – mostly searching for excuses; but there are none.

The remainder of the article gave the answer. Gerber's study highlighted the appalling feeding habits that prevail now in our toddlers. That 112 lb child, the weight of a cement bag, was the direct consequence of the way his parents fed him.

Clearly, we did not hammer the point home: children are not in control of their food supply – that is the responsibility of parents and other care givers. They are the ones who have to exercise the discipline, know-how and, dare we say it, character?

Fine Tuning Priorities

Q. *You do not talk much about organic or genetically modified foods. How important are these questions?*

A. Sophisticated 'health nuts' seek out foods that are 'organic', are not 'genetically modified' and are 'authentic' varieties. Mostly (but not always) these are worthy aims.

Organic broccoli is much richer in micronutrients for example, than intensively farmed versions. On the other hand, organic sugar is just as bad for us as the regular sort. Wheat in any form is not good for us -- even if it is ancient, 'authentic' einkorn.

We suggest (but do not insist on) avoiding genetically modified foods. In USA, the only way of being sure is to buy 'organic'.

However, we do not want you to be obsessed and diverted by these issues: they are the 'fine tuning' which become more important once you have put in place the basics – the Natural Eating precepts.

Fructose Drawbacks

Q. *You use fructose in some of your recipes. Can you comment on the claim that fructose is fattening and raises triglycerides?*

A. The answer is right there in the Natural Eating book, page 123:

"Is fructose a free-lunch? Not entirely..... First, fructose is still empty calories, fattening and no nutrients. Secondly, high fructose levels raise triglycerides and cholesterol levels. Finally, fructose in abnormal quantities can cause gastro-intestinal upsets.

So is there a place for fructose in the Natural Eating Pattern? Yes, it can still serve as a sweetener in the occasional dessert, such as the chocolate gateau recipe given in Chapter Twelve. Otherwise go very easy on it."

However, let's keep a sense of proportion: an eating apple naturally contains 1½ teaspoons of fructose (plus one of glucose). So the same quantity in a dessert is just fine.

High Fructose Corn Syrup

Q. *Some soft drinks are sweetened with 'high fructose corn syrup'. Is this a serious source of fructose?*

A. The term 'high fructose corn syrup' (HFCS) is rather misleading. In fact it is no more than 50% fructose, the other 50% being glucose. In other words it is exactly the same as 'sucrose' or ordinary table sugar.

Colas and sodas are commonly sweetened with HFCS but it might just as well be sugar. For every 12 oz can that you drink, you are taking in 6 teaspoons of fructose and 6 teaspoons of glucose.

But it gets worse: many people consume soft drinks by the *gallon*. This is an extraordinary change in habits just since the 1970's. It is blamed for the American obesity epidemic in a report³ by obesity scientist Dr. George Bray at Louisiana State University.

So we don't have to blame fructose for that – just blame gorging on sugar in all its forms.

All About Jerusalem Artichoke

Q. *In last month's newsletter, about 'good' low-starch, inulin-rich roots, you mention Jerusalem artichoke. What is it?*

A. It is the root of a variety of sunflower, a native of New England. It is also known as 'sunchoke'. Its botanical name is *Helianthus tuberosus*. In its natural state it looks rather like root ginger.

The Frenchman, Samuel de Champlain, brought it to Europe from New England. Curiously, the roots arrived on the same ship as Topinambour natives from Brazil. Seemingly by association, the sunflower root became known as 'topinambour' in France. Within 10 years, French gardens 'were full of them'.

The French Revolution in the 1790's not only metricated weights and measures but also the clock and calendar. Every day was given a name. The 13th day of 'Brumaire', which corresponds to our October 3rd, was given the name topinambour.

Napoleon quickly abandoned the unpopular metric clock and calendar, but not before he had spread 'topinambour' throughout continental Europe. It is known by this name to this day in Germany, Italy and many other countries.

It is thought that the English name, 'Jerusalem', is a corruption of 'Terneuzen', a town in the Netherlands which specialized in growing the tuber. In 1618 it was already known as the "artichoke-apple of Terneuzen".

We highlighted the Jerusalem artichoke as a low glycemic tuber. It can be used as a healthy alternative to potato for example. Some 70% of its dry matter is 'inulin' (not to be confused with the hormone 'insulin'). It is a low glycemic carbohydrate which can also be grated or chopped and eaten raw.

Several researchers have studied the effects of Jerusalem artichoke consumption on diabetic patients. They universally report that it does not cause blood sugar surges. Curiously though, no one has measured its actual glycemic index.

Pink Lady Apples, Fruits and Blood Sugar

Q. *I am confused: in the March Newsletter you seem to urge caution about even low glycemic fruit and their sugars. My typical breakfast has consisted of one grapefruit, two pears, and two apples (the Pink Lady variety that you cast doubt on). I don't get a blood sugar rush on this program.*

A. You have put your finger on the essential question: Is there is a blood sugar rush? Most healthy people will be just fine on the breakfast you have outlined.

However, we are discovering that not all people are as healthy as they think – their blood sugar control is already shaky. That is the difficulty with 'one size fits all' recommendations.

We already have a low ceiling for the 'safe' glycemic index – 35 or lower. This is already much lower than that put forward by glycemic index pioneer researcher, Jennie Brand-Miller of Sydney University, Australia. She sets the bar at a glycemic index of 55 or lower.

However, that is the judgment that we make based on two criteria: the very low glycemic nature of our ancestral diet, and the fact that the human blood sugar control mechanism seems to be more fragile than previously thought.

So you are right if you detect a small shift in our position compared to that expressed in the Natural Eating book. In the four years since it was written, scientific knowledge and experience of the whole glycemic question has advanced. It leads us to be yet more cautious.

As for Pink Lady apples, we did not intend to condemn them out of hand. For all we know their glycemic index is as good as, or better than, traditional apples – we just don't know. The proof of the pudding is in the eating: if you don't get a sugar rush, then that's what counts.

Sustainability of Food Supplies

Q. *If everyone in the world were to adopt Natural Eating practices, would there be enough of the right food to go round?*

A. No, there would not, although the problem is even worse with the standard American diet. There are many studies examining the sustainability of a variety of dietary practices. Some have been admirably summarized⁴ by researcher Joan Gussow of Columbia University, New York.

According to some studies, 'humans have already surpassed the planet's carrying capacity'. If the population of the USA had to live just on what its land area could sustainably provide, then only 200 million people could be fed as against the current 300 million. That's without a shift to the Natural Eating pattern.

Compared to the current western diet, a move to the Natural Eating pattern involves the following changes:

Food Group	Magnitude of Change	Direction of Change
Fruit	Huge	More
Vegetables	Huge	More
Dairy	Large	Less
Cereals	Huge	Less
Meats	Moderate	Less
Fish	Moderate	More
Fats/oils	Large	Less
Sugars	Large	Less
Poultry	No change	None

Patrick O'Brien of the US Department of Agriculture points out⁵ that the cultivation of fruit and colored vegetables requires three times as much water as cereals. Worse, they require 20 times more agro-chemicals.

On the other hand, reduced consumption of dairy, beef and pork frees up huge acreages of land for planting.

Similarly, sugar cane and sugar beet fields will be freed up for plant food. So will fields currently planted to oil seed like corn, peanut, soy and sunflower.

Fish supply is a major pinch-point. Already there are not enough fish in the oceans to supply the modest consumption in the West and the even lower consumption in the third world. Fish farming is not the answer: To grow 1 lb of farmed fish they have to be fed 4 lb of trawled-up wild fish.

The conclusion is that Western agriculture could make the huge structural changes necessary, but food would be more scarce and expensive.

However, if the teeming populations of places like China and India were to switch to colored plant food from rice and wheat – and eat beef at the same level as westerners – then the world's food supply would collapse.

Hints & Tips

Leave Some on Plate for Later

Can't resist between-meal snacks? Forget about the "clean plate club" and try squirreling away a bit of your lunch or dinner.

Enjoy these leftovers as your guilt-free snack later.

Nutri-Anthro Briefing

The Sweet Tooth Curse – Part 4

We have been reviewing the anthropological origins of our addiction to sweetness and the damage done by sugar. Are artificial sweeteners the answer? We looked at Aspartame in March; sucralose (Splenda) in February; and saccharine in January. Now we conclude this briefing.

We are living in an unfair world – sugary foods are all around us and, unlike in our homeland the African savanna, the supply never runs out. Our brains are not programmed for this situation. Are we to exert self-discipline or do we choose the lesser of two evils – artificial sweeteners?

The bottom line is that artificial sweeteners, although mostly chemicals made in the laboratory, are far less dangerous to human health than sugar itself. We can be sure that if sugar had been obliged to pass the same tests it would have been banned as a dangerous, addictive substance. Be aware though, that sweeteners are still food additives and, as such, they are linked to behavioral difficulties, allergies and headaches, particularly with children.

The ideal is to wean yourself off sweet foods as much as possible. If you are diabetic there is no question: sugar should be banished from the diet for ever. If you cannot do without the sweet taste, artificial sweeteners can be a viable halfway house.

Food Policy

Genetically Modified Food Labels in Europe

As of April 19th, Britons will see whether the food they are buying contains genetically modified organisms (GMO's). In accordance with a Europe-wide decree, food labels must declare the presence of GMO's.

Meanwhile, Americans continue to eat in ignorance. The only way they can be sure of avoiding GMO's is by buying organic.

Organic is Still Not Perfect

Even organic foods are not raised entirely without artificial aids. The list of 'permitted products' includes 17 factory-made fertilizers, seven trace elements, eight insecticides and 14 different fungicides. In Europe, organic ham for example, can contain E250 (sodium nitrite) and E301 (sodium ascorbate).

Our View? The organic movement is all we have got; it is certainly a huge improvement over unthinking intensive farming practices. But we must keep up the political and economic pressure for higher standards.

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Question of the Month

Longevity

This is not only on the basis of nutrition but also on exercise and stress levels.

It is also true that these peoples eat frugally – just like our ancient ancestors. This is to be expected: finding food is hard work -- so a balance is struck between the effort of finding it and how hungry you are. We can assume that this was the state of affairs for the whole of human history. Most of the time our ancestors felt slightly hungry.

The Russian specialists on longevity, Vladimir Frolkis and Khachick Muradian, find⁽⁶⁾ that a low calorie diet is one of the best factors for a long life. This, of course, is just the opposite of what is happening in the industrialized world.

It is no coincidence that the Okinawans, Hong Kongers and Cretans, spent most of their lives physically exercised, 'Eating Naturally' and slightly hungry.

To sum up, yes, do what we say and you will add years to your life – and in better shape. Each person is different but estimates suggest that Americans are knocking 8 years off their lives by poor lifestyle habits – and they spend more of their shorter lives disabled.

³ Am. J Clin Nutrition; April 2004

⁴ Am. J Clin Nutrition; 1995:61(suppl) 1383S

⁵ Am. J Clin Nutrition; 1995:61(suppl) 1390S

⁶ Life Span Prolongation; Frolkis & Muradian; CRC Press; Boca Raton; 1991

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