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Human Ancestry

Bushman - Oldest Lineage



Geneticists find that San Bushmen are genetically distinct not only from Europeans and Asians, but also from all other Africans [1].

So the San Bushmen have the most ancient human lineage. The common ancestor with all other humans lived some 150,000 years ago.

Indeed, the researchers found two pure-blood San Bushmen whose ancestry goes back over 100,000 years without admixture from any other tribe.

Moreover, the San remained the most populous group of humans for all that time until about 20,000 years ago. They peopled most of central and southern Africa, but now they number just a few tens of thousands living mainly in the Kalahari Desert.

Why is all this important? This information gives us a hot-line straight back to our formative time prior to 150,000 years ago. It means that studies of the San (as we do) are a good guide to the right lifestyle for us today.

Ageing Well

Centenarian Edith Morrey



Edith Morrey (102) & Nicole (77) We were delighted to meet up again with Edith Morrey on our recent California tour. Edith is a keen supporter of our work and has lived her entire life pretty much in harmony with ancestral principles. She came to this view in the 1930s. For how that happened see: [May 2012](#) [2].

Any other secrets to longevity? This time Edith admitted that she "always felt hungry".

Ah, yes, a hard, hunter-gatherer message for us all!

Last year Edith had just broken a hip but, doughty as always, she quickly made a full recovery. It was the first time in her life that she had been hospitalised.

Edith is as sprightly as ever, living fully independently in her golf resort flat. She is currently fighting a driving suspension brought on by what she considers to be an unjust traffic ticket.

Video clips:

Walking/talking with Nicole

<http://youtu.be/c01eXpJDjE4>

Sofa-talk with Nicole and dog

<http://youtu.be/7BhkUPn28GE>

News Flashes

Midlife Diabetes, Dementia Later

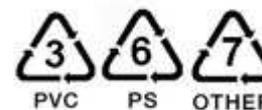
Research finds that diabetes ages the brain five years faster than normal ageing [3]. And the decline in memory, word recall and executive function leads to dementia.

"The lesson is that to have a healthy brain when you're 70, you need to eat right and be physically active when you're 50," says study leader Elizabeth Selvin PhD of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.

Prenatal Exposure to Household Chemicals drops Child's IQ.

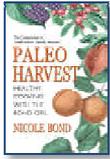
Children exposed in the womb to elevated levels of two common chemicals found in the home, the phthalates DnBP and DiBP, had an IQ score more than six points lower than children exposed at lower levels, say researchers [4].

Avoiding phthalates is for now impossible, but the researchers recommend that pregnant women limit exposure by not microwaving food in plastics, avoiding scented products such as air fresheners and dryer sheets, and not using recyclable plastics 3, 6, or 7.



My View? Pollutants are a growing if not overriding concern. See: 'Are Pollutants a Worry?', [April 2012](#) [5]

Recipes



This recipe is from Nicole's latest cookbook *Paleo Harvest*:

www.paleo-harvest.com

Mock Mashed Potato Yield: 2-4 servings

This is a purée that closely resembles mashed potato. Your unsuspecting guests will not be able to tell the difference! But it has all the advantages of the 'super-vegetable' cauliflower - and none of the drawbacks of potato. It is also a wonderful, healthful product for thickening soups and sauces.

- 1 pound cauliflower florets, fresh or frozen
 - 1 small white onion (about 3 ounces), quartered
 - 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - ½ teaspoon salt
 - ground black pepper, to taste
 - 2 pinches of nutmeg, or to taste
 - only if needed: 1-2 tablespoons vegetable broth, or vegetable juice
 - optional: 4-ounce can chopped black olives
1. Steam the cauliflower florets, together with the onion, until tender.
 2. Place the vegetables in a food processor, together with the oil, salt, pepper and nutmeg to taste. Blend to obtain a smooth consistency. Depending on the quality of the cauliflower, you might need more liquid to obtain this result. Hence add a little vegetable broth (or juice) if needed.
 3. Optional: if you want to serve the mock mashed potato purée as a side-dish (and not use it as a thickener), you may choose to mix in the chopped olives..

Questions

Almond Flour Substitutes

Q. The baking recipes contain a lot of almond flour which would be high in omega 6's. Would substituting chia, mesquite, coconut, plantain or green banana flours for some of the almond flour be advisable to decrease the omega 6's?

A. The omega-6 content of most tree nuts is the price we pay for all the other benefits of tree nuts. However, we already use chia and coconut flour in many recipes and now Nicole is experimenting with green (unripe) banana flour.

The flour from green bananas is of particular interest since it is rich in 'resistant starch'.

Resistant starch is non-digestible so it doesn't create the harmful blood-sugar spikes of regular starch. In addition, it fulfills the role of dietary fiber and feeds 'good' bacteria in the colon. See 'Resistant Starch', [Jan 2014](#) [6].

For the American Indians in arid areas, the pods of the mesquite tree were a staple. The flour is low glycemic, gluten-free and rich in dietary fiber, so it seems to fit the bill nutritionally. However, Nicole has no plans to try it out just yet.

Trialing exotic flours

It is worth noting that all these unconventional flours are much harder to cook with than regular wheat flour so extensive trials are necessary to get the recipe just right.

High Oleic Sunflower Oil

Q. Is high oleic sunflower oil good for high temperature cooking? What temperatures are safe?

A. High oleic acid sunflower is over 80% monounsaturated fat and is in the same league as olive oil so, on the face of it, it is OK.

This oil is produced from a specially hybridized strain of sunflower - which is OK - and not due to some jiggery-pokery with the chemistry.

However, this product has only just come off patent, there are few suppliers, it is open to fraud, and the consumer has to be pretty savvy... so I have to wonder if it is worth bothering with right now.

High temperatures

As for 'high temperature cooking' the usual caveats remain: whatever the oil, try to keep temperatures below 170°C (340°F).

News Flashes

Omega-3: Curcumin aids Alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) Conversion to DHA 'Fish-oil'

The body has a struggle to convert ALA (the plant form of omega-3 - e.g. flax oil), into something the body can use, namely the fish-oil DHA. This is a challenge for vegetarians and vegans who risk suffering deficiencies of DHA.

Now they have some comfort: a study finds that curcumin (a compound found in the spice turmeric) accelerates the making of DHA in the brain. [7].

And that is where it is needed most: DHA is a vital brain nutrient and is involved in good cognitive function and in mood.

In the study, the researchers noted that the rats on the curcumin diet suffered less from anxiety than those who did not receive the curcumin.

How does this relate to our ancestral past? Turmeric (which is of the same family as ginger) is native to south India and so was not present in our formative ancestral past. However, the researchers think that many other compounds could have the same effect.

Who knows? But we do know that the 'fish oils' were present throughout the savanna food supply, not just fish.

On the other hand, human ability to use plant sources of omega-3 is rudimentary so they cannot have been of prime importance.

Phosphorus - Wretched Excess

I recently wrote about yet more mischiefs that phosphorus over-consumption is doing to us: 'Phosphorus-rich Diet Unhealthy', [Sept 2014](#) [8].

In particular it increases blood pressure, increases osteoporosis, disrupts mineral metabolism, undermines kidney function, and hardens (literally) the blood vessels into a bone-like substance,

But now a series of studies are sounding the alarm [9,10,11]. Interestingly it is not only the excess of phosphorus that is important, it is also the ratio with calcium intake.

Ideally the calcium/phosphorus ratio would be better than 1.25 to 1. However, modern diets are at 0.5 to 1. But to correct this, the strategy must be to STRIP OUT phosphorus rather than to boost calcium intake.

Phosphorus sources

Colas have long been fingered as being a major source of phosphorus in the modern diet.

However, they have been overtaken by the increased use of FOOD ADDITIVES. The daily intake has more than doubled in 20 years, from under 500 mg/day to 1000 mg/day.

Culprits

Fast food and ready-to-eat processed foods are the main culprits. In processed meat and poultry products, the phosphate content is nearly twice that of the natural, generic product.

Phosphorus additives

We hope that our readers will not be eating much processed, convenience food. But if you do, check the labels for phosphorus and its aliases (the numbers in brackets are the European Union's 'E numbers'):

Sodium phosphate (E 339)
Potassium phosphate (E 340)
Calcium phosphate (E 341)
Orthophosphoric acid
Diphosphate (E 450)
Triphosphate (E 451)
Polyphosphate (E 452)

My View? Eat the way we say and, above all, choose authentic generic foods that do not need an ingredients label. That way you can be sure that no additives, phosphorus or otherwise contaminate your food supply.

Foot Strength & Fitness



Tarahumara running sandals
In [Sept 2014](#) I wrote 'Ultra Running - too much of a good thing' [12]. In spite of that the Tarahumara of Mexico, who are renowned for their long-distance running ability, have low blood pressure and hardly any cardiovascular disease. Moreover they are 13 TIMES MORE LIKELY to live to 100 as Americans [13].

The razor-sharp flint of their terrain would shred the soles of any hunter gatherer and so the Tarahumara runners wear rawhide sandals.

Daniel Lieberman of Harvard has studied their running patterns [14].

Just as we have reported on many occasions [15], by running almost barefoot (as nature designed), the Tarahumara run more on the balls of the feet, have stronger arches and do not suffer from knee injuries.

Similarly Dr Elizabeth Miller of the University of Cincinnati finds that running barefoot or in minimal shoes increases foot muscle volume, makes greater use of the spring-like function of the arch, and promotes higher and stiffer arches [16].

My View? It is not surprising if most westerners are walking around with atrophied foot muscles and collapsed arches.

Red Meat Inflammation Molecule

While people who eat much red meat (beef, lamb and pork) are more vulnerable to cancers,

other carnivores are not. This prompted researchers to investigate a molecule, 'Neu5Gc' that is common in red meat but not in human flesh.

Sure enough they find that mice treated with this molecule sprouted cancers and suffered body-wide inflammation [17].

What is happening is this: the body's immune system detects this 'foreign' molecule and raises antibodies against it, causing an inflammatory swarm.

The researchers suggest that this phenomenon could also lead to other inflammatory diseases such as atherosclerosis and type II diabetes.

My View? This casts a new light on the problems with the red meats. Up till now, the main problem was seen to be the high percentage of fats and the unhealthy fatty acid profile.

The first question is: how much of this molecule was in typical hunter-gatherer food? Not much, seemingly, if our body does not know how to deal with it.

The second question is: what other mammal meats (e.g. goat, venison, bison etc) are similarly tainted? We just do not know yet.

Siren Songs

Televised Medical Talk Shows

Programs such as The Dr. Oz Show and The Doctors have attracted massive followings. Their charismatic hosts discuss new medical research and therapies while offering viewers recommendations for better health. But how reliable are they?

A group of researchers from Alberta Faculty of Medicine, Canada, looked into the question and published their results in the prestigious British Medical Journal [18].

Their conclusions:

"Approximately half of the recommendations have either no evidence or are contradicted by the best available evidence."

In addition these shows rarely divulge that THEY ARE DESIGNED TO SELL PRODUCT: "Conflicts of interest are rarely addressed."

"The public should be skeptical about recommendations made on medical talk shows."

My View? I agree with the researchers who also note that these shows focus on ENTERTAINMENT. In consequence they can be deceptive and misleading.

The Weathercock of Oz

Certainly on the question of diet I have seen Dr Oz swiveling like a weathervane according to how the wind blows that week.

Human Nature

Why Men Take Idiotic Risks

The Darwin Awards are awarded posthumously to people who, by taking idiotic risks, kill themselves and so remove themselves from the gene pool.

Past winners include a man who tried to steal a ride home by hitching his shopping trolley to the back of a train and got dragged two miles to his death; and the three Cambodians in the village bar who played Russian roulette alternately taking shots of alcohol and then stamping on an unexploded land mine one had found in his backyard. The mine eventually exploded, demolishing the bar and killing all three men.

But why are almost all the Darwin winners young men? UK researchers looked into the question [19].

They tentatively conclude that it is the misdirected instinct to attract women. As I say in *Deadly Harvest*:

"...men will admire another man who indulges in reckless or dangerous behavior. Women are not impressed by the exploits in

themselves, but in the importance other men give to them [20]." - [Chapter 8](#), 'Sexual Selection', p 209 [21].

It is also a possible explanation for the stupid risks the Burke & Wills expedition took when exploring the interior of Australia: see 'Book Review IV – *The Dig Tree*', [July 2007](#) [22] and my [Amazon](#) review [23]

Event Remarks

Catching up with Followers

It was a great pleasure for us to meet up with our many followers on my recent speaking tour in California.

Special mention must be made of James Vakos who travelled all the way from Las Vegas to my talk in Palm Desert. We were delighted to see him and make his acquaintance.

He follows in the footsteps of Duncan Cunningham who, last year, came from Salt Lake City.



Deadly Harvest: Geoff's latest work encapsulates current thinking on lifestyle anthropology. www.deadlyharvest.com



Paleo Harvest Cookbook: Over 170 delicious, Bond Precept conforming recipes www.paleo-harvest.com

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