

FOOD AND EVOLUTION

Sept. 30, 2017

I believe that living more like our ancestors did in the wild, is a very healthy habit for modern humans to cultivate. Now that fall has officially arrived, I'd like to explain how evolution has dictated that our diets need to change with the seasons, assuming you live in a temperate zone.

The more we know, the more vehemently our experts argue over food and nutrition but to me, what's missing is how evolution has already pre-programmed our perfect diet. *How do I know?* Because for millions of years, we relied on the sun to tell us what to eat, when to eat, when to wake, and when to sleep.

Debating the best ratio of carbs, fats, and proteins is pointless today because evolution determined long ago, that both high-fat AND high-carb diets are healthy for Homo sapiens. The trick is knowing which one to pick or when to switch between the two, based on where you live.

The real problem is that we've forgotten what life was like before electricity and light bulbs. Modern humans think our technology makes us smarter than Lady Evolution but news flash America, it doesn't.

To ignore evolution's rules is to invite many modern chronic diseases into your lifetime. I'm talking about heart disease, diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis, fatty liver disease, high blood pressure, and even cancers or autoimmune conditions.

In fact, the number one cause of diabetes, in my opinion is very simply this: eating way too many carbs out of their growing season, along with eating after sunset and/or before bedtime.

Note that all of those diseases are instigated by chronic inflammation but here's the thing: when we eat carbs in the wrong season or even in the nighttime, our bodies naturally create more reactive oxygen species, or ROS which are inflammatory signaling compounds.

Those ROS are a necessary part of everyone's normal metabolism but when they remain chronically elevated for any reason, bad things will start to happen.

Think about how modern man has corrupted that primal environment where our species evolved and what that means from an evolutionary viewpoint. For example, in 2017 you could probably buy a freaking Hawaiian pineapple in Juneau, AK just about any time of the year.

However, without modern transportation, this could never have happened until fairly recently.

This is why I say, there are essentially three dietary templates based on what foods were *available* to us in the wild. I call these templates the "Arctic" diet, the "Equator" diet, and the "Temperate Zone" diet, because our seasonal foods varied by *latitude*.

In other words, this is the most fundamental principle of nutrition that humans *should* be worrying about especially today. Counting calories, over-training, eating a low-fat diet, avoiding saturated fats, and other government guidelines should be totally scrapped and re-written, in my book.

So, what am I saying?

Let your sunlight dictate the relative amounts of proteins, fats, and carbs you eat during the year.

Because agricultural products grow during the spring, summer, and fall, *introduce* a little fruit and some starches in the late spring and have the *most* fruit and starches in the height of summer. Then start to *taper off* in the fall until you avoid those items in the months with the shortest light cycles, basically December to February.

The Arctic diet is highest in seafood and saturated fats with the lowest carbs of the three because we need more fat and protein in the cold. What is the Temperate Zone diet? It's just the Arctic diet in winter with variations on the Equator diet in the spring, summer, and fall.

The Equator diet is highest in fruits, starches, and sweets in the summer with the least protein of the three and the lowest amount of fat. Also, less seafood would be required in the longest light cycles of the year.

No matter where you live there's at least a short winter season, even in the tropics. While it's not cold or snowing on the equator in December, it is the dry season which limits rainfall. This makes fresh produce much less available, as if you were spending that time in northern Canada but without the cold, eh?

BOTTOM LINE: If you're like most humans, you live in a temperate zone so you *should* be eating the Arctic diet in winter and the Equator diet in summer. Use a blend of those diets in spring and fall in order to transition from winter to summer, and back again every year.

Of course, if you live like an Inuit does, above the Arctic Circle, then three-quarters of the year your diet is mostly seaweed, fish, caribou, muskox, polar bear, sea mammals, and blubber.

However, if you live in the tropics, you can eat roughly 75% of your calories from fruits and starches for much of the year.

There have been many other examples of hunter-gatherer tribes from the 20th century that thrived on their indigenous diets wherever they lived, and more often than not, they lived long lives free from our typical diseases. So, what crucial detail has modern medicine missed about all those healthy hunter-gatherers?

They were eating local foods in season and those foods perfectly matched their environment – their good health had nothing to do with macro ratios, i.e., how many carbs, fats or proteins they ate!

Modern humans think we can eat anything we want, whenever we feel like it but I'm here to tell you that is a very bad idea. We need to wake up to these facts: our evolutionary history means that human health is NOT strictly about *which* foods we're eating, it's more about *when* we are eating them.

Okay, that's it for me today, folks.

Stay tuned for my next blog when we'll talk specifically how to cycle your macro ratios for optimal health, depending on where you live!

So long for now,

Rick