



Spirituality  
& Health

2017 TREND REPORT:

# *DIETS DEMYSTIFIED*

A guide to the sometimes murky, often  
confusing world of nutrition trends from  
today's leading experts

SPONSORED BY:



## “We are unhealthier than ever before, and the Western diet is responsible,”

said Dr. Drew Ramsey MD, author of *Eat Complete* and *50 Shades of Kale*.

Nutrition expert Dr. Gabriel Cousens, MD, MD(H), DD, says that the SAD diet, which is short for Standard American Diet, and is full of processed, fried, and convenience-based foods, “promotes sloth, lust, drug use, and overall societal degeneration, as well as poor health and longevity.”

In addition, this lifestyle “has demonstrably led to catastrophic results for the majority of its adherents (which has SAD-ly exported to *most* of the now industrialized world),” says author and neurofeedback specialist Nora Gedgaudas.

Despite knowing all of this—it isn’t really *new* news—the majority of Americans still adhere to this SAD way of obtaining the energy and nutrients that fuel our lives.

Let’s face it. What we eat has the power to enliven and strengthen us, or to kill us. Our current diets may be contributing to our demise, and we know we need to shift our habits, and we know the time has come, but...

There are 56 million search results on Google for “Diet Ideas” and another 59 million for “Eating Healthier.” So much information (and misinformation) is out there! No wonder we often feel overwhelmed and give up the search for the *right* nutrition lifestyle before we’re able to experience lasting change.

So, now what?

We must find a path through the excess and perhaps settle on a new perspective about healthy eating—one that is sustainable, nourishing, and well-suited for the unique beings that we are.

*S&H* decided to round up our favorite nutrition experts. These authors, doctors, and pioneers of today’s nutrition offer their views on what works, what doesn’t, and why. With their expert guidance, along with a few delicious burrito recipes, we’ll demystify today’s top diets and help you decide which trend to try.

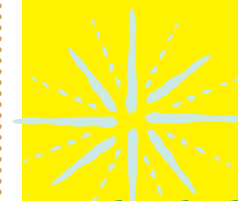
BY ROBIN STREMLow



**Thrive Market** is on a mission to make healthy living easy and affordable for everyone. This online grocer offers all the non-GMO foods and healthy products you love at 25-50% below retail prices—all shipped right to your front door. The company’s Thrive Gives initiative also makes it possible for food-insecure families to access natural, organic, and non-GMO foods and products for the first time.

1 month free + 25% off your first order

START FOR FREE



## Which diet is best for you?

PALEO/PRIMAL

KETOGENIC

AYURVEDA

VEGAN/

VEGETARIAN

RAW FOOD

MEDITERRANEAN

MICROBIOME/

GUT-HEALTH

MACROBIOTIC

## our expert guides



DR. GABRIEL COUSENS,  
MD, MD(H), DD



DONNA GATES



NORA  
GEDGAUDAS



DR. DREW  
RAMSEY, MD



# AYURVEDA

SPIRITUALLY SOUND • VEGETARIAN •  
GLUTEN-FREE OPTION

Ayurveda is a more-than-5,000-year-old system for complete body and mind health stemming from ancient Vedic wisdom. This sister-science of yoga believes that all of nature, including us humans, are composed of five elements (air, ether, fire, water, earth), and each of us has unique proportions of these elements within our own body/mind constitution, or *prakriti*, commonly referred to as one's *dosha*.

To stay healthy, you must adopt a diet and lifestyle appropriate for your *dosha*, and when imbalance shows up, or when seasons and environmental factors change, you simply alter your ingredients to correct the imbalance and return to optimum health.

Certain foods are excluded for certain types of people, yet the majority of types will eat vegetarian and seasonally, steering clear from processed, frozen, and reheated foods.



## CONTRAINDICATIONS:

None known.

## QUICK MEAL

**EXAMPLE:** Kitchari (basmati rice, mung dahl, and ghee) and lightly sautéed vegetables with Ayurvedic spices of cumin, mustard seed, coriander, curry, hing, ginger, and black pepper.

## what's in your burrito?

### AYURVEDA

BASMATI RICE

DOSA TORTILLA, MADE FROM BASMATI RICE AND MUNG BEANS

CILANTRO, COCONUT, GINGER, AND YOUR FAVORITE AYURVEDIC SPICES

GENTLY COOKED VEGGIES IN GHEE (SWEET POTATO, ZUCCHINI, CARROTS)

PANEER CHEESE CUBES

## what do the experts think?

### DR. GABRIEL COUSENS, MD, MD(H), DD

The Ayurvedic diet reflects a brilliant understanding of the relationship of us humans with our genetically determined diets. It also reflects the understanding of how to adjust one's diet to seasons of the year and the seasons of one's life. [Ayurveda] is an essential part of my teachings.

### DONNA GATES

The strength of the ancient Ayurveda diet lies in its excellent herbs. Holy basil and Ashwagandha help with stress and sleep, while turmeric helps with inflammation, for example. However, turmeric is high in oxalates (it's best to use curcumin extract from the turmeric root instead). This diet is not recommended for anyone with candidiasis.

### NORA GEDGAUDAS

The avoidance of processed foods is always a plus. But such a dietary approach fails to align in any healthy way with the current epidemic of autoimmunity (much less our human evolutionary heritage).

### DR. DREW RAMSEY, MD

While there is not much controlled science supporting the Ayurvedic model, the rules and structure can be helpful, especially with its focus on plants and spices. Like all vegetarian diets, there is a much higher risk of deficiency of B-vitamin, iron, zinc, and omega-3 fats than in diets with some seafood and meat.

# KETOGENIC

MEAT LOVERS • MEAL-PREP •  
GLUTEN-FREE OPTION • SNACKING ALLOWED

The ketogenic diet is designed for a high-fat, moderate-protein, low-carb lifestyle that pushes the body into *ketosis*, a state in which you use fat for metabolism instead of glucose (sugar). To enter and remain in ketosis, your body must be starved of carbohydrates, which signals the liver to produce ketones that your body will then use for energy.

This well-researched diet has proven effective in lowering and stabilizing blood sugar and insulin levels, promoting weight loss, lowering cholesterol, and increasing energy and brain function, while not depriving the body of satisfying foods. This diet is also shown to be effective in treating many health conditions, such as cancer and epilepsy.

It takes around three days to enter ketosis and about three weeks for your body to adapt. During this time you may experience several potentially unpleasant side effects (such as headaches, irritability, and bad breath), but this usually diminishes or disappears with time.

## CONTRAINDICATIONS:

While the potential for experiencing adverse reactions or developing health conditions due to a ketogenic diet varies widely person to person, there is evidence of digestive disturbances, endocrine system upsets, and unfavorable cardiovascular changes. It's important to talk with a trusted doctor when embarking on this dietary path or any other path that substantially differs from your current lifestyle.

## QUICK MEAL EXAMPLE: A

Lunchtime Tuna Salad: 1 can sustainably harvested tuna, 2 hard-boiled eggs, 1 small head romaine lettuce dressed with 1 small onion, 2 Tbsp homemade mayonnaise, lemon juice, pink salt, and black pepper.

## what's in your burrito?

### KETOGENIC

LOW-CARB WRAP

PAN-SEARED  
PORK SAUSAGE

SCRAMBLED EGGS

SOUR  
CREAM

SPINACH, KALE,  
SWISS CHARD

SHREDDED CHEDDAR  
CHEESE

## what do the experts think?

### DR. GABRIEL COUSENS, MD, MD(H), DD

A ketogenic diet is an essential part of my diabetes prevention and overall healing and health maintenance program.... It also may help in treating Alzheimer's disease and cancer, as well as many other forms of neurodegenerative disease.

### DONNA GATES

Research shows that high-fat diets destroy the very important bifidus bacteria that live in the colon. However, our genes tell a bigger story. Nutritional genomic testing shows that many people run the risk of heart disease, weight gain, dementia, and Alzheimer's on a high-fat diet, so it's imperative to know how you personally digest fats before remaining on a ketogenic type of diet long term.

### NORA GEDGAUDAS

The ketogenic diet, depending on the version being discussed, protects and nourishes the brain (increasing cerebral circulation by up to 38%), curtails free radicals, can improve the heart's efficiency by a whopping 28%, supports immune function, and is profoundly anti-inflammatory. Food/fat quality and variety are key!

### DR. DREW RAMSEY, MD

Ketogenic diets can be extremely helpful to people prone to insulin resistance. Still, there is the risk of high consumption of meat and low consumption of vegetables, along with a need to supplement some minerals. Ideally, this diet is pursued under guidance by a nutritional professional.

# MACROBIOTIC

SPIRITUALLY SOUND • PERSONALIZED •  
VEGETARIAN-FRIENDLY • GLUTEN-FREE OPTION

“Macrobiotic” stems from a Greek word meaning “long life.” A macrobiotic diet is a comprehensive approach to eating that aims to create inner balance primarily through food choices, preparation, and attitude toward eating.

This diet assigns each food a primarily yin or yang classification, depending on its unique energetic qualities, and on how and where the food was grown. Food preparation also affects the energy of food and should be tailored, depending on climate, season, and your specific balancing needs.

Your diet will be around 50% whole grains, 30% vegetables, and 10% beans, with small amounts of fish, sea vegetables like nori and wakame, fruits, fermented foods, and oils. Expect to be mindful and respectful of both your body and the process of eating food, all while staying grounded in gratitude.



## CONTRAINDICATIONS:

This diet isn't recommended for pregnant or lactating women. Based on the dietary limitations, you may have to supplement some nutrients.

## QUICK MEAL

**EXAMPLE:** Vegan Macro Bowl (courtesy of [kblog.lunchboxbunch.com](https://kblog.lunchboxbunch.com)). Rice, beans, tempeh, mushrooms, sauerkraut, sprouts, and loads of dressing make this a deliciously harmonizing dish.

## what's in your burrito?

### MACROBIOTIC

CORN TORTILLA

ADZUKI BEANS

LIGHTLY STEAMED TOFU CUBES

NORI STRIPS

SIDE/TOPPING OF SAUERKRAUT

ONION, KALE, CARROTS

## what do the experts think?

### DR. GABRIEL COUSENS, MD, MD(H), DD

One of the major drawbacks of this diet is that it is high in complex carbohydrates. Particularly with age, this can diminish brain function and energy up to fourfold. As far back as 475 B.C., the Taoist spiritual masters said, “*bigu*” (meaning *no grain*), for those who wanted to cultivate merging with the Tao (spiritual liberation).

### DONNA GATES

Today's version of the macrobiotic diet has evolved into a Japanese version of the Mediterranean diet, which allows fresh fish. [The Japanese culture] deserves much credit for bringing us real salt (Celtic sea salt) and teaching Americans about sea veggies and grain-like seeds (quinoa and millet). Having studied with Lima Ohsawa in Japan, this is where I realized that *principles, even more than the food*, were critical in health and healing.

### NORA GEDGAUDAS

This dietary approach has literally no basis in human evolutionary history, genetic makeup, or physiological design. It is made up of a strikingly high percentage of anti-genic foods and is largely devoid of critical fat-soluble nutrients and essential fatty acids required for optimal genetic expression as well as immune and brain health.

### DR. DREW RAMSEY, MD

A macrobiotic diet is lacking some essential nutrients that are especially needed during pregnancy and early development. This is a nice model, but ideally it is augmented with seafood.



# MEDITERRANEAN

SPIRITUALLY SOUND • VEGETARIAN/VEGAN-FRIENDLY • MEAL-PREP POSSIBLE

A Mediterranean diet is full of colorful food, sensory pleasures, and joyous mealtimes. More than a diet, this trend is a lifestyle aimed at giving you a long and deeply fulfilling life.

While this diet traditionally varies, depending on the regional trends you're mimicking, expect to eat primarily whole grains, locally grown seasonal vegetables and fruits, beans and legumes, nuts, seeds, spices, olives and olive oil, 1 to 2 glasses of red wine daily (if you choose!), small amounts of seafood regularly, poultry and cheese occasionally, and sweets and red meat kept to a minimum.

If you adopt this lifestyle, you'll likely lose weight and reduce your risk for heart disease, Parkinson's disease, dementia, and depression (among many other conditions), while normalizing your blood sugar and cholesterol levels.



## CONTRAINDICATIONS:

The flexible nature of this diet may be hard for some to follow, because calorie counting and dietary restrictions are limited, and therefore overeating is possible. Also, alcohol may not be recommended for you, so it's important to clear regular wine consumption with your doctor.

## QUICK MEAL

**EXAMPLE:** A light and simple Baked Halibut Meal (from [themediterraneandish.com](http://themediterraneandish.com)) of locally sourced fish, tomatoes, and green beans, baked with ample olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, and spices, is a quick and easy dinner idea.

## what's in your burrito?

### MEDITERRANEAN

FLOUR TORTILLA

STEAMED GARLIC LENTILS

FETA CHEESE CUBES

HUMMUS, TAHINI, CHOPPED OLIVES

SLAW OF CHOPPED PARSLEY, OLIVE OIL, AND LEMON JUICE

CUCUMBER, TOMATO, PEPPERS

## what do the experts think?

### DR. GABRIEL COUSENS, MD, MD(H), DD

A vegan-friendly Mediterranean diet is a general, basic healing and maintenance diet. Researchers are not sure exactly why it's essentially good, but the role of olive oil seems to be rather important. It's a flexible diet whose success depends on modest eating in alignment with one's constitutional dietary needs.

### DONNA GATES

This diet has become a catchall term for a diet that recommends healthy monounsaturated fats, like olive oil and avocado oil. The shared company and community of the Mediterranean way of eating is a great thing to incorporate into meals!

### NORA GEDGAUDAS

The Mediterranean diet has proven highly variable and therefore hopelessly vague in its actual definition. Any dietary approach that includes grains and legumes also has the strong potential for promoting immune dysregulation. In addition, humans have a high need for foods containing fat-soluble nutrients that are predominantly found in fully pastured animal-source foods (such as red meats), which tend to be underrepresented in this diet.

### DR. DREW RAMSEY, MD

This is the most studied diet with clear benefits for depression, heart disease, and even cancer prevention. That said, many professionals have pointed out that the diet is one part of an overall Mediterranean lifestyle, which includes regular movement, adequate sleep, and strong community and family connections.

# MICROBIOME/GUT-HEALTH

VEGETARIAN/VEGAN-FRIENDLY  
• GLUTEN-FREE OPTION •  
MEAL-PREP POSSIBLE

We all know how important gut health is to our overall physical and mental well-being. Anxiety and depression are thought by many to start *in* the gut, and some autoimmune diseases (such as rheumatoid arthritis and many thyroid disorders) are linked to an unhealthy microbiome.

So, how might you adopt a lifestyle that improves your gut health? You'll avoid processed and junk foods, refined sugar and vegetable oils, all artificial sweeteners, and most conventional animal products. Then, you'll explore eliminating certain foods that are bad for your unique system (remove certain trigger-foods like gluten or grains, soy, and so on, and then evaluate how each makes you feel).

Next, include many fermented foods in your diet, such as sauerkraut, kimchi, tempeh, kefir or yogurt, and kombucha. Eat fresh fruits and vegetables; spices such as turmeric, ginger, and oregano; and only organic and naturally harvested animal products. And finally, always eat in a calm and relaxed state (since your microbiome reacts to stress), and consider supplementing with a high-quality probiotic or prebiotic supplement.



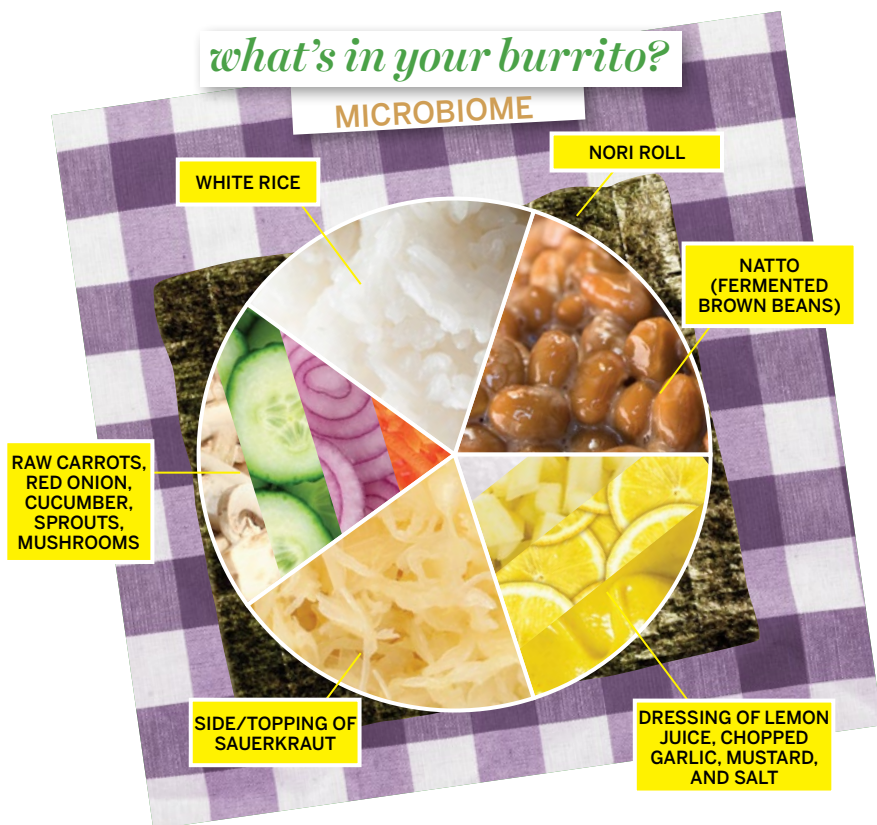
**CONTRAINDICATIONS:**  
No known side effects.

## QUICK MEAL

**EXAMPLE:** While not a full meal in itself, this anti-inflammatory powerhouse is a great side dish to any lunch or dinner. Using organic raw cabbage, fresh roots of turmeric and ginger, and a simple sea salt, you can add turmeric sauerkraut, a living probiotic, to your life.

## what's in your burrito?

### MICROBIOME



## what do the experts think?

### DR. GABRIEL COUSENS, MD, MD(H), DD

A diet that supports the microbiome, including a higher percentage of fermented foods such as sauerkraut and kimchee, is actually an important component of my 80–100% raw/100% plant-based diet. I strongly recommend eating in a way that supports a healthy microbiome.

### DONNA GATES

These diets cut their teeth on the Body Ecology's Diet by focusing on establishing and nurturing the inner ecosystem in our digestive tract. Most of these diets don't explain that certain fermented foods are not good for some conditions. Kombucha and beer with active wild yeast are not good for anyone with candidiasis, for example.

### NORA GEDGAUDAS

I have no problem with the general description of this dietary approach, which is essentially identical to the ancestrally oriented, fat-based ketogenic approach that I advocate.

### DR. DREW RAMSEY, MD

The gut is the basis of health. Without a healthy gut you can't properly digest food and absorb nutrients. Currently, there is a lot of hype about the microbiome and promotion of probiotics. Yet simply eating more plant-based foods, and including some fermented foods, is adequate for most people to establish healthy gut flora.

# PALEO/PRIMAL

MEAT-LOVERS • GLUTEN-FREE OPTION • DAIRY FREE • MEAL-PREP OPTION

If our most-ancient ancestors couldn't have eaten it, neither will you. . . if you adopt a Paleo lifestyle. The agricultural revolution nearly 10,000 to 12,000 years ago shifted our diet from mostly animal proteins and natural, minimally processed foraged fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds to one in which we grew and consumed processed grains, oils, and animal products like milk and cheese.

Proponents of the Paleo lifestyle claim that many of the physical diseases and mental imbalances we're experiencing today stem from our bodies (and our genetics) not yet being adapted to this more modern-style of eating. Therefore, we need to revert to our ancestral ways to regain health.

The Primal diet is similar to the Paleo, though Primal is more lenient regarding saturated fats. Both styles differ on dairy consumption.



## CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Because many foods are prohibited on this diet, nutrient deficiencies can occur and you may need to supplement (calcium and vitamins D and B, primarily). High cholesterol and high blood pressure are also common.

## QUICK MEAL

**EXAMPLE:** Ginger Beef with Broccoli and Portobello Mushrooms (courtesy of [popularpaleo.com](http://popularpaleo.com)) is made from beef sirloin marinated with garlic, ginger, and scallions, with a side of broccoli and portobello mushrooms seared in the same sauce.

## what's in your burrito?

### PALEO



## what do the experts think?

### DR. GABRIEL COUSENS, MD, MD(H), DD

It has the basics of the low-complex carbohydrate aspect, which is good, but has all the dangers of the high meat-protein aspect. Research shows that the mTOR pathway, which is optimal for longevity and anticancer effects, is between 35 and 70 grams of protein per day. The typical Paleo diet, as promoted today, is in excess of 70 grams of protein per day. Research shows that a higher protein diet in middle-aged men doubles mortality rates and quadruples cancer rates.

### DONNA GATES

A high-protein, high-fat diet does not nourish the microbiome. While the Paleo diet is a step in the right direction, it stops short of healing the inner ecosystem. The Paleo diet can be too high in fats and animal protein for many of us. We are all so unique.

### NORA GEDGAUDAS

Most Paleo diets are excessive in their emphasis on meat, but the overall concept is one that, by definition, should at least meet all basic human dietary requirements.

### DR. DREW RAMSEY, MD

Getting rid of processed foods and simple carbs is a great idea. However, Paleo diets also eliminate some very healthy foods like lentils, beans, and fresh fruit. To commit to this diet also denies that human diets evolve and that we have coevolved with milk-producing ruminants several times in human history.



# RAW FOOD

SPIRITUALLY SOUND • VEGETARIAN/VEGAN-FRIENDLY •  
GLUTEN-FREE OPTION • MEAL-PREP POSSIBLE

A Raw Food diet consists of eating primarily live whole foods with minimal processing. When more than 75% of your food intake is raw (not heated above 110–120F/43–49C degrees), you're maintaining a true raw food diet.

Two of the prime motivations behind a raw food diet are to keep the body alkaline, as raw fruits and vegetables have a high pH (are less acidic), and to prevent disease through the consumption of high-nutrient enzymes that remain present through minimal processing. When the body is more alkaline than acidic, it's harder for many diseases to grow.

Most raw "foodists" lose significant weight while also preventing or reversing heart disease, diabetes, and other ailments.



## CONTRAINDICATIONS:

While a raw food diet is suitable for most, some digestive systems may have a hard time adapting. You may also need to supplement nutrients.

## QUICK MEAL

**EXAMPLE:** Try Raw Pad Thai with zucchini noodles as a base, mixed with carrots and peppers and sprouts, and top with a raw almond-butter, lime, tamari, and ginger dressing.

## what's in your burrito?

### RAW FOOD

AVOCADO SLICES

ICEBERG LETTUCE WRAP

ALFALFA SPROUTS, CUCUMBERS, TOMATOES, YELLOW PEPPER

SAUCE OF ZUCCHINI, LEMON, AND ONION

SPINACH (OR YOUR FAVORITE LEAFY GREEN)

## what do the experts think?

### DR. GABRIEL COUSENS, MD, MD(H), DD

This is the best diet, when properly applied to one's genetic constitution, for optimal energy, flexibility, muscle strength, longevity, and spiritual life. Eating this way prepares one for the awakening and unfolding of the Kundalini energy that enhances one's ability to become a superconductor of the Divine.

### DONNA GATES

If you live in a warm climate like Hawaii, Arizona, California, and southern Florida (where most raw foodists live), eating raw can be right—because it is a cooling diet. Done properly, it's good for most cancers. However, the sugary fruits and popular treats made with dates, honey, and agave are never good for us.

### NORA GEDGAUDAS

Although there are certainly cleansing and detoxification benefits that can be derived from a diet rich in raw vegetables and greens, there are both pluses and minuses to raw foods. Some of the minuses involve certain antinutrients often present in such foods, as well as the manner in which many nutrients remain bound in the cellulose of raw plant foods, which are difficult for humans to fully digest and assimilate. Expect severe nutrient deficiencies over time.

### DR. DREW RAMSEY, MD

The evolution of the human brain depended on cooking food. Eating more raw foods is great for your health. But eating all-raw food denies that cooking food, especially seafood and meat, has a number of benefits.

# VEGAN/VEGETARIAN

SPIRITUALLY SOUND • GLUTEN-FREE OPTION •  
DAIRY-FREE OPTION • MEAL-PREP OPTION

On a Vegan diet, you consume no animal products, and you adopt a lifestyle void of anything from or tested on animals (think clothing, cosmetics, and the like). By doing so, you'll significantly reduce your risk for heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and some cancers (among other ailments). Vegetarianism is quite similar to Veganism, except that most followers consume some animal products, such as eggs or dairy.

Plan to eat plenty of whole grains, plant-based protein sources (like legumes in tofu, tempeh and peanut butter, and bean varieties), oils and fats, nuts and seeds, fortified dairy substitutes (almond and coconut milk, for example), and as many diverse vegetables and fruits as you like.

To follow a plant-based diet well, you'll need to ensure that you're getting enough nutrients and calories for your unique system. Don't forget to check food labels carefully, since many animal products find their way into not-so-obvious foods (gelatin is a commonly used animal-based ingredient, as is fish bladder, which is used to produce many beverages, like beer and apple juice).



## CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Studies have shown that many practicing vegans have a B-12 deficiency, many are deficient in calcium (taking the proper supplements is key), and hormonal imbalances occur in some individuals.

## QUICK MEAL

**EXAMPLE:** Make a dish that's sure to please even the pickiest eaters with a Swiss chard and chickpea sauté, complemented by raisins and pine nuts, and served alongside couscous (inspired from [realsimple.com](http://realsimple.com)).

## what's in your burrito?

### VEGAN

WHITE RICE

FLOUR TORTILLA

SPICY STEWED PINTO BEANS

CHILI PEPPERS, CORN, LETTUCE

VEGAN CHEESE

SIDE/TOPPING OF GUACAMOLE

## what do the experts think?

### DR. GABRIEL COUSENS, MD, MD(H), DD

I have been on a Vegan diet since 1973. As a natural part of my spiritual life, and as a part of all the great spiritual traditions, veganism promotes the ethic of "no killing" or "no spilling of blood," and therefore brings holiness and sanctification and uplifts the planetary web of life in our eating patterns. It is a profound misunderstanding to think that vegans are the only people who become B-12 and/or otherwise deficient. No matter what diet one is on, everyone in America today needs proper dietary supplementation.

### DONNA GATES

Many, especially those on a spiritual path, eliminate animal foods entirely from their diet, feeling that eating them is morally, ethically, and spiritually wrong. I respect this choice (and the Body Ecology Diet can be vegan). A Vegetarian meal with fermented milk and eggs may be a better compromise for anyone who, for spiritual or personal ethics, wants to avoid killing an animal

to sustain their own life, while still getting many of the beneficial nutrients found in animal products.

### NORA GEDGAUDAS

A Vegetarian/Vegan diet is typically a starch-heavy, highly antigenic (for many), and ultimately unnatural diet for humans, frequently resulting in a variety of nutrient deficiencies and many long-term health compromises.... There is simply no basis for this way of eating in human physiological makeup or evolutionary history.

### DR. DREW RAMSEY, MD

Strict Vegan diets are certainly incompatible with human health, as they require supplements to prevent damage to the brain and nervous system. People have confused this moral philosophy for a nutritional plan, and that is very concerning. In recent studies, more than half of vegans were frankly deficient in vitamin B-12, and Vegetarian and Vegan diets have been linked to increased rates of anxiety, depression, and health care utilization.



## Meet Our Experts

### DR. GABRIEL COUSENS MD, MD(H), DD

An internationally renowned holistic physician, spiritual leader, diabetes researcher (among other roles), and author of seven books—including *Conscious Eating*, *Spiritual Nutrition*, and *There Is a Cure for Diabetes*—Dr. Gabriel Cousens is also the founding director of the Tree of Life Center US. [treeoflifecenterus.com](http://treeoflifecenterus.com)

#### Summarize your dietary lifestyle for us.

An 80–100% organic, raw food and 100% plant-based nutrition, individualized to one's constitution, that is 25–45% complex carbohydrates (primarily leafy greens and sprouts with minimal to no greens); 10–20% protein according to one's constitution; and 25–45% raw, plant-source fats. Everyone should supplement with a complex vitamin C (rather than ascorbic acid); a natural, food-source B complex; long-chain omega-3s from yellow algae; a basic organic mineral supplementation with plenty of fulvic acid (such as High Mountain Shilajit from Dragon Herbs); and an adequate vegan, natural vitamin D that is titrated on intake to create a blood level of 80–90. Drink enough pure water to be urinating every 2 hours.

#### What is your go-to “cheat” meal or snack?

I don't have a need to snack.

#### Most important food to include in your diet?

Although there is not a single most important food, because the optimum diet is a synergy of macronutrients selected to support one's constitution, one of my favorites is Blue Green Algae from Klamath Lake. It's a great brain food.

#### Most important food to avoid in your diet?

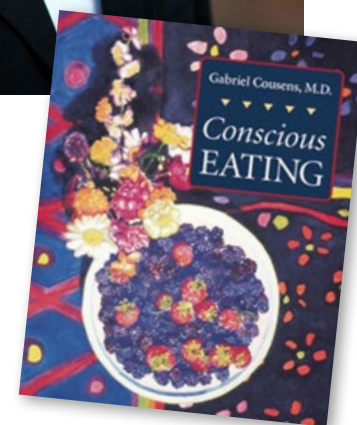
All meat, fish, chicken, and dairy.

#### If you could have done one thing differently regarding diet as a child, what would that be?

Avoid all meat, fish, chicken, and dairy. As a kapha type, (one of the three Ayurvedic **doshas**) meat, fish, chicken, and dairy, I believe, aggravated my constitution.

#### What is one recently published book on nutrition that you love and would recommend that our readers check out?

My own book, *Conscious Parenting*, covers vegan nutrition for children and is a good resource for parents.



## Meet Our Experts

### DONNA GATES, M.ED., ABAAHP

Creator and author of *The Body Ecology Diet*, Donna Gates is on a mission to change the way the world eats. Her dietary approach was the first of its kind—sugar-free, gluten-free, casein-free, and probiotic-rich. Gates introduced the natural sweetener stevia to the U.S. over 20 years ago; at the same time, she began teaching about fermented foods and coined the phrase “inner ecosystem.”

[bodyecology.com](http://bodyecology.com)

#### Summarize your dietary lifestyle for us.

A nutrient-dense, 80% plant-based diet rich in fermented foods that is perfectly balanced by the 7 Universal Principles.

#### What is your go-to “cheat” meal?

The Body Ecology Fermented Protein Shake and Super Spirulina Plus, mixed together, for a quick and easy meal.

#### Most important food to include in your diet?

This will be unique for each person, but I hope everyone will include some fermented foods.

#### Most important food to avoid in your diet?

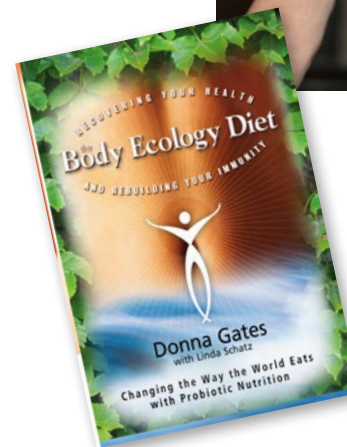
Bad oils that are processed and refined, refined sugar, and saturated fats.

#### If you could have done one thing differently regarding diet in your young adult life, what would that have been?

Avoided taking so many antibiotics and followed the Body Ecology Principles. I wish someone had handed them to me when I was young!

#### What is a nutrition/health book recently published that you recommend that our readers check out?

*Missing Microbes*, by Martin Blaser.





## Meet Our Experts

### NORA GEDGAUDAS

Board-certified nutritional consultant and a neuro-feedback specialist, Nora Gedgaudas is a recognized expert in the Paleo, Primal, and Ketogenic diets, and specializes in brain and thyroid health, among others. She is the author of *Primal Body*, *Primal Mind*; *Primal Fat Burner: Live Longer, Slow Aging*, *Super-Power Your Brain*; and *Save Your Life with a High-Fat, Low-Carb Paleo Diet* with a foreword by David Perlmutter, MD, to be published by Simon & Schuster in January 2017.

[primalbody-primalmind.com](http://primalbody-primalmind.com),  
[www.primalfatburner.com](http://www.primalfatburner.com)

#### Summarize your dietary lifestyle for us.

My dietary approach is focused primarily on the elimination of dietary sugars and starches, the moderation of protein intake, and the use of a wide variety of natural dietary fats (and critical fat-soluble nutrients) for my primary caloric intake and satiety. The bulk of what one generally sees filling my plate is a variety of fresh, fibrous vegetables and greens prepared in a variety of ways (cooked, raw, and cultured). The unwavering focus is on extremely high food quality (organic produce and 100% fully pastured meats, with some uncontaminated seafood) that is most in alignment with our human evolutionary and genetic heritage.

#### What is your go-to “cheat” meal or snack?

Himalayan salted macadamia nuts and pili nuts, mostly. And unsweetened, toasted coconut flakes.

#### Most important food to include in your diet?

A variety of natural, minimally processed dietary fats—including animal fats rich in important fat-soluble nutrients and essential fatty acids (but in the relative absence of sugar/starch: this is important).

#### Most important food to avoid in your diet?

Processed and refined vegetable oils (especially *all* soy-bean and canola oils), as well as any other manner of highly processed carbohydrate-based food. Obviously, GMOs in all of their forms and guises (and meat from animals fed these substances), as well as excess protein in general. It's important to eat complete protein from animal-source foods, but it is vital to limit that protein to what is needed for maintenance and repair and to not significantly exceed that.

#### What is your favorite city or location to eat in? (best foodie town/country/etc.)

I actually think we have it pretty darn good here in Portland, Oregon. It is very much a foodie town and it is filled to the brim with restaurants trying very hard to do the right things, such as offering fully pastured meats and fresh, “farm-to-fork” organic and local produce. We even have a few restaurants that run 100% dedicated gluten-free kitchens. Lots of Paleo-friendly options to be had!

#### What is a nutrition/health book recently published that you recommend that our readers check out?

*Misguided Medicine* (second edition), by Colin E. Champ, MD. Also, although these were not published within the last year, these are great books to check out: *Tripping Over the Truth*, by Travis Christofferson, and *Brain Maker*, by Dr. David Perlmutter.



## Meet Our Experts

### DR. DREW RAMSEY, MD

Author of *Eat Complete* and *50 Shades of Kale*, and coauthor of *The Happiness Diet*, psychiatrist and farmer Dr. Drew Ramsey is the leading brain food guru hoping to improve the world's mental and physical health by feeding body foods that grow and heal the brain. [drewramseymd.com](http://drewramseymd.com)

#### Summarize your dietary lifestyle for us.

Joyfully eating rainbow plants, oysters, and nutrient-dense whole foods to grow a healthy, happy brain and mind.

#### What is your go-to “cheat” meal or snack?

Big brains don't cheat. For snacks I love cashews, dark chocolate, hummus, or full-fat yogurt

#### Most important food to include in your diet?

Food you like. Seafood is the biggest challenge for most of our patients but is such a great source of B-12 and omega-3 fats, which are key to better brain health. Tied for first are fermented foods.

#### Most important food to avoid in your diet?

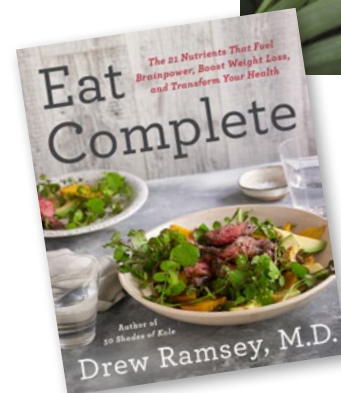
Empty calories. Count brain nutrients so you never eat empty calories. Packaged baked goods. Any package with a health claim.

#### How do you make sure your kids are eating foods to build a healthy brain?

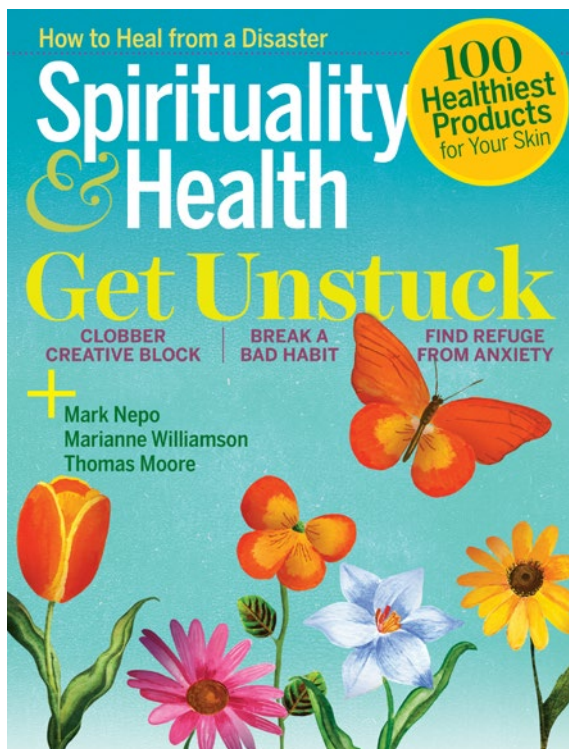
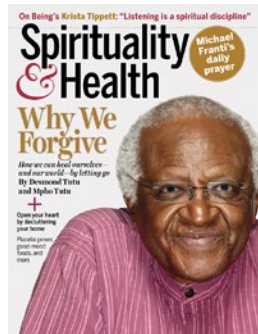
Include them. Helping our kids try new foods and explore flavors is one of the great challenges of parenting. Our kids are 6 and 3. We include them in meal planning and get them to help chopping and mixing. But I think the biggest thing is simply sitting at the table and clearing eating time of distractions.

#### What is one recent book (preferably published within the last year) on diet/nutrition that you'd recommend for our readers?

I really love the *Home Grown Paleo* by Diane Rodgers or *Hero Food* by Seamus Mullen.







**SAY YES!**  
to Spirituality & Health Magazine  
Enlightening Wisdom. Healing Practices.  
Luminary Interviews.

Subscribe now and get  
all access for print + digital.  
[spiritualityhealth.com/subscribe](http://spiritualityhealth.com/subscribe)

Download a free digital issue at  
[spiritualityhealth.com/app](http://spiritualityhealth.com/app)

**SpiritualityHealth.com**

