

CHAPTER 15

DIETS DISSECTED

Summaries and pros and cons of some popular diets

‘Finer meat ne’er met the eye, On the sweetest grass it fed.’

Jonathan Swift, *Mutton*

WE’LL NOW COMPARE THE SAPIENS DIET WITH the paleo, keto and carnivore diets.

These four diets have foods that are distinct to each diet, either being unique in type but also sometimes being unique in the quantity of the food that is recommended. It is also the case that each diet has foods in common with one or more of the other diets, such that they overlap each other. In the Venn diagrams that follow we indicate these areas in various shades of grey. The lightest grey indicates the area unique to that diet, the darker areas where there are overlaps. For these overlaps we highlight the types of food that the diets have in common. And for each diet we list the pros and cons in a table.

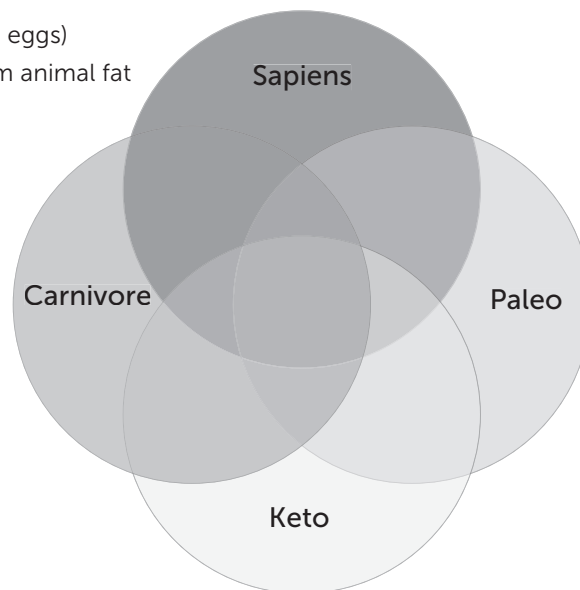
After comparing these diets, we give examples of typical weekly meal patterns and compare the carbohydrate contents. Then we summarise the key features of some other popular diets and conclude with a ranking of all the diets discussed, from best to worst.

THE SAPIENS DIET

Pros of the Sapiens diet	Cons of the Sapiens diet
• Healthiest of all the diets • Nutritionally complete • Makes you feel fuller than other diets • Reverses leaky gut • Puts type 2 diabetes, obesity and autoimmune diseases into remission • Reduces inflammation • Reduces chance of suffering physical or mental illnesses	• Can be difficult to keep to the diet in social situations • Likely to be met with bemusement or incomprehension in restaurants if you say that you don't want plant foods • While supermarkets promote a wide range of foods advertised as low-fat, they typically don't promote low-carb foods

Sapiens

- 15–20% protein (meat, fish, eggs)
- At least 70% of calories from animal fat
- Offal is compulsory
- Maximum of 10% of carbohydrates, in the form of fruit and vegetables
- No grains, dairy, legumes, seeds or nuts



COMPARISON OF THE SAPIENS DIET WITH THE PALEO DIET

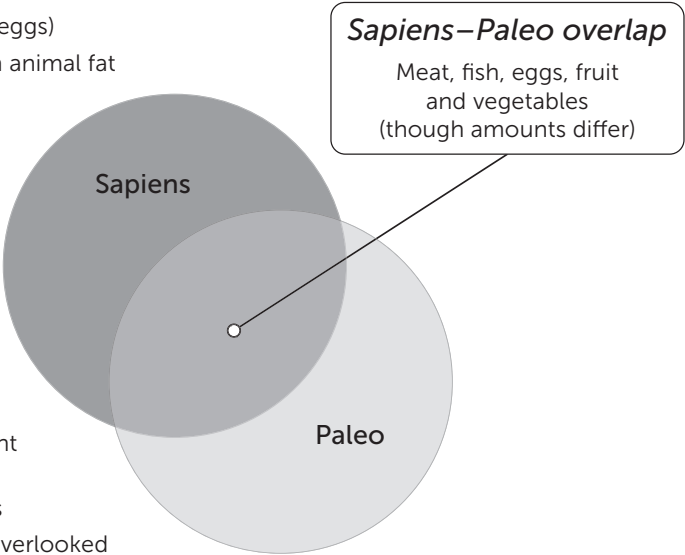
Pros of the paleo diet	Cons of the paleo diet
• Much healthier than government-recommended diets, Mediterranean diet, vegan and vegetarian diets, and Standard American Diet • Tastes good • Reduces risk of Western diseases • Makes you feel fuller than standard recommended diets, and SAD • Reduces excess body fat levels • High in vitamins and nutrients • Nutritionally complete if offal is included • Reduces risk for type 2 diabetes • Reduces inflammation	• You may miss eating non-paleo foods • Followers don't always eat 'nose-to-tail' as our ancestors would have done • Not necessarily nutritionally complete • Followers often include foods like olive oil or large amounts of seeds and nuts which, strictly speaking, isn't a Palaeolithic way of eating

Sapiens

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- At least 70% of calories from animal fat
- Offal is compulsory
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Paleo

- No specific limits on amount of protein
- No grains, dairy or legumes
- Importance of offal often overlooked
- Fruit, vegetables, seeds and nuts allowed

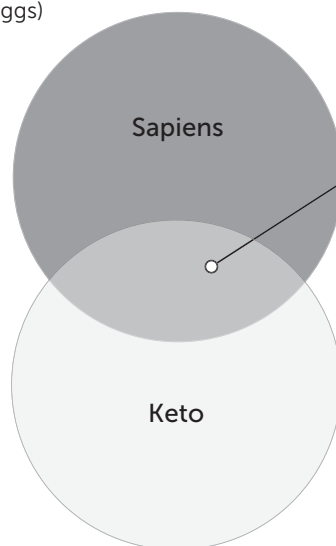


COMPARISON OF THE SAPIENS DIET WITH OTHER KETO DIETS

Pros of the keto diet	Cons of the keto diet
• Healthier than government-recommended diets, Mediterranean diet, vegan and vegetarian diets, and Standard American Diet • Well-established use in the treatment of drug-resistant epilepsy in children • Some evidence that the diet is effective at treating other neurological conditions • Lose weight without feeling hungry	• Associated with micronutrient deficiencies depending on food choices • Not always 100% effective at treating epilepsy

Sapiens

- 15–20% protein (meat, fish, eggs)
- At least 70% of calories from animal fat
- Offal is compulsory
- Maximum of 10% of carbohydrates, in the form of fruit and vegetables
- No grains, dairy, legumes, seeds or nuts



Sapiens–Keto overlap

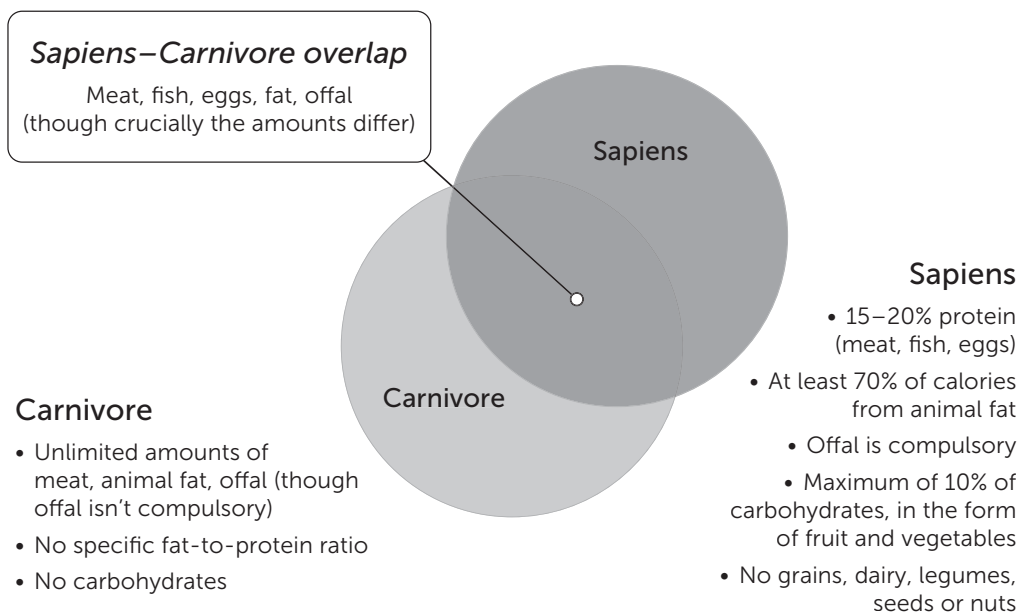
Meat, fish, eggs, fat,
fruit and vegetables

Keto

- High fat
- Moderate amounts of protein
- Very low carbohydrates
- Offal not compulsory

COMPARISON WITH CARNIVORE DIET

Pros of the carnivore diet	Cons of the carnivore diet
• Healthier than the Standard American Diet • Makes you feel good • Makes you feel fuller than government-recommended diets and Standard American Diet • Puts type 2 diabetes into remission • Often successful in putting autoimmune diseases into remission	• Possible to eat excessive amounts of protein • Isn't ketogenic if very large amounts of protein consumed • Associated with micronutrient deficiencies if offal isn't included



TYPICAL WEEKLY MEAL PATTERNS

Sapiens	Fatty meat, liver, nitrate-free bacon, eggs, beef dripping or lard, bone broth, roast bone marrow, optional few low-carb vegetables, optional few low-carb fruits, optional one or two teaspoons of honey per day.
Keto	Fatty meat, fish, chicken, eggs, butter, vegetable oil, dripping, nuts, low-carb fruit and vegetables.
Paleo	Eggs, meat, fish, fruit, vegetables, nuts and small amounts of honey.
Carnivore	Steak, mince, roast joints.

CARBOHYDRATE AMOUNTS OF SAPIENS, KETO, CARNIVORE, LOW-CARB AND UK EATWELL DIETS

Carnivore diet	Og/day
Keto and Sapiens diets	0-50g/day (ideally less than 30g)
On low-carb diets*	0-100g/day
UK Eatwell diet	At least 333g/day for adult men At least 267g/day for adult women

* There is no strict definition of these diets.

SUMMARIES OF SOME OTHER DIETS

LOW-CARB DIETS

- Limits foods high in carbs.
- There is no standard definition of low-carb diets – there are many different types of low-carb diets.
- Carbs are usually replaced with protein or fat or both.
- It doesn’t matter which foods provide the fat, protein or carbohydrates on a low-carb diet.
- Overlaps with keto diets if it is a very low-carb diet (less than 50g/day).
- Offal rarely featured.

Typical week: Meat, cheese, eggs, fish, olive oil, butter, low-carb vegetables, berries.

Pros of the low-carb diets	Cons of the low-carb diets
Healthier than government-recommended diets, the Mediterranean diet, the SAD and vegan and vegetarian diets	Associated with micronutrient deficiencies depending on food choices

US AND UK GOVERNMENT-RECOMMENDED DIETS, AND THE 'MEDITERRANEAN' DIET

- Low-fat and high-carb (from whole grains) diets.
- Saturated fat, trans fats, meat, salt, added sugars and alcohol are limited.
- Olive oil or other unsaturated oils are preferred over butter.
- Offal overlooked.

Typical week: Wholemeal bread, pasta, lentils, fish twice a week, small amount of lean meat, low-fat yogurt, salad with olive oil dressing, a handful of nuts, at least five portions a day of fruit and vegetables.

Pros of government-recommended and Mediterranean diets	Cons of government-recommended and Mediterranean diets
• Includes some meat, fish and eggs • Limits alcohol consumption • Discourages large amounts of sugar intake	• Encourages carb addiction • Introduction of low-fat guidelines coincides with the beginning of the obesity epidemic • Evidence on which the guidelines are based is highly questionable • Discourages consumption of healthy foods such as animal fat and red meat • No mention of offal – the most nutritious of all foods • Encourages consumption of unhealthy foods such as grains, legumes, dairy products and vegetable oils • Associated with micronutrient deficiencies (depending on food choices) • Encourages waste: large amounts of nutritious animal fat are routinely thrown away • Many U-turns in the last twenty years, e.g. on trans-fat laden margarines and on eggs • Difficult to trust the recommendations

VEGETARIAN DIET

A plant-based diet that excludes meat and fish.

Pros of a vegetarian diet	Cons of a vegetarian diet
If includes plenty of eggs and dairy products may be nutritionally complete and better than the Standard American Diet and vegan diets	If doesn't include many eggs or dairy products may be nutritionally incomplete and lack essential nutrients

VEGAN DIET WITH SUPPLEMENTS

A plant-based diet that excludes all animal foods, including eggs, dairy products and honey.

Pros of a vegan diet	Cons of a vegan diet
If low or moderate amounts of carbohydrates consumed, and if the diet is supplemented adequately, then it is healthier than the Standard American Diet	Lacks essential nutrients Catastrophic health impacts if not supplemented

STANDARD AMERICAN DIET (OFTEN KNOWN AS SAD)

- This is the high-carb diet that most people in Western countries actually eat.
- Characterized by excess calorie and carbohydrate consumption.
- Offal rarely featured.

Typical week: Burgers, pizza, pasta, chips, doughnuts, Coca-Cola and beer.

Pros of Standard American Diet	Cons of Sstandard American Diet
It tastes very good!	It is associated with an increased risk of obesity, diabetes, cancer and mortality Carbs are addictive

GRADING OF VARIOUS DIETS, FROM BEST TO WORST

1. Sapiens
2. Carnivore
3. Paleo
4. Keto
5. Low-carb diets
6. Mediterranean*
6. Recommended guidelines*
6. Vegetarian*
6. Vegan*
10. Standard American Diet

* Difficult to differentiate – depends on exactly what foods are eaten and in what amounts.

We have now reached the end of the nutrition part of the book. But what are the implications of recommending a high animal-sourced diet and reducing our intake of plant-based foods on farming? In the final section we will look at the impact of the Sapiens diet on farming and the environment. What we will learn is that livestock farming, to provide meat, fat and offal, is also highly beneficial to the health of the planet.