The Diet of The Future: Healthy, Tasty Food through Unconventional Methods

by Yuval Levental

“Maybe we are looking for something that doesn’t exist” - Dr. David B. Allison on a solution to the obesity epidemic (https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/15/health/in-struggle-with-weight-william-howard-taft-used-a-modern-diet.html)

“[Dr. John Nash] responded by saying that people have a mental picture that this [Fermat’s Last Theorem] is a difficult problem. Maybe that’s the stumbling block. Maybe, if people didn’t realize that the problem was ‘hard,’ they could solve it.” - Dr. Robert Aumann, as quoted in A Beautiful Mind

One of the biggest challenges in today’s world is the rising obesity epidemic. Although this problem is especially significant in the United States, obesity increased in every single country in the world during the past 30 years (https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-06-02/theres-not-single-country-has-succeeded-reducing-obesity-past-33-years). According to the quote by Dr. Allison, no significant progress has been made during this time.

However, by chance and through perseverance, I have discovered several potential groundbreaking methods that could virtually eliminate the obesity epidemic. This methods mostly involve a change in the type (not amount) of added sugar, and ways of preparing whole wheat bread and brown rice that remove their bitter flavor. While I obviously did not create these methods, I have realized their potential as silver bullets in promoting greater physical and mental health.

More background reading:


Choosing Natural Sugar

In contrast to natural sugar, which has existed for many millennia, artificial sugar has now existed for a little more than a century (https://www.saveur.com/artificial-sweeteners/). Some of the early artificial sugars were synthesized from coal tar! Most of these sugars have never been formally tested on people up to this day, but they are still widely consumed. Many companies prefer these sugars because they are far easier to produce, and far cheaper because of the much higher level of sweetness.

Proponents of artificial sugars argue that too much sugar of any kind is not good. However, this idea has never been proven to be true for every kind of sugar. Maybe natural sugars are actually a form of complex carbohydrates, which provide many nutrients and beneficial carbs. Yes, overweight people eat more sugar, but they also eat more fruits and vegetables, because of an overall higher rate of consumption. But nobody is saying that fruits and vegetables should highly regulated in one’s diet.
This idea may sound completely impossible to some individuals, but many ideas that sound very unconventional have been proven to be true. For instance, Albert Einstein didn’t acknowledge the existence of quantum physics, calling it “spooky action at a distance”. However, his claims have been proven to be wrong multiple times (https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/22/science/quantum-theory-experiment-said-to-prove-spooky-interactions.html).

**Autolyse Whole Wheat Bread**

Only around 15% of consumed grain products are whole grain (https://wholegrainscouncil.org/newsroom/whole-grain-statistics). As mentioned in the article “Why White Bread Still Wins”, most people greatly prefer the taste of white bread to whole wheat bread. The suspected reason is the presence of *ferulic acid*, a compound found in whole wheat that blocks the flavors found in white bread.

Over the past century, the process of making bread has become more automated. Machines can quickly mix all the ingredients together, but that might lower the quality of dough, as the dough cannot be properly hydrated while being intensively mixed. One post from the King Arthur Baking company discusses the benefits of autolysis, the process of slowly mixing the ingredients and letting them rest (https://www.kingarthurbaking.com/blog/2017/09/29/using-the-autolyse-method). This process allows the dough to properly hydrate. After that, the mixture can be put into a bread machine for intensive kneading.

I have tried this process with whole wheat flour, and I notice that the bitterness from whole wheat bread made with this method is virtually nonexistent. It only takes an additional half-hour of time to gently mix the ingredients and cover. It is not known why whole wheat bread tastes better when made this way, but I would suspect that the yeast can fully break down ferulic acid in properly hydrated flour. One possible evolutionary reason is that yeast was used to prevent spoilage before modern methods of cleaning.

Here is an example loaf made from this method (normally, it is very hard to shape whole wheat dough, but it was rather easy due to autolysis):
Parboil and Steam Brown Rice

Most people eat rice in the form of grains, and parboiling and cooling may be the best method to improve the taste of brown rice. Parboiling simply means to bring brown rice to boil, and simmer for 20 minutes. Then, the rice should be cooled under a stream of cold water, before being refrigerated overnight while soaking in water.

It is known that parboiled rice has greater amounts of certain nutrients than regular rice, according to several studies (https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/parboiled-rice). Again, one possible evolutionary reason was that parboiling was done to prevent spoilage.

The rice should then be steamed instead of boiled for 20 minutes. This is because boiled rice can become too mushy, but steamed rice that was parboiled will be able to absorb the right amount of water. Finally, it is recommended to steam with chicken or veggie broth for additional flavor.

Regarding Other Methods and Foods

There are different ways to improve the nutritional profile of various foods. For instance, parboiling potatoes increases their resistant starch content, which is similar to fiber. Marinating meat improves the flavor and texture by increasing tenderness. Sprouting is another method that can be applied to grains, nuts, and beans. This simply involves soaking and washing these items in water for a few days in a dark environment, which helps reduce starch content of these items. Fermentation is a good method for various dairy products, kombucha, and sourdough, which improves probiotic content. The list of alternative methods could be endless!
My Personal Experience

Because I was in quarantine, I spent far more time experimenting with these methods. I generally managed to eliminate artificial sugar, and managed to eat and enjoy more whole grain foods after I discovered the above methods.

I lost about 40 pounds in less than two months, and my triglyceride count sharply fell for the first time in years, which surprised my doctor. While some of my ideas are very cutting edge, I am definitely on to something revolutionary here.

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