

“A true road map for anyone who wants to apply the food-as-medicine approach to their health.”

—WILLIAM W. LI, MD, AUTHOR OF *EAT TO BEAT DISEASE*

21 PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES
FOR RECLAIMING
YOUR HEALTH IN A
NUTRITIONALLY
CONFUSING WORLD

THE PEGAN DIET

PALEO + VEGAN = PEGAN

Mark Hyman, MD

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING
AUTHOR OF *FOOD*



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**21 PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES FOR
RECLAIMING YOUR HEALTH IN A
NUTRITIONALLY CONFUSING WORLD**

Mark Hyman, MD



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Introduction

Do we really need another diet book? No. Despite the title, the Pegan Diet is an un-diet—a simple set of principles blending science and common sense into guidelines promoting health, weight loss, and longevity that can easily be adapted to any philosophical or cultural preferences. What do we know about food? How do we know it? What conclusions can we draw from the data? How do we combine that with dietary, philosophical, social, and cultural preferences? As a physician on the front lines of the epidemic of chronic disease and obesity (one who has used food as the primary medicine in treating disease and optimization of health for 30 years), I am saddened by the diet wars and fad diets. Politics, religion, and nutrition are all equally polarizing.

The Pegan Diet started off as a joke. Years ago I sat on a nutrition panel at a conference between two friends—one doctor a Paleo proponent, and the other a vegan cardiologist. They argued vigorously for their points of view. To break the tension, I quipped, “Well, if you are Paleo and you are vegan, then I must be Pegan.” Thus it all began. As I started to think more deeply about what I had said as a joke, I realized that most dietary philosophies, including Paleo and vegan, had far more in common with one another than most people realize, and far, far more in common with one another than with the Standard American Diet, otherwise known as the SAD diet.

In fact, Paleo and vegan camps (if we stick to the best in both approaches) are identical except for one thing: where to get protein. Animal products or beans and grains? That’s it. Of course, you can be a chips and soda vegan, or a bacon and no veggies Paleo eater, but the best whole food expressions of each are so similar. Both promote a plant-rich whole foods diet; a diet low in starch and sugar, processed food, additives, hormones, antibiotics, GMOs; and, except for a small group of extreme low-fat vegan fans, a diet rich in good fats. They both even eschew dairy. And all the other dietary approaches—vegetarian, keto, time-restricted eating, lectin-