

Review of “The China Study”
By Emily Miazga, M.Sc.

Recently I read “The China Study” by T. Colin Campbell. The book is about how our Western diets are causing chronic diseases of affluence such as heart disease, cancer and Diabetes; our #1 killers. It is also about how good nutrition can prevent and cure these diseases. This is not new news to me, however according to this book and its 35 pages of references, all the evidence over 40 years of credible scientific research all points to the same thing: a plant-based, whole foods diet. The evidence supporting a plant-based, whole foods diet is as compelling as the widely-accepted notion about smoking cigarettes being bad for us. Moderation is not the answer.

This got my attention. I’ve never been as moved by any piece of research or nutrition literature than I have been by this book.

I would have normally considered a vegan diet as an extreme nutrition practice and not something I would widely recommend for the general population, let alone athletes. However this book has changed my view. It is written in a way that is candid, technical and yet explained in a way that most lay people can understand. My husband and I have converted to a plant-based, whole-foods diet and are now near-vegans. It has been relatively easy for us because we’re not big meat eaters, however we love cheese and that has been difficult to cut out. I used to use a lot of cheese to “tie” meals together. Now I cook with even more spices than before and always something to add substance such as beans, starchy vegetables, nuts, tofu, soy products, or falafel to name a few ideas. I usually top my creations with fresh coriander or parsley which grow like weeds in my garden. These ingredients can be thrown into any cuisine to create zesty and nutritious burritos, pizzas, pasta, lasagna, curries, soups, stews, falafels, and many more things. My husband can attest that the best cake I’ve ever made was completely vegan and it was also the best cake he had ever eaten (sorry mum-in-law): shredded carrot and zucchini simmered with honey, raisins, brown sugar and spices then folded into whole meal flour and icing made with light coconut milk and icing sugar. I know that I make good cookies, but this cake was tops. It didn’t even have any oil or egg.



Don't assume that if you invite me over for dinner you have to peel some tree bark and provide a platter of birdseed. Although I don't go out of my way to eat animal-based foods, I don't obsess and that is advice taken from The China Study. Simple. There seems to be a 5% animal protein threshold correlation between animal protein and diseases of affluence. There needs to be some room for indulgence. Most western diets contain 20% or more animal protein, quite a high level of fat and a certain lacking of fibre and whole foods. So a small amount of animal-based food on occasion or in small amounts seems to be OK. For my own Em's Power Cookies, I was concerned because I use butter in my Original Cookie recipe so I have done trials recently to reduce the butter and substitute with sunflower oil. This has improved the taste and texture so it will be a win-win implementation. Also my Original Cookie, Chocolate Oat Cookie-Bar, and Apricot Attack Cookie-Bar all contain a small percentage of natural low-fat yoghurt – not enough to outweigh the overall benefit of the product (good fibre source, low GI, excellent energy food for athletes and health-conscious people), so the yoghurt will stay.

In my future diet advice for general people as well as for athletes, I will be recommending a plant-based, whole foods diet. For athletes to implement this way of eating, not much would change, except post-training milkshakes would be made with soymilk, oat or rice milk and ground LSA (linseed, sunflower and almond) with honey and fruit. This shake tastes outstandingly delicious. Most training foods are vegan, or near-vegan, such as sports drinks, gels, and energy bars. Try to avoid whey protein powders – they are not necessary nor economical. Strong evidence suggests that it is much better to obtain protein from plant-based sources: nuts, soy, wholegrain starches and vegetables. A wide

variety of plant-based proteins are also complete proteins, contrary to what supplement companies promote.

One concern that athletes may have is the question of getting in enough protein, calcium and iron. A plant-based whole foods diet is a high-protein, high calcium, high iron diet when implemented properly. Some effort must be put into making meals with beans, legumes, potatoes with skins, and other good quality high-protein vegetables. Starches should nearly always be of the most wholesome grain as possible such as brown rice, whole-wheat pasta and heavy multi-grain breads. A conscious effort needs to be made to eat lot's of vegetables and don't forget the nutritional density and importance of nuts and seeds. Cutting out meat, yet filling up on white breads, added sugars, processed grains and other processed foods with a few boiled vegetables is not the answer to a vegetarian diet. It is often these types of unhealthy vegetarian practices that set a negative outlook to this way of eating.



It does take some guidance to change eating habits and just like sport, sometimes a case of mind over matter. Once a few new cooking basics are explored with an open mind, a whole new world of eating and good nutrition awaits.

The "The China Study" is widely available through online bookstores. I highly recommend it and it may be the most important book you ever read.

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3x C2C Winner