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Buddhist Diet

Buddhism is a spiritual practice that teaches sacrifice and moderation as a means of reaching bliss. Most Buddhists are vegetarians and believe in minimizing harm to all living beings. Specific ideals and restrictions may vary among sects of Buddhism.

The Buddhist Diet is focused on intentions around eating rather than the actual food being consumed. The idea is not to fall victim to lust or desire. The “five contemplations” are meant to assure followers that their food choices will bring them closer to spiritual enlightenment. These contemplations follow:

1. This food is the gift of the whole universe: The earth, the sky, numerous living beings, and hard, loving work.
2. May we eat with mindfulness and gratitude so as to be worthy to receive it.
3. May we recognize and transform our unwholesome mental formations, especially our greed, and learn to eat with moderation.
4. May we keep our compassion alive by eating in such a way that we reduce the suffering of living beings, preserve our planet, and reverse the process of global warming.
5. We accept this food so that we may nurture our sisterhood and brotherhood, strengthen our community, and nourish our ideal of serving all living beings.

The Buddhist Diet is primarily an East Asian, vegetarian style of eating. It's recommended that food is chewed thoroughly and portions are moderate in size. Flavor is thought to lead to overindulgence, so meals tend to be simple to avoid clouding the mind. Buddhists may omit pungent spices including onions, scallions, chives, and garlic. In the Buddhist practice, meditation and yoga are valued as activities that free the spirit and quiet the mind.

Foods to include:

- Some vegetables
- Fruits
- Whole grains
- Fish
- Beans
- Nuts and seeds
- Healthy oils

Foods to avoid:

- Meat
- Eggs
- Dairy
- Onions, scallions, chives, and garlic
- Root vegetables (potatoes, beets, carrots, and parsnips)
- Alcohol
- Refined grains
- Sugar
- Trans fats
- Processed foods

Pros:

- May encourage a healthy relationship with food
- Spiritual approach and considers primary food
- Supports preservation of the planet by limiting animal harm
- Mindfulness and moderation may lead to natural weight loss

Cons:

- Requires strong religious conviction
- Very restrictive
- May not be suited for people who like seasoned food

Sources:

Buddhism Diet Laws www.livestrong.com (http://www.livestrong.com)

Buddhist Dietary Customs www.clovegarden.com (http://www.clovegarden.com)

Buddhist Diet: Can you Reach Nirvana Through the Food You Eat? www.dietsinreview.com (http://www.dietsinreview.com)