

IS RAW – VEGAN AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE TRADITIONAL DIETS IN ROMANIA?

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Abstract

Movement "raw food" is not an invention of the XXI century, not even of the twentieth century. The first studies occurred in the late nineteenth century, but the development of the movement happened only after ending of the Second World War. The name „row-vegan” was given by the great German physician Ernest Gunter who speaks and describes the many advantages of this harmonious way of life, about this natural diet in his book “raw-vegan – a hope for everyone”. We must not confuse the natural or vegetarian style with this diet. Live-Food can change people's lives by improving health, physical and mental work capacity, by reducing expenses on medicines, doctors, hospitals, the disease risk transmitted by animals: trichinosis, tuberculosis, avian flu, swine flu, foot and mouth disease, and releasing "slavery cooking" of a huge number of people, especially women

Key words: diet, food, health, raw-vegan, Romania.

INTRODUCTION

Swiss doctor Maximilian Bircher - Benner is the first who put into question the live food as treatment and set up a clinic in 1897 in Zurich, to treat patients suffering from various diseases. He experienced the direct healing cure jaundice by fresh apples.

His name is withheld by history as the inventor of the product „muesli" (unfortunately his invention has been diversified over time so that the "muesli" today does not really have anything to do with the original recipe of Swiss doctor).

Norman Walker, Max Gerson, Weston Price - all are specialists in the early years of the 20th century who studied the effects of live feed and wrote scientific papers based on their direct observations. The 80s meant basically developing this type of diet. The current *fast food* is that marks the last century and which, unfortunately, is responsible for many health problems [2].

In the USA, the movement *raw food* caught more quickly and more widely because it has

been promoted by actors, actresses, artists in general. How tendency of the masses is to follow the example of a public, it was natural that the American space be increasingly more followers of natural nutrition and kitchen without fire [1,3].

Here, in Romania, the pioneer of food without fire was Elena Nita Ibrian who believed in a regime ovo-lacto-vegetarian and at 25 ages was diagnosed and operated from cancer without many chances to survive. She lived 89 years, having a varied activity and wrote over 50 books which combine recipes of this cuisine, but also many useful health tips [8].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to set up this paper, a corresponding information and documentation was done using the recent literature and research results. The paper is a critical overview on the main aspects regarding the new trend in a healthier food consumption.

What does raw food practically mean? It is not beyond religion and does not require

adherence to any sect. It is simply a diet based on unprocessed foods, without cooking it with fire, and often organic (or least traditionally cultivated).



Fig. 1. Raw food pyramid, Source:[12]

Raw vegetables, raw or dried fruits, nuts, seeds, grains in pure form, eggs, cheese naturally occurring, fish, even meat to some extent, are all part of herbal nutrition.

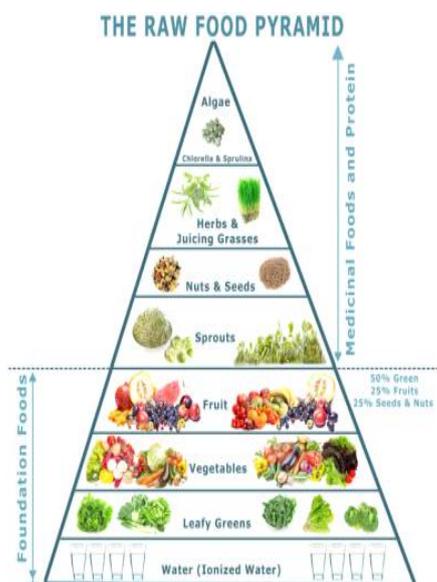


Fig. 2. The Raw food pyramid, Source:[12]

Nothing canned, additives or any other additions to the product, nothing's sites, chemically processed or derived by methods other than traditional handmade. There are different branches: those who choose to combine foods containing vegetable protein with animal protein and those who reject heading for a vegetarian or vegan diet par excellence. Natural diet without heat treatment follows three basic principles. First,

it consumes the product but not the manufacturer, so it consume milk and does not cow, and it does not consume chicken but egg and so on [4].

The second principle is that for the preparation of food it is used temperature not exceeding 42 ° C.

The third principle is that it excludes all the refined products, technologically and genetically modified, such as bread, sugar, refined oils and recommend a food including honey, bran and pressed cold oil.

It is consuming natural food prepared without heat treatment (boiled, fried, baked or broiled) and in particular vegetable juices, fruit juices, whole wheat, whole grains, seeds, sprouts vegetables or cereals, bee products, coconut milk, pure water.

In this way, at least 75 % of food must be fresh and only 25 % to be dehydrated within 42 degrees Celsius [5].

The variety of cuisine without fire and the combination of natural products with similar tastes are vast; those preparations were heat treated but they are healthier for our body. For example we can mention a few products such as kale and vegetables, fresh or pickled, milk (raw, unpasteurized) and all dairy products obtained up to 37 degrees Celsius or natural temperature of the sun, eggs, all kinds of grains and seeds, all kinds of natural dried fruits.

As in all kitchens, the food is much diversified and rich in taste: cook the soup, cabbage rolls, cookies, cakes, ice-creams, teas and coffee.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the presented study, conducted on samples from subjects who had a raw vegan diet, the purpose was to observe the beneficial effects. Also, there were identified the negative effects on the subjects, which, in the opinion of the doctors, could have been avoided if they had maintained a balance and would not be exaggerated the percentage of *raw food* diet. *Raw vegan* diets contain more than 70 % thermally unprocessed food. All *raw diets* decrease good cholesterol (HDL) and increase homocysteine levels. Both changes are known

to be hazardous to health.

The study was done on 201 subjects who consumed at least 70 % of food in raw form at least two years. Then, the same study showed low levels of lycopene in the studied subjects [8].

According to another study realized on 513 subjects, all *raw diets* led to a significant decrease in body weight in both sexes and *amenorrhoea* at women. These negative effects are even more important as the duration of this type of food eaten is longer and the percentage of raw food in the diet is higher. Raw diet has been correlated with the decreased bone mass, which is related to osteoporosis. The study was done on 18 volunteers who ate raw food across 3.6 years (in mean). All low bone mass is due to the increased risk of occurrence of dental problems. The study was done on 130 vegetarians who consume at least 95% of food in raw form at least 17 months (median 39 months).

Solutions for optimizing the benefits of a balanced vegetarian diet

Regarding the shortcomings that are referenced where vegan diets (raw or not), researchers realized a series of studies showing that for a healthy life, vegetarians, vegans and raw vegans can supplement the diet with the right food to substitute shortages vitamins and minerals or dietary supplements and can adjust the level of B12, iron, calcium and zinc.

Calcium is absorbed more from cabbage and broccoli than from milk (an amount of 50-70 % on cabbage and only 32 % of milk). Other foods with a high calcium content are dried raisins (165 mg), sesame paddy (88 mg), oranges (74 mg), humus (64 mg), almond (50 mg). For calcium intake is recommended a daily intake of vegetables, such as spinach, broccoli, turnips, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, peas, green beans, and dry products - peanuts, nuts.

Although, the critics argue that the iron from plants is not as well absorbed as C vitamin from consumed meat. The iron-rich foods are bran (11 mg), lentils (3.3 mg), pumpkin seeds (2.5 mg), apricots (1.5 mg), raisins (1.1 mg).

Zinc is necessary for human life and health. It

plays an important biological role in the cell division; it assists sexually mature and ensure the production of enzymes that the body needs to function. Zinc also has antioxidant properties which help to prevent aging effects and rapid healing. The recommended daily dose of zinc is 11 mg for men and 8 mg for women. The vegetable sources of zinc include beans, corn, peas, peanuts, peanut butter, pumpkin seeds, sunflower, cereals fortified with zinc. Most fresh fruits such as avocados, raspberries, apricots, blackberries, figs, berries and pomegranates contain appreciable amounts of zinc. Zinc is essential for health one of the trace elements, this accelerating wound healing, contributing to the smooth functioning of the prostate, helping to increase fertility, improving brain function, improving respiratory diseases and helping the development of muscles, enhancing the appearance of skin, hair and nails.

Vitamin B12 is probably most often used as an argument against *vegan* and *raw vegan* diet. Vitamin B12 is the largest and most complex of all vitamins and is necessary for the formation of red blood cells. It is essential to prevent certain types of *anaemia* and neurological disorders. It is also involved in the metabolism of fats and carbohydrates and is essential for growth.

Although vitamin B12 is produced exclusively by the microbial synthesis in the digestive tract of animals, who do not consume animal products. This states that this vitamin can be assured in several ways. Vitamin B12 can be present in raw vegan diet including algae and other marine plants and *maca*, but they have small amounts of B12 so that the 100 % raw vegans consumers should take supplements with B12 vitamin.

The recent researches have shown that the deficiency of B12 for a short period of time can lead to neuropsychiatric disorders. The B12 supplementation can restore the levels of B12 in the body and eliminate *anaemia*, but the changes at the nervous system level are irreversible. The risk of a diet with a low level of B12 is caused by the fact that the vegetable products contain too little vitamin B12. [7, 10,11,12, 13]

A similar study made by the Nutrition Council

showed that the most viable way to assure B12, it is the nutrition B12 tablet which should be taken daily after diluting in water, as discovered and researchers at Loma Linda University.

CASE STUDY:

In 2011, when the company *PACIFIC BIO CULTURE SRL* was founded, one has proposed that the Restaurant (NACE code 5610) to get into a niche market rather than the poorly represented and developed restaurants where (RAW) vegan food is served.

Raw vegan food domain is a modern one challenging as the preparations included in the restaurant menu to combine the usual ingredients with exotic food. The result of this combination is a fresh, tasty, nutritious and especially hearty food.

Therefore it can easily explained the development of the company Pacific Bio Culture, which increased its turnover from Lei 45,000 and 3 employees to Lei 360,000 and 7 employees in only 2 years.

Table 1. Pacific Bio Cultura SRL information

Address:	29, Av. Lt.Vasile Fuica Str., App. 7, Bucharest District 1, Bucharest, 12083
Legal form:	Limited liability company, CAEN Code: 5610, Restaurants
Registration number: Unique registration code:	J/40/11044/2011
Company Status :	In operation
Social seat:	96B, Drumul Lapus Str., Bucharest District 1, Bucharest
Wardens:	Filip Cristina Paula, warden
Shareholders:	Name: Filip Adela Ioana
Financial information:	
2013:	Turnover: Lei 361,478 Profit: Lei 0 Employees: 7
2012:	Turnover: Lei 366,858 Profit/Losses: Lei -72,092 Employees: 4
2011:	Turnover: Lei 44,376 Profit: Lei 0 Employees: 3

Source: Ministry of Finance [6, 9]

CONCLUSIONS

In Romania the *raw vegan* food mission is difficult, although it is appreciated theoretically, but when it comes to put in practice the situation is changing. [2]

The trend in the last few years is rediscovering gastronomy, at least for a segment of the population and deserves by a pricing policy that encourages healthy eating.

But for now, most of the "clients" are oriented to what is cheap and not at all healthy.

As long as the eco and bio products market is also booming in Romania, the adoption of vegan diets will become more accessible. And the people seem to have a high interest both in terms of health, as well as for pure economic reasons.

Overall, raw food is very hearty thanks to the use of large amounts of sprouted grains, root vegetables and various kinds of nuts soaked not get fat, but they are very nutritious. So, in the winter the costs do not rise very much; it can reach up to 50 Lei/person/day.

Vegan diet without fire seems to be a good deal for consumers. During a summer week when it is consumed only *raw food*, one spends about Lei 30-50 per 7 days. The menu consists of fresh fruit and some vegetables bought from the market.

Live-Food can change people's lives by improving health, physical and mental work capacity, by reducing expenses on medicines, doctors, hospitals, the disease risk transmitted by animals: trichinosis, tuberculosis, avian flu, swine flu, foot and mouth disease, and releasing "slavery cooking" of a huge number of people, especially women.

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