

Genius Foods Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Genius Foods is the ultimate science-based diet plan that will help your brain perform the best and give you clarity, make you smarter, and protect against dementia.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



We all worry about how the things we eat affect our weight or our heart. But how often do we consider how the food we eat affects our brain? It turns out, what we put into our bodies has a much bigger influence on how we think than we realize. A lot of us in today's world of fast foods and microwave dinners are starving our brains without even realizing it.

Max Lugavere is here to save you and your brain. He is a journalist and filmmaker who has long covered issues in health science. His book, *Genius Foods: Become Smarter, Happier, and More Productive While Protecting Your Brain for Life*, shows the science behind how the food we eat affects our cognitive health. After explaining what the research says, he gives an actionable diet plan to help your brain perform optimally, make you feel happier and more balanced, and prevent dementia.

Here are the 3 greatest lessons this book taught me:

1. Eating good fat is essential to a healthy brain, but watch out for the bad fats that can damage your brain.
2. You will have better cognitive performance when your brain runs on ketones.
3. Follow the "Genius Plan" to pave the way to a healthier life and mind.

Ready to start nourishing your body and mind while still eating good food? Here we go!

Lesson 1: To improve mental well-being, eat lots of healthy fats and cut out unhealthy fats.

For a long time, fat was given a bad rap. Doctors advised us for decades to switch to “low-fat” foods to lose weight and keep our hearts healthy. Most of this was false, and fat is making a well-deserved recovery in recent years. **Certain fats are actually really good for you, and especially for your brain!**

Omega-3 fats, for example, are some of the best for nourishing the brain. Studies have found they help with a variety of things, such as memory, brain cell function, and executive functions like planning. They can even help people with anxiety and depression. You can find Omega-3's in mackerel, salmon, sardines, grass-fed meats, and eggs.

Monounsaturated fats are stellar brain food as well. These are in olive oil, avocados, and nuts. They nourish the brain by protecting neurons and helping in neurotransmission. They've even been shown to protect against dementia.

Steer clear of any refined, heated, or processed fats. Think of the oils you use to fry food. Eating too much fried food builds up plaque in the brain, a characteristic of Alzheimer's. Also, avoid trans-fats. These are in prepackaged foods and things like cookies and margarine. They stiffen neuronal membranes and can lead to brain shrinkage and dementia.

The bottom line? Not all fats are created equal, so make sure to learn which ones you need and which you don't!

Lesson 2: Fueling your brain with ketones will improve your mental capacities.

In normal circumstances, glucose, or sugar is what fuels the brain. It breaks down carbohydrates to their simplest form, glucose, and runs on that. But what if I told you there was a cleaner, more efficient fuel? Ketones are that fuel. Switching the brain to running on ketones is sort of like switching from a gas-powered car to an electric car.

Ketones are a product of the body breaking down fat when there isn't enough glucose for fuel. This happens while fasting and in diets low in carbohydrates. Your body takes fat and breaks it down into ketones in the liver. The process happens in less metabolic steps and produces much less waste, hence “clean fuel.”

Your mind actually runs better on ketones. Glucose in the brain sticks to and damages proteins and cells. This process is called glycation and triggers advanced glycation end-product (AGE) formation in the brain. High amounts of AGE is also correlated with declines in memory and cognitive functioning in adults. Additionally, high levels of AGE's are present

in those with Alzheimer's. On the flipside, **ketones have been shown to actually boost the brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) hormone, which helps with learning, brain plasticity, and mood balance.**

You're not expected to starve yourself to get ketones, but intermittent fasting is actually good for you! Without any other fuel, your body will run only on ketones. Try starting by fasting for 16 hours every so often. That might sound long, but consider that still gives you 8 hours during the day to eat as much as you want.

Another way to run on ketones is to eat fewer carbs and more ketogenic-friendly foods, like coconut oil, palm oil, and goat's milk.

Lesson 3: A healthier mind and life will come from following the "Genius Plan."

Now it's time to lay out a diet plan so you can enhance your cognitive health. The "Genius Plan" begins with a 14-day focus on staying away from brain-toxic foods. By doing this, you can reduce long-term brain inflammation, which leads to many cognitive ailments like depression, anxiety, Parkinson's, and Alzheimer's.

Throw out all processed carbs, commercial cooking oils, sweeteners, fruit juices, gluten, and soft drinks. Once you've cleansed your pantry of these, fill it up with brain-friendly foods. These are Omega-3 rich foods, polyunsaturated fats, grass-fed beef, nuts and seeds, vegetables, low-sugar fruits, and dark chocolate. You aren't even expected to stop carbs entirely, but try to shoot for only 20-40 grams a day.

After the first 14 days, you can begin re-introducing certain carbs. Make sure you stay stocked on brain-friendly foods like avocados, eggs, mushrooms, and chia seeds. While you fill your diet with these foods, you can introduce 50-70 grams a day, while avoiding the bad fats and sugars mentioned above. An example of some good carbs can be bananas, brown rice, or sweet potatoes. Do this, and you can help your brain get the nutrients it needs to be fully fueled.

Genius Foods Review

Genius Foods is an awesome guide for what you need to eat not just to nourish your body, but your mind. It's full of interesting studies, but my favorite part is that we get an actionable diet plan. Forget Atkins or Paleo, the plan laid out here is simple, doable, and science says it will make you smarter!

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Who would I recommend the Genius Foods summary to?

The 35-year-old who feels like they have a hard time concentrating and thinking clearly, the 55-year-old who knows their genetic susceptibility to Alzheimer's and wants to do as much as they can to prevent it, and anyone who wants to become smarter and healthier by improving their diet.