

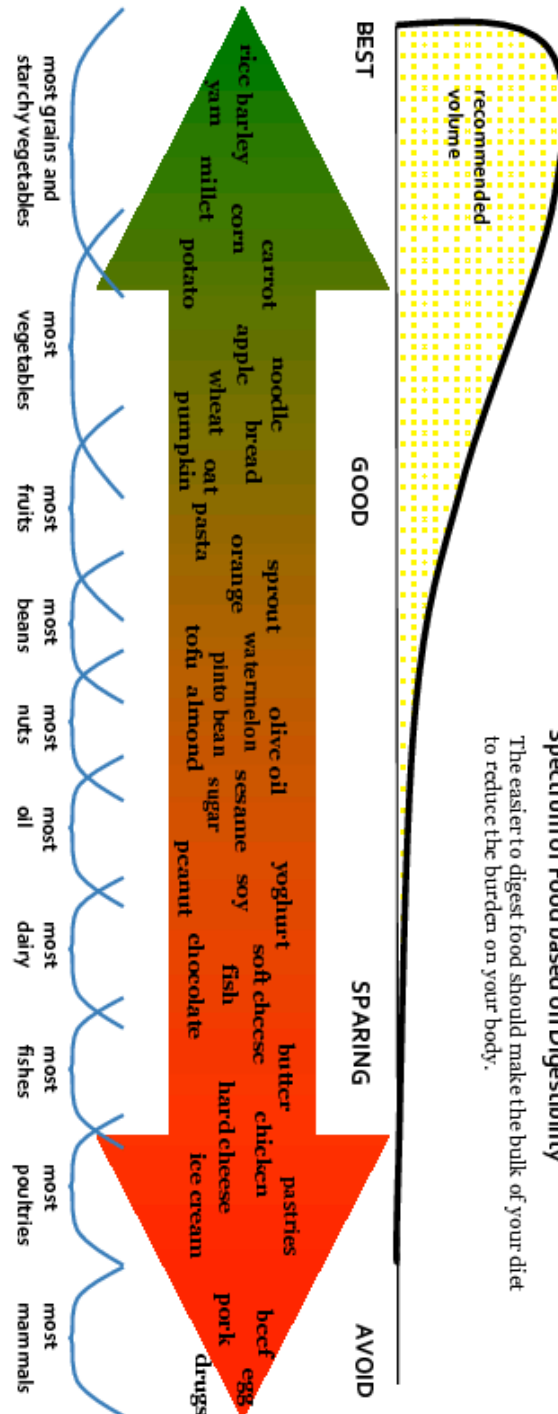
Digestibility on a Scale

I constructed a digestibility scale based on traditional Chinese literature and my own clinical observations.

I categorized food into the following digestibility groups:

- **Avoid:** These food are very hard to digest so you should avoid them as much as possible.
- **Sparingly:** These food are hard to digest but given their nutritional value, it can be healthy to eat them in small quantities.
- **Good:** These food are easy to digest so it is beneficial to eat them often.
- **Best:** These food are the best and making them the bulk of your diet will reduce the burden of digestion which will help you achieve better health.

The scale is based on the relative digestibility of foods. There is no numeric value of digestibility so each category's placements are relative to each other. You can use this scale to build your daily diet. It is recommended to make the bulk of your diet with the *Best* digestible food category and supplement it with the *Good* digestible food. You can also use it to make substitutions. For example, if you eat an egg every morning. Now, knowing that it is one of the worst digestible food, you can replace it with something else. However, if you still crave the savoriness of egg in your breakfast, you can substitute it with another savory food like cottage cheese or yogurt.



Some Foods Are Not Worth Eating

Diet, Health, and Digestibility

For more detailed information, visit

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Digestibility?

If you have never heard of digestibility, don't worry. It is a new concept I am introducing to you because a good diet not only must be nutritious, but also digestible.

Modern dietary advice focuses too much on nutrients. It gives people the idea that a good diet is a diet that prevents deficiencies. However, this simplistic view overlooks the body's ability to handle food. It underestimates the burden required to break down, absorb, transport, store and dispose ingested food. It assumes that all foods are similarly easy to digest.

What about Nutrition?

Nutrition is very important, but what constitutes a nutritious diet. Keep the following facts in mind:

- In our society, unless you are homeless or are in some other unusual circumstance, no one is in danger of *macronutrient* (protein, carbohydrate, and fat) deficiency.
- *Micronutrient* (vitamins and minerals) deficiency, however, may be widespread. The solution is to eat a wide range of fruits and vegetables, preferably organic.
- The average American consumes 16% of calories from protein, but we need only 5% protein to survive. To avoid deficiencies, I recommend eating 10% protein. Overeating protein has no clear benefit and may harm the body because the body must find ways to dispose of it.
- The average American gets 34% of calories from fat. The government recommends consuming less than 30% of calories from fat, which I personally believe is still too high. I recommend consuming less than 25% of calories from fat.

Traditional Chinese Medicine and Food

For centuries, Chinese people have known that not all food are equally digestible. Some food may be very nutritious but very difficult to digest and are not worth eating. Without understanding the digestibility of food, we cannot achieve better health.

Food is central to Chinese culture and food therapy is an inextricable part of Traditional Chinese Medicine. There is a Chinese saying, 'Food and Medicine (herbs) share the same origin.' It reminds people that medicinal herbs were discovered in the process of finding food, and that food therapy plays an integral role in Chinese Medicine.

Through centuries of experimentation, practitioners of Traditional Chinese Medicine have accumulated immeasurable insights with food and herbs that were recorded in massive volumes of medical literature. Without using microscopes or chemical labs, the ancient Chinese used careful observation to explore and understand the world of food. This may have limited their understanding of chemical and metabolic processes, but it also freed them from the rigid thinking of biochemistry.

Importance of Digestibility

Ancient Chinese physicians observed that the human body has an amazing ability to self-heal. However, self-healing is often interrupted by external forces, and one of the most critical factors is eating. Some foods are so difficult to digest that it becomes burdensome for the body to handle them. In the process, the body diverts energy which could have been used to maintain good health. Therefore it is important to keep in mind the digestibility of the food you eat.

Constructing an Ideal Diet

Putting all these concerns together, I recommend the following diet. These percentages are based on volume since it is easier for people to make quick visual estimates:

- **60%** of your diet should consist of whole grains and starchy vegetables. They are the easiest to digest and will provide your body with nutrition and sustainable energy without burdening your body.
- **30%** of your diet should consist of vegetables and fruits. These foods provide a wide range of nutrients and are dense in micronutrients. Eating plenty of them will protect you from micronutrient deficiency.
- **7%** of your diet should come from beans, nuts and soy products. These foods provide savoring and the heaviness that we crave in a traditional meal. Adding them to your diet will make you feel full and prolong your satiety.
- **3%** of your diet can come from the little indulgences you crave. It could be butter on your toast or a piece of chocolate after a meal. A diet devoid of these treats can be boring and unsustainable. As long as you keep them in proportion, it will be OK. As always, it is better to indulge food that is easier to digest.

