



Diet History I

By

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American's weight has been on the rise over the last decade so it seems natural to have plenty of weight loss programs being promoted. When looking deeper into America's dieting history, it stems back to 1820 when Lord Byron made the vinegar and water diet famous. From that point on there have been many good, bad and just plain scary diet trends such as restrictive diets, detox plans, diet pills, and exercise programs. People have partaken in these trends over the years yet many individuals still struggle with weight management. There is a need to dig deeper and discover what speaks to the public about these diets. From there we can take these tactics and turn them into long lasting lifestyle changes for all.

Other restrictive diets followed the vinegar and water diet. The first was the Grapefruit Diet of

the 1930's. This diet was nicknamed the Hollywood diet since plenty of celebrities joined the bandwagon. It is as simple as it sounds, eating a grapefruit for each meal of the day. There was not much variety but people certainly lost weight causing many to join. In the 1950's the Cabbage Soup diet showed up, which promised the dieter to be able to lose 10-15 pounds in a week by eating nothing but cabbage soup.

People must have gotten tired of only eating one food to lose weight because a new program called Weight Watchers appeared in 1963. Weight Watchers was founded by Jean Nidetch who described herself as an "overweight housewife obsessed with cookies." Weight Watchers was one of the first diet trends to offer dieters variety. It was found to be successful because it gave the dieter structure but also freedom to choose. Slim Fast later made its debut in 1977, which combined the ideas of consistency and variety. It offered a shake for breakfast and lunch with a sensible dinner of your choice. In the late 1970's diet pills appeared in the form of Dexatrim. The pill was supposed to curb cravings and lead to weight loss. After the restrictive diets and diet pills had their

chance, in came Jane Fonda and aerobic exercise in 1982 featuring ‘no pain, no gain.’ This was followed by several other workout videos in the 80’s and 90’s.

In 1992 the Atkins diet was published by Dr. Robert Atkins. Atkins promoted controlling blood sugar levels and reducing fat storage through a high-protein, low-carb diet plan. Then in 1995 The Zone Diet was created to encourage specific ratios of carbohydrates, fat and protein at each meal. This was later followed by The South Beach diet, a moderate interpretation of Atkins.

From the 1800’s to the year 2000, we saw many different weight loss trends. Many people have tried several of these plans based on popularity, simplicity and quick results. The common goal through it all has been to create a healthier lifestyle. So what do diets look like in the 21st century? Let’s discuss diet trends and fads while discovering what makes them desirable and sustainable for individuals in *Diet History II*.



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