

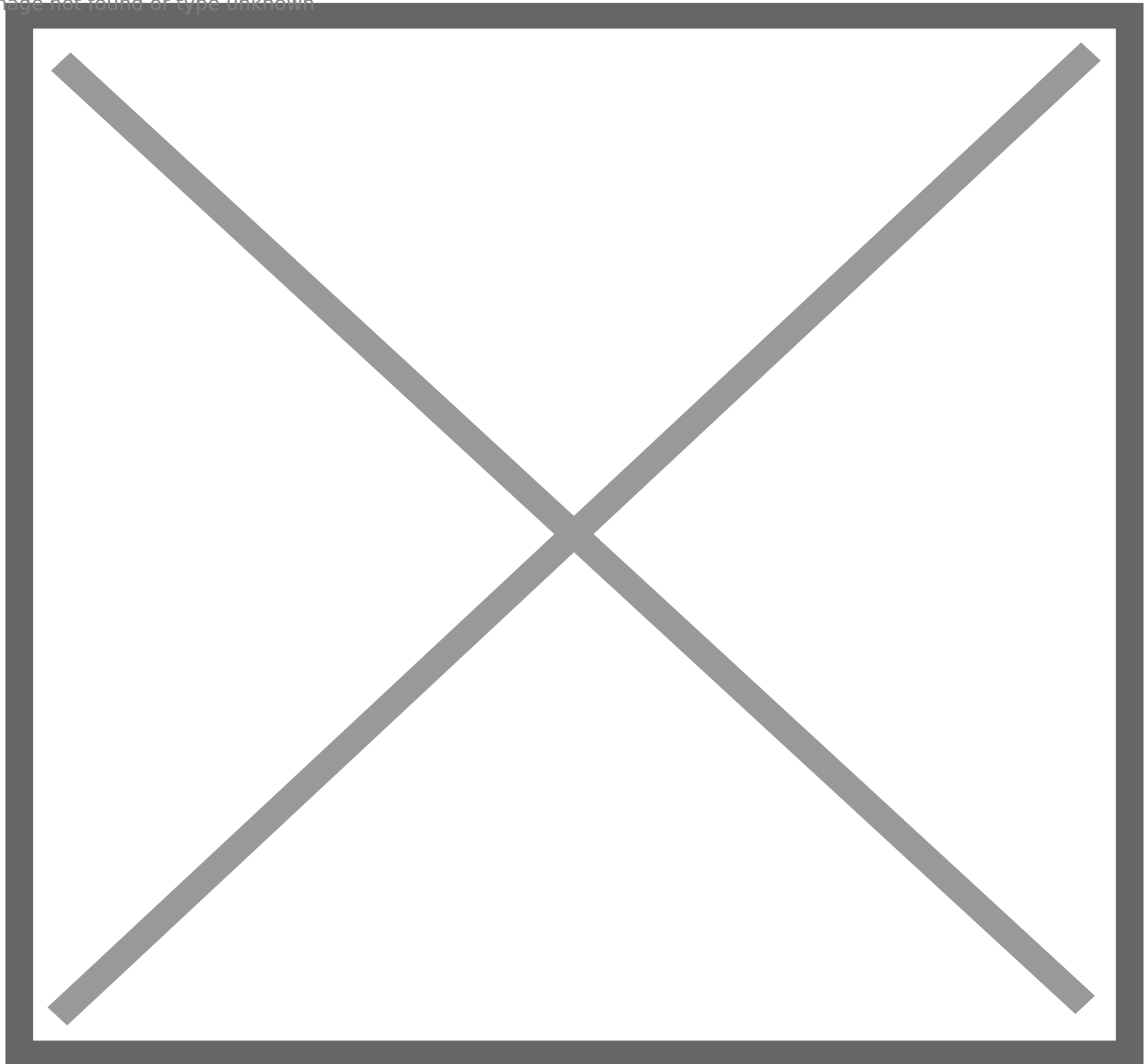
# A "Bread and Water" Question

Post by "Cassius" of September 1, 2024 at 9:06 AM

Don:

This question cries out for your discussion on the meaning of bread and water, but I am not sure where to point him. Do you happen to know the best place for your longest discussion of it?

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[Epicurean Philosophy | When Epicurus said that you could live on bread and water, with an occasional treat of some cheese, I presume the bread was more nutritious than today... | Facebook](#)

When Epicurus said that you could live on bread and water, with an occasional treat of some cheese, I presume the bread was more nutritious than today's but...

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John Bramwell

When Epicurus said that you could live on bread and water, with an occasional treat of some cheese, I presume the bread was more nutritious than today's but have never given it much thought. I know Epicurus had the occasional drop of wine but was his diet that frugal?

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### **Post by "Joshua" of September 1, 2024 at 9:30 AM**

Pages 70-72 at [Don](#) 's 'Commentary to the Letter to Menoikeus', [here](#). Like rice in Asia, pasta in Italy, wheat bread in France and Britain, and corn tortillas in Latin America, barley bread or porridge was a staple of the ancient Greek diet.

In fact, when the ancient city of Alexandria was first laid out by teams of surveyors following the architect and city planner [Dinocrates of Rhodes](#), they marked out the streets and avenues of the new city's plan with lines of barley flour criss-crossing the sand; Greeks preferred to use ground chalk for this work, but none was available in that part of Egypt. Barley flour could be taken from the baggage train of Alexander's armies, since that was what the soldiers themselves ate. This was not asceticism, just a normal diet for most people at the time.

The Greek word for this, μάζα (maza), seems to me to be connected to the Spanish word for corn flour, masa harina.

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### **Post by "Don" of September 1, 2024 at 10:06 AM**

Thanks, [Joshua](#) . I'd also include p.73 in that.

I continue to stand by my insistence that "bread and water" referred not to ascetism but to ordinary, everyday experience. Take pleasure in the quotidian. When luxury is available, take pleasure in that, too. Emily Austin gets it right, in my opinion.

## Post by “kochiekoch” of January 1, 2025 at 3:37 PM

Hmmm..., the bread and water diet wouldn't be the best one. Not only would you run into nutritional problems, but you'd also get really tired of it! I suspect that would be true of other things in a person's lifestyle.

### [How to survive on a bread and water diet](#)

>>But even sourdough might not be enough to survive. Eventually, just like [the potato scenario](#), you would probably run into nutritional deficiencies. Even sourdough bread made with wild yeast, bacteria, and whole grains likely will not provide enough nutrients like vitamin C, B12, and D, as well as calcium. Without these key players, humans would run into some serious problems. With no vitamin C source, a person could develop scurvy, which results in weakness of the muscles and fatigue. Calcium is necessary to prevent osteoporosis, which results in weakened bone mass. Plus, humans need fat to survive as well, which sourdough bread doesn't have.

If you did attempt to eat one food for an extended period of time, you would probably get sick of eating the item far before you gave yourself any severe nutritional deficiencies. That's due to a psychological phenomenon called sensory specific satiety. [Scientists have found](#) that the more you eat something, there's a corresponding decline in pleasantness. But some foods are more prone to this than others (like high protein foods), and some researchers have found that bread [might be](#) in fact fairly resistant to this phenomenon.<<