

FREE GUIDE • DIET SWAD

Purani Peedhi Ka Raaz

The five everyday eating habits of the pre-packaged-food generation - the story behind each one, what the science says now, and the one small step that brings it back today

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Ancient Wisdom, Modern Life

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The 80-year-old who never dieted

Almost every family has one - a dada or dadi who worked hard, ate simple ghar ka khana, never counted a calorie, and stayed sharper and stronger than people half their age. They were not lucky, and they were not following a plan. They were living inside five quiet habits that modern nutrition research keeps rediscovering.

Each habit below comes in three parts: **the story** - what it actually looked like in their kitchen; **the science** - what we now understand about why it worked; and **bring it back** - the smallest version that survives a 2026 week. Read the third part if you read nothing else.

Habit 1: Food changed with the calendar

The story: sarson ka saag meant winter had arrived. Aam meant summer. Kanji meant spring. Nobody ate strawberries in December because nobody could.

The science: produce harvested in season and eaten soon after keeps more of its vitamins, because nutrients degrade during long storage and transport. Eating with the seasons also rotates your diet automatically, and variety is one of the least controversial principles in all of nutrition.

Bring it back: once a week, buy whatever is cheapest and most piled-up at the local mandi. That is the season talking, and price is a more reliable signal than any chart.

Habit 2: Something fermented, every single day

The story: dahi with lunch. Chaas in the afternoon. Idli-dosa batter left out overnight. Nobody called it a gut-health routine; it was just what was on the table.

The science: fermented foods carry live cultures - probiotics. Research links a well-fed gut microbiome to smoother digestion, immune support and even mood regulation. The gut produces so many of the body's signalling chemicals that researchers call it the 'second brain'.

Bring it back: one bowl of plain dahi or one glass of chaas a day, attached to a meal you already eat. Homemade beats flavoured packaged yogurt, which usually adds sugar, starch and colours on top of the milk.

Habit 3: Ghee, without the guilt

The story: a spoon of ghee on dal or roti was completely normal. Not a treat, not a transgression, not a thing anyone discussed.

The science: vitamins A, D, E and K are fat-soluble, which means the body cannot absorb them without some fat present in the meal. A modest amount of ghee on dal or sabzi genuinely improves that absorption. The key word, every time, is modest.

Bring it back: one small spoon on real, home-style food. Not on fried snacks 'because ghee is healthy now' - that is the opposite of the habit. The context was always the point, not the ingredient.

Where this one goes wrong today

'Ghee is healthy' has quietly become a licence to add it to things that were never part of the habit. Your grandmother's spoon went on dal and roti. It did not go into a deep fryer, and it did not turn a fried snack into a health food.

Habit 4: Everything from scratch

The story: there was no ingredient list to read, because there was no packet. Sugar went in only where the cook's hand put it.

The science: the strongest research trend of the last decade links diets high in ultra-processed food with weight gain and metabolic problems. In one tightly controlled trial, people ate around 500 calories a day more on an ultra-processed diet than on a minimally processed one - with both diets matched for sugar, fat, salt and fibre, and everyone free to eat as much as they liked. Nobody was choosing to overeat.

Bring it back: two scratch-cooked dinners a week, and set the bar on the floor. Khichdi counts. Dal-chawal counts. This is about how many of your meals arrive with an ingredient list attached, not about cooking ambitiously.

Habit 5: No all-day snacking

The story: breakfast, lunch, evening chai with something small, dinner. In between, water. That was the whole day.

The science: every time you eat, insulin - the hormone that moves sugar out of the blood and into cells - goes to work. Constant grazing keeps it raised; real gaps between meals let it settle. Their fixed meal times were accidental insulin management.

Bring it back: do not try to stop snacking, because you will fail by Thursday. Give it a fixed slot instead. For most people genuine hunger lands in the 4-6 pm window. One planned, satisfying snack beats six unconscious ones.

Being realistic in 2026

You probably cannot cook everything from scratch or eliminate snacking, and you should not have to. This is the habit with the biggest gap between then and now, and the reason is not discipline: food simply was not within arm's reach for most of their day. You are being asked to do deliberately what their environment did for them for free.

The honest part: what does not transfer

A guide that only romanticises the past is not much use, so here is the other side.

- **The labour was enormous**, and most of it was women's, unpaid, and taken for granted. Grinding, soaking, daily market trips. 'Cook everything from scratch' quietly assumes somebody has four hours.
- **The food supply was not uniformly better**. Shortages were real and variety in a bad season was poor.
- **Not every old rule holds up**. These five survive scrutiny. Plenty of other traditional food beliefs do not, and picking the ones that survive is the entire exercise.

The order to try them in

Do not attempt five changes at once. Ranked by effort against payoff:

1. **Give snacking a fixed time** - no cooking, no shopping change, and it is the habit that has drifted furthest from theirs.
2. **One bowl of dahi or glass of chaas daily**, attached to a meal that already happens.
3. **One seasonal fruit or sabzi** added to the weekly shop.
4. **The small spoon of ghee** back on real food, without the guilt that arrived with refined-oil advertising rather than with evidence.
5. **Two scratch-cooked dinners a week** - genuinely the hardest, so attempt it once the others are running.

The habit stack, in one line

Seasonal thali + daily dahi + a spoon of ghee + two scratch-cooked dinners + one fixed snack time. That is most of a dietitian's advice, in dadi's words.

The one slot we can help with

For the fixed snack slot

Four of the five habits above cost nothing and need nobody's product, including ours. The snack slot is the exception, and it is deliberately first on the list. Diet Swad Power Bites are dates, oats, cashews, almonds, raisins, coconut, ghee, flax and sesame - 11 ingredients your dada could name, no refined sugar, no preservatives. Rs 499, FREE shipping India-wide - dietswad.in.

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