

The Extra

# Kick

in Your Coffee

Why butter coffee could be a lot healthier than you think

By Keri Heath



What's the secret ingredient missing in the recipe for a healthy lifestyle? According to a growing health trend, this ingredient is—wait for it—butter. Specifically, butter in your coffee.

Bulletproof coffee, a type of coffee designed to provide drinkers with healthy fats and a boost of mental awareness, is being adopted by many health enthusiasts. It was invented by Dave Asprey, founder of Bulletproof Executive, a company that creates technology and products to increase body and brain functioning and productivity. Asprey came up with the idea for the beverage after being rejuvenated by drinking a cup of yak butter tea while hiking in Tibet.

Essentially, this coffee drink consists of three items: black coffee beans grown in high altitude, pesticide-free conditions; grass-fed, unsalted butter or ghee; and medium-chain triglycerides (MCT) oil. The claims behind this combination are that it keeps drinkers at high energy levels for six hours, promotes fat burning all day, and increases cognitive functioning. The explanation is that butter helps assimilate the coffee and decreases negative side effects while the MCT oil aids in digestion, and Asprey has promoted Bulletproof coffee as a way to add healthy fats into the daily diet.

The concept has moved beyond the specific Bulletproof brand, and butter coffee is becoming increasingly popular among those who want a healthy diet. Picnik, a Paleo diet-based food truck on South Lamar, uses butter coffee as the base for every coffee they produce. The owners of Picnik took several months after opening last April to educate customers about the health benefits of butter coffee.

"Butter used to be a hugely important part in an American diet, especially before the 1920s," said Naomi Seifter, owner and general manager of Picnik. "Then they started making a shift towards canola and seed oils and in conjunction with that, heart disease became rampant, cancer became rampant. I think there's really something special to be said about the right kind of quality fat."

Seifter, who was first introduced to the coffee by her mother, a doctor, said she has personally witnessed many of the claimed health benefits. Drinking butter coffee, she said, has increased her mental clarity and awareness, decreased sugar cravings, made her feel

great, and helped her to lose 30 pounds "without trying." In addition, Seifter insisted that the butter coffee is essential to her Paleo-based diet.

"When you go Paleo, it's very hard to get enough quality fat unless you make a conscious decision every single day," said Seifter. "For me, I made that transition to butter coffee because I was hungry all the time. With my relationship to Paleo, it made it easier for me to commit."

However, some experts question how 50 grams of saturated fat in this breakfast beverage can be healthy for drinkers. Christopher Ochner, research associate at the New York Obesity Nutrition Research Center at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospitals, pointed out that, while there is evidence that MCT oils lead to mild fat loss over time, just one tablespoon provides 100 percent of the daily recommended amount of saturated fat. This is only half of the saturated fat in a cup of Bulletproof coffee, which also contains two thirds of the recommended daily total fat allowance. As stated on licensed nutritionist Monica Reinagel's show "Nutrition Diva," taking in more calories from fat than the body is using will not reduce fat reserves. In addition, some drinkers of the coffee have found themselves hungry after only a few hours.

Asprey has countered this information by pointing out that generic butter coffee is not Bulletproof coffee, and drinkers should be aware that getting the beverage's full health benefits requires using his specially designed products. On the company's website, Asprey sells Bulletproof Upgraded Coffee Beans, Upgraded Brain Octane, and Upgraded MCT oil; Asprey's recommended recipe consists of one cup filtered water, two and a half tablespoons of ground coffee beans, one teaspoon of Upgraded Brain Octane, and a teaspoon of grass-fed butter (his preference is Kerrygold, unsalted). He also suggests using a French press and blending the mixture to give the drink the appearance of a latte.

Despite the lack of scientific study, the popularity of the drink is increasing. "I would just say give it a shot," said Seifter. "It can be such a powerful tool towards health and wellness and [I would tell people] not to be afraid of fat because it can be really good for your brain. I think it's really important to try it out and see how you feel and make a judgment for yourself, but I've seen incredible transformations." **AFM**



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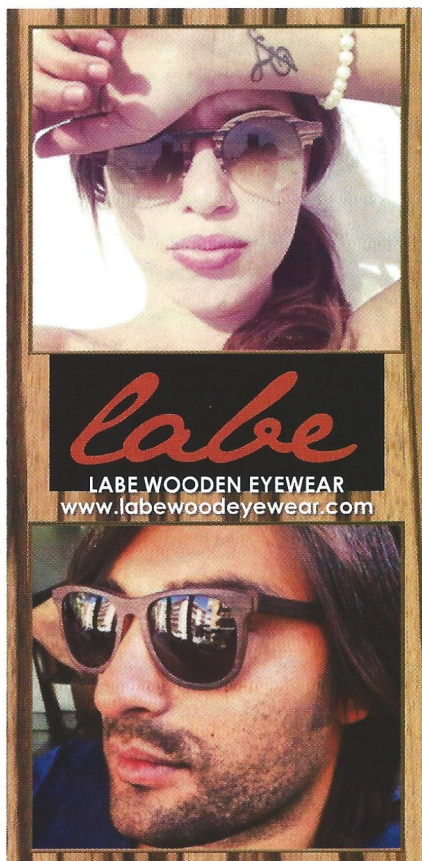
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