

# VOGUE

MAR

## THE RIHANNA EFFECT

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UNSTOPPABLE  
POP DIVA  
BECAME A  
FULL-ON  
FASHION  
FORCE

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TAKES ON  
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# CRÈME FATALE

ONCE A CONNOISSEUR OF TRIPLE-CREAM BRIE, CHLOE MALLE GOES DAIRY-FREE IN HOPES OF MORE ENERGY, BETTER SKIN, AND A CALMER STOMACH.

### BEYOND THE PALE

HEALTH EXPERTS ARE QUESTIONING THE WISDOM OF "THREE GLASSES A DAY." BELOW, AN ARRAY OF MALLE'S FORSWORN LOVES. RIGHT, NADEGE, SHOT BY BRUCE WEBER, *VOGUE*, 1990.



I am a dairy queen: My heart beats for salted-caramel gelato, aged Mimolette, and chocolate egg creams. I am also lactose intolerant—my body is unable to break down lactose, the primary sugar in milk—or so I suspect. All the telltale signs are there (gas, bloating, upset stomach), but dairy has been a joy which I refuse to sacrifice for intestinal well-being.

The tipping point came after a particularly decadent order of truffle macaroni and cheese from the Waverly Inn—and the ensuing digestive dismay—at the end of a fall social season the most popular dress code for which seemed to be dairy-free. “If your body is a machine, this is not the oil that’s going to keep it going,” said Claire Distenfeld at a capsule-collection launch in her boutique, Fivestory, in September. “Dairy just slows you down.” Under the curved light-box ceiling of the new Balenciaga store, a fashion publicist proclaimed, “It’s just not natural for humans to drink milk after we’re babies, so we can’t digest it.” I nodded dutifully. And so it was, after my last bite of macaroni, that I reluctantly christened Dairy-Free December. HEALTH > 506

Dairy seems to have replaced gluten as the elimination diet du jour. Often the two are eliminated in tandem (think Gwyneth and Miley), or as part of a vegan diet—hello, Jay Z and Beyoncé's #22DaysVegan challenge. With people expounding on the subject like religious zealots, I couldn't help being seduced. Maybe my life would really be better in the land of no milk and honey.

According to anti-dairy evangelist John McDougall, M.D., famous for an inpatient program he designed to treat degenerative disease by placing people on a plant-based diet, "You'll experience the most profound improvement in your health and appearance by eliminating dairy." The Joel Osteen of the dairy-free movement, McDougall claims the proteins and fats in milk are responsible for ills ranging from acne and joint inflammation to constipation and heart disease.

T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D., the nutritional biochemist behind the best-selling *China Study*, is an equally fervent plant-

simply feel bloated, while others cannot keep down a yogurt. According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine, about 65 percent of adults in the world experience some form of lactose intolerance, with close to 90 percent of certain East Asian communities affected compared with only 5 percent of people of Northern European descent. In America, 30 to 50 million people experience the condition to varying degrees.

Even though my ills fall on the mild end of the spectrum, my lactose intolerance is enough of a problem that on the Monday after Thanksgiving, I stopped eating dairy. My first morning, chalky almond-milk latte in hand, I entered my office to discover Max Mara's holiday gift, always a highlight of the season, awaiting me. The Italian company sends a holy trinity of olive oil, balsamic vinegar, and a hunk of Parmesan the size of a foam gymnastics wedge. I stared at the cheese for a long time and then hid it in a tote bag under my desk like a hoarding

not the no-training-needed Ironman triathlon kind; I simply found myself craving less caffeine and feeling not as exhausted at the end of a long day. I was also less bloated. "A lot of people are less puffy if they cut out dairy, probably because you've got to break down products that are harder to digest, so it just stays there undigested," says Lipman, an M.D. with a celebrity cult following.

More rewards ensued. My mother stared at me over a cheese-free sandwich (blessedly, bread does not contain dairy) and said, "Wow, your skin looks brighter and glowy." I shrugged and said I'd been using my Clarisonic diligently. Days later, Bajaj offered another explanation: "Dairy is often a problem with acne because most milk is from pregnant cows, so it's full of hormones."

People were eager to know if I lost weight—I gained half a pound. Perhaps it was simply water weight, or it was because I had substituted diet-unfriendly alternatives for my daily

## MY MOTHER STARED AT ME OVER A CHEESE-FREE SANDWICH (BLESSEDLY, BREAD DOES NOT CONTAIN DAIRY) AND SAID, "WOW, YOUR SKIN LOOKS BRIGHTER AND GLOWY"

based-diet defender. "When people ask, 'What's something I should do to get well, to improve my lifestyle?' I tell them to quit dairy." He points to studies that show calcium consumption to be a leading contributor to degenerative disease, including, shockingly, osteoporosis (by acidifying bones). Such statements raise the eyebrows of many mainstream doctors, including Michael Holick, M.D., Ph.D., "I drink three glasses of milk a day. It's a great source of calcium, and the whey is a great source of protein and essential amino acids." The vitamin D and calcium-deficiency specialist urges his family and patients to consume two to three servings of dairy daily. "I don't buy the argument that it's not digestible at all. Certainly not everyone has a lactase deficiency; if they did, there would be a global culture of not drinking milk."

Part of the controversy stems from the fact that identifying dairy intolerance is not as easy as, say, a strep test, but rather a murky area largely dependent on a wide spectrum of symptoms that could just as easily result from eating food that's too rich. Some sufferers

squirrel. At least it was vacuum-sealed, I consoled myself; come January, it would be just as delicious. I kept this resolve for a few days, until the arrival of a ribboned box of God's Love We Deliver's famous brownies. How could I resist?

I later learned that the contraband baked goods wouldn't make too much of an impact on my dairy-free trial run. Kerry Bajaj, a health coach in integrative-medicine practitioner Frank Lipman's NYC wellness center, explained that butter baked with flour and sugar was a less offensive form of dairy (the butter-making process apparently separates the majority of the milk's water components, lactose being one, leaving the fat). "It's more the cup of milk in a latte, or if you always have a yogurt for breakfast, the stuff that's building up every day in your system," said Bajaj. I easily replaced my Fage Greek yogurt with oatmeal, but I missed my coffee, which had until then been a vehicle for milk and sugar.

Lo and behold, despite my latte nostalgia, after just ten dairy-free days I began to notice that I had more energy,

staples. For instance, I had replaced my usual blueberry muffin at Argo Tea with their vegan lemon-poppy seed variety; it was weeks before I discovered, thanks to Mayor Bloomberg, that my delicious butter-laden blueberry had 340 calories compared with 530 in the vegan option. I felt the same gut-wrenching dismay as I do after purchasing a pair of flats that give you blisters—what's the point?

At the end of the month, I was more conflicted than ever: What did I appreciate more, a bloat-free, undisturbed stomach, not to mention more energy and glowier skin, or a slathering of triple-cream Brie? Lipman takes a level approach: "Some people tolerate dairy well; some people don't. If you tolerate it, I don't think it's the end of the world to have some cheese in your diet."

I remembered those words in January, when I gleefully opened the vacuum seal on my wedge of Parmesan. Yes, I'm back to dairy, but in a more mindful way. I now view it as a delicious indulgence to be meted out in moderation. Like with a cheese grater, over a bowl of penne. □ FITNESS > 512