

New Foods, New Diets Diet of the Past On March 26, 1662, Samuel Pepys and four friends had lunch at his home in London, England. They ate beef, cheese, two kinds of fish, and six chickens. Today, we might wonder, "What? No fruits? No vegetables?" More than 300 years ago, people in Europe ate differently from today. They looked different, too. In famous paintings by Bruegel, Rubens, and other artists, people weren't thin; they were overweight. But people 300 years ago thought, "How attractive!" — not, "How ugly!" Today's Diet A A painting by Bruegel Today, people are learning more about health. Many people are changing their ways of eating. They're eating and C. People are eating less sugar. They're eating low-fat foods. They're not eating much red meat. They're drinking less cola and coffee. Trying to Be Thin People these days want to be slim, not fat. Sometimes people in North America go a little crazy to lose pounds. Thousands of them join gyms and diet A People exercising in a moderate health club a lot of fruits and vegetables, Many of the vegetables are raw, They aren't cooked because cooking takes away some Vitamins, such as Vitamins A, B, C, and D. While many people are becoming thinner, other people are becoming fatter, go to special diet doctors, or spend a lot of money at diet centers. Each year Americans spend more than 25 \$46 billion on diets and diet products. More People Are Overweight However, there is an interesting, surprising, opposite result—to all this overweight. More people are overweight than in the past! In many countries, there is a serious problem with obesity—in other words, a condition of being very overweight. There are two main reasons. First, these days, many people often go to fast-food restaurants. (They didn't in the past.) At these restaurants, many of the foods (such as fried potatoes and meat) are high in fat. Some of the dairy products (such as cheese) are high in fat, and others (such as ice cream, soft drinks, and sugary cereals) are high in fat and sugar. This seems similar to Samuel Pepys's party, doesn't it? Second, dieting doesn't often work. Sometimes people lose weight fast, but they usually gain it back again. Almost 95 percent of all people gain back weight after a diet. One problem with obesity is easy to see: overweight people have more sicknesses, such as heart disease and diabetes. Sometimes people go crazy over food. Sometimes they eat very little because they want to be slim. Other times, they eat lots of bad foods because these foods taste good. When will people learn? Too much food, too little food, and the wrong foods are all bad ideas.