



# Diet diatribe

Gwyneth's diet has left me broken-hearted.

**G**wyneth Paltrow and I have had a thing going for a while. Well, she doesn't know about it but I do. You know how you have a favourite Hollywood star? I'd settled on Gwyneth after deciding Cameron Diaz was just a slapper and Angelina Jolie, with her predilection for tattoos, piercings, kinky sex and collecting orphans, scared the bejzus out of me.

Besides, even though this is just fantasy it's hard not to resort to the old boyhood trick of checking out the mother, and Gwyneth's mum, Blythe Danner, is still hot in her mid-sixties.

But now, my heart has been broken. Gwyneth, it seems, is a complete flake. I spotted a news report that she had been living for three weeks on a detox diet of pumpkin seeds, herbal tea, fruit smoothies, miso soup and coconut water. She had one solid meal a day and meditated for at least five minutes. Meditated? One daily meal of only pumpkin seeds and I can guarantee she was in a hypoglycaemic coma by day three.

Gwyneth describes it as a "majorly fun and delicious relax-and-enjoy-life phase". Oh, please! That damned diet bans most of the major constituents for sustaining life: alcohol, dairy, sugar, caffeine, red meat, processed foods, flour, gluten and soy. Okay, you can do without soy and maybe gluten but I challenge anyone to have "majorly fun" without a decent steak, a glass of wine and a bowl of ice cream.

According to her, though, she "followed [the diet] to the letter and I feel pure and happy and much lighter". No Gwyneth, the light-headedness and soporific stupor you describe are symptoms of malnutrition.

What is it with diets? People torture themselves by going without all the small culinary pleasures of life when a few sensible precautions would have a much more lasting effect.

Forget detox diets for a start. Frankly, I've been "retoxing" for years and I'm as fit as a fiddle. Portion control is vital.

Look at the French. They get stuck into some of the richest food in the world and guzzle wine, and they should look like a bloated flock of foie gras ducks but they don't. That's because they only eat small portions of their rich tucker.

Americans, on the other hand, are the fattest people on Earth, with buttocks like giant ham hocks and stomachs the size of Zeppelins because they pile up their plates with enough starchy fodder to choke a hippopotamus.

Alcohol contains a lot of sugar but if you're worried about your waistline for God's sake don't stop drinking. You'll

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only get depressed and eat more. I have previously recommended the vodka, soda and splash-of-orange diet. It has very few calories and the only side effect is incipient alcoholism, but that is a small sacrifice to maintain a svelte figure.

**T**hen there is regular exercise. A 30-minute walk, an hour at a gym a couple of times a week or a bit of horizontal folk dancing if that's your fancy – just do something vigorous once a day and you'll not only feel better, you will be burning fat.

Gwyneth, at least, recognises the value of "exercising her butt off". She recently told *USA Today* her new personal trainer "has totally transformed my bottom". I'm not entirely sure what her bottom looked like before but, from the latest photos, it appears in perfect working order now.



Diets are dangerous. Google "diet" and "danger". Detox diets, low-carb diets, low-calorie diets, high-protein diets, low-fat diets – they're causing people to drop like flies if Mr Google is any kind of authority on the issue.

The only diet you should try is the Common Sense Diet. Eat what you want with smaller portions of the stuff that might make you fat and bigger portions of the stuff that doesn't. Stay active and don't drink too much wine or beer. It's a revolutionary concept.

It will, of course, completely fail to gain any popular support because it is easy, obvious and free. We only value things that cost us money or cause us pain.

I bet Gwyneth paid a fortune for her detox diet with its motto "Remove, Restore, Rejuvenate". What with the pumpkin seeds, raw almonds and coconut water, she sure as hell would have suffered. Ergo, it must be good for her.

I could set up a dungeon with a daily diet of dried bread crusts, a spoonful of water and regular floggings for a grand a day and people would be queueing halfway along Ponsonby Rd. Actually, come to think of it, this is Ponsonby and quite possibly just the offer of the flogging would reel them in, but you get my drift.

Anyway, I'm so disappointed in Gwyneth I'm going to have to find a new star to follow. What about that nice Dawn French? ■

ANTHONY ELLISON