

# Templar Diet

According to a research conducted by 4 doctors on ancient documents, the extraordinary longevity of the monks-soldiers was due to the hygiene and food rules codified by Bernardo di Chiaravalle: little meat and many legumes and then fish, cheese, olive oil and fresh fruit. A modern regime, unusual for the time and forerunner of the Mediterranean Diet.

They lived 40 years longer than their average peers. What was one of the Templar secrets now seems to be revealed by research that has examined their food choices thoroughly, using documentary sources: attention to hygiene at the table, but also to the quality and variety of foods, with little meat and more consumption of legumes, fish and fresh fruit. "A diet that brought 314 Knights Templar, one of the best-known Christian chivalric religious orders, in many cases to exceed 70 years of age in the trial that saw them protagonists in 1321.

The explanation could lie in the positive effect exerted on the intestinal flora by this nutrition, healthier than what was eaten in the Middle Ages. A natural source of probiotics that has positive and protective effects on the gastrointestinal flora ". The explanation, provided to the Adnchronos health agency, is Francesco Franceschi, director of emergency medicine at the Gemelli polyclinic in Rome and author, with colleagues Roberto Bernabei, Giovanni Gasbarrini and Peter Malfertheiner, of the research "The diet of Knights Templar: their longevity secret? ".

The study, published in 'Digestive and Liver Disease', was conducted through an investigation of the documents of the time and process and highlighted how precisely the diet may have helped these monks-soldiers to live much longer than the average, at a time when life expectancy is between 25 and 40 years old. In the Middle Ages – the study highlights – the diet was rich in fat and calories, it consumed a lot of meat in the richest classes and gout was one of the most common diseases. Like obesity, a symbol of wealth and opulence, diabetes mellitus and cholesterol and triglyceride levels were very high.

"The diet of the Templars, very modern and if we want a forerunner of the Mediterranean diet, fights all these diseases – says Franceschi -: they ate little meat (2 times a week), many legumes (three dishes a week) which today are consumed very little, but they are instead powerful probiotics; fish was very frequent and to the drinking water they added orange juice to enrich the antibacterial charge. To the wine (very rationed) they added Aloe pulp, a plant with antiseptic and fungicide actions very useful in countries with hot desert climates ".

"Longevity – underlines Franceschi – was a peculiar characteristic of the Templars, according to the historical documents analyzed: Hugues de Payens died at 66; the last Grand Master Jacques de Molay when he was killed, after 7 years in prison, was 67 years old. . At the time this exceptional dowry was attributed to a special divine 'gift', but in reality behind it there were food and hygiene habits codified in rules by Bernard of Clairvaux ".

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In addition to the written rules, in fact, the Knights Templar also had principles of behavior to be respected to avoid the spread of infections: it was mandatory to wash your hands before eating, the refectory had to be always well kept and the tablecloths always clean. The Order also prohibited hunting for food purposes, while it was the Templars who dedicated themselves to fish farming, a food very present in their diet together with cheeses, fresh fruit and olive oil. "The Templars considered seafood an excellent meat substitute, in this way – the research continues – to benefit from the positive effect of omega-3 fatty acids on blood levels of cholesterol and triglycerides, in addition to the antioxidant and anti-depressant effect. In conclusion – say the authors – we believe that the diet and habits of life could be the explanation for the extraordinary longevity of the Templars: if this is the case, the motto 'learning from the past' has never been so appropriate " They lived 40 years longer than the average of their peers. What was one of the secrets of the Templars now seems to have been revealed by a research that has thoroughly examined, using documentary sources, their food choices: attention to hygiene at the table, but also to the quality and variety of foods, with little meat and more consumption of legumes, fish and fresh fruit. "A diet that led 314 Knights Templar, one of the best known Christian religious orders of chivalry, in many cases to exceed the 70 years of the process that saw them as protagonists in 1321. The explanation could lie in the positive effect exerted on the intestinal flora by this diet, healthier than what was eaten in the Middle Ages. A natural source of probiotics that has positive and protective effects on the gastrointestinal flora ". The explanation, provided to the Adnkronos health agency, is by Francesco Franceschi, director of emergency medicine at the Gemelli polyclinic in Rome and author, with his colleagues Roberto Bernabei, Giovanni Gasbarrini and Peter Malfertheiner, of the research "The diet of the Knights Templar: their secret of longevity? ".

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Sources : ***Prof. Francesco Franceschi, direttore della Medicina d'urgenza del policlinico Gemelli di Roma e autore, con il colleghi Roberto Bernabei, Giovanni Gasbarrini e Peter Malfertheiner, della ricerca "La dieta di Cavalieri Templari.***