

## Fruit and Nuts as Food.

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The Department of Agriculture has for several years been conducting a series of experiments to determine the dietary value of different foods (says the "Scientific American").

Nine dietary studies and thirty-one digestion experiments were carried on. In the majority of the dietary studies and all but one of the digestion experiments fruits and nuts constituted all or almost all of the diet. The results of the investigation emphasize the fact that both fruit and nuts should be considered as true foods rather than food accessories. The subjects were two women, three children, two elderly men, and two university students. The men all did hard manual labour during a part of the time, the students working to support themselves while pursuing their studies.

The fare given in these experiments was in every case one that would appeal to any normal appetite. It embraced honey, tomatoes, apples, bananas, cantaloupe, grapes, verdal, cornichon, tokay, muscat, scarlet haws, pears, pomegranates, persimmons, oranges, strawberries, watermelons, figs, almonds, and peanut butter. The only animal foods allowed were cottage cheese and eggs; and these in limited quantities. The cost of such a diet varied from 7½d. to 9d. a day. Comparative experiments were carried along in which animal foods were employed under the usual conditions of living, and in these the daily cost ran from 1s. 1d. to 1s. 3d. It was found that the food eaten supplied about sixty per cent of the protein usually secured by the average meat diet, while health and strength continued the same, if not improved, and in two or three cases there was a slight gain in flesh and weight.

One of the chief objects of the series of experiments was to furnish data as to the value of nuts as food. Fruits contain little protein, and nuts are relied on in the fruitarian plan of eating to balance the ration. Fruits are rich in carbo-hydrates and nuts in fat. A pound of peanuts, which cost 3½d., furnishes 1000 calories of energy at a cost of 1½d., and protein at a cost of 1s. 6d. a pound. A porterhouse steak costs for the same result respectively 11½d. and 5s. 5½d. when the steak can be bought for 1s. 0½d. a pound.

The average price per pound of the protein of nuts ranges higher than the corresponding average of meats, but the cost per pound of peanut protein is lower than for meats, fish, eggs, milk, dairy products, and prepared cereals. The only foods which furnish protein at a less cost than peanuts are flour and dried beans. According to Professor Jaffa's experiments, nuts are the cheapest source of energy for the fruitarian, the peanut ranging far ahead of any other variety.

Although peanuts supply protein and energy for a smaller sum than bread, they are outranked by dried beans, which at 2½d. a pound, will supply for 5d. over 200 grammes of protein and 3040 calories of energy.