

PAN in conversation with Elana Amsterdam



Courtesy of Elana Amsterdam

Elana Amsterdam, longtime PAN friend and supporter, is the founder of elanaspantry.com and an author of best-selling cookbooks. Her books include: [The Gluten-Free Almond Cookbook](#), [Gluten Free Cupcakes](#), and [Paleo Cooking From Elana's Pantry](#). Elana shares healthy, simple and delicious gluten-free recipes and advice for healthy living with her readers. Elana lives in Colorado with her husband and two children.

PAN sat down with Elana Amsterdam to discuss her latest book, why she supports PAN and how her belief that clean food is a basic human right comes into play in both her life and her work.

PAN: Can you tell us about your cookbook "[Paleo Cooking from Elana's Pantry](#)," that is coming out this summer? Perhaps beginning with, What is the Paleo diet?

Elana: The Paleo diet is a hunter-gatherer diet that consists of meat, vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds; it is a grain-free diet, the diet that our ancestors ate prior to the advent of agriculture approximately 10,000 years ago.

I believe that clean food is a basic human right. It's that simple.

While I have followed the grain-free diet for more than a decade, it is in the last couple of years that a large number of people have become more familiar with this way of eating. Many people are turning to this diet to heal various autoimmune conditions and other health issues that appear to be "untreatable." My book has close to 100 recipes that are entirely free of gluten, grains, dairy, and nightshades, ranging from Paleo Shepherd's Pie to Primal Coleslaw, to fruit sweetened Apple Tartlets (my boys' favorite dessert).

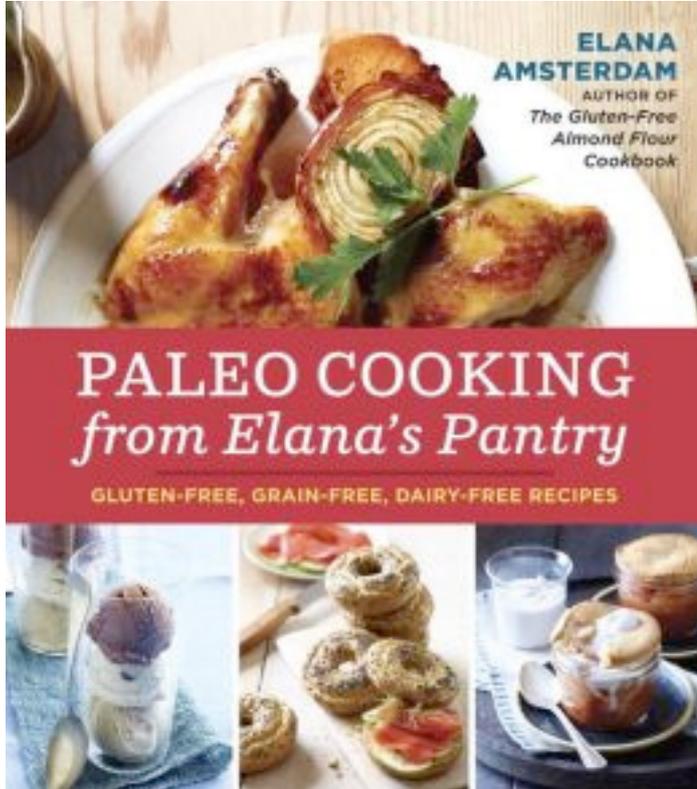
PAN: On your website, www.elanaspantry.com, you share that you have Celiac disease (an autoimmune disorder triggered by the ingestion of gluten). How has your diet restriction shaped your lifestyle choices? Do you think it has led to a greater attention to environmental issues and/or health activism?

Elana: Thankfully, I was very health conscious prior to getting the diagnosis of celiac disease. In my 20's I enrolled in a 3 year Ayurvedic training in which we studied food, herbs and yoga asanas.

Although I had been focused on an alternative lifestyle prior to this, this training truly gave me the tools to live holistically.

PAN: You have been a supporter of PAN for over a decade. What initially brought you to PAN? Why have you chosen to support our work?

Elana: I believe that clean food is a basic human right. It's that simple.



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PAN: Can you share with us how pesticides have impacted you (e.g. your health, or how you raised your children)?

Elana: I was raised on homegrown fruits and vegetables from our family's garden at our home in Northern California. My father and I would check the compost pile together on a regular basis. We took our newspapers to the recycling station in our town in the 1970's before recycling was implemented across the country.

Thankfully, I've raised my children in a similar way, especially when it comes to organic fare. Unfortunately, so many children around the world do not have the opportunity to eat clean food. And many children in this country are fed food laden with pesticides that can lead to ill health in so many ways -pesticides can not only lower IQ, they can lead to cancer, autoimmune conditions and more. Some pesticides can even alter the very structure of a developing brain.

PAN: PAN recently released "[A Generation In Jeopardy](#)" a report that looks at children's health and the connection to pesticides. Were there any precautionary steps you took as a mother in raising your own children? Do you have any advice for other mothers who are worried about pesticide exposure?

Elana: I have made a point of purchasing organic food for my children, avoiding plastics in the kitchen and elsewhere in our home and I also make my own cleaning products to avoid adding unnecessary chemicals that contain endocrine disrupting properties to our home environment.

PAN: Your online blog attracts 20,000 visitors per day. Do you have any inspiring examples of how you have used your influence to help others dealing with restrictive diet requirements?

Elana: I just share what I know.

PAN: As a longtime supporter, are there any PAN successes or wins over the years that have stood out to you as especially important or inspiring? What particular issue, action or campaign of PAN's is of interest to you, or hits home?

Elana: Although we did not win the battle, seeing PAN lead the charge on California's Prop 37 was inspiring in so many ways.

And last March, methyl iodide — the cancer causing strawberry fumigant — was pulled from the U.S. market as a result of a campaign spearheaded by PAN and partners. Thanks to the work of so many, farming communities and the kids who go to school and live near strawberry fields won't be exposed to this incredibly toxic pesticide.

PAN: Is there is anything you would like to say to PAN supporters and future supporters?

Elana: I buy my children organic food to protect them from the damage of harmful of pesticides. And I support PAN in order to protect the rights of children all over the world. All children, not just my own, deserve to eat clean food that is free of toxic pesticides. By supporting PAN we protect access to clean food for everyone.

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