

If you're still convinced that Daniel refused the food/wine because it violated Jewish food laws or was offensive on account of being offered to idols, here is a rundown of the issues related to the most common views:

- **Why Daniel refused:** palace food likely came from the temple, and thus had been offered to an idol. **Why this isn't a slam dunk solution:** this would be a problem with *all* the king's food, including vegetables, which Daniel doesn't refuse to eat.
- **Why Daniel refused:** the palace wouldn't observe Torah laws about which animals could be eaten and how they were to be killed (see Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 12:23–25 and chapter 14). **Why this isn't a slam dunk solution:** The reference to meat *and* wine meat suggests animals aren't the focus of the problem.
- **Why Daniel refused:** meat and wine were festival foods, and abstaining from them is a sign of mourning or penitence and thus appropriate in exile (see 10:3). Also, it's the kind of food fit for nobility, whereas the four Israelites ask for peasant food. **Why this isn't a slam dunk solution:** It doesn't help explain why Daniel would have been *defiled* by the food/wine.
- **Why Daniel refused:** Abstaining from meat & wine was an ascetic practice in some groups (e.g., the Essenes, Hasidim), and one of their reasons for abstaining was to prepare to receive divine revelation. **Why this isn't a slam dunk solution:** Daniel isn't abstaining in order to seek God; he's refraining from something that's incompatible with his commitment to God.
- **Why Daniel refused:** Accepting the king's provisions would indicate dependence on him, entering into covenant-style relationship and agreeing to be a loyal supporter of the king. **Why this isn't a slam dunk solution:** The four boys do become (trusted!) courtiers. And why would this relationship be defiling?
- **Why Daniel refused:** Consuming pagan food/drink may “simply epitomize the pagan uncleanness associated with exile (cf. Isa 52:11). This reflects the fact that what we eat and drink, like what we wear and how we speak, generally constitutes an outward expression of our self-identity and commitments. . . .” This is John Goldingay's take (p. 19 of his Word Biblical Commentary on Daniel) and I think it's pretty good – though it doesn't address the temporary nature of Daniel's abstinence.