

Testimonials

“New to real food and wondering where on earth to start? Kate Tietje knows what it takes to make the transition to real, whole and traditional foods, because she’s done it herself and has seen the positive benefits for her family’s health. She walks you step by step through the why’s and how’s behind it all, helping you stock your kitchen with the right foods and tools, and then shows you how easy it is to make delicious foods that everyone will enjoy! “

Stephanie Langford,
Keeper of the Home and Saving Naturally

“Kate has put together a fantastic resource for anyone looking to take the step into real foods! She takes the subjects I had a hard time getting done for my own family and explains them so that anyone can understand and follow through. I also love the section on kitchen tips - she leaves no stone unturned. A well rounded resource and must read!”

Donielle
Naturally Knocked Up

“Kate equips you in your pursuit of wellness, while feeding your family their favorite comfort foods! Her family’s story and the simple recipe methods are inspiring. Kate walks you through the basics, from the store, to the kitchen, to the table. Keep this book alongside you in your journey of discovering whole, “real foods.”

Michele Augur,
Frugal Granola

“This book is for those of you who want to eat real food but don’t want your dinner guest to ask, “What is this?” ten times. You CAN make everyday American food that is nourishing rather than fattening, and Kate Tietje will hold your hand while you learn. If you’re intimidated by a 600-page tome filled with research and recipes, try the normal person’s version with a dozen pages of conversational food science, and then the mouthwatering, call-your-waitress-over recipes for french fries, ice cream, and pizza. You’ll love the diner style taste with the real food nutrition.”

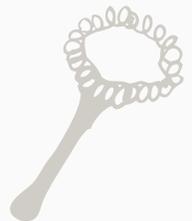
Katie Kimball
Kitchen Stewardship

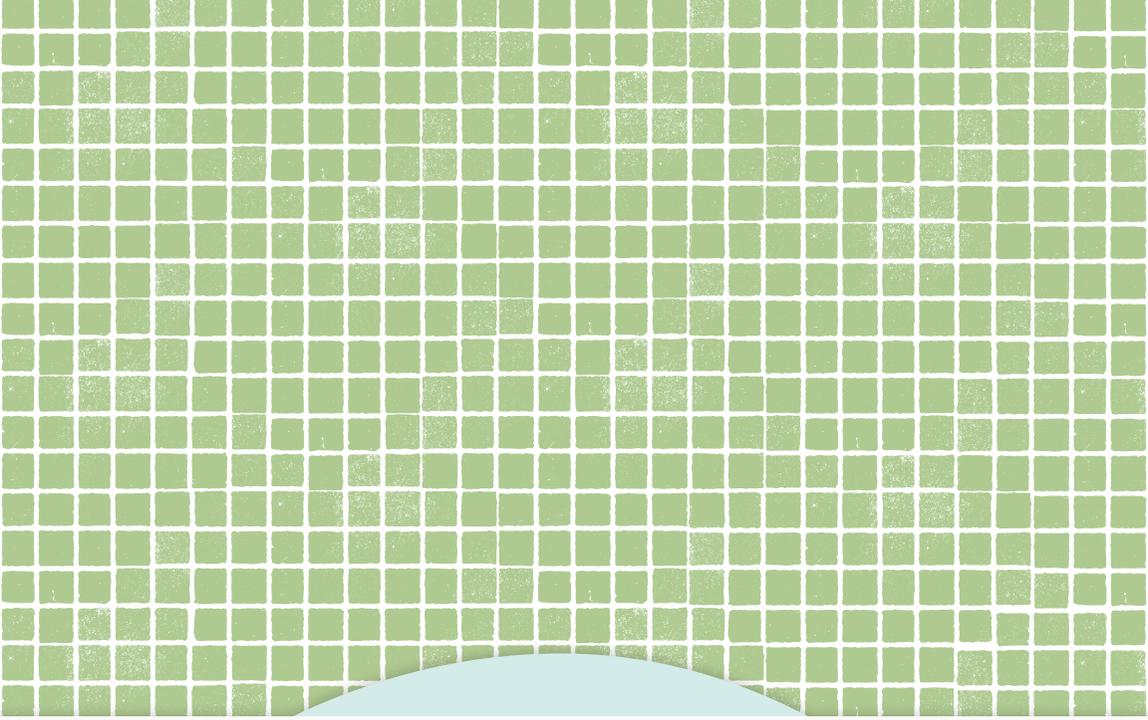
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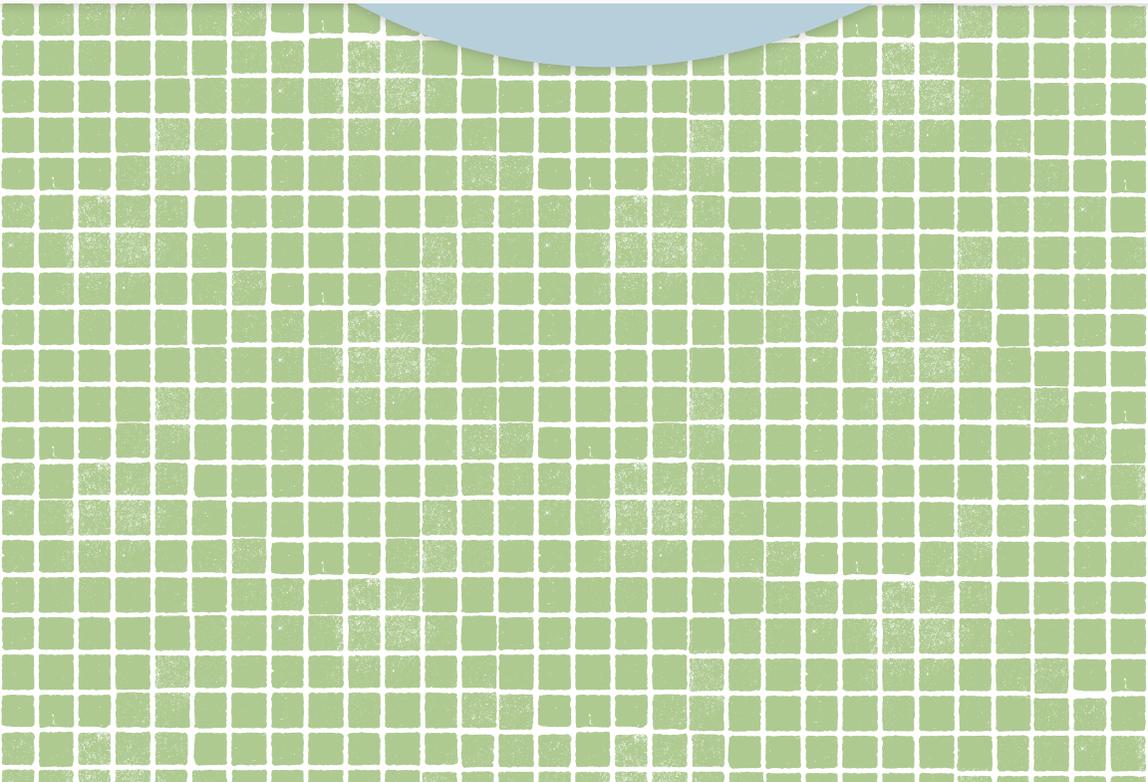


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Introduction



You may wonder how this cookbook came to be. The truth is, I've always wanted to write a cookbook. I even started to write on a dozen times, beginning when I was only about ten years old. What did I know about cooking at age ten? Turns out – not much. However, that's no longer the case.

But the real reason this cookbook is being written now is because there is a sore lack of information out there about what's really healthy. There are dozens of different diets, each claiming to be the healthiest one. They're all about the same at the core, though: whole grains, plenty of produce, lean meats, and low fat. It doesn't matter whether they're also low-carb, Mediterranean, South Beach, etc. They all generally fall within the USDA's food pyramid guidelines. They all vilify white flour, sugar, and fat. And while these diets all have some merit, they all generally get it wrong.

There are already cookbooks out there that get it right. There are many blogs, too (including mine!). But these cookbooks and even blogs are seen as “fringe” sources, ones that most people don't know about and which even seem a little crazy. They advocate radical, immediate changes in one's diet and lifestyle. They can be expensive, too! While this would be ideal, we don't live in a perfect world. Most people who see the value in changing their diet and lifestyle need baby steps to get from point A (that would be “Standard American Diet,” or SAD) to point B (that would be “real food”). They also are seeking recipes that are familiar to them. Maybe those recipes are for favorite foods, or at least recognizable foods! There's nothing worse than picking up a book on healthy eating only to realize that all the recipes use strange, exotic ingredients and sound like something your family would never even try, let alone eat on a regular basis! There's also the cost factor – buying a book that's reasonably priced so that you can afford to learn about change without committing a ton of resources – at least right away.

That's where this book comes in. It advocates change, for sure, but in small steps. All of the recipes included are simple and recognizable. There's pizza, ice cream, roasted chicken, and more. The recipes are made over into healthier versions. There are sections on why we need these changes (and the reasons may surprise you), how to make these changes, helpful tools and resources, and even a local source guide for any “unusual” ingredients (and there aren't too many).

While the recipe section is great, don't skip the introductory sections! Otherwise you may look at the recipes and think “This is healthy??” I assure you that all the recipes in here are! But you need to understand the research behind this diet before you accept it. You may need to go back and read it several times.

And if you don't get it yet...look for local cooking classes or an online ecourse for more information!

We didn't arrive at this diet overnight, of course, anymore than any of you will. It was a long, slow process as we researched what a real healthy diet was, and tried different things. It was difficult to sort through all the research out there, as there were many different schools of thought on healthy eating. But eventually a pattern emerged, and we began making real changes that had a real impact on our health.

The beginning of our story finds us in 2006. This was the year we were married. Ben had just graduated from college and I was still attending college. We were busy and didn't have time to cook. Prior to our marriage, Ben had subsisted on frozen pizzas, frozen fried chicken and fries, and other convenience foods. "Cooking" was mixing some meat with a jar of spaghetti sauce and boiling some white pasta. Once we were married it wasn't much better. I "cooked" for us, but used frozen veggies, cans of chicken broth, and other convenience items to make food. We frequently ate Hamburger Helper, macaroni and cheese, and we also often ate out.

The result was that we rarely felt well. Most nights found us on the couch with upset stomachs and no energy. We both gained weight. We tried to eat "better" – Instant Breakfast (it was fortified with vitamins, after all), Cheerios, other products that had "more nutrition" and less sugar. We felt slightly better, but we continued to gain weight. We tried exercise routines, which did nothing. We went on "strict diets" where we'd eat tons of produce and little to no fat, yet we still gained or maintained our weight! Nothing seemed to help. I began to think we were just destined to be a bit heavy.

Then, our daughter was born. I lost some weight after this because I was eating a little differently – focusing on salads, lean meats, etc. "standard healthy diet." I stopped buying ice cream and other desserts very often. I was also breastfeeding, which helped. But we still didn't see significant change.

When our daughter turned 1, we suddenly realized she had allergies. She'd had trouble sleeping, eczema, chronic diaper rash, and other minor issues that we hadn't realized were all connected to undiscovered allergies. We removed dairy and her symptoms began to improve almost immediately. But then she self-limited her diet to only bread, potatoes, applesauce, and bananas. I began to search for help, and found a group called "Weston A. Price Healthy Babies Group." I didn't believe everything they said at first, but I started paying attention. By beginning to follow some of their principles (along with some supplements), Bekah began to eat again. By age 2 she was eating nearly everything, and any remaining pickiness was reminiscent of her father.

I started to really read about this group in the last few months of my pregnancy with Daniel (when Bekah was 15 or 16 months). I began to see that fat wasn't evil, and that we needed more whole foods in our diet. I realized
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Cheerios weren't healthy, and neither was Instant Breakfast. We began to focus on eggs, butter, cheese, meat, and other nutrient-dense, fattening foods. We began to eat coconut oil (which is almost entirely saturated fat).

And...we lost weight.

By the time Daniel was 6 months old (early 2010), Ben had lost 60 lbs. and I had lost about 25 (on top of the baby weight!). We weren't exercising. We weren't counting calories, controlling portion sizes, or doing any special stuff. We were eating whole, healthy, full-fat foods when we were hungry and stopping when we were full. We were avoiding eating too many grains, and preparing them properly when we did eat them (more on that later).

Yes – we really did lose a combined 85 lbs. by eating full fat, especially saturated fat foods.

Additionally, when our family began to consume raw dairy (more on that later), our health improved. Our “dairy allergic” children thrived and had no reaction to milk any longer.

We learned at one point that Bekah was gluten intolerant, too. (At one point she was off all grains, seeds, nuts, dairy, legumes, and certain fruits. Think about how fun it was to figure out what we could actually eat!) We discovered sprouting grains (more on that later) and slowly she was able to eat bread again. Some will tell you that sprouting grains only slightly (1/8” tails) is sufficient; we found that for Bekah, slight sprouting was as bad as not sprouting at all. When grains are fully sprouted (1 – 2” tail), she has no reaction and can eat wheat, rye, and spelt with no issues. It's made life a LOT easier!

That wasn't enough, though. We started to reach out to people around us as well. To date, we have friends and family who have lost weight, gotten rid of allergies, had improved thyroid function, improved PCOS, gotten rid of gluten and dairy intolerances and so much more. We have story after story of people whose lives were changed by this diet.

It's not a rigid diet. It's not a special protocol that expressly forbids any foods and reverts others. Every person's approach will look a little bit different. It's simply another way of thinking about food and our relationship with it. And it can change everything.

Fat.

It's practically a four-letter word these days. If you walk into any grocery store, you'll see the words "low fat" and "fat free" emblazoned across many products. Restaurants often advertise this too. McDonald's even changed from frying their popular fries in beef tallow to frying them in vegetable oil – ironically, this was a change for the worse!

Have you ever wondered how this came to be? When did we start to fear fat? And why? Many people look to their grandparents, who ate (and maybe still eat) bacon and eggs every morning, fatty meat and potatoes every night, and yet lived to be 90 and were never overweight, and have wondered why. These people are generally simply considered anomalies.

But that isn't the case. The truth is, fat is good for you. Saturated fat especially.

So how did this whole thing get started? Kellogg's Corn Flakes, originally invented in the late 1800s to -- get this -- reduce your sex drive, because proper ladies and gentlemen need to squash their desires, surged in popularity. Scientists invented baby formula, which they said was much better than breast milk could ever be; all babies were fed with this new "superior" milk. Women were knocked out and their babies basically dragged out in hospitals. And Ancel Adams, a researcher, came up with the lipid hypothesis, which basically says that saturated fat and cholesterol in the diet cause heart disease.

Today we know that all of those things – other than the lipid hypothesis – were ridiculous. Corn Flakes don't (exactly) suppress one's sex drive, baby formula isn't better than breast milk, and women shouldn't be knocked out during birth. Yet, we've held onto the lipid hypothesis ever so tightly. It's become so ingrained in our culture that FAT IS BAD that if you even suggest otherwise, people look at you like you're crazy.

But consider this. Saturated fat and cholesterol are found in all your cells. They help your hormones to regulate (controlling testosterone, estrogen, serotonin, and many others – so adequate cholesterol and saturated fat are responsible for both your sex drive and your mood), they repair cells that are damaged, they help your memory, and lots more. You literally can't live without them. So why are they considered bad?

It was noticed that when people had plaque building up in their arteries (cholesterol), they were at increased risk of heart disease. It was also noticed that about half the time, high blood cholesterol was also involved. (Yes – only half the time.

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There is only a very loose correlation between cholesterol levels and heart disease.) Doctors simply assumed the obvious – that cholesterol was causing these problems. This was too simplistic.

Cholesterol's function in the body is to repair damage. When your body becomes damaged from exposure to food additives, stress, chemicals in your environment, etc. it sends out cholesterol to repair this damage. Without cholesterol, the damage wouldn't be repaired and you would be at serious risk of disease. If the damage is ongoing or severe, though, the cholesterol might build up in your system, similar to how scar tissue forms when you cut yourself badly on the outside. Cholesterol is only a sign that something else is going on; it's not the cause of the problem.

What happens when you try to artificially lower your cholesterol, then? If you do it by dietary changes, thereby reducing inflammation, you'll be fine because you're addressing the root cause of the problem. But if you're taking drugs, then your body is still experiencing inflammation but it can no longer protect and repair itself. This is where trouble starts.

Ironically, Ancel Adams and many of his research subjects, all of whom were on the "Prudent Diet," (Corn Flakes, grapefruit, and other low fat foods) died of heart disease, while others on high fat diets didn't. Nonetheless, the notion that fat was bad has somehow stuck.

If this all seems unbelievable, look at your grandparents' generation in pictures when they were young. Then look around you. How many people were overweight when your grandparents were young? How many had diabetes, heart disease, cancer, autoimmune conditions? How many have those problems today? Clearly the rates of obesity and chronic illness have exploded as we've become more and more obsessed with low fat, low calorie foods. Something isn't working right.

One reason is that manufacturers had to replace all that fat with something else to make their products taste good. They chose sugar. Most low-fat and fat-free products are absolutely full of sugar. Consuming large amounts of sugar isn't good for us, as we know. But when you're choosing a dessert or sauce (like ketchup or barbecue sauce or a marinade) that's "fat free," you're consuming a ton of sugar!

Sugar contributes to or causes all kinds of disease, like diabetes, heart disease (it causes the inflammation in the body that the cholesterol has to go repair), autoimmune conditions, and even cancer. Many peoples' health has improved simply by cutting out sugar! And this does, unfortunately, apply to all forms of sugar, even natural ones.

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While honey and real maple syrup aren't horrible, they should still be consumed in moderation only!

Fat plays a huge role in your health. Consuming plenty of healthy fat increases your absorption of many fat-soluble vitamins, like A and D. These vitamins are crucial for your health. Did you know vitamin D is really a hormone precursor and also helps to regulate your hormones as well as your immune system? Without fat you won't be able to reap those benefits! This is why many nutritionists do tell you to consume your salad with "a little" fat – because they know you'll absorb more nutrients from it. In fact, consuming tomatoes with fat increases the amount of lycopene you will absorb by 100 times!

Which fats are healthiest? Butter (from grass-fed cows), lard (from pastured pork; the lard at the grocery store is partially hydrogenated and not safe!), coconut oil, palm shortening, bacon grease (from pastured pork), beef tallow (from grass-fed cows) and extra virgin olive oil. Note that NONE of these are "industrial" fats (like vegetable oil, shortening, etc.) and nearly all of them are saturated. Saturated fats are much safer because they don't go rancid easily. From good sources, they're also full of nutrients and are not from Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO).

Vegetable oils are not healthy because many of them are GMO. Corn and soy oils are typically GMO; even the ones that aren't turn rancid easily when exposed to heat or light. So, by the time they've gotten to your grocery store, especially in a clear package, they're already rancid. Rancid oils contain trans fats – even if it's not listed on the label!

Eggs are also another excellent source of fat. Unfortunately many people vilify egg yolks, preferring to eat only the whites. Unfortunately the vast majority of nutrients are found in the yolks! Good eggs can be found preferably at local farms or farmer's markets. Sometimes they can be found in grocery stores, but they need to say "pastured" eggs, not simply "cage free." When you get a great egg, you'll know it. The yolk will be large and deep orange; not small and pale yellow like the type you get at most grocery stores! Eggs are truly among the best source of good fats, very inexpensive, and easy to prepare.

Suffice it to say that fat is crucially important to your diet, and that saturated fat is nothing to fear – embrace it!

Resources and Additional Reading:

<http://www.thescreamonline.com/essays/essays5-1/vegoil.html>

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2001/08/01/oil-part-one.aspx>

<http://www.lewrockwell.com/miller/miller33.1.html>

http://www.spacedoc.net/saturated_fat_is_good_for_you_1

<http://www.westonaprice.org/know-your-fats/526-skinny-on-fats.html>

Drink your three glasses of milk per day! Calcium builds strong bones! But make sure that milk is pasteurized and homogenized, because otherwise it's dangerous.

Or is it?

Milk has only been pasteurized for the last 50 years or so, although the process was initially invented in the 1800s by Louis Pasteur. However, it wasn't invented to be used on milk. It was originally intended to be used on beer after production, to sterilize it. Over time though, it came to be used on milk, of course. Here's the story you've probably heard: In New York in the 1950s, several children were getting sick and the outbreaks were linked to milk. Officials decided to start pasteurizing the milk, and boom! everything was all better. Pasteurization made the milk safe to drink again and illnesses went way down.

Sounds great, right? So why would anyone want to drink unpasteurized milk?

The problem is, that isn't the whole story. What's there is true, but there's more to it. In the early part of the 1900s, food began to be mass produced, and this included milk. Cows were moved off pasture and into barns, the way they're raised today. They were fed distillery mash (the "stuff" that's leftover after making whiskey and other alcohol). This isn't what cows were meant to eat (they are meant to eat grass, they are ruminants) and they became sick. Their milk was full of pus and infection because they were sick. People were drinking this raw, tainted milk and becoming ill. Pasteurizing it didn't solve this problem, it masked it. It killed all the bad bacteria in the milk so that it didn't make people sick anymore. But it didn't make the milk healthy to drink.

In fact, raw, unpasteurized milk contains a lot of things that pasteurized milk doesn't. It contains the enzyme lactase, which allows us to digest the lactose in the milk (which is why people who are "lactose intolerant" can often drink raw milk). It contains probiotics and enzymes that are beneficial to our digestion. It also contains slightly more nutrients. Since it hasn't been heated, the delicate protein structures are still in place too. Pasteurization destroys the enzymes, lactase, and all the beneficial bacteria. That's the test for successful pasteurization – that all the living bacteria and enzymes have been destroyed!

With that said, it's not a good idea to drink raw milk from the large-scale farms. These farms keep their cows penned up, give them antibiotics and hormones, and feed them corn and other unnatural foods (some even feed their cows donuts and other "bakery waste!"). This makes the cows sick and the milk would be full of the hormones and antibiotics.

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Cows that live in these types of conditions live only about 18 months, while cows that live on pasture (i.e. eating grass and have plenty of room to roam) live about 5 years. Drinking milk from these sick, medicated cows would be just as dangerous as it was at the time that pasteurization became mandatory.

However, if you can find a farmer who does not use antibiotics or hormones, and who allows his cows to roam freely on pasture and consume only grass (hay, alfalfa, and other “grasses” in the winter in temperate climates), this milk will be safe to drink raw. Not only safe, but incredibly beneficial!

Seek out a source of raw milk if you possibly can. Unfortunately, in many states it's illegal to buy retail (which is outrageous, but true). In some states you can buy it directly from a farm (which is the best way anyway, you want to know your source!). In other states you can become part of a “cow share” program, where you pay for part of a cow's feed and board; if you own the cow, you are entitled to drink its milk if you wish. You can find out more about this at www.realmilk.com.

Resources:

<http://www.raw-milk-facts.com/>

<http://www.rawmilk.org/default.php>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/06/05/10-things-you-should-know_n_211715.html

The Untold Story of Milk: Green Pastures, Contented Cows and Raw Dairy Products, by Ron Schmid

Grains and the Food Pyramid

In the U.S., the food pyramid is everything. It is really called the “U.S.D.A. Dietary Guidelines” and it is reviewed and updated every 5 years (most recently, this year, 2010). The food pyramid currently calls for this:

6 – 11 servings of bread/grains (bottom tier), 9 servings of fruits and vegetables (second tier), 3 – 4 servings each of protein/meat and dairy (third tier), minimal fat/sugar (top tier). But as we’ve already discussed, people eat far too little fat (and they eat the wrong kinds of fat, too). What about the rest of the pyramid?

The prevailing thought is that no pyramid should be used at all. And if one were, grains certainly shouldn’t be on the bottom. Some people truly need to focus more heavily on meat/dairy, while others need to focus more heavily on plant foods (but always consuming both). So there’s no way to really have a “standard food pyramid.”

What’s the issue with grains?

Everyone says “eat healthy, whole grains to maintain your health!” Products love to claim “made with whole grains!” Some products have even claimed that consuming them can lower cholesterol or improve your heart health. While it’s true that whole grains are certainly preferable to refined, white flour (as pretty much everyone knows), they’re not really healthy for you. At least not the way that they’re used, or in the quantities they’re used.

There’s the issue of breakfast cereals, first. Most people consume them heavily. But these cereals are made with extruded grains (grains shot through tiny holes at high pressure in order to create the flakes, puffs, etc. that are so popular). This denatures the proteins in the grains and can actually make them toxic.

Then there’s the issue of how the grain is grown and processed. A hundred years ago, grain was cut and left in the field for awhile, where it began to sprout slightly, then dried in the sun. Once dried, it was stored and ground as needed. It was also only about 60% starch and 40% vegetable protein. Now, it’s cut, immediately pulled inside, dried, and milled (no sprouting). Hybridization has made it around 92% starch and only 8% vegetable protein. This is why we’re seeing huge increases in gluten intolerance (so much more gluten in the grain) and celiac disease.

Sprouting the grain before it is milled reduces so-called “anti-nutrients.” Think about it this way: have you ever seen a horse swallow grains whole? When they come out the other side (having been subject to strong acids in digestion), they can still grow, right in the pile of manure.

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There are protective enzymes in those seeds to keep them alive through all sorts of harsh conditions. This includes being ground and digested by people. But once the grains are sprouted (about 1/2" long), they have fulfilled their potential as seeds: to grow a new plant. Much of the plant's starch has been converted to vegetable protein or simple sugars (which is much more easily digestible) and nutrient content has increased significantly, especially in the B vitamins (nutrients needed to feed a growing plant are now available to you during consumption). Most flours are fortified with B vitamins for this reason: they're not sprouted, but they should be.

If grains are consumed, they should be sprouted. Some also use soaking in an acidic medium or preparing sourdough as a way of decreasing the "anti-nutrients" and increasing good nutrients, but I won't cover that in this book. In my opinion, sprouting grains (while a bit more work up front; though you can buy sprouted flour) is much easier because you can use sprouted flour in recipes just as you would any other kind of flour. There is no need to adjust most recipes at all (with the exception of true yeasted breads, which we'll discuss only briefly).

Grains should compose only a small part of your diet, since they're not as nutrient-dense and are still a bit rough on digestion.

In general, your focus should be on whole, real foods: milk, cheese, meat, fresh fruits and vegetables. Add a bit of grains, nuts, seeds, and very little natural sugar. The exact percentage of meat vs. vegetables will vary depending on an individual person's needs. There should not be a focus on counting calories or fat grams, but rather simply enjoying food when hungry and stopping when satiated. Ignore the food pyramid, because it doesn't actually represent a balanced diet. And there's simply no way that "one size fits all!"

We'll discuss more on that in the next section!

Resources:

<http://editor.nourishedmagazine.com.au/articles/puffed-grains-should-we-eat-them>

<http://www.westonaprice.org/modern-foods/567-dirty-secrets-of-the-food-processing-industry.html>

<http://www.westonaprice.org/food-features/497-be-kind-to-your-grains.html>

<http://www.karlloren.com/diet/p109.htm>

<http://www.godsdirectcontact.com/vegetarian/sprout.html>

As you can see from what you've read so far (you have been reading along, right? You didn't just skip to this part? If so, go back and read!), all of this is about a complete lifestyle shift. It's not just about a healthy diet. Of course, a healthy diet is the foundation of it all, but your entire mindset has to shift in order to make this work properly.

It's a little weird to think about eating fat, drinking raw milk, and not eating processed foods. It's kind of anti-American. But the changes to your health as you shift the choices you make will be astounding to you. This diet isn't about deprivation, either. You can still have ice cream, pizza, cake, and all your favorite foods (some more often than others!). In fact, you will probably feel like the food you are eating tastes so good that it can't be healthy! Yet the proof will be in how you look and feel.

Eating a whole, real foods diet will change everything about your life. You will re-discover your ability to taste real food. Many people say they "don't like vegetables," but it's because they've never really had them. They've become so used to "fake" foods full of artificial flavors and colors that they don't know what they like or don't like anymore. They've lost the ability to really notice when they're hungry, when they're full, or when they suffer any ill effects from food. Many are so tired all the time, and frequently have headaches, stomachaches, and other random, seemingly minor symptoms that they can't really sort anything out anymore.

Once you have eliminated all of the junk from your diet, you will begin to notice when you really feel hungry, and when you are satisfied. Note I said "satisfied," not "full." You will not need to eat as much, and you will be able to stop when you are comfortably full instead of stuffed. This is because humans actually have receptors on their tongues (a new set of taste buds!) that allow them to notice when they consume fat and protein. When you have had enough, your body will produce leptin, a hormone which signals you to stop eating. Eating healthy fats and getting enough vitamin D helps ensure that this hormone is functioning well. Eating too much sugar suppresses it (leptin deficiency is one part of type II diabetes).

You will also start to notice direct correlations between what you eat and how you feel. Certain foods will make you feel energized (true energy, not the type you get from sugar or caffeine). Certain foods will make you tired. Certain foods may give you a headache. But you'll find it easy to notice which are causing it, and choose to possibly eliminate them from your diet if necessary.

All of these changes will come in time. As you feel better you'll be more eager to make them. Keep reading for tips and ideas on how to make the changes!



Kitchen Tips and Procedures

There's nothing so tricky as looking at a cookbook where the recipes include a lot of ingredients that it says you're to have made already (like chicken stock), but having no idea how to make them. It can be easy to just give up, rather than search around to learn how to make them. Luckily, this section of the book will walk you through exactly how to do all these basic things, as well as giving you lists of kitchen tools, pantry staples, and more.

Keep reading! This "real food" business gets easier as you go along!

One of the most basic ingredients you'll need in your kitchen is stock. That is, chicken stock, beef stock, or whatever kind of stock you want (also known as "broth" to some). Stock is a wonderful, healing food. It contains natural gelatin, which pulls the toxins out of your body and helps you to recover from illnesses. Your grandmother's advice to eat chicken soup when you are sick wasn't an old wives' tale! However, this healing power is only found in real chicken stock made from bones, not the artificially flavored, MSG-laden stuff you buy!

Stock is very simple to make, but it does take time. Most of this time, as with many of these recipes, is "wait" time, not active time. In fact, total active time here will be maybe 20 minutes per batch!

Ingredients:

1 whole chicken OR 5 – 8 lbs. of bones

Filtered water

Vegetable scraps (onion peels, carrot peels, ends of celery)

Large stock pot (16 qt. is good)

2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar*

*I don't use it. But many people say you get better stock if you do, because the acidity pulls the gelatin out of the bones.

Directions:

Put all the chicken bones or a whole chicken into the large stock pot. Fill nearly to the top with cold filtered water (the more bones you have, the better your stock will be, but it will also be more expensive). Add vegetable scraps (if you don't have them it doesn't really matter) and vinegar (if using). Turn the stock on low. Allow it to heat up slowly and simmer gently. It should cook about 24 hours and does not need any tending during this time (as long it remains on low). When the stock has been actively simmering for awhile, is reduced, and is a rich, golden color, it is done. Place into containers and freeze for later use. Glass is ideal, but make sure it is freezer-safe. Plastic is okay. Do not skim the fat off the stock! This is extremely beneficial stuff!

Use later in soups, sauces, or cooking rice, potatoes, etc. You can also freeze some in ice cube trays and then put all the cubes in a bag so that you have a small amount to use at a time to make gravy, thin baby food, etc. A handful of recipes later will call for this stock, and it's great to have around, so make some now!

Resources:

<http://www.westonaprice.org/food-features/515-broth-is-beautiful.html>

<http://www.kitchenstewardship.com/2009/03/26/food-for-thought-health-and-nutrition-of-traditional-homemade-chicken-brothstock/>

I mentioned why sprouting grains is beneficial in earlier sections. Go back and reread “Our Story,” which mentions using sprouted grains for gluten intolerance, and “Grains and the Food Pyramid,” which specifically talks about why grains should be sprouted.

Sprouting grains is really quite easy and requires no fancy equipment. Grinding them is another story, however. There are two general options as far as that goes: a grain mill, which is specifically to grind grains; or a good blender. I’d recommend the blender because it’s multi-use. Also, if you happen to have a coffee or spice grinder, that can mill the grains too, although many are quite small and it may take awhile. Since you should ideally only grind them as you need them, this may work out well (and coffee and spice grinders are rather cheap too). More on that in the “Kitchen Tools” section.

To sprout grains, you will need:

Whole, unground grains (health food stores will have this)

Filtered water

Large bowl

Colander

Kitchen towel

Pour the grains (any amount you want) into the large bowl. Fill with water, covering the grains by at least an inch. Allow this to sit overnight or for 6 – 8 hours. Drain in the colander. Put the colander (still full of grains) into the large bowl (it will keep dripping) and cover with the towel. Check on it every 8 – 12 hours, more often if it is very hot. Rinse the grains to make sure they stay moist about every 12 hours. After 1 – 2 days, the grains will have sprouts growing out of them. If your family suffers any difficulty with digesting grains or gluten, make sure the sprouts are quite long, 1/2” or more. If not you may call it done when the sprouts are only ¼” long.

Spread the sprouts on either dehydrator trays (if you have one) or baking sheets. Put the trays/sheets into the oven or dehydrator on low (dehydrator on 115 degrees; oven as low as possible) for 6 – 8 hours. When the grains are completely dry, they are done. Store in bags in the freezer and grind as needed.

For a complete tutorial with photos, please visit:

<http://www.modernalternativemama.com/blog/2010/7/6/tutorial-sprouting-grains.html>.

Butter is a wonderful fat. It can be expensive to buy good butter (\$5 - \$9/lb.), but making your own is easy and much cheaper.

You will need:

Cream from grass-fed cows, no hormones or antibiotics used

A blender or food processor

Glass storage dishes

Filtered water

To make butter, pour cream into the blender or food processor. Fill it less than $\frac{1}{2}$ full. My blender (8-cup capacity) can only handle 2 cups at once. Turn it on low and leave it alone for about five minutes. It will thicken into whipped cream first, then the butter will separate from the buttermilk.

Once it's separated, pour the buttermilk into a glass dish and save it for later use. You can bake with this, or use it in place of regular milk. It still has a fairly high fat content and is very good for you.

Then, pour a little water into the butter. Smash it around to "wash" it. You are trying to get all the extra milk out of it. If you don't, it will go bad faster. At first this water will be milky-white. Pour it off and add more water and repeat the process until the water is clear. Then, smash the butter around more to get the extra water out of it as much as possible.

Store your butter in a glass dish. If you make a lot at once (I usually do $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon of cream at a time, which nets me about 3 lbs. of butter), you can freeze some of it.

For a complete tutorial with photos, visit:

<http://www.modernalternativemama.com/blog/2010/7/27/tutorial-making-butter.html>.

Fermented foods are traditional, but no longer common. They are so wonderful for our health, though: they are full of the probiotics that doctors are constantly talking about these days. These probiotics benefit our digestive system, boosting our immune systems and helping to heal our gut and populate it with healthy bacteria. Our ancestors used to eat them much more often than we do, but they were replaced with similar replicas that don't have all the same health benefits. You may see the word "fermented" and think of alcohol, or think of "yucky" things, but there are several fermented foods with which you are familiar:

- *Yogurt
- *Kefir
- *Pickles (sometimes)
- *Alcohol

And, there are others with which you may not be familiar:

- *Water kefir
- *Beet kvass
- *Kombucha
- *Fermented salsa
- *Ginger carrots
- *Other fruits/veggies

Right now we're not going to concern ourselves with most of those. We're only going to talk about two: yogurt and kombucha. Yogurt, because it is the most commonly available fermented food; and kombucha because it is my favorite.

Yogurt is simplest to buy. I like full-fat Dannon for its availability, good probiotics, and price. It's also simple to make, however. I haven't perfected it, but the general method goes like this:

Heat 1 quart (whole) milk to about 180 degrees. Allow it to cool to about 110 degrees. Add the active culture (this could be a packet of culture mix, or it could be about 2 tbsp. of already cultured milk – purchased or purchased or that you made previously. Stir well to combine. Put the milk into a warm location where it will maintain a steady temperature for 4 – 8 hours. This could be a dehydrator with trays removed, the oven on warm, a yogurt maker, or a cooler filled with hot water. At the end of the time, remove the yogurt and place it in the fridge. There, done! Wasn't that easy?

Unfortunately it's also easy for the yogurt to separate the solids from the whey or have other issues. This doesn't mean the yogurt is ruined, it just means the texture is going to be weird. Like I said, I haven't perfected it, but that's the general method if you're interested.

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There are many better tutorials, which I'll put in the resource section.

Kombucha, on the other hand, is something I have perfected (nearly). I brew four gallons of it every 10 days or so, and have been doing it for months, so I better know a thing or two about it! It requires very few ingredients, all of which can be obtained either at a local health food store (or, really, any store) or through me.

Kombucha is a “mysterious” ancient Chinese tea which is reputed to be antibacterial, antiviral, to help with digestion, liver function, sleep issues, hair, skin, nails, boost immunity, and much more. It can cause something of a “detox” reaction in individuals who are not used to consuming probiotic foods (including headaches, stomachaches, dizziness), but once this stage is past (and it doesn't happen to everyone), it makes you feel wonderful. When I first began drinking it I felt happy, light, excited. Kind of like drinking alcohol and getting an initial buzz but never getting drunk (it contains a very, very small amount of alcohol, less than .5%, but this isn't the cause of the feeling).

To make kombucha, you will need:

- 1 gal. glass jar
- Filtered water
- Black tea bags (or loose tea)
- Sugar (white is okay)
- SCOBY (Symbiotic Culture Of Bacteria and Yeast)
- Kitchen towel
- Rubber band
- Juice (optional)
- 16-oz. glass bottles with air-tight lids

Boil about 1 qt. filtered water. Add 6 regular-sized tea bags and allow it to steep for 5 minutes. Remove tea bags and add 1 cup sugar. Stir to combine. Pour this sweet tea into the 1-gal. glass jar. Add 2 more quarts of cool, filtered water. (You COULD boil an entire gallon then wait a few hours for it to cool...or you could do it this way.) Add ½ - 1 cup of prepared kombucha (which will come with your SCOBY; or, save it from your last batch), then fill the rest of the way with filtered water. Add your culture carefully with clean hands. Put the kitchen towel on top and use the rubber band to secure it. The kombucha needs to breathe to culture. Place it in a cool place where it can get some air for 5 – 9 days. Kombucha is an aerobic ferment, meaning it requires oxygen. I recommend going shorter the first few times you make it. As you learn what you can handle and what tastes best to you, you may choose to culture as long as 14 days (but this will be too strong at first, unless it is very cold where you are). I like mine cultured for 9 days in the summer.

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At the end of the fermenting time (during which you simply ignore it), get your jar. Remove the towel. Place the SCOBY on a plate or in a bowl and cover with at least ½ c. of kombucha. You will use this for your next batch.

You will notice that you now have a baby SCOBY, too. Your brew will grow a new one every time, so you can use this to start a second gallon, give it to a friend, compost it, or simply throw it away (that is, throw away the old one). If you want, you can do a second ferment with some juice so that it tastes kind of like fruit flavored soda. This is how we prefer it.

Choose juice that has no pulp in it. Cherry, grape, blueberry, pomegranate, cranberry, strawberry – these are all good, but dream up whatever you want (lemon, ginger, etc.). You can use a combination, too. You will need 1 oz. of juice per 16 oz. bottle. You can find good bottles at any home brewing store (beer or wine brewing store). They have glass bottles with flip tops for brewing pop at home; these are good. Old commercial kombucha bottles are good too, but sometimes this is hard to find. In July 2010 kombucha was voluntarily recalled due to a Whole Foods alleging that it contained more alcohol than it was supposed to. The kombucha wasn't being sold in August at the time of this writing, but is due to return to shelves sometime in 2010. In the mean time, just go to a brewing store and buy good bottles.

To bottle your kombucha, pour the juice into the bottom of each bottle. Then, add kombucha until just below the top. Put the lid on, making sure it is air-tight. Allow these bottles to sit on the counter for 2 – 3 more days, then put them in the fridge. They are ready to drink once they are cold. Be careful! Open them over the sink, because they may explode! They will taste very much like soda, and should be nice and carbonated. Many people use them to replace either soda or an energy drink (they'll provide energy, but no crash) for this reason.

If your kombucha isn't very fizzy, the best remedy is to use more prepared kombucha in your new brew. Adding this kombucha causes the pH of your sweet tea to lower. This acidity prevents unwanted mold or other contaminants from growing in your tea. The more tea you use (ideally 1 – 2 cups; ½ c. is the minimum), the more consistent and carbonated your brew will be.

If you somehow do not have kombucha for your brew, adding a bit of pasteurized apple cider vinegar will lower the pH sufficiently to prevent mold growth.

If your brew does spoil somehow (unlikely) or become contaminated, you will know. Fuzzy, black mold will grow on top of the SCOBY. It will look bad. The perfect balance of the bacteria and yeasts in the SCOBY culture make this highly unlikely.

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In fact, I had to leave a SCOBY in sweet tea for several months before I saw any black mold forming (though I did eventually get some). By this time, the tea was so heavily vinegar-ish it would have been undrinkable, and the jar was more SCOBY than tea.

If you note foamy, whitish “mold” growing on top – this is normal. This is simply a new baby SCOBY forming. Long, brown strings hanging from the bottom of the SCOBY or floating in your tea are also normal, and consuming them are safe and healthy, albeit not very palatable to many. It’s best to remove them from each individual bottle as you’re ready to drink it and not to strain the tea, because this removes some of the beneficial cultures and some people note that the tea is no longer carbonated when they do this.

Resources:

<http://www.foodrenegade.com/kombucha-health-benefits/t>

<http://www.kitchenstewardship.com/2009/04/13/monday-mission-homemade-yogurt-the-easy-way/>

Sugar is bad for you.

There, I said it. However, living completely without sugar, while certainly possible, isn't acceptable or ideal to most. Having some form of sweet is good, sometimes. Our goal should certainly be to reduce the amount of sugar that we're consuming, and choose different, less refined forms of it. But eliminating all sugar just isn't likely for most people, which is fine. We need to strike balance.

Eliminating the sugar in processed foods will be simple if you start using recipes from this book instead of buying pre-made foods. Sugar is added to just about everything to improve texture and flavor. But it just isn't necessary in many food items. Besides these processed foods, we also tend to add a lot of sugar to our cakes, cookies, and other desserts (I have recipes in here for low-sugar dessert recipes that are really quite sweet!). We also add them to tea and other drinks. In these cases, finding different forms of sugar would be helpful, as well as using less.

First, though, let's look at the "bad" sweeteners:

White sugar

We all know this is bad. It's highly refined, bleached white sugar cane or beet that has been stripped of basically all its nutrients. It is pure carbohydrate. It is also often GMO these days. It is sucrose, which is difficult to digest (must be first broken down into glucose, a form the body can actually use), and it will spike your blood sugar and do all kinds of wild, horrible things to you. It's responsible for our epidemic of diabetes and heart disease, etc. because of the stress digesting it puts on your body. It can be used minimally in baking (if you must!) and is fine for kombucha (since the growing organisms completely consume and transform it), but generally you want to avoid this.

High-Fructose Corn Syrup, Agave Nectar

Surprised to see them linked together? I was too, at first. Unfortunately agave nectar is not a natural product. The sap of the agave plant is typically used to make tequila, which isn't sweet at all. It has to be heavily boiled down or chemically extracted to actually become sweet. And once it does, it has more fructose in it than HFCS! Some still use it as a health food, but it's probably safer to avoid it. Sweeteners that contain high levels of fructose have been shown to increase rates of diabetes and obesity (more so than white sugar) and even to cause cancer to grow more rapidly. Definitely not something you want to mess with.

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Artificial Sugars

Splenda. Equal/Nutrasweet/Aminosweet (aspartame). Sweet'n'Low (saccharin). These are awful, awful poisons. Yes, poison. You should never, ever consume them under any circumstances. They were just barely approved for use in food (especially aspartame) and cause all kinds of side effects. They are not “made from sugar,” no matter what the commercials claim. They do not taste like sugar, they taste like chemicals. There is no proof that they are metabolized without any calories. Some contain chlorine (Splenda). They can cause migraines, weight gain (yes!), and all kinds of horrifying symptoms. Not to mention they're clearly not natural. Skip them and save your health!

Now, onto the good (or mostly good) sweeteners.

Stevia

The jury's still out on this one. It tastes chemical-like to me. But generally, using the leaves from the Stevia plant is safe and natural, and contains no calories (many swear by Stevia and use nothing else). So is using the liquid extract. Using Truvia, Stevia powder, or other refined forms of Stevia is probably not a good idea. Only a tiny bit is needed because it's very, very powerful. In baking, you will want to combine this with some other form of sweetener.

Organic cane sugar

This is basically less refined, non-GMO white sugar. It's acceptable sometimes, but shouldn't be heavily used.

Turbinado sugar

This is even less refined cane sugar. It's sometimes sold under the brand name “Sugar in the Raw” and is light brown crystals. This can be subbed 1:1 for white sugar and is okay in moderation.

Sucanat/Rapidura

This is the least refined cane sugar. It's brown and is basically dried, cut sugar cane. It doesn't look the same as other sugar crystals. If you need to use “sugar,” this is the best one to use.

Raw honey

Honey is a great natural sweetener. It's best to get it raw, unheated (grocery store honey is pasteurized, typically). It is sweeter than sugar so less is needed. There are many flavors or varieties, depending on what the bees have been eating, so if you don't think you like honey, seek a good, local source and try some different varieties. Clover honey is typically the only one sold in grocery stores, but ones from local producers can taste vastly different (including chocolate overtones, mint overtones, etc.).

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Maple syrup

While this is clearly heated, it's also fairly safe. It's sweet, so you don't need much. It's also easily produced at home (tap a tree, boil sap) and doesn't require fancy chemical processing. Buy it locally and use it just like sugar, just use less.

Maple syrup/Palm sugar/Coconut sugar

These are made from the plants listed and are all supposed to be very safe, albeit very expensive. I haven't experimented with any of them yet and none of my recipes in this book call for them. But if you were so inclined, you could use them. It also contains many trace nutrients, making it a good choice for occasional use.

Cooking real food doesn't have to require fancy kitchen tools and gadgets. However, you will need many basic kitchen items, and some of the "fancy" stuff would be really nice to have, although not necessary. Here's a list of all the things you will want to have, or may want to have in your kitchen to make cooking all this stuff a bit easier.

Must have

- Crock-pot/slow cooker
- Large stock pot (16 qt.)
- Bamboo/wooden spoons
- Baking sheets
- 9x13 baking pan
- Loaf pan
- Ladle
- Blender
- Oven/stove
- Knife (good chopping knife)
- Cheese grater
- Large mixing bowls
- Cutting board
- Measuring cups and spoons

Nice to have

- Ice cream maker
- Dehydrator
- High-quality blender (Vitamix)
- Food processor
- Stand mixer
- Spice or grain grinder

You really must have basic kitchen equipment: cutting boards, cheese grater, mixing spoons, mixing bowls, a nice cutting knife. But no kitchen is complete without these, even if the only cooking you're doing is mixing up a box of muffins. There is nothing on the "must have" list that a decently stocked kitchen wouldn't have. When selecting a knife, please choose a decent quality one. You'll get frustrated with flimsy knives very quickly as they won't be sharp enough to do much for you. You get what you pay for, and a knife is something you will use all the time.

On the "nice to have" list, though, many people don't have those items. I don't even have some of them! An ice cream maker has been so nice to have, because I really do make ice cream very often – a few times a week. I've included an ice cream recipe in this book, and you will need a maker if you want to try this recipe.

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I use my dehydrator very often, too, for drying grains, drying herbs, and even making yogurt. My Vitamix is very important to me because I use it for smoothies, chopping veggies, grinding grains, and lots more. I use it daily. It does what a regular blender just can't. But, it isn't absolutely crucial to have, just really nice.

There are plenty more kitchen tools that I consider practically frivolous, but that I'd love to have someday! These include a pasta maker, apple peeler, extra knives, meat grinder, mandolin slicer, etc. They are on my "wish list" but by no means do you need any of them to accomplish the recipes in this book!

If you're feeling overwhelmed already by all the research I've presented and the "new" stuff to do, relax. Take everything in baby steps. You don't have to do it all at once. Choose a few easy-sounding recipes and try those, then come back to all this information. Here are some baby steps you can work through when you're ready.

1. Buy good eggs
2. Choose healthier fats
3. Buy some organic produce (dirty dozen)
4. Choose one food ingredient to avoid (HFCS, MSG)
5. Replace white sugar with healthier alternatives (sucanat, raw honey, etc.)
6. Buy good milk, or milk substitute (coconut milk -- why not soy? Check my blog)
7. Replace white flour and white flour products with healthier alternatives (whole wheat, spelt, etc.)
8. Try making your own chicken or beef stock
9. Learn to bake your own bread
10. Reduce reliance on packaged/prepared meals (replace one store-bought item per day)
11. Reduce consumption of factory-farmed meat, and replace it with pastured meats (one meat at a time)
12. Try sprouting grains
13. Reduce the amount of sugar in your diet
14. Increase the amount of fat in your diet
15. Find healthier snack options
16. Try making kombucha or yogurt
17. Start meal planning
18. Reduce your consumption of grains
19. Avoid canned items (replace with glass bottles or from-scratch)
20. Reduce/Eliminate the use of the microwave

The original version of this list, along with more details, can be found here:

<http://www.modernalternativemama.com/blog/2010/4/10/baby-steps-in-the-kitchen-wrap-up.html>

When shopping for good quality food, you need to know your source. That means that your local grocery store probably just isn't going to cut it for most things. There will be some things you can buy there – condiments (maybe), yogurt, etc. if you read labels carefully. But if you are looking for whole, unground grains, pastured meats and eggs, raw dairy products – you simply won't find them in a regular grocery store. There are usually several options for finding what you want, though.

Health Food Stores

These are probably the most commonly known options. They will generally carry raw milk cheese, pastured meats, whole grains, and other slightly obscure items. They will not have the cheapest prices, but they will probably have the items you are looking for. Keep in mind, however, that health food stores are becoming more mainstream, and they are catering to the “mainstream organic” crowd. This is the crowd that wants organic food, but they want it to resemble the stuff they usually eat. This means a lot of packaged, processed food with the word “organic” or worse, “natural” slapped on it. Avoid this and seek organic produce, meat, and dairy products and don't buy the processed foods. It's the same as any other grocery store: shop the perimeter.

Farmer's Markets

If you have one near you, take advantage of it! Many farmers gather all in one place at a specified time and bring their meat, eggs, cheese, produce, jams, honey, baked goods, etc. to sell. Stick to the whole foods ingredients if you don't want to walk away with a huge bill. This produce is typically freshly picked (usually that morning), so it has the most nutrients. Even if it's not organic, it may be your best option. Make sure you talk to the farmers you buy from and learn how they raise the food. Do they feed their beef corn? You may be surprised by the answer. Do their cured meats contain nitrites? Do they spray their apples? It's good to know the answers so you can make an informed decision. Prices are often good here because it's the farmers selling directly to you, no middlemen to force mark ups.

Amazon

When you can't find what you want locally, turn to the internet. Amazon has a surprisingly large selection of organic and natural products now. While many are processed, you can find several that are good. They have nice organic tea, vanilla beans, grains, flours, coconut oil, and other dry goods at decent prices.

Online Coops/health food stores

There are several online stores from which to buy. Azure Standard is a very popular one, and in states where they have drop points, quite frugal as well (shipping is expensive).

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U.S. Wellness Meats is another good site to check. Tropical Traditions has a great selection of products as well.

Local Coops

There may be a local coop that has products available from a local farmer. You can check Craig's List or other community boards to see if there is one in your area. If you are seeking raw milk and it is illegal in your state to buy directly, you can find cow share programs through these coops so that you can still obtain the raw milk.

Farms

Your best bet is to shop directly with farms. You can look at www.localharvest.org or www.eatwild.com to search for farms in your state. If you go driving in the country, look for signs. Ask friends or look on Craig's list too. Many farms are sort of "underground" because they don't have the money for advertising, but once you find one or two you can often find many more. They all seem to know each other. If you go directly to a farm, you can get the best prices on food. You can even participate in a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) where you pay a fee for a season of produce and also help in the garden (not all CSAs require helping). These can be great sources for large amounts of produce if you are interested in freezing or canning; or if you are looking for a bulk meat purchase as well. If you purchase ¼ cow, you will often get steaks for only \$3/lb. instead of \$12/lb. or more that retail would be. There are many, many great options when shopping directly from farms.

My recommendation is to find local farms and buy what you can there; supplement with health food websites and local health food stores, buying what you can't get at the farms.

As far as what to buy, here is a list of foods that are good to have around:

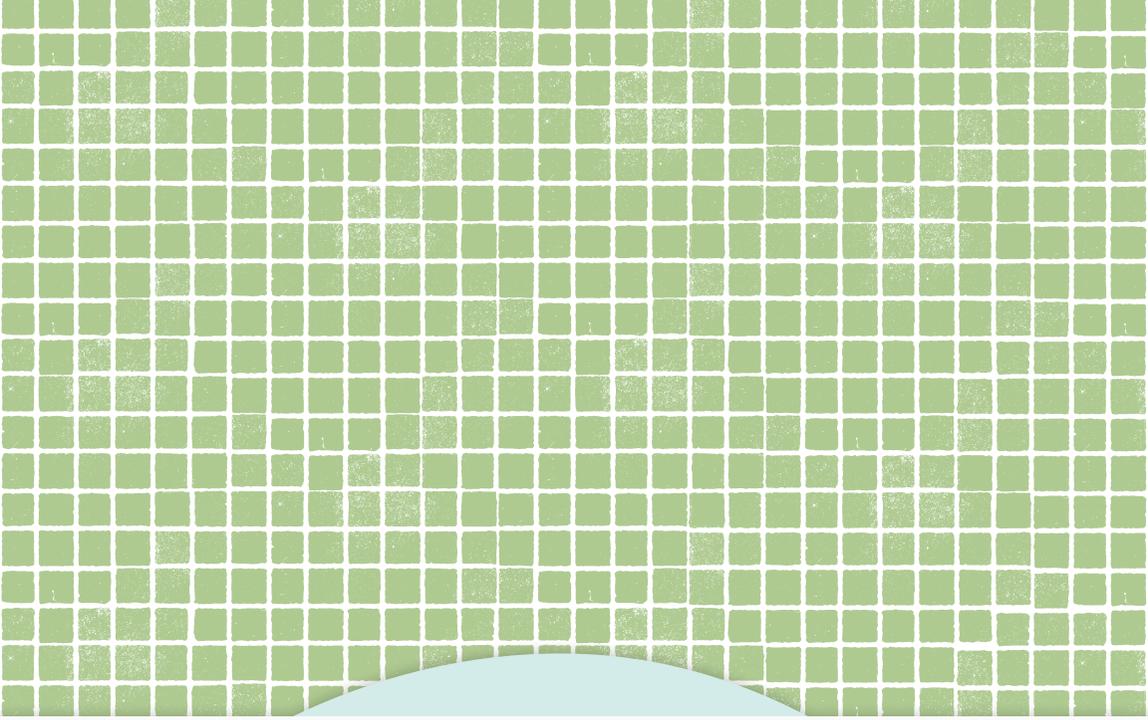
- *Grass-fed beef
- *Pastured chicken
- *Eggs from pastured chickens
- *Butter from grass-fed cows
- *Extra virgin coconut oil
- *Extra virgin olive oil
- *Organic spices (whatever types you like; oregano, basil, thyme, etc.)
- *Natural sea salt
- *Raw honey
- *Sucanat
- *Live-culture yogurt (I buy Dannon)
- *Raw milk or low-temp pasteurized, non-homogenized, grass-fed milk
- *Buttermilk (whole, not low-fat)
- *Raw nuts and seeds
- *Any organic fruits/vegetables



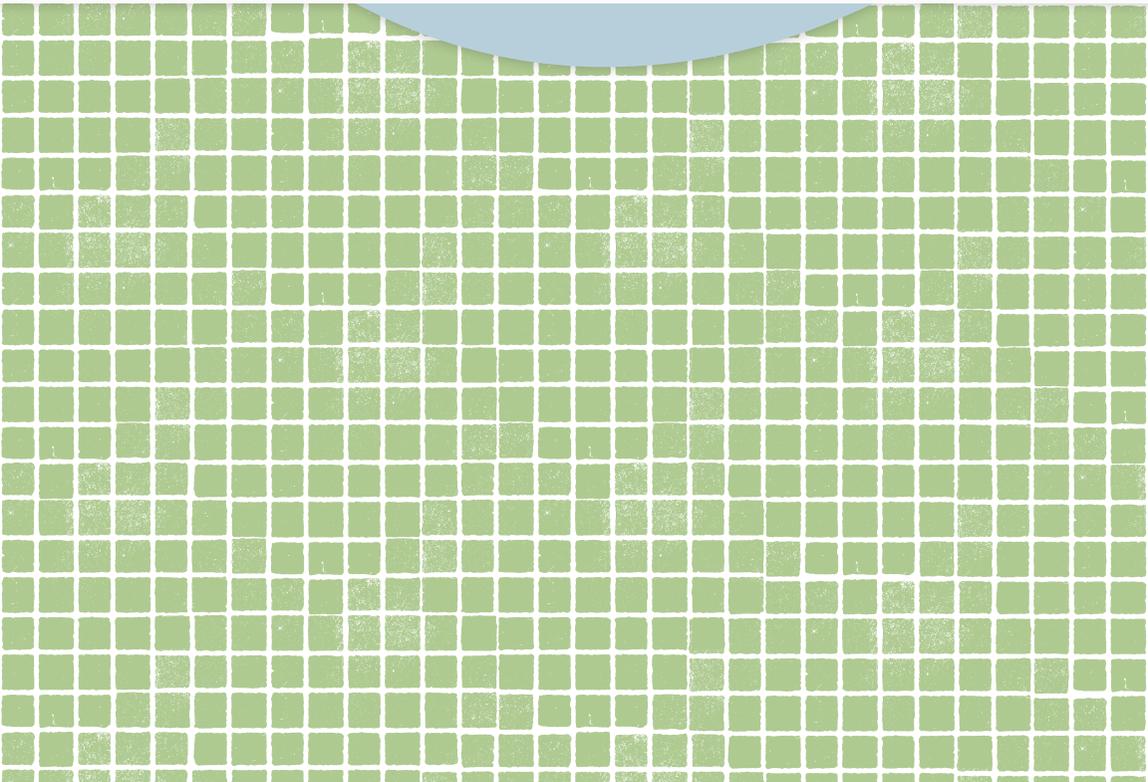
Recipes

Now that you've read all about the basic procedures and philosophies behind eating real food, it's time to get to the "real" stuff – how to make it! These recipes are generally simple and for recognizable dishes. Kids will eat it, friends who aren't into "real food" will eat it. The recipes are also fairly versatile and easily adapted for your kitchen.

Look for specific hints and variations with each recipe so that you can adapt them as necessary to suit your family's tastes! Enjoy!



Main Dishes



One day I decided I wanted to make marinated chicken for dinner, so I headed to the store to buy a bottled marinade (I know – how silly!). As I read the ingredients, I realized that all the marinades had water and high fructose corn syrup as their primary ingredients! I decided not to buy any and figured, how hard could it be to create my own? All you need is a liquid, an acid, and spices. This is what I came up with and we love it!

Ingredients:

Juice of 1 lemon (or 2 tbsp. of another acid, like apple cider vinegar)
1 cup of water (or as needed to cover the chicken)
1/4 cup of onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
1/4 tsp. black pepper
1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes
1/2 tsp. sea salt
1/2 tsp. thyme (or basil)
1/4 tsp. sage

Directions:

Mix all ingredients together, then add chicken. Cover with a towel or plastic wrap and place in the fridge. Marinate overnight, or better, 24 hours. Cook as desired (grilling is good). This chicken is great served as is, or chopped and added to a sandwich, or breaded after marinating and fried.

You can cook it in a frying pan with a little lard or palm oil and some chopped or sliced onions, green peppers and mushrooms for a Chicken Philly sandwich. It also works great wrapped in bacon and topped with Gruyere cheese. There are all kinds of ideas! Makes enough marinade for 1 – 2 lbs. of chicken.
Serves 3 – 4.

Prep time: 10 min.

Wait time: 4 – 24 hours

Cook time: 20 minutes

Serving suggestion:

Serve with Cheesy Potatoes or steamed broccoli with Cheese Sauce!



This is a very basic, easy recipe. Everyone should know how to do it! When you make it, you'll be surprised at how simple it really is.

Ingredients:

1 whole chicken (4 – 6 lbs.)

Sea salt

Black pepper

1 small onion

Directions:

Thaw the chicken, if frozen, overnight in the fridge. Unwrap it and rinse it in cool water. Place it in a roasting pan, breast-side up. Cut an onion in half and peel it. Place this inside the chicken's cavity. Sprinkle some sea salt in the cavity also (about ½ tsp.). If you'd like to stuff it with anything else (bread stuffing, sausage, etc.) you can do this too. Sprinkle sea salt and black pepper over the outside of the chicken. Place it in the oven at 325 for 2 – 3 hours, until the chicken is golden brown. Remove from the oven, allow it to cool, and serve. Serves 4 – 6.

To make gravy to serve with the chicken, remove the chicken from its roasting pan. Pour 2 cups cold water into the pan, and use a bamboo spoon to scrape the drippings up. Pour the liquid into a small saucepan. Add 1 tsp. sea salt, 2 tbsp. minced onion, and 2 tbsp. arrowroot powder. Stir to combine. Heat the gravy on medium until it boils, stirring frequently. Once it is thickened, it's done! If the gravy doesn't get as thick as you would like, add an additional 1 tbsp. arrowroot powder to a small amount of COLD water, then pour this mixture into the gravy (if you add the powder to hot liquids it will become lumpy). Once it is boiling, keep stirring it until it is thick. Serve immediately, or freeze and keep until later.

To make mashed potatoes, peel, chop, and boil potatoes for about 20 minutes, until potatoes feel soft when stuck with a fork. Drain. Add whole milk or cream, butter, and a bit of salt (add a little bit at a time, to taste). Parsley is optional. Mash the potatoes and stir it all together. Serve immediately.

This makes a wonderful, “fancy” meal, yet it is so simple!

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 2 – 3 hours

Serving suggestion: Serve with mashed potatoes and gravy, and make ice cream for dessert!

There's something simply delicious about fried chicken, but buying it at a restaurant or even packages at the store just isn't healthy. There are preservatives in the breading, the chicken is usually poorly sourced, MSG is often involved, and the oils used for frying are extremely unhealthy for you. To find out why, please read my blog. However, you can still enjoy delicious, moist fried chicken at home!

If you're looking to save time, it is possible to follow this recipe up through the preparation, then freeze the chicken before frying it. This way when you want chicken, you need only go to the freezer to pull out pre-breaded, healthy chicken and fry it up.

Ingredients:

Breading

2 c. sprouted flour
1 tsp. sea salt
1/2 tsp. ground mustard
1 tsp. parsley
1/2 tsp. black pepper
1/2 tsp. onion powder
1/2 tsp. paprika

Batter

1 egg
1 c. cream OR buttermilk

2 lbs. of chicken, cut*
Palm shortening or lard for frying



Directions:

Mix all ingredients for the breading together in a large bowl and set them aside. In another bowl, mix together the batter ingredients. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over low-medium heat. It is ready when a small piece of chicken begins to sizzle immediately upon being put in the oil, but does not boil hard or immediately burn (start it off lower than you think you need, you can always make it hotter). Chicken should be thawed and cut to the desired size. Dip the chicken into the breading mix, then into the batter mix, then back into the breading mix, coating completely. This "double coating" helps to seal in the wonderful moisture and gives the chicken its amazing texture.

Add the breaded chicken to the oil and fry it for 5 – 8 minutes per side, or until golden brown (exact cooking times will vary based on size of the chicken pieces, temperature of the oil, etc.).

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Remove from the pan and place on a cloth-covered plate to absorb any excess oil. Repeat the procedure for the remaining chicken pieces. Serve immediately. Serves 4 – 6.

*You can cut thin, large pieces (such as for chicken parmesan), chicken strips, or even chicken nuggets.

Prep time: 30 min.

Cook time: 45 – 60 min.

Serving Suggestion: Make Perfect Fries to go along with it, and add a green salad, some iced tea, and homemade ice cream!

We love meatballs here. Bekah eats them plain. I add them to pasta dishes, soups, even sandwiches. They freeze well, too, so I can make a couple pounds at once and keep them in meal-sized packages for later. It saves a lot of time! Make them big, make them bite-sized, make a variety of sizes for many different uses!

Ingredients:

1.5 lbs. ground turkey or beef
1 egg
1/2 c. coconut flour
1/2 c. tomato juice
1/2 c. onion, minced
1 – 2 cloves of garlic, minced
1/2 tsp. oregano
1 tsp. basil
1 tsp. parsley
1 tsp. fennel seed (opt.)
1 tsp. sea salt
1/2 tsp. pepper

Directions:

Mix all ingredients together thoroughly. Add coconut flour as needed to keep mixture moist but not too wet. Shape into balls and bake at 350 for 30 – 40 minutes, depending on size. Serve with your favorite sauce and/or pasta. Mini-meatballs also go well in soups, like Italian Wedding Soup. Serves 4 – 6.

Prep time: 20 min.

Cook time: 30 – 40 min.

Serving Suggestion: Serve with Tomato Sauce and your favorite pasta!

I used to always want to make tomato sauce from scratch when I was a teenager and it just never worked. Right after I got married, suddenly I found the perfect recipe! I make this as my go-to sauce recipe now for just about everything Italian.

Ingredients:

2 tbsp. olive oil

1/2 cup onion, minced

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 tsp. oregano

1/2 tsp. basil

1 24-oz. jar crushed or strained tomatoes (or 3 c. fresh tomato puree)

Salt and pepper to taste (small amounts)

Directions:

Heat olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, cook until soft (5 min. or so). Add oregano, basil, and tomatoes. Stir. Cook 1 – 2 hours on low until flavors are blended. (If desired, you can add about 1 lb. of meat to the oil, onions and garlic and cook until browned before adding the tomatoes.)



This recipe also cans well, if you are inclined to do so. Simply cook 25 c. of tomato puree down until it is a thin sauce (just a bit thinner than you'd like). Add the olive oil, onion, garlic, and spices and cook another 30 – 60 minutes until thickened. Pour into jars and process in a hot water bath for 30 minutes. Please read more about canning on my blog. Serves 4 – 6.

Prep time: 10 min.

Cook time: 30 – 45 min.

Serving Suggestion: Use as Pizza sauce, or serve with Meatballs!

Since my husband doesn't like tomatoes, he's always preferred his mother's chili, which is a thinner "chili soup" that doesn't have tomato chunks. I took her recipe and added a few extra spices and changed things so the chili is thicker, more whole-foods-friendly (no canned beans) but retains the flavor he likes best.

Ingredients:

1/2 lb. kidney beans, soaked overnight
1 lb. ground beef
2 tbsp. olive oil
1/2 small onion, chopped
2 tbsp. chili powder
1 tbsp. molasses
2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
1 tsp. cumin
2 tsp. onion powder
1 tsp. garlic powder
2 tsp. sea salt
6 c. tomato juice, OR 3 c. puree and 3 c. filtered water

Directions:

The night before you want to make chili, pour the beans into a glass bowl and cover with water by at least 1". They need to soak at least 6 hours. In the morning, cook beef and onion in a frying pan with olive oil over medium heat until beef is no longer pink and onions are soft. Put meat mixture into a slow cooker. Drain the beans and add them. Add all spices, vinegar, and tomato juice. Cook on low 6 – 8 hours, or high 3 – 4 hours. Serves 3 – 4.

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 3 – 8 hours

Serving Suggestion: Top with onions and raw cheddar cheese and serve with sprouted cornbread!



I created this soup a few years ago when I was craving a nice potato soup. It packed up well and I used to take it with me to school when I was finishing college. I've recently tried it again with non-dairy substitutes and it's just as good!

Ingredients:

2 tbsp. butter
1/2 cup onion, chopped
3 strips bacon, chopped
1 carrot, julienned
2 tbsp. flour
2 medium potatoes, chopped
3 cups chicken stock
1/2 tsp. thyme
1/4 tsp. black pepper
1/2 pint cream or milk

Directions:

Melt butter in large saucepan over medium heat. Add onions, bacon, and carrots, cooking until they are soft. Add flour and stir until it is dissolved. Then, add potatoes, spices and stock and cook on medium heat (soup should boil lightly) until potatoes are soft. Stir; add cream. Heat through, remove from heat, and serve immediately. Serves 2.

*Hint: Use a julienne peeler for easy julienned carrots!

Prep time: 15 min.

Cook time: 30 – 45 min.

Serving Suggestion: Top with green onions, bacon, and/or cheddar cheese!

After years of trying to come up with a simple chicken noodle soup recipe and failing, I finally hit upon this one right after I got married. It's still my favorite.

Ingredients:

4 tbsp. butter
4 stalks celery, chopped
4 small carrots, peeled and chopped
1 small white onion, diced
4 – 6 oz. chicken breast OR other chicken meat
8 cups chicken stock
8 oz. noodles
1 tsp. sea salt
1 tsp. celery salt
1/2 tsp. pepper

Directions:

In a large soup pot, sauté onion in butter over medium heat. Add carrot, celery, stock, vegetables, chicken, and spices. Cook 1 – 2 hours, until chicken is tender. Add noodles 5 – 10 minutes before serving. Serves 4 – 6.

Prep time: 20 min.

Cook time: 1 – 2 hours

Serving Suggestion: Serve with a salad or a grilled cheese sandwich (on sprouted bread)!

Roast beef is a wonderful comfort food. There's nothing better than a tender roast smothered in gravy, especially in the winter time. Roasts are actually easy to prepare, too! There are several different ways, so I'll offer you a few options, depending on how much time you have!

Ingredients:

2 – 3 lb. beef roast (bone in or out)
8 c. water or beef stock (water if bone-in roast)
1 small onion, sliced
1 tsp. sea salt
1/2 tsp. black pepper
1/2 tsp. thyme
8 oz. mushrooms (optional)

Directions:

You will need a slow cooker, large stock pot, OR dutch oven. Place the roast in the desired pot along with the water or stock, onion, and spices (add mushrooms if using). Roast in a slow cooker on LOW for 6 – 8 hours; in the oven at 300 for 4 – 6 hours; or on the stove in a stock pot on low for 3 – 4 hours. Just before serving, remove from the pot and de-bone (if necessary) and slice or shred the meat. Serves 4 – 6.

Prep time: 5 min.

Cook time: 3 – 8 hours, depending on method

Serving Suggestion: Serve with mashed potatoes and gravy or roasted potatoes and a salad.

This is my husband's favorite soup. I originally created it right after we got married, and he was hesitant to try it at first. But he loved it so much that he's eaten it everyday for lunch at work for over three years now. He takes it to work potluck parties too and "the soup" has become something of a legend around his office.

Ingredients:

2 tbsp. olive oil
1/3 cup onion, chopped
3/4 cup tomato juice
3 tbsp. cumin
1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper
2 tsp. oregano
1/2 tsp. sea salt, or to taste
1 tsp. cilantro (fresh or dried)
1/2 lb. mixed vegetables (frozen)
1/2 lb. corn (frozen)
6 cups chicken stock
2 large chicken breasts (about 5 – 6 oz. each) OR chicken, bone-in
3/4 cup brown rice, uncooked

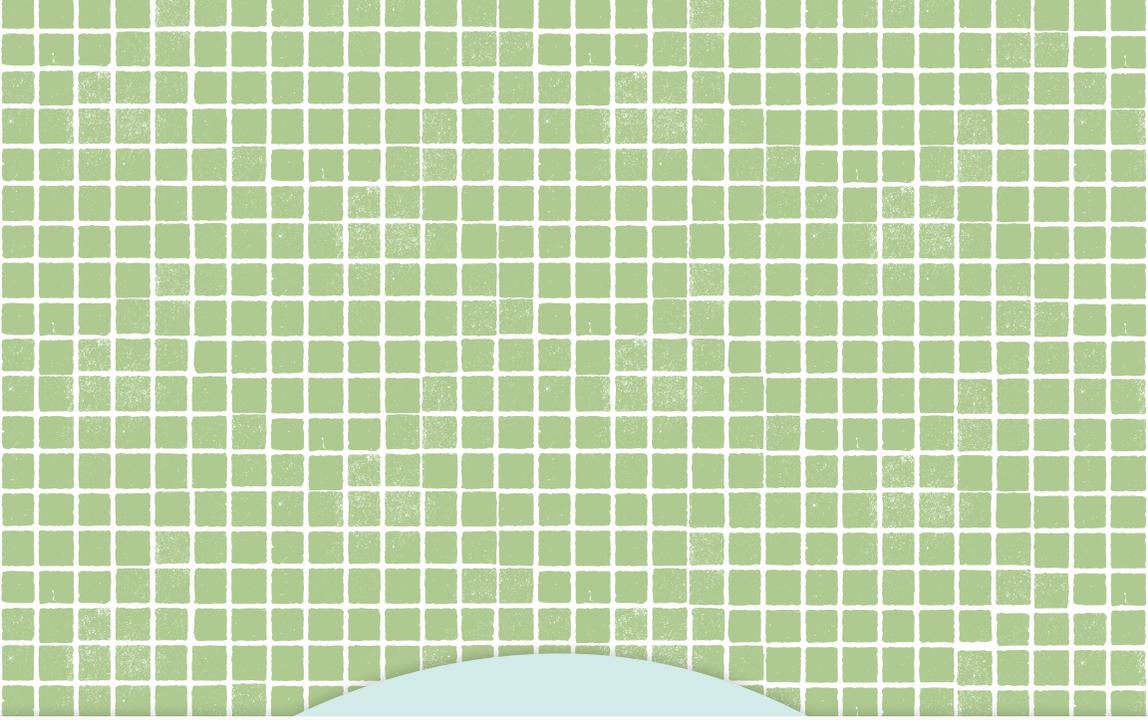
Directions:

Heat a large soup pot on medium. Add the oil and onions and cook until onions are soft, about five minutes. Add tomato juice and all spices, stir. Add vegetables and allow to heat through. Add chicken broth. Taste and adjust spices as necessary. Cumin and oregano should be the primary flavors, and the soup should be stronger/spicier than you will ultimately want it, as the vegetables will make the flavor milder as they cook. Add the chicken breasts (whole). Allow the soup to cook for about 2 hours on low heat. Towards the end of the cooking time, cook the rice separately according to package directions. Just before serving, remove the chicken breasts and cut into bite-sized pieces, and add it back to the soup, OR if using 1/2 chicken, remove it and pull meat off the bones, chop, and add that to the soup. Add the rice as well. Serves 6 – 8.

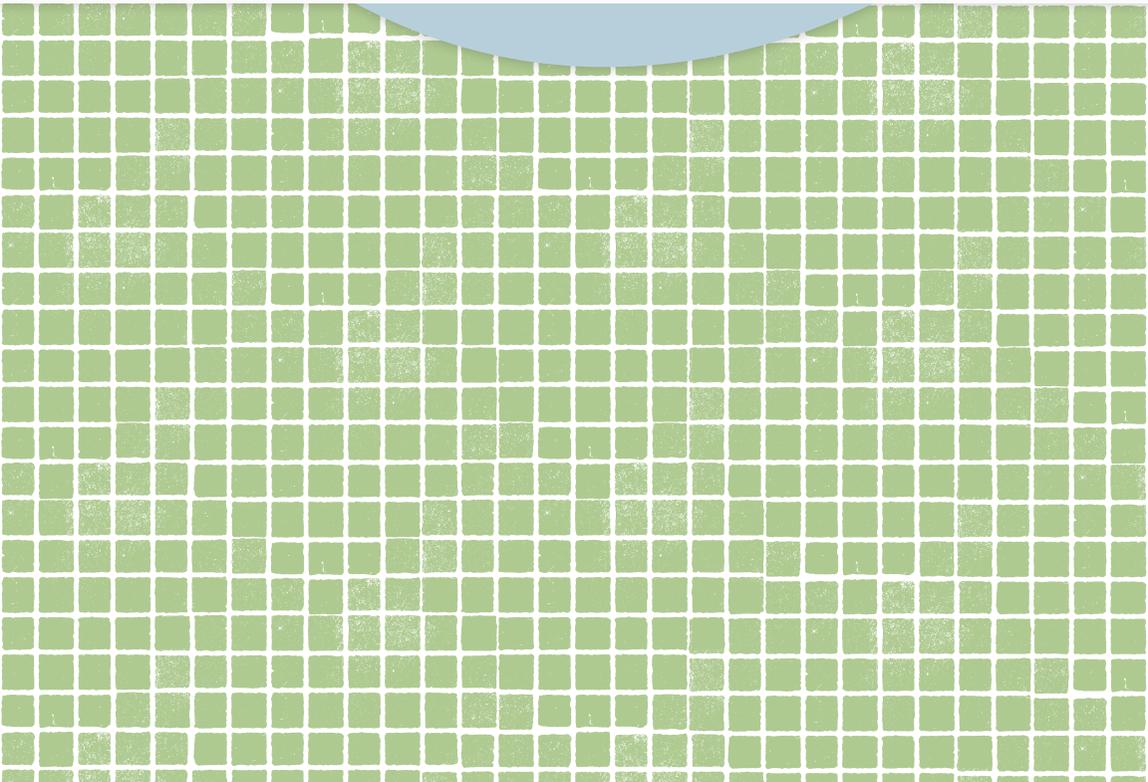
Prep time: 15 min.

Cook time: 2 – 3 hours

Serving Suggestion: Top with raw cheddar and serve with organic corn chips.



Side Dishes



I LOVE cheese sauce, but the commercially available ones are full of MSG and other junk. I needed to find a homemade version that tasted great and was also full of great ingredients. This is it! It also freezes well, so feel free to double or even quadruple the recipe and freeze portions of it for later use. This makes it extremely quick and easy when you need dinner on the table fast.

Ingredients:

2 tbsp. butter

1 tbsp. arrowroot powder

1 c. raw whole milk

1/2 tsp. sea salt (or to taste)

1/2 c. raw cheddar cheese

1/4 c. raw Romano cheese

Directions:

Melt the butter in a medium saucepan. Mix the milk and arrowroot powder in a measuring cup and add to the butter. Stir and cook on medium for just a minute. Remove from heat and add the cheeses, finely shredded, and the salt. Place briefly back on heat and cook and stir until cheeses are melted and mixture is slightly thickened. Serves 2.

Prep time: 5 min.

Cook time: 10 min.

Serving Suggestion: Serve over broccoli or fries, or add jalapeno and serve with organic corn chips.

Who doesn't love a good French fry? I know I do. But most fries are made in unhealthy vegetable oils (which, when heated, form trans fats – ironic, since they're supposed to be trans-fat free!). You can make delicious French fries at home, though, which are also healthy for you! There are two different methods, depending on how much time you have.

Ingredients:

4 – 6 medium potatoes, sliced (your preferred thickness)

Oil for frying (beef tallow, lard, coconut oil)

Sea salt

Directions:

For AMAZING fries, boil a large pot of water. Put your sliced (raw) fries into the water and boil for 2 – 3 minutes: this is called blanching. Remove them from the water and put them on a towel to dry. Meanwhile, heat the oil (beef tallow or lard) in a large frying pan or deep fryer until sizzling (around 400 degrees). Add the blanched potatoes to the oil and cook until golden brown. Remove from the oil and place them on a towel to drain. Sprinkle with sea salt.

For good, and fast fries, place cut potatoes on a baking sheet and coat them with coconut oil. Sprinkle on sea salt. Bake at 425 for 30 – 40 minutes, until crispy and golden. Turn once, halfway through baking time. Serves 4 – 6.

Prep time: 10 min.

Cook time: 60 min. for blanching/frying; 40 min. for baking (and you get to ignore it!)

Serving Suggestion: Serve with cheese sauce and accompany grass-fed burgers!

As a kid, I really loved the cheesy potatoes people always brought to picnics and parties. However, nearly all versions were filled with canned soups and other processed ingredients – yuck! I set out to make a version of this delicious dish that used no processed ingredients and this is what I came up with. In my opinion it's even better!

Ingredients:

3 tbsp. butter
3 slices bacon, chopped
1/3 c. onion, minced
1.5 c. whole milk
1 tbsp. arrowroot powder
1/4 tsp. thyme
6 – 7 medium potatoes, cubed
2 c. raw cheddar cheese
1/2 c. Romano cheese (raw)
16 oz. sour cream, organic
2 tsp. sea salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

Directions:

In a small saucepan, cook bacon until lightly crispy over medium heat. Add butter and onion and cook until onion is soft, about 5 minutes. Add salt, pepper, and thyme. In a small bowl, mix cold milk and arrowroot powder. Add the milk mixture to the saucepan and cook and stir until thickened. Meanwhile, put chopped potatoes in a 9 x 13 baking dish and preheat the oven to 350. Pour milk mixture over potatoes. Stir in sour cream and cheeses, reserving a small amount of cheddar for the top. Bake at 350 for an hour and a half. Serves 6 – 8.

Prep time: 20 min.

Cook time: 90 min.

Serving Suggestion: Serve alongside Fried Chicken, Marinated Chicken, or take it to a barbecue to share!

Fresh salsa is one of the joys of summer time. There's just nothing quite like it. While you can make this salsa in the winter, too, it won't taste the same with under ripe tomatoes flown in from somewhere else in the world, so I wouldn't recommend it. Take advantage of local tomatoes while you can!

Ingredients:

3 – 4 large tomatoes, or 6 – 7 Roma tomatoes

1/4 c. red onion, minced

1 jalapeno, minced (optional)

Juice of 1 lime (more if small)

Sea salt

1/2 c. cilantro leaves (fresh)

Directions:

Chop tomatoes into bite-sized pieces, removing seeds if you like (it's not necessary). Mix tomatoes, onions, jalapeno, and cilantro in a large bowl. Add lime juice and a bit of sea salt (start with about ½ tsp.), stir, and taste. Add more salt and/or more lime juice to taste. Serves 2 – 4.

Prep time: 10 min.

Cook time: None

Serving Suggestion: Serve with tacos or as a snack with organic corn chips.

This is one of my husband's favorite foods, and a typical Southern comfort food. It's easy and fast to make and so yummy you'll wonder why you've never made it before!

Ingredients:

1 lb. pastured breakfast sausage
1/4 c. onion, minced
2 tbsp. butter
4 tbsp. arrowroot powder
4 c. raw milk
1 tsp. sea salt
1/2 tsp. black pepper

Directions:

In a frying pan, cook sausage and onion over medium heat until sausage is browned and onion is soft. Add butter and arrowroot powder and stir together. Add milk and spices and continue to stir over medium heat until the gravy is bubbling and thickened. If necessary, stir together a bit more arrowroot powder with a small amount of COLD milk and add it to the pan to thicken the gravy to the texture you'd like. Serves 4 – 6.

Prep time: 5 min.

Cook time: 10 min.

Serving Suggestion: Serve over Sprouted Biscuits.

Many waiters at upscale establishments learn to make their own versions of Caesar salad, so they can prepare it right at the table to the delight of their customers. My Uncle Jim had learned to do this when he was young and still prepares it from time to time for his family. One night when we visited, he prepared it for us. I loved it! I've never had a Caesar salad as good as his, but that doesn't stop me from constantly trying to find it again. This version is delicious, and it's also very healthy!

Ingredients:

2 large cloves garlic
3 anchovy filets, mashed
1 egg
3 tbsp. red wine vinegar
2 tbsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. sea salt
1/2 tsp. basil
1/2 tsp. thyme
1/2 c. olive oil

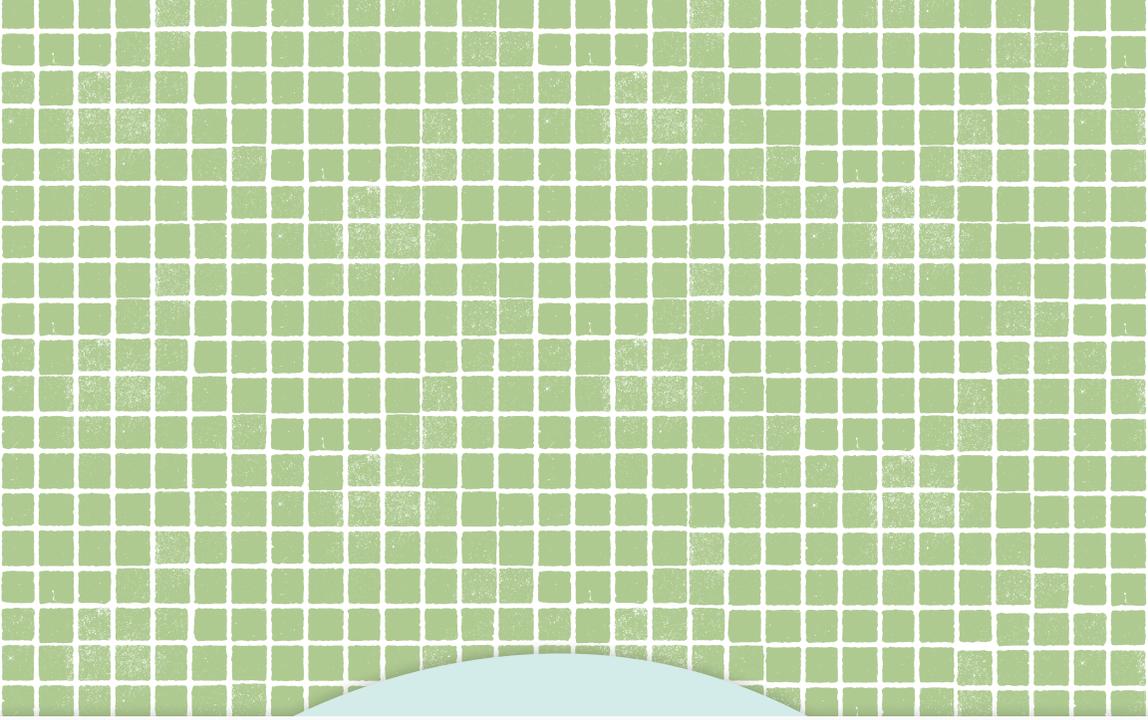


Directions:

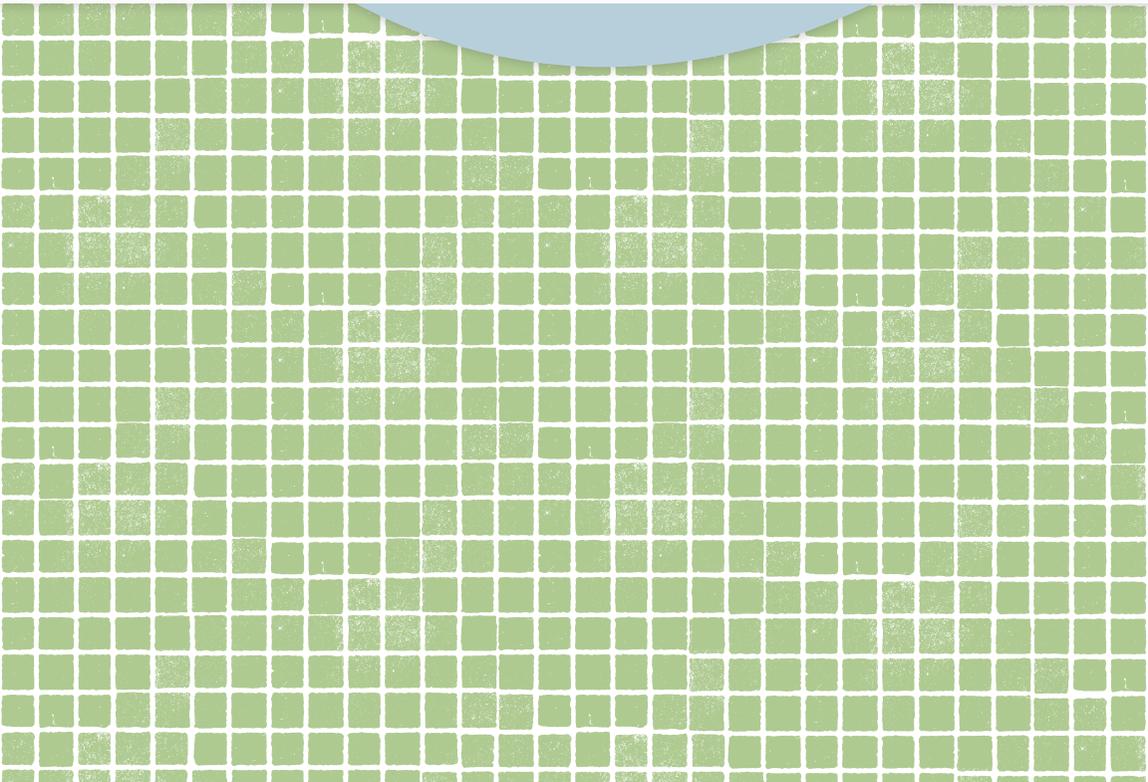
First, use a microplane grater to crush your garlic. If you don't have one (and you should!), you can mince it, but it'll be better incorporated into the dressing if you can really crush it. Then, go ahead and mash up your anchovy filets. I suppose you could use a bit of anchovy paste, too; or you can actually leave them out if you really don't like them. Add the red wine vinegar. (You could use apple cider vinegar if you prefer.) Then, coddle your egg. Bring a pot of water to a boil on the stove, then add the egg for exactly 45 seconds. Crack your egg into your dressing and whisk it in. Add your lemon juice now. Then, add your spices; salt, thyme, basil. Now, slowly stream in your olive oil. If you go too fast, the dressing won't emulsify, meaning that your oil will separate from your other ingredients. Make sure you are whisking as you do this. Then, pour your dressing into a bottle. Serves 2 – 3.

Prep time: 10 min.

Serving Suggestion: Serve with crisp Romaine lettuce, croutons, and parmesan cheese for a wonderful Caesar salad!



Breads



I've searched for a good pancake recipe for a long time. My favorite one was full of white flour and sugar. Other versions just didn't taste very good. This version, however, is fluffy, lightly sweet, and delicious.

Ingredients:

1 ¼ c. sprouted flour
3 tbsp. organic sucanat
1/2 tsp. sea salt
1 tsp. baking soda
1 egg
1 c. cultured buttermilk (or as needed)
1 tsp. vanilla

Directions:

Mix all dry ingredients together. Add egg, vanilla and stir. Add buttermilk as needed to create desired texture (fairly thick, though you may thin it if you prefer), about one cup. Heat a cast-iron pan over medium heat and melt butter in it. It is very important that the pan be preheated, or the pancakes won't rise. Add batter in small scoops to form pancakes 3 – 4" in diameter. Cook pancakes for about 3 – 4 minutes on each side. Add more butter to the pan in between batches. Serve the finished pancakes with butter and real maple syrup. Serves 4 – 6.

Variation: Add 2 tbsp. butter and bake as waffles instead.

This recipe freezes well! Simply put frozen pancakes in the toaster when you want them for a fast breakfast.

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 5 – 8 min. per batch (3 – 4 batches)

Serving suggestion: Pair with scrambled eggs and sausage for a healthy, protein-filled breakfast!

This is my FAVORITE bread recipe, the one I keep coming back to no matter what. It's adapted from a white-sugar-and-flour recipe I found in an old Doubleday cookbook.

Ingredients:

1/4 c. milk
1/4 c. coconut oil (or butter)
1/4 c. raw honey
2 tsp. sea salt
1.5 c. warm water
2.5 tsp. yeast
4 – 5 c. spelt flour (or finely ground whole wheat)

Directions:

Heat milk in a pan until bubbles begin to form, then remove from heat. Add coconut oil, honey, and salt; stir and allow the mixture to cool. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, add warm water and yeast together (a small amount of honey will help it proof; I usually add this, no more than a tsp.). When the milk mixture is about room temperature and the yeast is puffy, add the milk to the yeast and stir.

Begin adding flour slowly, about 1 c. at a time. Once it is a thick batter, add less at a time, about 1/2 c. As the mixture pulls away from the bowl and begins to really stick to the spoon, use your hands to knead the bread instead. Continue to add flour in small amounts and knead until the dough is smooth and elastic and no longer sticky, about 10 min. Place the bread in a warm place to rise until doubled, about one hour.

Punch it down and knead it for just a minute, then divide it in half and shape into two loaves. Place in two greased loaf pans (I use coconut oil) and allow to rise until at least doubled, about another hour. The loaves should fill the pans and crest the top. In the last 10 min. of rising, preheat the oven to 350 (400 if using milk/butter). Place the loaves carefully into the preheated oven (too much motion can cause them to fall; if this happens, punch them down and knead them for a min. and allow to rise again) and bake 35 – 40 min. or until golden brown. Makes 2 loaves.

*Note: This recipe doesn't work as well with sprouted flour, because sprouting interferes with gluten development, but it is still possible.

Prep time: 10 – 15 min.

Wait time: 2 – 3 hours

Cook time: 35 – 40 min.

Serving Suggestion: Serve with plenty of real butter and a little raw honey for a sweet treat!

We created this recipe after using many different pizza dough recipes and combining all our favorite ones.

Ingredients:

2 tsp. yeast
3/4 c. warm water
1/4 tsp. basil (opt.)
1 clove garlic, minced (opt.)
2 tsp. salt
2 tbsp. olive oil
3 – 4 c. sprouted flour

Directions:

In a large bowl, mix yeast, warm water (not warmer than 120 degrees). Allow to sit about 5 minutes or until foamy. Add any optional spices, salt, and olive oil. Then, begin to add the flour about ½ - 1 c. at a time, stirring to incorporate thoroughly. When the dough becomes thick, difficult to stir, and pulls away from the bowl, add more flour but use your hands to knead the dough. When it is smooth, stretchy, and only slightly sticky (if you add too much flour it will become heavy and won't rise and the texture won't be as nice in the finished pizza), it is done.

Allow the dough to rise until doubled, about one hour. Then punch it down. Spread it onto pizza pans (1 large, or 2 – 3 medium, depending on crust thickness). Pre-bake at 425 for 5 minutes (if you don't, your crust will get soggy), then remove and top as desired. At this point, the pizzas can be wrapped tightly and frozen for later. Either way, bake at 425 for 15 – 25 minutes, until crust is golden brown and cheese is melted. Makes 1 – 3 pizzas.

Prep time: 15 – 20 min.

Wait time: 1 – 2 hours

Cook time: 15 – 25 min.

Serving Suggestion: Top with Tomato Sauce, fresh mozzarella, and pastured sausage for a wonderful pizza!

Last weekend I had biscuits and gravy on my meal plan. My husband had requested it. The last time I'd tried to make it, it didn't come out too well. The biscuits were dry and tough and strange-flavored; the gravy had been thin. The whole meal was...blah. So this time, I decided not to look up a recipe for biscuits, but just to go by feel and see what I came up with (and I measured, in case it was good). It was SO delicious I just have to share it with you!

Ingredients:

About 2 c. sprouted spelt flour (I had just under)

1 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. salt

4 tbsp. butter

1 c. buttermilk

Flour for dusting

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Mix the flour, baking soda, and salt together. Add the butter (cold) and cut it in, leaving some large chunks (about the size of peas). Don't be afraid to do it a lot less than you think you need to -- this is the secret to fluffy biscuits!! (By the time I was completely finished working with my dough, I had chunks of butter sticking out everywhere. Some even melted in the oven as I put the biscuits in and turned brown on my baking sheet. You NEED the dough to look like this!)



Add buttermilk a little at a time, stirring gently until incorporated. Put the dough onto a floured cutting board (it will be sticky) and fold it over a few times. Make it into a round about 1" thick. Cut biscuits in any shape you'd like (I did triangles so I wouldn't have to re-work the dough to cut more, since too much working results in less tender biscuits). Bake for about 15 minutes on an ungreased cookie sheet. Serve warm. Serves 4 – 6.

Prep time: 15 min.

Cook time: 15 min.

Serving Suggestion: Serve with real butter and honey, or with sausage gravy!

These muffins are awesome! I set out to make a (refined) sugar-free version and this is what I came up with. They were delicious, and could be very versatile. Try them and see!

Ingredients:

2 c. sprouted spelt flour
1/2 tsp. sea salt
1 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1 egg
1/4 c. raw honey
2 tbsp. maple syrup
1/4 c. butter, melted
1/2 c. whole milk yogurt

Directions:

Mix together all the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Melt butter in a small saucepan over medium heat. In the pot where you melted the butter (do NOT microwave!!), add egg, syrup, and honey. Stir to combine. Add to the dry ingredients and stir lightly, until just incorporated. Add the yogurt and stir again until all dry ingredients are moistened, but not over mixed. Batter will be a bit lumpy. Bake at 350 for 20 - 25 minutes (or 12 - 15 as mini muffins). Makes 1 doz. regular muffins or about 2.5 doz. mini muffins.

Variations: Add 1 c. fruit (blueberries, chopped apples, raspberries, etc.) to the dry ingredients before mixing wet and dry together. Or, stir in 1 c. chocolate chips, 1 c. nuts, coconut flakes, etc. Additions should be no more than 1 c. total no matter what combinations you choose.

Prep time: 15 min.

Cook time: 15 – 20 min.

Serving suggestion: Top with lightly sweetened cream cheese or real butter!

At this point, I've learned to bake by feel. I combined the following ingredients seeking to replace my husband's favorite coffee cake recipe (which is full of white flour and sugar). This is the closest yet! It's soft, rich, and delicious, although not overly sweet.

Ingredients:

2 c. sprouted flour
3 tsp. baking powder
2 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. sea salt
4 tbsp. butter
1/2 c. grade B maple syrup
3 egg whites
1 tsp. vanilla
3/4 c. sour cream

Topping:

2 tbsp. butter
4 tbsp. flour
3 tsp. cinnamon
3 tbsp. brown sugar

Directions:

Mix dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Melt butter in a small sauce pan and mix in syrup, egg, and vanilla. Add the wet ingredients to the dry. Stir to combine, adding sour cream 1/4 c. at a time until the batter is moist and not too thick (it will still be thicker than you think it should, it's not a runny batter). Spread in a buttered 9 x 13 pan. Mix topping in a small bowl until combined; spread on top. Bake at 350 for 25 min. Serves 6 – 8.

Prep time: 15 min.

Bake time: 25 min.

Serving Suggestion: Serve with a glass of hot herbal tea and some pastured sausage links for a sweet breakfast!



Desserts

Chocolate Chip Cookies

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Who doesn't love a chocolate chip cookie? With the standard "Tollhouse" recipe (full of white sugar, white flour, butter, etc.) declared unhealthy, I've tried many different versions. Here's one we've all enjoyed.

Ingredients:

3/4 cup coconut oil or butter
1/2 cup packed organic brown sugar
1/4 cup sucanat or organic sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla
2 1/2 cups sprouted flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup chocolate chips

Directions:

Mix together sugars and coconut oil. Add egg, beat thoroughly. Add flour, baking soda, and salt; stir to combine. Add chocolate chips and stir. Place in fridge for at least 30 minutes to firm up (can be left overnight or as long as you like). Bake at 350 for 10 - 12 min. Makes 3 – 4 dozen.

Prep time: 20 min.

Wait time: 30 min.

Cook time: 10 – 12 min. per batch (2 – 3 batches)

Serving Suggestion: Serve with real ice cream for a sweet treat!

Ice cream is a perfect summer treat, and this one has all the benefits of raw milk with very little sugar. It's more like an ice-milk than an ice cream as it isn't incredibly thick or creamy, but it's still a wonderful treat and a favorite in our home. Using 1/2 cream will make it thicker and creamier.

Ingredients:

4 c. raw whole milk OR 2 c. raw milk, 2 c. raw cream
3 egg yolks
1/3 c. maple syrup
2 tsp. vanilla extract

Directions:

Add everything to a blender and blend until smooth. Freeze in an ice cream maker according to manufacturer's directions. Serves 8 – 10 (1/2 gallon).

Variations:

- *Add ½ c. chocolate chips
- *Add 1 tsp. mint extract and/or chocolate chips
- *Add ½ c. any type of chopped nuts
- *Add ¼ c. melted chocolate, towards the end of freezing
- *Add ½ c. chopped or pureed fruit
- *Add ½ c. pure raw cacao or cocoa powder
- *Add ½ c. cocoa powder and ¼ c. coconut cream or oil

Prep time: 5 min.

Wait time: 30 min.

Serving suggestion: Serve with Chocolate Chip Cookies for a hot and cold sweet treat!

Smoothies are a wonderful breakfast: fast, easy, and nutritious. They also lend themselves well to any additions you'd like to throw in, like powdered supplements. I usually add spirulina to mine. Some like to add Brewer's yeast, cod liver or fish oil, or other supplements too. Talk to your health care professional.

Ingredients:

1/2 c. orange juice

1/2 c. plain yogurt (full fat)

1 c. frozen fruit (mixed berries, peaches, etc.)

Directions:

Blend everything until smooth. Very simple! Serves 1 (2 cups).

Variations:

Blueberry-pomegranate juice with peaches and strawberries.

Orange juice with banana, coconut oil (or milk) and berries.

Orange-pineapple juice with coconut milk and frozen mango, pineapple, and papaya (tropical!).

Prep time: 5 min.

Cook time: 2 min. (to blend)

Serving Suggestion: Serve with eggs and sausage for a filling, healthy breakfast.

...for now.

This is the first in a series of cookbooks I plan to write. The focus of this book is “basics” – why you should eat differently, how you can eat differently, and simple, recognizable recipes to get you started. But it doesn’t end here. Once you start to eat real food, it becomes a bit of an obsession. You want to eat more and more real food, trying different flavors and different preparations to see what you can come up with.

It’s wonderful, to really taste food again, isn’t it? Not to mention how wonderful you feel!

You will also discover as you take your journey to real food that everyone’s menu and tastes are a little bit different. Some will focus more heavily on meats and dairy, while others will focus more heavily on fruits and vegetables. Neither is wrong because people have different preferences and needs. As long as principles are followed (no processed foods, plenty of good fat), just about anything goes!

See you in the next book!

If you happen to live in Columbus, OH, you're in luck. I do too! I know of many great resources around here for meat, milk, eggs, and produce. Here, I'll share them with you. If you don't happen to live here, sorry. Check out www.eatwild.com for resources near you.

[Flying J Farms*](#)

www.flyingjfarm.com

Grass-fed beef, CSA, seasonal produce, wheat, spelt, and cornmeal, maple syrup

[Wayward Seed Farms^](#)

www.waywardseed.com

Unusual, heirloom vegetables and fruits

[Raisin Rack](#)

www.raisinrack.com

Natural health products, supplements, local produce

[Lynd's Fruit Farm](#)

www.lyndfruitfarm.com

All varieties of apples, peaches, green beans, potatoes, other produce, Amish eggs, cheese, meat, jams and jellies.

[Luginbill Family Farm^](#)

www.luginbillfamilyfarm.com

Milk/herd share, eggs, grass-fed beef, pastured chicken, pork, lamb

[Frijolito Farm](#)

www.frijolitofarm.com

Pastured chicken, eggs, produce, CSA

*Certified organic

^Follows organic methods