



REAL FOOD ON PLANET EARTH

REAL FOODS GUIDE

Real Food: Whole is the Goal

Whole foods nourish the whole person. They come from mother earth and are neither processed nor refined. Whole foods are simple and pure, fed with an abundance of sunshine, nutrient rich soils, and clean seasonal rains which sustain and enliven every part of us. Examples of these foods are: brown rice, quinoa, barley, millet, fresh land and sea vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, fish, and meat from healthy animals. Their varied colors, textures, smells and tastes engage and delight our senses. Their abundant nutrients allow our bodies to renew, repair and revitalize.

On a subtler level, whole foods supply us with unique energetic qualities. Root vegetables give us grounding and staying power, a tenaciousness to take on life's challenges. Leafy green vegetables impart lightness and vibrancy. Whole grains (complex carbohydrates) provide us with a slow-burning, steady and balanced energy. Animal or vegetable protein can promote strength, muscle tone, and stamina.

We feel better and look better eating a regular diet of real food. But the greater benefits are the deeper connections we develop with mother earth, the maturation of our intuition, the healing of our body, and the revitalization of our whole being.

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Processed foods: refine me out

Most Americans deprive themselves of critical nutrients because of their high intake of processed foods. We are often gravely deficient in B-vitamins (major stress reducers), anti-oxidants, essential amino acids (the building blocks of protein), water, fiber, and essential fatty acids.

Highly processed foods are incomplete, with much of their vitality and nutrients lost in the refining process. With fragmented energy we are left ungrounded, vulnerable to injuries, and prone to poor decision making. Our innate healing process becomes crippled. Most processed foods contain contaminants, including artificial sweeteners and flavors, MSG, sulfites, preservatives, and dyes. All these contaminants are toxic and strain our liver and kidneys, making them weak and susceptible to degeneration. Sugar, packaged breakfast cereals, fast foods, white bread, white flour, soda, hot dogs, and margarine are unbalanced, nutrient-deprived foods which drain our physical and mental energy. Eating protein from animals that have been treated with antibiotics and hormones further tax and weaken our immune system.

True balance

Our individual dietary needs vary greatly depending on our physical constitution. When we're in touch with our body's requirements, food can help us create balance and better health. When we're hot we seek foods which are cooling; when cold, foods which are warming. When tense we are drawn to foods that soothe our nervous system, and when energy is low we look for foods which give us a boost. An active lifestyle produces different nutritional and energetic needs than a sedentary one.

Going organic

Eat lots of organic vegetables for proper nutrition, digestion, hydration, energy and great vitality. Other bonuses include healthy skin and hair, improved kidney and liver function, and a stronger immune system.

Organic whole foods, free from artificial fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides are critical for our health and the health of the planet.

Your body knows best

As you experiment with changes in your food selections, your body can become a valuable teacher. Allow your intuition to blossom as you respond to physical and emotional changes. Over time you will learn which foods are best for you. Many people discover that when they choose a more natural, whole foods diet, their intuitive voice becomes stronger. In the same vein, cutting down on junk food will often reduce the chaotic internal static and tame the confusion and drama surrounding food.

You say tomato; I say listen up

Nightshades (including tomato, potato, eggplant, and peppers) are high in alkaloids which block vitamin B absorption (key vitamins in coping with stress). This group of vegetables may contribute to arthritic and rheumatic symptoms. Notice how these foods affect you. Are you more irritable? Do your joints ache more? Do you feel better after eliminating these foods for a few weeks?

Salt by default

Salt (sodium) and other electrolytes including potassium, magnesium, and calcium are critical for many physical functions. Cardiovascular and nervous system functions, the kidneys, cellular transport, and the acid/base balance of the blood all depend on the proper ratios of these minerals. Use salt sparingly. Salty foods stimulate the appetite and make us crave more salty food, sweets and fats, and tax the kidneys. And of course, a diet high in sodium leads to high blood pressure and water retention. Always use good quality sea salt, high in trace minerals.

Aggravating allergies

Many people have undiagnosed allergies or food sensitivities to wheat, corn, dairy, and soy products. Symptoms may include weight gain, mood swings, bloating, poor digestion, acne, headaches, and memory loss. As you adjust to a new way of eating, notice which foods give you problems. The practice of observation takes patience. A daily yoga and meditation practice will help build patience and focus. Experiment with eliminating one suspect food group for a couple of weeks and see how you feel. The healing process can be quite simple. Miracles often occur when we change our diet. Well...not really miracles. This is simply what happens when we return to nature.

Carbohydrate conundrum: complex is better than simple

Carbohydrates have gotten a bad rap over the last years. However, there is a wide range of carbohydrates, ranging from whole grains (complex carbohydrates) to refined sugars (simple carbohydrates), which have profoundly different effects on the body.

Simple carbohydrates, including white flour, sugar, white breads, pasta, cakes, bagels, cookies, go directly into the bloodstream and rapidly raise blood sugar levels thereby creating mood swings, fogginess, sluggishness, food cravings, and other symptoms of hypoglycemia. When we indulge in simple carbs, we're often trapped in relentless cravings, never quite satisfied, never content, always seeking another quick fix.

Complex carbohydrates are found in a wide variety of whole grains such as brown rice, quinoa, millet, whole wheat, barley, buckwheat, and amaranth. These slow-burning, nutritionally rich carbohydrates provide a steady supply of energy, support mental clarity, and can help tame and eliminate many types of cravings. Research over the last decades has firmly established the importance of complex carbohydrates in supporting our well-being. Some benefits include cardiac support, mood regulation, weight stabilization, and prevention of hypoglycemia—the sustained balanced energy throughout the day.

Got milk? Or has milk got you?

Dairy foods are problematic for many people for a variety of reasons. Buyer beware: many dairy products on the market today are filled with growth hormones and antibiotics. Many of us are lactose intolerant. Symptoms include nausea, bloating, gas, burping, sluggishness, and weight gain. Many women have found that premenstrual symptoms such as bloating, headaches, and cramps improve significantly on a dairy-free diet.

Allergies of all kinds, including food and environmental allergies, chronic sinus conditions, and asthma often “miraculously” disappear on a dairy-free diet. Research also implicates high-dairy diets in the development of breast cancer, fibroid tumors, endometriosis and cervical cancer. If you choose to eat dairy foods look for brands free of hormones and antibiotics, and eat them in moderation. The bottom line here: Take a three week trial to see what happens when you stop eating dairy.

The calcium dilemma

If I stop eating dairy where will my calcium come from? Many non-dairy foods are actually richer in absorbable calcium than are dairy products. Dark greens are packed with this important mineral. High on the list are mustard greens, turnip greens, kale, collards, watercress, parsley, and broccoli. Other important sources of calcium are sea vegetables (nori, hijiki, arame, wakame, kombu, dulse, etc), sesame seeds and tahini, wild salmon and sardines. There is good research indicating diets high in protein and sugar deplete calcium resources in the body.

Food combining: pair your fare with care

Many people have found certain food combinations difficult to digest. Some of these troublesome combinations are fruits - or any sugars, paired with beans—vegetables, grains, dairy, or meat. Also difficult to digest are grains eaten with dairy. Symptoms include flatulence, bloating and abdominal pain. Vegetables pair well with pretty much everything except fruit. To avoid intestinal discomfort, fruit is best eaten alone.

For good digestion: adjust your 'tude

Even if you eat high quality foods, the nutritional and energetic qualities will be lost if you eat when angry, upset or stressed. Digestion will be compromised, making it impossible for nutrients to be fully absorbed. It is best to eat while seated and in a calm and quiet environment. Practice kindness towards your body: don't eat while driving, working, watching TV, or glued to your iPhone and computer.

Before beginning a meal, take a few moments to get centered: close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and express your gratitude for the food in front of you.

Chew, baby, chew

Digestion begins in the mouth. The digestive enzyme, amylase, is plentiful in saliva. The more you chew, the more saliva is produced, thus initiating digestion. Fully chewed food is more easily digested, giving your body and brain more energy and minimizing toxicity in your gastrointestinal tract. Chewing also reduces stress. For an interesting experiment, chew each mouthful fifty (50) times during one meal. Notice if you have more energy after eating this way.

Eat until 80% full. What does this mean? If you are uncomfortably full, you have eaten too much. Putting down your fork when the body is satisfied takes practice, patience, and the ability to stay conscious. The body knows how much food it needs; it is your job to listen. Quantity changes quality!



In the words of Michael Pollan, author of
In Defense of Food: an Eater's Manifesto:

**"Don't eat anything that your
great-great grandmother would
not recognize as food."**

Whole Grains

Short, medium, long grain brown rice... Retains the bran and germ; fiber rich, nutritious, chewy.

Brown basmati rice... Aromatic, grown in the foothills of Himalayas, staple grain of India.

Sweet rice... Glutinous rice, often called sticky rice, but is actually gluten-free.

Millet... Staple in Asia and Africa. Hardy and grounding, cooks in about 30 minutes.

Quinoa... Grown in mountainous areas (originated in the Andes) high in protein and fiber. Cooks in about 20 minutes. A complete protein.

Wheat berries... Primary cereal of temperate climates. Used to make whole wheat flour.

Hulled barley... Most nutritious of barleys, only the tough outer hull is removed.

Pearl barley... A more polished form, not truly a whole grain.

Hato mugi barley... Job's tears, dates back to biblical times. Deliciously nutty.

Whole oats... Formerly the staple food of Scotland. Used in making oatmeal.

Wild rice... Grown in North America. Lovely nutty flavor.

Buckwheat... Originated in Europe and Asia. Staple grain of Eastern Europe. Hearty and warming during the cold months. Cooks in about 20 minutes.

Amaranth... Ancient cereal, a complete protein. Formerly a staple of the Aztec empire.

Teff... Popular in Ethiopia. An ancient grain. High in fiber and protein.

Rye berries... A hardy food most often used in cold climates. Used in making rye flour.

Maize/Indian corn... Staple in North and South America and Africa.

Spelt... Close relative to common wheat. Needs to be soaked before cooking.

Kamut... An ancient type of wheat. This grain is two times larger than modern-day wheat and is known for its rich nutty flavor.

Root Vegetables

Beets

Beets are notable for their sweetness — they have the highest sugar content of any vegetable, but they are very low in calories. Fresh beets are high in folic acid and potassium. They have a distinctive flavor and a crisp texture. Fresh beets also supply a nutritional bonus: their green tops are an excellent source of beta-carotene and a good source of calcium. Beets are good roasted, steamed, braised, grated raw in salads, and make wonderful pickles.

Burdock Root

Burdock is a carrot-like root vegetable with brown skin and white flesh that darkens quickly when cut. Its flavor is described as a cross between celery and artichoke, earthy and mildly sweet. Cooking removes any lingering bitterness. Look for firm roots and scrub well to remove dirt. Since many nutrients are in the dark skin, don't scrub it off and do not peel. Burdock can be used in broths, stir-fries, soups, and stews. It cannot be eaten raw. Burdock has also traditionally been used as a health-supportive herb. Note: This vegetable is terribly under-used. It has a great flavor and is highly nutritious and is traditionally used as a blood purifier.

Carrots

Carrots should be firm, smooth skinned, without cracks or small rootlets. Literally loaded with beta carotene, one 8 oz. glass of carrot juice contains about 20,000 mg (45,000 IU) of vitamin A.

Celery Root or Celeriac

Celeriac, also called turnip rooted celery or knob celery, is grown for its globular root which has a celery-like flavor. It is usually about 4 inches in diameter at maturity with a light brown, bulbous root. This must be peeled before use. Celeriac is usually eaten cooked rather than raw, and marries well with potatoes and carrots. It can be used in soups, stews or purées.

Daikon

Daikon is a variety of radish also known as Japanese radish, Chinese radish or Satsuma radish. It is white with a milder flavor than the small red radish, and can grow up to 3 feet long. It is usually harvested at 1 to 5 pounds. Daikon can be eaten raw in salad, pickled, or in stir-fries, soups and stews. Daikon has a pleasant, sweet and zesty flavor with a mild bite. Traditionally used to dissolve fatty deposits in the body and eaten along with fish and meats to facilitate digestion.

Ginger Root

Ginger, an underground knotted, thick beige stem, or rhizome, has been used as a medicine in Asian, Indian, and Arabic herbal traditions since ancient times. It extends roughly 12 inches above ground with long, narrow, ribbed, green leaves, and white or yellowish-green flowers.

In China, for example, ginger has been used to aid digestion and treat stomach upset, diarrhea, and nausea for more than 2,000 years. Since ancient times, ginger has also been used to help treat arthritis, colic, diarrhea, and heart conditions. In addition to these medicinal uses, ginger continues to be valued around the world as an important cooking spice and is believed to help the common cold, flu-like symptoms, headaches, and even painful menstrual periods. Native to Asia where its use as a culinary spice spans at least 4,400 years, ginger grows in fertile, moist, tropical soil.

The important active components of the ginger root are thought to be volatile oils and pungent phenol compounds (such as gingerols and shogaols).

Today, ginger root is widely used as a digestive aid for mild stomach upset and is commonly recommended by health care professionals to help prevent or treat nausea and vomiting associated with motion sickness, pregnancy, and cancer chemotherapy. Ginger is used as support in inflammatory conditions such as arthritis, and may even be used in heart disease or cancer.

Parsnip

This vegetable resembles a top-heavy, ivory-colored carrot, but it has a mild celery-like fragrance and a sweet, nutty flavor. Unlike carrots, parsnips contain no beta-carotene but they are a good source of vitamin C and folate. Look for well-shaped, small, firm roots. Large, older parsnips require more peeling and have a woody core. Parsnips are among the most versatile roots for cooking, adding complexity to stews, soups and mashed potatoes. Another under-valued and under-utilized vegetable.

Potato

Technically a tuber, potatoes are in the same family as tomatoes and peppers - the nightshades. Potatoes are very versatile with hundreds of varieties. They provide important vitamins and minerals, including potassium, niacin, vitamins B6 and C, and manganese. For a substantial helping of fiber, eat potatoes with the skin. Potatoes will keep well stored in a cool dry place for a number of months. Potatoes are high in the alkaloid solanine, which can be toxic and stressful on the body. As a nightshade vegetable, they may contribute to arthritic and rheumatic symptoms. Green potatoes should not be eaten and sprouts on any potatoes should be removed before cooking.

Radish

Radishes have a distinctive flavor range: from the juicy crispness of the familiar red radish to the sharp bite of the turnip-shaped black radish to the delicate sweetness of the white icicles. They are an excellent source of Vitamin C and very low in calories. Radishes will not keep as well with their tops left on, so remove the tops before storing. They will keep for up to two weeks in the refrigerator.

Rutabaga

A member of the cabbage family, rutabagas resemble large turnips. A cruciferous vegetable, they contain good amounts of vitamin A and excellent amounts of vitamin C. Typically 3 to 5 inches in diameter, rutabagas have a thin, pale yellow skin and a slightly sweet, firm flesh of the same color. Choose those that are unwaxed, smaller in size, smooth, firm and heavy for their size. Rutabagas can be refrigerated in a paper bag for up to 2 months. Rutabagas are another undervalued and versatile root.

Sunchokes (Jerusalem Artichoke)

The sunchoke is actually a tuber, or underground stem, that resembles a small nubby potato or a piece of gingerroot. They are a variety of sunflower. It has a sweet, almost nutty taste and a crisp texture that is quite distinctive. Sunchoke contains the prebiotic inulin which provides food for the good intestinal bacteria. Look for clean, firm tubers with unblemished skin, which may be glossy and tan or a matte brown. They should not show a greenish tinge or any sign of sprouting or mold. Scrub instead of peel to retain the most nutrients.

Sweet Potato

The potato and sweet potato may share a name, but the two are unrelated botanically. Potatoes are tubers and sweet potatoes are roots. Sweet potatoes are an excellent source of the antioxidant vitamin A. The darker the color the higher the vitamin A content.

There are two basic types of sweet potato: moist (orange-fleshed) and dry (yellow-fleshed). The moist-fleshed potatoes are often called yams. Look for firm, not too large sweet potatoes that are tapered at both ends. Skin should be smooth without brown spots. Sweet potatoes should not be stored in the refrigerator, but in dry, dark conditions around 55°F.

Turnip

Turnips can be cultivated for the roots as well as for the greens, which are rich in vitamins and minerals. Turnips come in an astonishing range of shapes and sizes, depending on the age and variety. The flesh can be white or yellow, but most commercial turnips have white flesh. Turnips keep well. Cut off turnip greens and bag them separately for storage (they keep for just a few days). Place the roots in plastic bags and store them in the refrigerator crisper; they will keep for about a week. Larger turnips should be peeled before cooking. Note: turnip greens are delicious sautéed, steamed or chopped and added to soups and stews. Hakurei turnips (a small, white, spherical variety) are particularly distinctive, delicate and sweet.

Yam

The true yam is a large root vegetable grown in Africa and Asia and rarely seen in the western world. However, common usage has made the term "yams" acceptable when referring to the moist-fleshed sweet potato.

Beans

Adzuki
Green Lentils
Red Lentils
Kidney
Chickpeas
Pinto
Soybeans
Split Peas
Navy
Northern
Lima
Black Turtle
Black-eyed Peas
Mung
Anasazi

Guide to Leafy Greens

Nutrition

Whether you choose baby field greens for your salad or dive right in to mustard greens, ounce for ounce, these celebrated vegetables pack a powerful nutritious punch, providing a wide array of nutrients including fiber, beta-carotene, calcium, iron, folic acid and chlorophyll (the green pigment found in plant cells). Many varieties of leafy greens, especially members of the cruciferous (cabbage) family such as collards, kale and bok choy are also rich sources of Vitamin C.

Selecting

Fresh, tasty, leafy greens are available year-round, but, like most produce, they do have their peak seasons. Collards, kale, turnip greens and mustard greens are at their best from October through early spring. Swiss chard and beet greens are best from the spring through the fall. Dandelion greens are available and best in the spring and summer.

When shopping, always look for crisp leaves with a fresh green color. Stems should appear freshly cut, the leaves should be crisp and the color should be vibrant. Yellowing is a sign of age and indicates that the greens may not taste their best. One pound of untrimmed greens will typically serve two to three people. While this may look like a lot when raw, most greens cook down considerably. Please note: the stems of greens are delicious and quite nutritious.

Storage & Cleaning

Most greens can be stored in the refrigerator for several days. Wrap collards or kale in a damp towel and place in an open plastic bag in the crisper drawer (or coldest section) of your refrigerator. Store chard, escarole, chicory, rabe and mustard greens in a perforated plastic bag. All cooking greens will lose their "bounce" in the refrigerator. Tender, delicate leaves (such as beet greens) wilt very quickly, so use them as soon as possible or purchase them on the day you plan to prepare them.

To prepare greens for washing, discard any bruised leaves. For greens such as collards, mustard and kale, separate the stem from the leaf and cut into ½" rounds. Wash the greens and stems in a sink full of water to remove dirt and sand. Bunches of greens that are especially sandy may require several soakings. Curly and grooves on the leaves can hide bits of sand, so be thorough even if the greens look clean. Drain the greens in a colander and chop or slice them according to your recipe's directions.

Potassium-rich foods

Raisins, currants, dried fruit, bananas, nuts & seeds, sardines, deep orange squash, carrots, lemons, oranges, orange juice, avocado, pears, melons, brussels sprouts, beets

Magnesium-rich foods

Soybeans, beans, nuts & seeds, pumpkin seeds, whole grains, winter squash, sea-vegetables

Calcium-rich foods

Bok choy, brussels sprouts, broccoli, collard greens, almonds, beans, kale, turnip greens, salmon, sesame seeds, yogurt, sardines, peas, sea-vegetables