



Almost Raw e-Cookbook

getting you started

with general info and recipes

Hi there!

Whether you're looking to simply add more goodness to your meals or transition towards a raw food diet, here are some basic useful information and easy recipes to help you along the way. You'll find starting up tips, important health tips, how to know what's raw or not, the benefits of the raw food diet, where you can get more information, the equipment used and some really awesome and easy recipes from totally raw to combo raw/cooked recipes that can help during those cold winter months. All you'll need is a good blender, a knife and a cutting board to start making refreshing smoothies, surprisingly simple classic desserts, healthy yummy dressings, beautiful salads, international dishes and a simple jam when you're in a big hurry. Hope these meals spark your creative juices in making your own unique dishes so enjoy substituting the ingredients for what's already in your cupboards, that can be equally satisfying to your pocketbook :)!

Enjoy and happy almost raw cooking!

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What is a raw food diet?

Eating raw means eating uncooked, unprocessed plant-based foods heated below 48C or 118F. Under those temperatures, foods retain their nutritional value and help your body break down all the nutrients it needs through enzymes and phytochemicals (these are what help plants survive). Eating raw means eating vegetables, fruits, legumes, seeds and nuts, sprouts (from seeds, legumes or grains) and sea vegetables. How much raw food to include in your diet is up to you based on your health, ethics, environment, social context, culture and lifestyle, as it is not for everyone and this may come at a great sacrifice. Going raw is the ultimate for some on this diet, that is eating 100% raw, but it is not necessarily the healthiest option for everyone. For those wanting a more balanced diet with cooked food keep a 75% ratio. It is wise to know whether you can fit this diet into your lifestyle and health regime so make sure to consult a health professional prior to making this transition. Or do what you can, any increase in eating raw foods will give your body more of what it needs and with a few more tools added to your kitchen, as in a dehydrator, a high-powered blender and a juicer, you can add delicious meals and wonderful treats to your diet, like pizza, chips and even crackers.

Do I need to go completely raw to get all the benefits?

No, any increase in the amount of raw food in your diet will provide your body with enzymes to breakdown the nutrients needed. The average raw foodists maintain a 75% level while some hold 100% but it's not for everyone. Be wise and know what your body and lifestyle can and will handle.

Where can I get recipes?

There are some online here and if you're up to sharing with others, send yours in. We'd love to post them up so others can enjoy them too.

Starting up tips

The best way is to start slowly unless you have the time and inclination to fully immerse yourself into this diet. First, take a thorough look at your current diet by either writing down what your meals are made of or look through your kitchen for anything that is processed and not naturally raw. Reading ingredients on packaging will quickly help you figure this out, besides its most likely packed with processed ingredients and not raw anyway. See how you can substitute these towards healthier options. Look at your side dishes, smoothies, soups, salads, and do the same, see how you can find ways to include healthier raw nutrients. Any salad dressing can be quickly put together with healthier oils like olive, rice bran or sunflower oil, and lemon juice, apple cider vinegar or balsamic vinegar and mixing in any aromatic herbs you'll enjoy. Just having fun playing with the many choices of nuts, seeds, legumes, vegetables and fruits, you will be able to create some unusually wonderful recipes. If it feels right, however odd it might be, it's probably something you'll enjoy. Meats can be easily substituted with portobello mushrooms, nuts, seeds, sprouted grains or cooked grains if you're not on a full raw plan.

Important health tips

Here are 10 tips to maintain a healthy raw vegan diet, not to be overlooked. (reference: Becoming Raw - The Essential Guide to Raw Vegan Diets by Brenda Davis, RD and Vesanto Melina, MS, RD with Rynn Berry)

1. Add variety
2. Consume from an array of raw foods in your diet daily with a variety of vegetables, fruits, greens, seed and nuts, sprouted grains and lentils. Also include cooked legumes, grains and starchy vegetables if your diet is not entirely raw to get the nutrients you need.
3. Greens a must!
4. Bring much needed calcium-rich green everyday in your diet, broccoli, bok choy, dandelion, greens, kale, mustard greens, napa cabbage, turnip greens and watercress.
5. Add colors
6. While vegetables are the most nutrient-dense they hold specific richness to your diet with their individual color. So why not bring in some colors you've never enjoyed before and have fun creating unique tasting and looking dishes. You'll get more than you know.
7. Fruit sugars
8. As the most vitamin-rich food high in sugar, eating too much fruit can unbalance your metabolism so it's important to counteract this by including foods with protein, minerals and low in sugar. And don't forget to brush your teeth, too much acidity can work on them too.
9. Fats in moderation
10. A healthy fat you need. As seeds and nuts help in the absorption of mineral and protecting you with phytochemicals, a handful eaten daily will provide a good dose of omega 3 and 6. Just watch how much you eat as nuts tend to be packed with good fats but too much might push you overboard.
11. Sprouted or cooked legumes
12. Sprouting or eating any cooked legumes like lentils and mung beans will give you the complex carbohydrates your body needs to maintain healthy blood sugar levels.
13. Sprouted grains
14. Additionally, sprouted grains will help you maintain this balance and keep your energy up.
15. Vitamin B12
16. In today's stressed environment, it's imperative to supplement your diet with B12 either taking daily vitamin supplements or including nutritional yeast as food in your diet. So why not pour some on your popcorn, including in a dressing or fabulously on top of raw or lightly steamed vegetables.
17. Vitamin D
18. Sunlight or a daily supplement of Vitamin D.
19. Iodine
20. Kelp, iodized table salt or a supplement daily will help you with keeping up with recommended levels.

Important tips on knowing if it's raw or not

Of course, the easiest to classify as raw food are fruits and veggies but whether or not they are organic, that is something else to discuss. For other items it can be difficult to tell whether they are or not. Any raw-conscious suppliers will package their product appropriately otherwise you'll need to confirm with the store personnel or with the supplier directly. Looking online is a wonderful options as there are many forums covering this topic. What's of big concern is at which temperature the food is heated, extracted or processed. If it is cold-pressed, raw, extra-virgin, then it's raw. Otherwise other items are not easily defined and can be difficult to assess like nuts, if they are roasted, they aren't raw. Milks, oils, nut butters, protein powders, sweeteners and cocoa are usually those you'll want to pay attention to. And yes, typically chocolate is made from processed cocoa that originates from the raw cacao bean/powder but be careful, depending on the supplier, the name "cacao" has been loosely used for the process unraw cocoa. So, it's something to keep in mind as you progress with raw food but, all in all, reading your package well will be most helpful and if your not sure, ask a reliable source when you're ready to dive in further. There are many ways to transition into raw, through groups, cold turkey, with a friend, gradually as you learn or by following your body's needs and intuitive hunches. Enjoy and happy raw cooking!

Where can I get more information?

As we progress with this diet, more information will be posted and shared with everyone. In the meantime here are a few reference to help you get the most out of this diet. Happy raw eating!

Becoming Raw - The Essential Guide to Raw Vegan Diets by Brenda Davis, RD and Vesanto Melina, MS, RD with Rynn Berry

Russell James - a leading UK raw food chef www.therawchef.com

David Wolfe - a leading authoritative speaker on the subject www.davidwolfe.com

The Simply Raw Living Foods Detox Manual by Natasha Kysaa

Sweet Gratitude A new World of Raw Desserts by Matthew Rogers and Tiziana Alipo Jamborra

What kind of equipment will I need to create raw food?

To help you along the way, here's how to equip your raw kitchen to save you time and energy. This equipment will also give you plenty of new ways to create raw dishes. But don't worry, you won't need all of them right away! As you start getting familiar with raw food, you'll need the basic tools, that is, a good knife, a cutting board and a blender. Yes, just that will get you making smoothies, salads, puddings, juices and deserts. And when you are ready to expand, here's what else is being used in raw kitchens today to create a variety of new dishes, like noodles, ravioli, crackers, and even pizza! Some of these can be directly purchased locally so search online but here are a few: www.mannawholefoods.com.au, www.therawkitchen.com.au, www.aliveorganics.com.au, www.vitamix.com, www.ebay.com.au, www.cuisinart.com.au, www.excaliburaust.com/order.php

High Speed Blender

A Vitamix or any good quality blender that can process food easily and thoroughly is probably the most important piece to have in your kitchen. Make sure food doesn't stick to the bottom and is blended into a smooth texture, a raw pudding is just not the same! The ingredients should be blending downwards spiraling into the blade and not up the wall. If that happens, use a spatula to scrap the food back down and blend, repeat till it's all even. See what works for you and your budget. Vitamix blenders are the most widely used by raw foodists and within the food industry. You can see them at juice bars.

Mandoline

While it seems a little odd, this little instrument will thin out your vegetables very nicely making them extremely malleable. Now you can create new dishes like Ravioli. It's easy, low maintenance and relatively inexpensive. You'll want to make sure the Mandoline is solid and not clumsy to work with and that it will cut to varying thickness.

A Turning Slicer

This will make noodles and provide beautiful textures to any of your dishes. Side-loading slicers are the most popular as top-loaded ones can make your noodles too thin and watery.

Nut Milk Bag

To make any nut milk, all you'll need is this bag. Presoak your nuts overnight, rinse and to every cup add 3 cups of water and blend well together. Pour mixture in the bag and squeeze the milk into a container. The pulp can be used for smoothies, shakes and deserts. Have fun!

Food Processor

For mixing thicker ingredients in making crackers, patés or heavy deserts, opt for a good food processor. You will save your blenders blade in the long run and will find it much easier to work with. Be wary of cheaper model, the blades might not last as long especially if the processor is used daily. Cuisinart as the most popular of home brands.

One good Knife and cutting board

Anyone who's been preparing raw food will know much a good knife is worth in the kitchen. It will save you a lot of time and energy and is actually much safer than the cheap and blunt alternatives. Raw recipes are loaded with chopped items, it's a sure investment and not just monetarily but for your body as well, wrist and arm. Consider adding a sharpener that will keep your blade in great condition and ready at all times. As for cutting boards, there are several materials you can chose from, bamboo, wooden and plastic. Bamboo cutting boards are becoming the most widely used for raw foodists as they tend to be more environmentally conscious in their making and hygienic. The surface is harder than wood keeping your knife from dulling and safe from bacteria contamination from opened cuts. Wooden boards are the next in line although not as hygienic since blades can cut through the top surface of the board. So it's really only best used for cutting vegetables and not meat. Plastic alternatively, is more hygienic but rather eco-unfriendly and yet at a price that can't be beaten. Keep in mind how solid the board is, so it doesn't slip off the table while you're cutting away!

What is a dehydrator?

To make pizzas, crackers, breads and dehydrated veggies, you'll need this amazing piece of equipment. Ovens aren't used in raw recipes as they overheat food depleting them from valuable nutrition like enzymes, that is at a temperature above 48 degrees Celcius. When using a dehydrator planning ahead is important as it takes a little bit more time dehydrating food. Many raw foodist will vouch on square dehydrators as opposed to the inexpensive circular ones, but see what works for your budget. Investing in a good one will cost around \$400 and worth well the investment. Excalibur is the brand of choice and some enjoy TSM for it's quietness and ease of use. Depending on the quality of your dehydrator, you might want to consider a thermometer to maintain an accurate temperature.

Just a few worthy investments can make a huge difference in your journey with raw food while keeping your budget in mind. If you have any questions or concerns, or feel like sharing your newfound recipes, please email us. Enjoy and happy raw cooking!

How to make an awesome morning smoothie

I recently overheard some work mates discussing protein in the diet. And more specifically, how to incorporate it into breakfast, so I thought I'd write a quick article about what I think is the best way to get your morning protein and that is... 'An Awesome Morning Smoothie!' The smoothie will most likely consist of four elements:

- The Base
- The Supplements (these could also add flavour)
- The Liquid
- The Sweeteners (Optional)

Common Bases

- Banana
- Mango
- Berries
- Avocado
- Basically any soft fruit that works and you like!

Supplements

Here are a list of some of the supplements I use often. The percentages are the level of protein in the supplement.

- Pea Protein Isolate 88% (though not strictly raw, I've found it a good addition)
- Spirulina 65% (I usually add in smaller quantities as the flavour can be overwhelming)
- Wheat or Barley Grass Powder 30%
- Raw Cacao Powder 27%
- Unhulled Tahini 25%
- Maca Powder 11%
- Chia Seeds
- LSA (Linseed, Sunflower and Almond meal)

I'm not going to mention all of the other amazing benefits these supplements have in this article (it would be too long).

Liquids

I usually alternate between the following milks:

- Soy
- Rice
- Oat (probably my favourite)
- Nut Milks (almond, cashew, macadamia, etc.)

Note: Nut milk is easy to make, I'll write an article about that soon.

Cracking open a young coconut and using the coconut water and flesh is also a great smoothie base!

If I'm not using coconut base, I'll put in a tbs of coconut oil/butter.

If you are feeling ultra healthy, you could just use water but make sure it's either spring water or very well

filtered as otherwise you'll be taking in chlorine and fluoride which are terrible for your innards.

Sweeteners

Agave Syrup

Maple Syrup

Honey

Stevia

Date Paste

Any other unrefined natural sweetener should do.

A real word example:

The Base 1/2 banana

The Supplements 1 tbsp pea protein (raw might be difficult to find)

1 tbsp chia seeds

1 tbsp lsa

2 tsp barley grass powder

2 tsp cacao powder

1 tsp unhulled tahini (raw might be difficult to find)

1 tsp spirulina

The Liquids 1.5 cups oat milk

(raw might be difficult to find. Add more or less to attain desired consistency)

1 tbsp coconut oil

The Sweetener 1 tbsp agave syrup

A smoothie like this may look slightly green, but taste it and it should be amazing! :-). The amount of nutrients in these smoothies is mind blowing. I love them and I hope you do too!

RECIPES

A Quick Jam

In a jam? Here's a quick and easy spread great on toast, over fruit or with granola.

8 moist dates

1/2 c dried raisins

Blend together with a little water for consistency.

SMOOTHIES

Berry Berry Good Smoothy Sir

Yes sir, it's berry berry good! A tasty purple dotted smoothy with good protein and good fat and all in good fun for the tummy!

1/2 beet

1 small avocado

3 pitted dates

3/4 tbsp pea protein

1/2 tbsp barley grass

2 tbsp blueberries

2 tbsp raspberries

1 c cashews

1 tbsp agave

1 tbsp coconut oil

1 1/2 c water

Blend together and add water till desired consistency.

Oat Banana Smoothie

A lighter tasty vegan oat smoothie.

1/2 banana

1/2 c granola

1 tbsp spirulina

3/4 tbsp barley wheatgrass

1 c rice milk

1/2 c pea protein powder

Blend.

SALADS

Asian Minty Cabbage

Light asian-style cabbage salad with a summery twist, watermelon!

- ½ green cabbage sliced
- 2 c watermelon cubed
- ¼ white onion sliced
- ½ c sesame seeds
- ¼ c rice bran oil
- 3T Braggs (a light gluten-free soy sauce)
- 2 T apple cider vinegar (lightest of vinegars for your tummy)
- ½ fresh mint cut
- salt to taste

Cut ingredients and mix together.

Asian Summer Salad

A good source of protein and greens on a hot summer's day.

- 1 c snowpea
- 1 c spinach
- handful of bean sprouts
- 1/2 c sunflower seeds
- 1/2 c pumpkin seeds
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp cold-pressed oil
- handful of finely chopped cilantro

Chop cilantro into fine pieces, cut snowpea in thirds and mix all ingredients.

Lazy Coleslaw

When you're short on time, a simple coleslaw that's a little pre-made!

- 1/2 bag of coleslaw mix
- 1 cup alfalfa sprouts
- Handful of bean sprouts
- 1 celery chopped
- 1 cup snowpeas chopped
- 1/2 onion chopped
- 1 spring onion chopped

Combine and allow to soak for a 5-10 minutes.

Mexican Fiesta Salad

A great addition to any fiesta party, infused with avocado and great as a dip.

- 1/2 red onion
- 1 c cherry tomatoes
- 1 celery
- 1/2 each red, yellow, green and orange bell peppers
- 2 small ripe avocados
- 1/4 c mint
- 1/4 c rice bran oil
- 1/4 c apple cider vinegar
- juice of 1 lime
- 3/4 tsp salt
- cayenne pepper to taste

Chop all ingredients (except avocados) into small bit size pieces and mix together in bowl with liquids and seasoning. Then cube ripen avocados and mix well enough so they break down a little into the dressing.

Spicy Cole Slaw

Not all raw enthusiasts are 100% raw so here's a little cooked addition to a tangy cole slaw.

- 1/2 cabbage finely cut
- 3 medium carrots grated
- 1 cup bean sprouts
- 1/2 cup soaked sunflower seeds
- juice of 1 lime
- 3 tbsp oil
- 3 tbsp apple cider vinegar

Cube and steam 1/2 pumpkin or squash, cool down, mash and mix with rest of ingredients

Summer Salad

A refreshing savory summer salad, great as is or as a side dish

- 2 avocados
- 4 large tomatoes
- 2 cucumbers
- 4 large tomatoes
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 tbsp lemon
- dash of spike or savory spices

Cut avocados, tomatoes and cucumbers into big bit size pieces and put all ingredients together in a bowl. Mix well enough so the avocados break down a little into the dressing.

Thai Market Salad with Wild Rice

A beautiful balance of fresh Thai ingredients with a little spiciness!

- 1 cup of wild brown rice cooked
- 1 small head of lettuce
- bunch of fresh wild greens (dandelion)
- ¼ daikon finely sliced (a long Asian white radish)
- 2-3 tbsp soyabean oil
- 1 tbsp light soy sauce
- ½ tsp chili powder
- 2 garlic cloves chopped
- 1 bamboo root sliced or ½ c of the canned variety
- 1 medium tomato cut in small wedges
- ½ c peanuts
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar
- ½ tbsp ground coriander seeds
- 1 large green jalapeno finely chopped
- ⅔ lemongrass stick finely chopped
- handful of basil roughly chopped

Cook rice and allow to cool. Create a salad with the remaining ingredients then mix the rice in.

Zesty Watermelon Salad

A refreshing summer salad with a nice zesty twist.

- 2 c sprouted quinoa
- 4 c watermelon cubed
- 2 c bean sprouts
- 1 bunch of fresh mint
- 2 tbsp oil
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp soy sauce

Cut watermelon into cubs and add all ingredients together in a bowl.

DRESSINGS

Aztec Gold Dressing

Get the minerals you needs with Chia, an Aztec seed.

3/4 c sunflower seeds

3/4 c nutritional yeast (high in B12, also known as savory yeast flakes and not brewer's yeast!)

1/2 c light soy sauce

1/2 c oil

1/2 c lemon juice

1 tbsp chia seeds

Blend together. Makes one litre

MEALS

Brazilian Nutty Pasta

- 1 large zucchini
- ½ chocko
- 1 can of cooked mushrooms
- ½ soft avocado
- 1 semi-soft avocado
- 6 med tomatoes
- 2 c fresh basil and parsley
- 1 tsp kelp
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp sea salt to taste
- water for consistency

Pasta: grate both zucchini and chocko in spaghetti size noodles with either a mandoline or grater. Cut mushrooms in quarters and dice the semi-soft avocado into bit sizes then mix all these ingredients together.

Sauce: add fresh basil, oregano and parsley leaves in blender with all remaining ingredients and blend till proper consistency.

Mix sauce into pasta and serve, yum!

Cabbage Slaw

Something delightful satisfying on a cold wintery evening.

- ½ green cabbage
- 4 small tomatoes
- 3 medium yams
- ½ green bell pepper
- ½ red bell pepper
- ½ cauliflower
- 1 c soaked almonds
- 1 c alfalfa sprouts
- 2 c chocko grated
- 1/2 cup lime leaves
- 1 T chili paste
- Sea salt to taste

Cooked ingrein steamer: boil lime leaves in the base component of your steamer and steam cubed yams till al dente then add cabbage. When almost done, include greens for steaming.

Raw stuff: finely chop green and red bell peppers, cauliflower and almonds and mix in large bowl with medium diced tomatoes.

Top cooked ingredients and lime water from steamer into bowl of raw ingredients, include chili paste and salt and mix thoroughly till yams are saucy. Spread alfalfa sprouts around the edge of the bowl and place grated choko in center. Enjoy!

Rice Rolls

Almost raw packed with freshness, a light lunch's delight.

- 4 rice papers
- 1 c lentil sprouts
- 1 c alfalfa sprouts
- 2 shiitake mushrooms
- 20 half cut cherry tomatoes
- 1 sliced avocado
- handful pumpkin seeds
- a little apple cider vinegar
- 4 cilantro strands

Roast pumpkin seeds and set aside. Slice and cook mushrooms then allow to cool down as well. Add vinegar to sprouts. Soften one rice paper in a container of hot water then spread out on plate. Lay out ingredients at the bottom end then fold over once, tuck sides in and roll till the end. Rolls can be stored in refrigerator under a moist towel.

Peanut Dipping Sauce

- 3 tbsp smooth peanut butter
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp apple cider vinegar
- little water for consistency
- chili powder to taste

Mix together.

Sprouted Quinoa Sushi

Delicious raw and gluten-free sushi. Sprouting is fun and easy but take a few days to make. Read up on how to online at <http://www.natural-health.net.au/articles/nutrition/sprouting>.

- 4 raw nori sheets (you can find these at most natural food stores)
- 2 c sprouted quinoa (sprouting is fun, easy and highly nutritional but take a few days to make)
- 1 tbl apple cider vinegar
- 1 sliced avocado
- 1/2 cucumber
- 1 carrot

Cut cucumber and carrot into 2" long thin strips or use mandoline. Mix apple cider vinegar well into quinoa and spread mixture on bottom end of a Nori sheet. Top with remaining ingredients nicely and carefully. Roll

bottom over the filling tightly and moisten top inside end of nori with water and seal together.

DESSERTS

Banana Ice Cream

The easiest non-dairy ice cream ever! A classic you won't need to dash to the store for!

- 2 ripe bananas
- a little water
- a little vanilla

Cut bananas in 1 inch slices and freeze flat in freezer bag or container for at least 30 minutes then blend all ingredients together.

Instant Party Snacks

In a panic for something sweet for your party! Don't fret if you don't have it, sub it for something you do, and voilà!

- handful of grated coconut
- 1/4 c coconut oil
- 1/4 c nibs
- 1/4 c pea protein powder
- 1 tbsp agave
- 1 tbsp maca

Mix by hand and shape into little balls then freeze for 5-10 minutes.

Mango Pudding

A fresh smooth tasting mango treat.

- 1 pitted avocado
- 2 pitted and diced mangos
- 3 pitted dates
- 1/2 banana

Blend.

Mayan gold pudding

A classic favorite full of antioxidants!

- 2 large bananas
- 1 avocados
- 5 moist pitted dates
- 1/2 c cacao powder
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 tsp stevia

Blend all ingredients together in blender and add water for desired consistency.