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Written by Jenny Ross

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JENNY ROSS

RAW basics

Incorporating Raw Living Foods into Your Diet Using Easy and Delicious Recipes



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For Grandma Ross, thanks for "playing restaurant" with me all those years and teaching me how to have fun, even with the hard stuff.

To my parents, Tamara and Charles, thank you for helping me pursue my passion at every turn and supporting my ever-evolving process; to Aunt Jerrie and Uncle Dennis, for teaching me what unconditional love looks like; and to my son, Dylan, for bringing me and our family "back to the basics" in such a beautiful way. I love you.

To the entire team at 118 Degrees, thanks for your continued support of our vision to "educate the world about the power of gourmet living foods." Your hard work and efforts have helped shape the lives of so many people.

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Introduction



Ten years ago, my personal journey with living foods began. As I changed my lifestyle, eating choices, and personal way of working with and looking at food, I arrived at such a euphoric place of good health that I wanted to shout about it from the rooftops. I became very passionate about sharing the wellness and vitality I was now living with the world. Of course, I knew nothing of how this would unfold except that I was committed to making a difference.

As my personal journey has evolved, I have been blessed with the opportunity to spread the word about living foods to more and more people, one day at a time. Through my current restaurant, 118 Degrees, in Costa Mesa, California; workshops and classes; and hands-on educational experiences, I've been a part of bringing this powerful lifestyle to more than 100,000 people, and have seen truly miraculous things.

Whenever I teach, and oftentimes in the restaurant, customers will ask me, "What is the easiest way to start 'doing' raw foods?" Of course, there is no magic answer or a one-size-fits-all approach to embarking on the path of living foods, but there *are* some basics that can help even the most novice cooks begin creating healthy and delicious raw dishes they will love.

Raw Basics is designed to answer this important question, as well as inspire you to begin adding more fresh, vibrant foods to your diet. We have a saying at 118 that goes like this: "Just start adding more of the good stuff." I've found that more than 80 percent of our clients get great results if they begin by focusing on *adding* to their diet. Adding, not subtracting. As they shift to learning great raw options and incorporating them into their everyday eating, the other foods they've been trying to give up just sort of fall away, leaving them feeling refreshed and invigorated.

Enjoy this book as a whole, or skip to the recipes that sound good to you, and actively explore each section on its own. In a very fundamental way, this book is designed to educate and empower you so you can find a healthy balance in your diet . . . leading to vibrant health!

How Much Living Food Does the Body Need?

It's true that every little bit of raw food you add to your diet counts, and at the end of just a week, you'll feel more vibrant and alive. Living bodies need living food: the idea is that for everything you add to your life, you get more of the same. Negative thoughts breed negativity. Foods that are devoid of life and life-enhancing agents foster death and disease. For every "nonvital" part of your diet that you replace with something vital to your overall health, you become "more of" health.

Our bodies serve our minds and souls to the utmost when in good physical condition; and we are "more of" who we are and can therefore offer more to the world, those around us, our work, and our lives. When our bodies do not serve us and our health is failing, there is "more of" disease, and we must work to restore the balance of wellness that is our birthright as human beings. We were designed to embody optimal health!

Is "Raw Foods" a Diet Fad?

The answer to the above question is no. The living-foods diet does more than restrict calories, speed metabolism, and shrink fat cells. It is a *lifestyle*—one that brings about health and restores balance. This balanced functioning allows the body to fight disease properly and nourish itself while performing vital operations that keep you youthful and energetic.



The number one reason many diets fail is because they are too restrictive in the minds of the dieters. You can get around this by eliminating the *need* to diet, instead choosing nourishing substances like raw whole foods, and adjusting the mental focus in the process from what you can't have to what you *get* to have. This is a basic and positive "recipe" for success.

I observed a client (whom I was fortunate enough to share the living-foods lifestyle with) really struggling in the early days of trying to release old habits during her transition to a more whole-foods-based diet. So I asked her, "What foods do you think about?"

She replied, "Everything I can't have."

"What makes you think you can't have them?" I asked her.

She looked at me, shocked, and said, "Well, they're not good for me!"

I smiled and said, "So you are *choosing* not to have them, because your vibrant health is more important to you, right?"

And she replied simply, "Yes," followed by a sigh of relief.

When you're strong enough to choose more of the good stuff, the focus is different: it's about taking a proactive approach to your goals. Then you can explore. You can literally play like a child would, discovering new things that will catapult your health in ways you could never imagine.

Are the Negative Effects of Past Physical Damage Reversible?

Health is cumulative, and the best preventive medicine I know of is to treat your body well. Over the past decade, I have seen it time and time again: customers—ones who thought optimal health could never be reached again in their lifetime—focus on adding more raw food to their meals and begin reversing diseases that have plagued them for years.

One of the most immediately rewarding ways to begin to treat your body better is to eliminate toxins from your diet. Forgoing cooked oils and greasy, fried foods is a great place to start; and cutting back on animal products and focusing on plant-based cuisine provides a wonderful foundation for health.

Of course, eliminating processed foods from your diet will yield tremendous and tangible results. These benefits include weight loss, increased energy, lower cholesterol, healthy blood pressure, physical endurance, glowing skin, renewed hair growth, mental clarity . . . and countless others.


"Let your food
be your medicine,
your medicine food."
— HIPPOCRATES

CHAPTER ONE

What Is the Living-Foods Lifestyle?

Living or "raw" foods are those that have not been heated above 118 degrees Fahrenheit. This is the commonly agreed-upon temperature after which plant-based ingredients begin to break down and lose essential vitamin and mineral content, as well as enzymes. Pure and simple, raw foods are natural foods in their natural state. In addition to breaking down enzymes and nutrients, many modern-day cooking methods actually create by-products during the heating process that have been found to be toxic.

Raw foods are primarily plant based. Fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and sprouted grains are the basis of this culinary lifestyle. In addition, living-foods enthusiasts oftentimes make use of high-grade minerals and other superfoods as a way of restoring balance. Juicing is an effective alternative-health remedy and is currently being used in several cancer-treatment centers worldwide, with incredible life-enhancing results. A high-nutrient-density diet goes a long way toward maintaining overall health, and living foods are at the top of the scale in terms of nutrient density and purity.

Living foods are not a new idea; in fact, many would counter that this is the *oldest* notion of how to eat. The Bible contains several references to living-food preparations; early texts discuss the heating of plant-based ingredients and "cooking" using the

energy of the sun. In many ancient cultures where longevity of life was enjoyed, there was also a focus on fresh, living foods.

This style of eating can help you reach and maintain your health goals, for three main reasons:

1. The living-foods lifestyle encourages a very low-toxin diet, with a focus on the function of every food and how it is helping you achieve health. With living foods, there are simply no fillers, artificial preservatives, or unneeded additives that do not benefit your body in some way. As a result, the living-foods diet is largely alkaline forming. Disease cannot live in an alkaline environment; it must have a toxic, acidic one to thrive. Picture the pH test strips from your high-school chemistry class. On the pH scale, 14 is totally alkaline, 7 is neutral, and 0–6 is acidic. The body should be anywhere from neutral to moderately alkaline to prevent disease.

2. Raw foods constitute a plant-based diet, which has been proven to maintain strong vital organs and optimal bodily function. Overall health has been shown to drastically improve in direct relationship to how much plant-based eating you're doing. From providing essential proteins, amino acids, minerals, and vitamins to detoxifying the body where necessary, this eating style serves to keep you in balance.

3. Living foods have the power to heal the body by reintroducing essential vitamins and minerals, as well as enzymes—the catalysts that break down nutrients into a usable state. With a diet rich in enzymes, your body isn't overwhelmed with the breaking-down process (called *assimilation*) and has time then to go about the business of maintaining a vital system and promoting health.

Whether you're looking to move into a more energetic space, restore overall wellness, achieve a vibrant lifestyle, or find alternatives to processed foods and their associated health conditions (ulcers, indigestion, headaches, chronic fatigue, and depression have all been linked to poor diet), living foods could prove to be a very viable option for you . . . and even serve to heal you completely.

Trying the living-foods lifestyle, even if for only one day or one meal a week, will start to give you an idea of what is possible. Keep in mind that this is not an all-or-nothing proposition. Choosing to add even one more component of living nutrition to your daily eating plan will begin the process. The best choice you can make for the health of your body and mind is to take control of your diet one bite at a time. Go back to the basics of health, and add in more of the good stuff.

What Is the Good Stuff?

No matter what your current diet, it's easier to add something new—more of the good stuff—instead of being focused on what to take away. Deciding which items are right for your body or are important for nutrition can be a challenge. Here is a list of questions to consider when evaluating whether a food selection really constitutes the "good stuff":

- Where did this food come from?
- Can it grow from the ground? (Picture a tree full of cheese puffs or Oreo cookies and you're on the right track.)
- What is the health benefit of eating this?
- How was this food prepared?

The golden rule in choosing good, nourishing food is finding items that are *local, fresh, organic* (without pesticides), and *grown from a healthy vital plant* of some sort. In general, this includes all fruits and vegetables in their natural state, nuts and seeds, grains, herbs and spices, superfoods, and products minimally processed from any of the above-listed items. These are all whole foods.

A nice raw nut, for example, makes a fantastic raw butter. But if you roast nuts, then add iodized salt and some preservatives, you've just created a product that could very well be hazardous to your health. The average jar of peanut butter contains unhealthy levels of saturated fats and iodine, along with bleached white salts that are toxic in the bloodstream.

Really, what you have to consider when making choices at the grocery store are the following questions:

1. What is the food product itself? It should be fresh, organic wherever possible, and from a plant source. Tomatoes and avocados are perfect examples of fresh, whole foods.

2. How has it been treated? If it has been cooked, there could now be many toxins entering into the picture. To make a cooked product shelf stable, a preservative of some sort typically must be added. Preservatives act the same way in the body as they do in the food itself and can be easily stored for years, blocking your absorption of important nutrients, until released during a cleansing process. So although a tomato is a good choice, tomato sauce in a can is probably not. The can contains harmful

metals, and the contents have been processed and may include up to 14 different unnatural ingredients just to increase shelf life. Look into the ingredients list, and also the processing. If it's not very "vibrant," then it does not equate to vibrant health for you!

3. Where does it come from? Processed crackers, for example, come from a box with a side label that lists 10 to 20 ingredients you may have never heard of before (enriched flours, dioxides, and so on). Bags of potato chips line the shelves, and while it is very tempting to reason that a potato once came from the earth and is therefore "natural," don't take the bait. You know that fried oils are *not* natural; that ground potato flakes, which are the starter for many brands of commercial chips, are treated with chemicals to alter how they look; and that preserving agents are anything but wholesome.

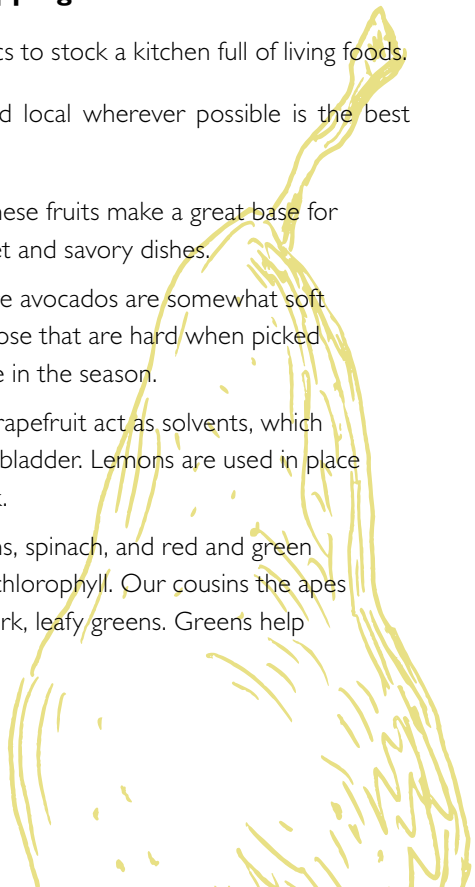
4. What are its health benefits? Food should taste great, but it should also be functional. Ask yourself what you're getting out of every bite. Food is fuel; you want top-notch ingredients for top-notch performance.

Raw-Foods Shopping List

Here is my go-to shopping list for the basics to stock a kitchen full of living foods.

— *Fresh produce.* Shopping organic and local wherever possible is the best choice for your health.

- **Apples and pears**: When in season, these fruits make a great base for many recipes and can be used in sweet and savory dishes.
- **Avocados (Hass and Reed):** Make sure avocados are somewhat soft and haven't been picked too early. Those that are hard when picked may not ripen, especially early and late in the season.
- **Citrus**: Oranges, lemons, limes, and grapefruit act as solvents, which are good for cleaning the liver and gallbladder. Lemons are used in place of vinegar in many recipes in this book.
- **Dark, leafy greens**: Kale, collard greens, spinach, and red and green chard provide necessary protein and chlorophyll. Our cousins the apes enjoy a diet that is over 40 percent dark, leafy greens. Greens help build muscle and connective tissue.





- **Heirloom tomatoes, Roma tomatoes, or fresh tomatoes from the vine:** Tomatoes are best when in season and sourced locally. Heirloom varieties come in many different colors and shapes, and the benefit of enjoying these in season is a much higher nutrient density, because the seeds haven't been hybridized or genetically altered over time to create stronger crops.
- **Fresh herbs:** Basil, cilantro, and green onions are my standbys for stocking the fridge. Store these wrapped in a wet cloth or inside a small bottle of water to keep them fresh.
- **Fresh berries:** Berries are a heavily sprayed crop, so it's very important to shop for organic or pesticide-free selections wherever possible. If you must buy conventional produce, be sure to rinse the berries well with a vegetable wash to remove any residue.
- **Zucchini or yellow squash:** Squash is a very mineral-dense row crop and is typically easy to find. The water content makes it readily digested, and it's a great base for many vegetable dishes.

- **Garlic:** Garlic is an immunity-boosting ingredient that is also good for heart function. It contrasts with other flavors for a superior culinary experience.
- **Young Thai coconuts:** Young Thai coconuts yield 1–2 cups of coconut water each, as well as up to a cup of coconut flesh.
- **Bananas:** Bananas are a great base for smoothies, and are high in potassium.
- **Shiitake or portobello mushrooms:** Mushrooms are great to have in the kitchen year-round and are very powerful during cold-and-flu season to boost immunity.

— Nuts, seeds, and grains. Shop for raw, unpasteurized, and unheated varieties. Be sure to store in a cool, dark space to protect the integrity of the oils present in the nuts. Soaking and sprouting your raw nuts and seeds is recommended as you begin to add more to your diet. This process releases the enzyme inhibitor naturally present within the nut, activating it to make the nutrients more readily available for digestion. The amount of soaking time varies per nut.

- **Raw tahini (ground sesame seeds):** This is actually pretty hard to make at home and worth buying jarred when you can. (Artisana is my favorite brand!) Tahini is high in calcium and B vitamins, and is an easy ingredient to whip into sauces and spreads in a hurry.
- **Miso:** Shop for a mellow white miso that is unpasteurized, or a brown or red variety for more flavor. Make sure it is labeled "non-GMO," as many soy crops are genetically modified.
- **Raw almond butter and raw almonds:** Almonds are one of the only nuts that are naturally alkaline forming. Raw almond butter is a great substitute for peanut butter.
- **Raw flaxseed:** Flax is rich in essential fatty acids such as omega-3 and omega-6, as well as fiber. A great base for wraps and crackers, flaxseed is helpful for optimal digestion and brain function.
- **Macadamia nuts:** Naturally creamy, macadamia nuts are a go-to ingredient for making great nut cheeses and yummy sauces. The essential fatty acids are incredible for promoting healthy hair, glowing skin, and elastic nails. *Soak time:* 4 hours.



- **Pistachios:** Pistachios whip up into a great pesto and are easy to store. Shop for raw varieties—unsalted, out of the shell. *Soak time:* 4 hours.
- **Pecans or walnuts:** These nuts have naturally occurring oil that makes a great component for many desserts. Try to keep one or the other on hand at all times. *Soak time:* 4 hours.
- **Pumpkin seeds:** Pumpkin seeds offer superior health benefits to sunflower seeds and have a great flavor to work with on a culinary level. *Soak time:* 6 hours.
- **Quinoa:** A gluten-free seed, high in protein, quinoa (pronounced "kee-NO-wah") is a natural alternative to wheat and rice. *Soak time:* 12 hours.
- **Kamut or rye berries:** Kamut is a high-protein grain; when sprouted, it contains only trace amounts of gluten. This is a nonhybridized heirloom grain indigenous to Egypt. Rye also has a small amount of gluten—but less than wheat—and is known to be high in protein, magnesium, and calcium. *Soak time:* 12 hours, followed by 2–3 days for sprouting.
- **Raw buckwheat:** Buckwheat is a gluten-free grain with a high protein profile. Fast and easy to sprout, it is an important ingredient if you love crunchy foods, as it dries to a very crispy texture. *Soak time:* 12 hours.

— *Basic pantry.* These items can keep in your pantry indefinitely.

- **Olives:** Look for kalamata, green, or sun-dried black varieties; these should be packaged dry or in oil, not in vinegar or with additional salt.
- **Dulse and other raw sea vegetables:** Maine Coast Sea Vegetables are hand-harvested and sun-dried. Look for purple colors and wild varieties. Dulse is easily integrated into many recipes.
- **Raw honey or agave nectar:** To find the best raw honey (which helps fight allergies), I suggest seeking out your local beekeeper. When shopping for agave, look for a dark color, and make sure it's labeled "raw."
- **Raw cacao, maca-root powder, and supergreens:** These supplements can be a daily smoothie staple and provide needed minerals. Superfoods are generally found in the supplement section of your local health-food store and online. (See additional superfood suggestions in Chapter 3.)

- **Raw coconut aminos:** This great substitute for soy sauce is soy and wheat free.
- **Sun-dried tomatoes:** Look for unsalted varieties, oftentimes packed in olive oil.
- **Shredded coconut:** Be sure to buy dried coconut shreds that are unsweetened and unsulfured.
- **Assorted chili peppers:** Naturally dried peppers are the best in terms of taste and health benefits. Chipotle peppers are naturally smoked and create a great flavor in sauces and spreads.
- **Dried figs:** Look for unsulfured and sun-dried mission figs for use in the recipes in this book.
- **Himalayan and other gourmet salts:** Salt should always be a dingy-gray or pink color, as opposed to bright white. (There are also black and red varieties.) It is important to find a great one that hasn't been processed to remove its mineral content. Salt "separates" flavor when creating culinary treats and is an important ingredient in your kitchen. The right salts are also functional because they double as trace-mineral supplements.
- **Cold-pressed extra-virgin olive oil:** Olive oils need to be stored in dark glass to prevent oxidizing. Try many in the "cold-pressed extra-virgin" category until you find one you love the taste of. Since you're not heating the oil, the final flavor profile in many of your dressings and sauces will directly result from it.
- **Truffle-infused oil and other gourmet oils:** These should be used sparingly, but can add a quick and easy burst of flavor. Be sure to look for natural infused oils, not synthetic flavors.

How to Set Up Your Kitchen for Success

Setting up your kitchen for success can be as easy as finding a great functional knife and a cutting board. However, if you plan to jump into the living-foods lifestyle, either in steps or with both feet right away, there are some tools that can help ease the transition.

Introduction to the Tools

- **High-powered blender:** A high-powered blender makes manipulating nuts, seeds, and whole fruits and vegetables fast and easy. I suggest outfitting your kitchen with a blender that has a high and low setting, plus a variable-speed dial for even more ease of use. A plunger is also standard on many of these models and helps blend thick sauces made with nuts and seeds. Without a high-powered blender, living cuisine is still possible, but you *will* need a blender of some sort to create sauces, spreads, and smoothies. I recommend dividing the recipes in half for use in a basic blender to make them easier on the machine.
- **Mandoline:** A mandoline is the tool used to create pastas and layered vegetable dishes. Shop for one that has comfortable grips on the bottom designed to keep the equipment in place during use and that features a rotating blade for easy cleaning.
- **Food processor:** Food processors are used mostly for breads and dough, as well as spreads. A basic model will work in your living-foods kitchen to create all of the dishes in this book.
- **Juicer:** Juicers are nice to have on hand if "cleansing" will be part of your health regimen. You may elect to shop for a machine that helps reduce oxidizing and "extracts" the juice to maintain its integrity. The Green Star Elite, for example, extracts juice through a magnetic field, helping maintain its structure, and therefore the longevity of the juice is extended up to three days.
- **Chef's knife:** Knives that are ceramic will reduce oxidation of the fruits and vegetables, and will maintain a sharp edge much longer than a stainless-steel blade. It's important to find a knife that suits your hand well, as it will be the most-used tool in your kitchen.
- **Cutting board:** Anything on your cutting board will get into your final food product. For this reason, a natural-grain board like bamboo or olive wood is preferred. Make sure to find one that's big enough for your large projects so you have space to maneuver.
- **Glass containers for storage:** Storage containers should be glass to avoid any off-gassing of plastics while your foods are stored. Look for ones with a BPA-free, tight-fitting plastic lid.

- **Glass bowls:** Tossing your salads and vegetables in a glass bowl makes the mixture easier to see and is also preferable for health reasons.
- **Squeeze bottles:** Squeeze bottles are great for storage of sauces for use throughout the week. Look for a set of bottles with BPA-free plastic at your local kitchen store.
- **Dehydrator:** A dehydrator is not essential to a living-foods kitchen, but it really expands what is possible in terms of creating new textures and flavors. This is a logical step if you're adopting living foods as a lifestyle. Shop for a dehydrator like the Sedona by Tribest, which has multiple trays, is square, and utilizes a fan. Dehydrators simulate the natural properties of the sun and wind by moving warm air over the food product to remove moisture, leaving behind essential nutrients, fibers, and intensified flavors.



Before we jump into raw-foods recipes, I'll leave you with three suggestions for success in your kitchen that I recommend for anyone just starting out:

1. Place great food options so that they are readily available throughout the kitchen. A platter of fruit on the countertop or terrific raw cookies next to the refrigerator will always divert the wandering eye and stomach to something healthy.

2. Get set up with great tools that make creating living-foods dishes fun and easy. The more you can equip your kitchen with the right tools, the more likely you are to use the skills you learn. Also, keep the equipment out where you can see it; this is more of a motivator to create fresh foods in your home instead of dining out.

3. Enter with a great attitude! Make your kitchen somewhere fun to be. I have quotes and pictures of people I love in mine, and in my mind I make sure to frame my time there as playtime. This will move you away from the restrictive nature of a diet regimen and into a more permanent lifestyle shift.




"The journey
of a thousand miles
begins with one step."
— LAO-TZU