CLEAR THINKING, CLEAN EATING: A GUIDE
FOR FOOD MEDIA LITERACY

A Project

Presented to the faculty of the Department of Communication Studies
California State University, Sacramento

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Communication Studies

by

Denise Karapinar

FALL
2012
CLEAR THINKING, CLEAN EATING: A GUIDE
FOR FOOD MEDIA LITERACY

A Project

by

Denise Karapinar

Approved by:

______________________________, Committee Chair
Carmen Stitt, Ph.D.

______________________________
Date
Student: Denise Karapinar

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this project is suitable for shelving in the Library and credit is to be awarded for the project.

__________________________, Graduate Coordinator

Michele Foss-Snowden, Ph.D.

Date

Department of Communication Studies
Abstract

of

CLEAR THINKING, CLEAN EATING: A GUIDE
FOR FOOD MEDIA LITERACY

by

Denise Karapinar

This project addresses issues that arise from misleading or confusing food marketing messages. The project primarily seeks to create awareness about the persuasive use of food marketing messages. The project proposes a new branch of media literacy called “food media literacy”. Food media literacy focuses on an active, critical analysis of food marketing messages. A critical perspective of food media messages is promoted through the creation of Clear Thinking, Clean Eating, a book that encourages food media literacy by presenting the consumer with information conducive to a critical, individual analysis of food media marketing. The book provides helpful tools and teaches skills necessary to comprehend and critically analyze health claims and nutritional information. Implications and suggested additional research routes are discussed.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Carmen Stitt, Ph.D.

_______________________
Date
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents for their continuous support and for always encouraging me to pursue my dreams. I would also like to thank my committee chair, Carmen Stitt, for believing in me, my vision, and my project from the very beginning, even when it seemed a little farfetched. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee, Elaine Gale and Christine Miller, for their advice and critiques. This project would not have evolved into what it is without the guidance of my committee.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Objective</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Media Literacy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Choice and Heuristics</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equivocation and Tricky Terms</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filling the Gap</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parameters of the Project</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance and Implications</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Thinking, Clean Eating</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

From the time I was a young child until my late teens I suffered from an undiagnosed illness. I had debilitating stomach pains, chronic fatigue, and a litany of digestive issues. I can remember being in the grocery store with my father and falling to the floor in the aisles from stomach pain, not being able to get up and walk around until the feeling passed. It was an illness that affected me quite profoundly on a daily basis. My mother took me to multiple doctors and experts. I was tested for seemingly hundreds of things, all to no avail. My mother took the advice of the doctors and things she read or heard about on television. She made sure I got lots of milk every day to help me grow up strong and made sure I got lots of whole grain by making all my school lunches with whole wheat bread. She would give me a warm glass of milk before bed to help settle my stomach, because she heard about it from a doctor show on television. She did these things because it was repeated in media, and perpetuated for years as being a sort of nutritional and health fact that went unscrutinized. I was desperate for answers, but no doctor, no medication, and no special product seemed to help me.

My freshman year of college at the University of California, Santa Barbara I was still suffering through undiagnosed illness. One of my advisors recommended that I take an introductory nutrition course because it was a great life skills course. I was admittedly not very interested, but decided to take it anyway. Taking that course was one of the best decisions I could have made for my health. The class did something to me. It opened up a whole new field of information. It was as if something suddenly clicked for me. If there was one thing I took away from college, it was the ability and the desire to question
everything. I was taught to look at everything through a critical lens. I was encouraged never to take anyone or anything at face value. It dawned on me, why had my mother and I both just taken everything we heard from television and advertisements as the last word on health? Why had we never questioned any of the media that concerned food? Why did I never look at food advertising critically? Advertising always boils down to someone trying to sell something. Why would I not be suspicious of marketing ploys as I would any other persuasive message? This epiphany lit a fire within me. I began researching. The more information I could get my hands on, the better. I was reading every article, every book, every press release, and anything I could find about food advertising regulation or nutrition. To this day, I still attend at least one seminar a month to stay current with nutritional information and food regulation because it seems to constantly evolve and change.

After a lot of research, and much trial and error, I finally realized that I was gluten intolerant and lactose intolerant. According to the University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center (n.d), gluten intolerance, also known as celiac disease, is a condition that is triggered by the consumption of the gluten, a protein found in wheat, rye, and barley. The consumption of gluten leads to an immune reaction that causes damage to the inner surface of the small intestine. The damaging reaction also makes it hard for the body to absorb the nutrients needed to keep the body healthy (University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center, n.d.). When I eat gluten, I am stricken with a multitude of painful symptoms that can last for days at a time. According to the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (n.d.b), lactose intolerance is a condition that results from the
body’s inability to produce sufficient amounts of lactase, an enzyme needed to digest lactose, a type of sugar found in milk and dairy products (Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, n.d.b). Simply put, my body cannot digest dairy or wheat (and other grains containing gluten) without causing harm to my body. After all of these years, the foods I was eating to make sure I was healthy were the very foods that were making me so sick. The contradiction between what food media messages were telling me was healthy, and what was healthy for me as an individual, made me wonder what else I had believed without question. The more research I did, the more I began to understand how the food industry uses media and marketing to capture a consumer’s attention. I began to understand that profit takes priority over consumer wellbeing in a competitive market. I learned how to read labels, and understand how to look past the flashy sales pitch and identify ingredients that could be harmful to my health. Learning to look beyond the showy packaging helped me to find foods my body needed to be healthy, not what media made me believe I needed.

All of my food intolerances proved to make grocery shopping a daunting task. I would spend hours in the grocery store examining labels and scrutinizing ingredients lists. In a rush, I would snag foods I perceived to be safe for my diet, only to get home to find upon further investigation that the packaging was misleading. I use the term “misleading” because I found myself purchasing products based on words or terms on the product’s packaging that, upon closer scrutiny, did not reflect the actual product. For example, I used to buy a frozen novelty product labeled “lactose intolerant friendly”. I assumed this meant that it was safe for lactose intolerant people to eat because that is
what the label implied. After I returned home, I took a closer look at the product only to find it still contained lactose. I was misled into thinking the product was safe for me to consume. Having to stop and scrutinize every aspect of a food’s packaging and nutritional information in the store made the process of shopping for food an unpleasant, cumbersome experience. I found that there was so much to consider and I became overwhelmed easily. I began to gravitate towards whole foods because they do not need labels or ingredients lists. They are what they are. I learned pretty quickly that my best bet was to make food for myself, at home. Cooking my own meals from scratch allowed me to control exactly what went into my foods. I found cooking my own meals from whole foods a very empowering experience. There is something so rewarding about creating a meal from scratch. I became very passionate about cooking and began baking and making dinners for my entire family every night. Certain family favorites emerged out of my daily cooking experiments, and I want to share them here.

My experiences with food intolerances and my frustrations with misleading product packaging led me to the realization that there is a need for an educational tool to help. I cannot count how many times I wished there was some manual I could turn to that would help me to navigate through all the food labels and food marketing messages. I wanted to create the guide I wish I had during the beginning of my struggles with food marketing messages.

It is important to keep in mind that I do not consider myself an expert. I simply want to educate the consumer through food media literacy by informing him or her about common food marketing practices, and encouraging the interpretation of food marketing
messages from a critical perspective. As a result, the consumer is able to weigh the information and make decisions based on his or her own needs.

I developed the book *Clear Thinking, Clean Eating* as a guide for individuals’ with special dietary needs. It is a book for people who want to become informed consumers and learn to see food marketing messages in a critical way. The book consists of two sections. The first section offers a foundation of basic information about food labeling and packaging that is needed to make informed decisions about food based on individual concerns. The second section of the book provides recipes made from mostly whole, nutritious ingredients. Each recipe also features an easy to understand note that provides helpful information about each recipe. No tricks, no ploys, no smoke and mirrors. Just meals made from simple ingredients.

This master’s project acknowledges the specific audience that it addresses, explains the project’s objective, provides a literature review that covers research and topics that concern food marketing messages, explains the methodology behind the creation of the project, and finally, provides implications and suggestions for future research. This paper will be followed by *Clear Thinking, Clean Eating*, a standalone manuscript included as an example of how the issues discussed in this project can be addressed and how food media literacy may be achieved.

**Target audience**

The book is not just for people struggling with food allergies like me. I wrote *Clear Thinking, Clean Eating* for anyone trying to achieve wellbeing through food, but don’t know where to start. This book is for those who are fed up and confused by all the
conflicting information about food and nutrition in the media. This book is for those who want help navigating through a sea of marketing messages. More than anything, *Clear Thinking, Clean Eating* was written to inform those who are desperate for information like I was. This book is specifically designed to address individuals who have special diets or food allergies like me. Although the book is tailored for a certain audience, it is also helpful to anyone who is seeking advice and information about how to understand food labeling and food media marketing. I am aware that there are individuals who are not interested or concerned with whether or not the claims on the front packaging of a product represents what is inside. I used to be one of those people. It was not until I found a need to seek out information that I realized how helpful a “manual” for understanding food marketing messages could be. The important thing is that if an individual decides he or she wants the information, it is available.

*Clear Thinking, Clean Eating* does not address those interested in sensationalized diets or fad foods that media seeks to address. This book does not address those who are uninterested in health and wellbeing through food. With that being said, I believe it is advantageous to view food media messages and marketing in a critical way. If an individual wishes to be an informed consumer, and take responsibility for what he or she purchases, it is the consumer’s job to learn the skills that are necessary to recognize if he or she is being misled by a food marketing message.

**Project objective**

This project seeks to address the problems that may arise from misleading, contradictory, and confusing communication that takes place in food marketing...
messages. The problems can come from an array of sources, but can be distilled into four major areas: 1) A lack of general nutritional education and awareness about the persuasive use of food marketing messages, including a lack of tools and skills necessary to comprehend and critically analyze health claims and nutritional information, 2) profit driven marketing by food industry professionals and governmental entities, 3) confusing and misleading information that is relayed to the public through mass media outlets and, 4) individuals’ limited time and access to fresh, healthy, affordable foods.

This project primarily addresses the lack of consumer awareness of and education about food marketing and labeling, including a lack of tools and skills necessary to comprehend and critically analyze health claims and nutritional information in food marketing messages that occur in advertisements and product packaging.

From my perspective, I see food product packaging as a type of sales pitch. The front of the package is the flashy sales pitch. Its sole purpose is to catch your attention, draw you in, and get you to make a purchase. The front of the package usually features gimmicks and buzz words to get you interested. Every package is fighting for the consumer’s attention. The side panel of the package is like the fine print. The fine print consists of the actual nutritional information and ingredients. The fine print is where aspects of the products are laid out in detail. It is where you will find what the product actually consists of. If something seems too good to be true, it usually is. This adage proves true not only for sales pitches and infomercials, but for food as well. Food marketing can be as full of as many ploys and gimmicks as infomercials and sales
pitches. I intend to support my view of food marketing in this master’s project while simultaneously providing awareness through consumer education.

**Literature review**

The study of marketing messages in the food industry is extremely important when it comes to potentially misleading information. For the purpose of this master’s project, a misleading message in food marketing is defined as a message or symbol that represents or implies an idea or assumption that is either fraudulent, deceptive, one-sided, or not entirely true. A large amount of consumers are health conscious and want to search out products that supplement a healthier lifestyle. One study found that consumers clearly prefer products with nutrition and health claims through a close-to-realistic purchase simulation (Aschemann-Witzel & Hamm, 2010). The fact that consumers prefer products that claim nutritional or health benefits reinforces the notion that consumers are health conscious. The consumer is actively seeking and choosing products that claim to support a healthier lifestyle. Health claims are no longer exclusive to the health foods aisle. A quick glance at any aisle of the grocery store, even the cookies and snacks aisle, reveals the abundance of these health claims. However, the messages that consumers look for to identify a food as healthy or “the right choice” can be unclear. Foods that are adorned with a label of “organic” or “natural” seem to possess an assumption of healthfulness, regardless of the nature of the product. Even cookies and cakes labeled as organic or natural can produce an aura of health. This phenomenon is known as a “health halo”. If a label like “organic” is perceived by a consumer as healthy or positive, the label can radiate a “halo”, resulting in the perception that the product itself, and other
characteristics associated with the product, are also positive (Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, 2011).

Food marketing messages have the potential to affect the choices made by consumers. This notion seems obvious, after all, persuasion is the main objective of advertisements and the abundance of nutritional facts and health claims on product packaging is easily observed. The notion that food marketing messages have the power to influence choice becomes problematic if a consumer is being persuaded by misleading information both in marketing messages and the food packages themselves. The consumer thinks he or she has made an informed choice, but was instead misled by a misleading food marketing message.

**Food media literacy**

Media literacy is a method of education that utilizes an inquiry-based pedagogic model that encourages individuals to ask questions about what he or she watches, hears, and reads. Silverblatt and Eliceiri (1997) define media literacy as “a critical-thinking skill that enables audiences to decipher the information that they receive through the channels of mass communications and empowers them to develop independent judgments about media content” (p. 48). Media literacy provides tools to help individuals critically analyze media messages, offers opportunities to broaden an individual’s experience of media, and helps to develop skills to create media messages. Media literacy encourages critical viewing and critical analysis of media. The media literate person is an active participant in experiencing media. A media literate individual considers who the message is intended for, who created the message, what the purpose of the message is, whose
voices are heard, whose voices are absent, and what strategies are used in order to catch a viewer’s attention and influence them. The media literate person is in control of his or her own media experiences.

According to Potter (2010), the purpose of media literacy is to aid an individual in protecting himself or herself from the potentially negative effects of media. The purpose of becoming more media literate is to gain greater control over the constant influence from the mass media on an individual’s life (Potter, 2010). Van Der Linde (2010) notes that becoming media literate is increasing in importance due to the omnipresence of media in people’s lives (Van Der Linde, 2010). Media literacy can be used to empower consumers through the use of critical analysis to moderate and reduce any negative impacts of media. Even subtle media influences that a consumer may not pick up on are important to consider due to the pervasive nature of media messages and the high rate of exposure to media over the lifetime of an individual (Potter, 2010).

The use of media literacy to combat potential ill health effects with regard to food marketing messages has been largely overlooked in media literacy research. Media literacy has been used to address many issues including violence, sexual content, stereotyping, fear, and health (Potter, 2010). Media literacy studies that address health topics in the media have used media literacy as an intervention tool to prevent negative effects of media on health. For example, most health-related studies focus on combating the media’s glamorization of smoking (Primack, Fine, Yang, Wickett, & Zickmund, 2009) and helping young adults process images of “perfect” bodies to avoid developing eating disorders or low self-esteem (Choma, Foster, & Radford, 2007; Evans et al., 2006;
Herzog & Eddy, 2009; Levine & Murnen, 2009; Nathanson & Botta, 2003; Richardson, Paxton, & Thomson, 2009). A natural extension is to apply a media literacy concept to food marketing messages. It is important to look at the potentially negative effects of media on health with a focus on food marketing messages because there is a need to understand food marketing messages and practices. Consumers who want to become educated about food marketing messages and apply that education to food choices are met with obstacles when the messages encountered in media and on food packaging are misleading or not straightforward. Food marketing messages have not yet been a focus point for the use of media literacy as a tool to encourage an active, critical view of media. Health concerns regarding food marketing messages and media merit the same amount of research as drug use and self-esteem because such issues have the potential to be just as damaging.

I seek to create a new branch of media literacy called “food media literacy”. Food media literacy encourages the same kind of active participation and critical analysis that media literacy encourages, but with an emphasis on food related marketing messages. The same questions addressed in media literacy should be asked about food advertising as with any advertising. A media literate individual should be aware of the motives that are behind media messages and how it may influence the content of any media message, including food marketing messages and labeling. Media literacy is not about looking to media for the right answers, it is about asking the right questions. One way to combat the problems associated with misleading persuasive messages is to encourage the viewer to question and critically analyze what he or she is exposed to. Thus, this project intends to
encourage a probing, critical perspective when it comes to viewing food marketing messages on television and in the grocery store.

**Heuristics and food choice**

In order to foster critical analysis of food marketing messages, a consumer must learn to look past the flashy marketing labels and simple cues he or she relies on to make food choices. Heuristics, or cues, are simple and efficient rules individuals use to make decisions, come to judgments, and solve problems typically when the information that is available is incomplete or the problem is complex (Kahneman, Tversky, & Slovic, 1982). These rules are hard wired through evolutionary processes or learned, for example, through media, to save cognitive effort in situations when the complete analysis of a message may be inefficient. The innate hardwiring of these rules supports other research that shows food choice is usually based on cues which, consequently, require little cognitive effort, making food decisions easy (Grunert, 2006; Scheibehenne, Miesler, & Todd, 2008).

Even though consumers may be interested in making informed food choices, labels and food marketing messages make it difficult, even for the tenacious consumer, to make nutritious food choices. Part of this is explained by the way people make day-to-day decisions. Consumers tend to not view food marketing messages in a critical way.

One study illustrates how consumers tend to have an uncritical view of food marketing messages: participants were all given a mixture of vegetables, pasta, salami, and cheese, served on a bed of fresh romaine lettuce. The dish was identified as either “salad” or “pasta”. The study found that when a food is identified by a relatively
unhealthy label like “pasta” the dieters thought the item was less healthful than an identical product with the healthier label of “salad” (Irmak, Vallen, & Robinson, 2011). The way in which a food is labeled has an impact on the perception of the food, regardless of the food’s actual content. The authors propose that over time, people who are on diets or seeking healthier food options learn simply to avoid or to choose foods based on what the product name implies. Thus, the health conscious consumer is likely to assume that an item assigned an unhealthy name is less healthy than an item assigned a healthy name without considering any additional product information that might impact his or her evaluations or product choice (Irmak, Vallen, & Robinson, 2011). The findings underscore people’s dependence on cues to make sense of nutrition in food labeling and an inclination to employ heuristic information processing when evaluating food products.

Applying simple heuristic rules works well in most situations, but in others heuristics have resulted in cognitive bias or systematic error (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). For example, imagine a woman is at a grocery store after work picking up some items for dinner. She recently saw a story on the news about the benefits of eating whole grains. She has been trying to get her husband and children to eat a little healthier, so she is attempting only to buy whole grain bread products. She has trained herself to be on the lookout for certain terms. She scans the bread aisle for the terms “100%” “whole”, “grain”, or “wheat”. These words have been programmed into her mind from the news story she watched. She sees a nice loaf of French bread labeled as “100% wheat”. She grabs the loaf, not realizing the product contains virtually no whole grain. Her heuristic cues associated with the labels “100%” “whole”, “grain”, or “wheat” led her astray due to
food marketing tactics. 100% wheat simply means a product is made from wheat. It does not mean the product contains the whole grain. The terms are similar and easy to mix up. The use of these terms on food packaging for products that are not 100% whole grain is likely no accident.

Most food marketing messages today require a good deal of active cognitive effort to understand fully what a product consists of, and whether or not the product is what it is advertised to be. This is because food marketing messages are persuasive by nature and tend to use marketing ploys to influence purchase choice. A noncritical view of food marketing has the potential to aggravate the problem. Reliance on heuristic cues to make healthy food choices may result in purchases based on an unscrutinized, misleading persuasive message. A critical review of food marketing practices will reveal strategies the food industry typically relies on to label foods and will explain why most consumers do not put forth more cognitive effort to understand the messages, and, consequently, why he or she does not learn more about what he or she is eating.

Cognitive effort is needed beyond simple heuristic cues even for claims that seem straightforward. For example, canned soups labeled as “reduced sodium” or “lower sodium” may still contain alarmingly high amounts of sodium, but to a lesser extent than the original product. A consumer cannot rely on the use of term “reduced sodium” as a cue to signal the product is low in sodium.

A study examined the potential effects of comparative sodium content claims on food product labels on consumers (Andrews, Burton, & Netemeyer, 2000). The study found that the effect of misleading generalizations for sodium levels in soup
advertisements was dependent on the ad claim type and the nutrition knowledge level of the consumer. The study shows that a consumer’s knowledge about nutrition affects their ability to understand comparative content messages because of its misleading and purposefully confusing nature. Essentially, if consumers do not put forth the additional cognitive effort it takes to analyze a nutrition facts panel when they observe a statement on the front label of a soup can that reads “50% less sodium”, it will affect their evaluation of the soup’s overall sodium content.

Questions that need to be asked about food labeling and claims are often not considered. Consumers should consider what the soup is being compared to, and question if the soup contains fifty percent less sodium than the original product, fifty percent less sodium than a competing product, or fifty percent less sodium than a cube of salt. Consumers should question if fifty percent less sodium is a low amount of sodium. It most cases, it is not. These questions often go unasked because little cognitive effort is put forth in choosing a soup for those who do not have the skills or time to analyze nutritional information in a systematic way.

The Heuristic-systematic model (HSM) of information processing helps to explain further why people tend to rely on cues when making day-to-day decisions. HSM is relevant for this project because the project seeks to understand why people tend to rely on simpler messages and risk not fully understanding the nutritional content of the foods.

According to HSM, an individual typically processes information in one of two ways. First, an individual may judge the validity of a message using systematic processing. Systematic processing is a comprehensive, analytical, and specific mode of
processing information. Systematic processing is cognitively taxing because it requires
the receiver to scrutinize a good deal of information in order to judge a persuasive
message. Systematic processing assumes that persuasive messages are mediated by an
individual’s understanding of the issue or object. Systematic processing relies on in-
depth, judgment-relevant information to process the content of a persuasive message
(Chaiken & Eagly, 1993). Thus, one has to expend a lot of cognitive effort in order to
process the arguments and evidence in a message. When making daily decision about
food, one is unlikely to spend much time doing so.

Alternatively, HSM suggests that an individual may judge a persuasive message
using heuristic processing. Heuristic processing is a more limited mode of information
processing (Chaiken & Eagly, 1993). The heuristic mode of information processing
requires less cognitive effort and requires fewer cognitive resources. When an individual
uses heuristic processing he or she uses a subset of available information that allows him
or her to formulate simple decision rules or cognitive shortcuts to make decisions or
judgments. Such simple decision rules include “consensus implies correctness” and
“experts’ statements can be trusted” (Chaiken and Eagly, 1993, p. 327). Using such
shortcuts without considering all arguments presented, without processing information,
and by making choices using heuristic processing, can be troublesome regarding food
choice.

Take the decision rule “experts’ statements can be trusted” for example. In the
world of food and nutrition it is not uncommon for experts in the field to have
contradictory opinions about the same subject. If the experts have opposing views about
an issue, the consumer is likely to trust the opinion of whichever expert opinion he or she hears first and most frequently. The frequency with which an opinion is repeated also feeds into the “consensus implies correctness” rule.

The issues that arise from the use of heuristic cues like “experts’ statements can be trusted”, in situations that require a more probing approach to making informed decisions, is illustrated by the complicated debate that takes place over an American food staple. It is well-known, and easily accepted that milk has the ability to build strong bones. This notion has been perpetuated for years. Milk contains calcium. Calcium is beneficial to bone health. Therefore, milk must be beneficial to bone health. This notion is generally not questioned. Many health experts tout the benefits of milk for bone health and growth. Dixon (2011) discusses the benefits of a diet rich in calcium and cites dairy as a good dietary source of calcium to promote bone health (Dixon, 2011). Weaver (2001) and Greer and Krebs (2006) both agree that although calcium is more bioavailable in some vegetables than in milk, the amount of vegetables one would have to consume is double the amount needed than drinking milk. Since more calcium can be consumed in smaller amounts with milk, it is seen as the superior source for calcium (Weaver, 2001; Greer & Krebs, 2006). The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2006) cites low-fat and fat-free milk and milk products as the best dietary source of calcium in comparison to certain vegetables that can inhibit calcium absorption (The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2006).

The benefits of milk are highly publicized in the media. According to the USDA report to Congress on the National Dairy Promotion and Research Program (2006) over
$785 million dollars was spent on generic milk advertising from 1995 – 2005 (National Dairy Promotion and Research Program, 2006). However, there are numerous studies that suggest milk does not “do a body good”.

Most people are unaware there is even a debate taking place about the health benefits of milk. There is another side to the story that is not marketed in the American mainstream media. The Harvard School of Public Health (n.d.) published an article wherein the researchers suggest that the USDA’s new “MyPlate” food guide is influenced by food industry lobbyists. In particular, the inclusion of a glass of milk on the MyPlate guide is called into question. The article states, “…dairy is given a prominent place right next to the plate, despite evidence that high intakes of dairy products do not reduce the risk of osteoporosis and may increase the risk of some chronic diseases” (The Harvard School of Public Health, n.d.). The Mayo Clinic explains that osteoporosis is a disorder that causes the bones to become weak and brittle. Osteoporosis occurs when the creation of new bone is slower than the removal of old bone. Most factors that contribute to the risk of having osteoporosis are unchangeable like aging, genetics, sex, and hormones. Low calcium intake over a lifetime is also listed a risk factor, along with sedentary lifestyle, alcohol and tobacco use, and others. The consumption of dairy is not mentioned (Mayo Clinic, n.d.). One of the main benefits of dairy that is present in food marketing messages is its ability to keep bones strong and fight off osteoporosis. This could be true, but it there is also evidence to suggest the opposite is true; it just is not publicized in the media.
Many other experts and institutions have a similar view about milk and calcium. Robert M. Kradjian (n.d.), the former Chief of General Surgery at Seton Medical Center, stated, “Don’t drink milk for health. I am convinced on the weight of the scientific evidence that it does not 'do a body good.' Inclusion of milk will only reduce your diet’s nutritional value and safety. Most of the people on this planet live very healthfully without cows’ milk. You can too" (Kradjian, n.d.). This opinion about milk may seem like a radical view for a medical professional to have, but it is not entirely uncommon.

Frank A. Oski (1992), the Former Director of the Department of Pediatrics at Johns Hopkins University, stated that in many parts of the world, East Asia in particular, many people consider cow milk to be unfit for human consumption. His observation is linked to the fact that no other mammalian species, besides humans, consume the milk of another species or continue to consume milk after the weaning stage of infancy. He notes that cow’s milk is beneficial for helping a calf gain a large amount of mass in a short time, but suggests that it is not intended for human consumption (Oski, 1992).

Something to consider is that the highest incidents of osteoporosis in the world actually occur in Denmark, Holland, Norway, and Sweden. These countries also have the highest milk consumption rate in the world. Some of the lowest incidents of osteoporosis belong to tribes in Kenya and Tanzania who consume virtually no dairy (Cohen, 1997). The only case of a tribe suffering from osteoporosis is the Maasai, who also happen to be the only cattle-owning, milk drinking tribe (Cohen, n.d.).

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (n.d.a) also made their concerns about the benefits of dairy known. Though milks’ main selling points are its
high calcium content and ability to build strong bones and prevent osteoporosis, an article from the PCRM states that there is clinical research showing that milk and other dairy products have little or no benefit in promoting bone health. The view that milk has little to no beneficial effect on the prevention of osteoporosis is mainly backed by the fact that the animal protein present in milk can actually inhibit calcium absorption (Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, n.d.a). The opinion that dairy is not a suitable source of calcium is reaffirmed by Walsh (2002), who believes that dairy products are not the best source of dietary calcium available because they promote calcium loss alongside an increased calcium intake. He argues that cheese in particular, degrades the calcium balance of individuals most at risk of osteoporosis (Walsh, 2002). All of these expert statements are in direct opposition to the popular belief that milk builds strong bones. Somehow this entire side of the debate has stayed out of American mainstream media. The absence of the view that milk is not a beneficial food could be due to a lack of funding for promotion, media biases, or short sidedness, among other reasons.

Both sides of this argument appear to be very strong. Both the view that dairy can be beneficial to health, and the view that dairy can be detrimental to health are supported by experts in the field, and backed by scientific research. Each expert holds tightly to his or her claims. The conflicting opinions of experts in the field, and the uncertainty of the health effects of dairy is not only an example of how confusing food marketing can be, but it also shows how simple decision rules based on heuristic cues are not suited for situations that entail complicated, conflicting information and opinions.
The dairy debate is a very complicated issue that requires a good deal of critical analysis in considering all of the evidence, expert opinions, and personal needs in order to come to a conclusion about what is right for an individual. The complicated nature of the debate that surrounds dairy is problematic because consumers are more likely to make decisions without fully absorbing the semantic content of a persuasive argument while using simple heuristic decisions rules (Chaiken & Eagly, 1993).

Semantic content refers to the meaning behind the linguistic use of a word, term, or message (King & Stanley, 2003). The semantic content of a message addresses the meaning of a message beyond the use of the words. If the semantic content of food related media messages is not fully absorbed, the meaning is not fully absorbed. Understanding the meaning behind these messages is essential for becoming a media literate individual. An individual will inevitably have a hard time analyzing and questioning a media message if the meaning of the message is not absorbed. The use of these simple decision rules to judge the probable validity of a persuasive message without fully absorbing the semantic content of the message is troublesome, especially if the message is misleading or controversial.

Reliance on heuristics to make healthy food choices could result in a consumer making a food choice he or she believes is healthy based on whatever he or she hears frequently in food marketing messages. In some cases, what is advertised as beneficial to health by experts or in product advertisements can actually be detrimental to the health of others. For example, it is easily observed that the daily consumption of whole grains is frequently advocated on health-oriented television talk shows like Dr. Oz, and The
Doctors. The television shows explain the benefits of eating whole wheat bread and whole wheat pasta in place of white bread and refined pasta products. Promoting eating whole wheat products may be good advice for some, but not all.

A growing number of American’s are diagnosed with celiac disease or wheat and gluten allergies. It is estimated that at least three million Americans have celiac disease, an autoimmune disorder that causes a harmful reaction in the small intestine when an individual eats gluten, which is found in whole wheat products (University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center, n.d.). If an individual is allergic to gluten, the consumption of the wheat products endorsed as being beneficial to health are actually damaging to his or her health. In this case, the advice given to eat whole wheat products is actually harmful to a large segment of the population. It is the responsibility of the individual to analyze food marketing messages according to his or her own health concerns instead of simply accepting everything he or she is exposed to. Again, this points to the need for consumers to become more educated about food marketing messages and labeling.

Many food marketing messages rely on only representing one side of an argument, wherein the advertisement provide quotations and opinions of experts, but do not give the consumer a well-rounded understanding of the issue. For example, recently some advertisements attempting to rebrand high fructose corn syrup as “corn sugar” have aired. According to the advertisements and the campaigns website, experts say that your body cannot tell the difference between high fructose corn syrup and sugar. The website features quotes under the heading “simple facts”. One the “simple facts” listed on cornsugar.com is taken from a popular magazine. Joan Salge Blake is quoted by the
website from the 2010 issue of Redbook as saying, “When high-fructose corn syrup and sugar are absorbed into our bloodstream, the two are indistinguishable by the body” (Redbook Magazine, 2010). The expert quotes from cornsugar.com all dismiss the notion that high fructose corn syrup is any less healthy than other sugars. Cornsugar.com (n.d.) also comments, “A sugar is a sugar whether it comes from corn sugar or cane sugar. All are safe and natural. Your body can’t tell the difference” (Cornsugar.com, n.d.). The expert statements on the website, which are echoed in the television advertisements, stand strongly by the fact that there is no difference between high fructose corn syrup and table sugar.

The argument that high fructose corn syrup is identical to table sugar in the body seems convincing given the plethora of expert quotes and simple facts given on the corn sugar website. However, there is a large body of research that refutes these claims. To understand how the body uses different types of sugars differently one must understand how the glycemic index works. Wiel (2008) explains that the glycemic index is a comparative measurement tool that ranks carbohydrate foods on the basis of how they affect blood sugar. Essentially, a glycemic index rating represents the rate at which the carbohydrates in a food absorb as sugar into the blood stream. The numerical representation of a food shows how fast the food raises blood sugar. Foods high on the glycemic index release glucose into the blood stream at a rapid rate. Foods low on the glycemic index release glucose into the blood stream slowly and steadily. The numerical ranking of a food on the glycemic index is important because eating a lot of foods that rank high on the glycemic index can produce spikes in blood sugar. Eating an excess of
food that is high on the glycemic index can lead to an insensitivity to insulin which is associated with obesity, high blood pressure, and an increased risk of type 2 diabetes (Wiel, 2008).

Table sugar has a GI of 80, where high fructose corn syrup has a GI of 87 (Sciortino, 2011). The difference may seem small, but the difference builds up when consumed over time. According to this information, the body converts table sugar and high fructose corn syrup to glucose and releases it into the blood stream at different rates. The difference in the rate of conversion shows that the body uses the sugars differently.

One article looks at the short and long term effects of high fructose corn syrup on the body weight, body fat, and circulating triglycerides in rats. The study found that the rats with access to high fructose corn syrup gained more body weight than the rats that had equal access to table sugar, and the same total number of calories. The authors suggest the study could be translated to humans (Bocarsly, Powell, Avena, & Hoebel, 2010). The debate over how the body reacts to high fructose corn syrup versus table sugar is another example of how the simple heuristic decision making rules consumers are likely to use, like “experts opinions can be trusted”, are not efficient for decision making regarding bettering one’s health when the opinions of the experts are contrasting and only one side of the discussion is represented in an advertisement. Instead, consumers are in need of information that can aide in breaking the use of these cues in situations where a deeper, more critical approach is needed for decision making.

An important assumption of the heuristic-systematic model is that individuals are more likely to be cognitive misers. The term cognitive miser refers to the idea that
individuals tend to rely on simple and time efficient strategies when evaluating information and making decisions. Cognitive miserliness is not due to laziness. Necessity and efficiency govern cognitive work (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). Cognitive misers tend to minimize the use of cognitive resources which inevitably has an effect on the processing of persuasive messages. Processing a persuasive message in a systematic way requires the receiver to exert a considerable amount of cognitive effort. It also requires the receiver to actively try to comprehend and evaluate the persuasive messages’ content. In contrast, heuristic processing allows for a consumer to rely on cognitive shortcuts to process persuasive messages.

Chaiken (1980) notes that heuristic processing relies on easily accessible, readily available information. It also offers an economic advantage by requiring a minimal amount of cognitive effort on the part of the receiver in making judgment calls (Chaiken, 1980). The assumption that individuals are more likely to be cognitive misers explains why most trivial, everyday decisions are made using the heuristic mode of processing. The average adult is exposed to about 19.3 persuasive messages concerning food on a daily basis (Harris, 2010). Daily exposure to persuasive messages about food, paired with the need to make food choices on a daily basis produces a very prosaic type of decision. People are more likely to use a heuristic route to process information about food because food choice is a decision made on a routine basis.

Choice heuristics also have been used to explain decision making. Choice heuristics are rules that consumers employ to simplify decisions made in low involvement or time pressured situations. Choice heuristics involve considering only one
or very few pieces of information in making a choice. The characteristics associated with food purchase decisions are a prime example of characteristics typical for the use of choice heuristics (Grunert, 2006).

Scheibehenne, Miesler, and Todd (2008) also point out that most of the research on food choice is based on the assumption that a consumer will spend a good deal of cognitive effort making rational, well thought out decisions. To the contrary, the authors point out that a large, growing body of research shows that food choice decisions may be better categorized as simple heuristics. The authors suggest that people are more likely to use simplified rules of thumb, which consist of very few pieces of information, to make food choices. Results from their study suggest that food choices are based on simple heuristics (Scheibehenne, Miesler, & Todd, 2008).

Heuristically processing persuasive arguments about food can concurrently affect food choice, and becomes a concern when the advertising that affects food choice is misleading and misguiding. The views that “consensus is correct” and “experts’ are to be trusted” perpetuate decisions based on misinformation relayed through the media.

Heuristic processing can be helpful for some situations, but can be detrimental to consumers who are trying to become healthier but rely only on mass media messages about health. For example, an obese consumer, working towards a healthier lifestyle, may view a popular medical talk show in which a reputable doctor tells the audience that choosing whole grains is a good healthy choice. The consumer also hears from his peers that whole grains are healthy and a good choice for losing weight. The consumer then visits his favorite café on his lunch break. He is trying to make a real effort to eat
healthier so he grabs some crackers to go with lunch that feature the words “whole grain” printed largely and brightly on the package. What the consumer does not realize is that the crackers he purchased with his lunch contain more enriched white flour and sugar than whole grains (see appendix A). Had the consumer taken the extra time to look past the large print on the front of the package and read the ingredients list, he would have seen that the product was not as conducive to his goal as advertised. Thus, consumers would benefit from more than just understanding how food marketing operates. The consumer would benefit from guidance in how to make more informed and healthier food decisions, and this master’s project provides the consumer with just that.

Typically, not a lot of critical thinking goes into food choice since consumers tend to make food based decisions using heuristic processing, as opposed to systematic processing (Scheibehenne, Miesler, & Todd, 2008; Grunert, 2006). If the consumer was more educated about food labeling practices, and had the skills necessary to assess the product for the validity of the front of the package claim, he could have made a better choice to aid his efforts in becoming healthier. To make matters even more confusing, say the consumer is a little more knowledgeable about reading package labeling. The consumer realizes the first crackers are not actually whole grain crackers, and opts for a cracker made with 100% whole grain. Choosing the product labeled as 100% whole grain may still not be a healthier choice. One of the main advantages of eating whole grains is an increased fiber intake. A 100% whole grain cracker may have identical fiber content to a processed grain cracker. There is also typically added fat and sodium to whole grain products to boost flavor content (see appendix B). If the consumer was more educated in
nutrition and food labeling, he would have seen that the particular brand he chose is not the best choice for his health goals. He could have realized the 100% whole grain label was only part of the story, and that the nutrition panel revealed a more accurate description of the products health attributes. A consumer has to be very well educated in nutrition and food labeling practices to see through all of the marketing ploys that prey on heuristic based food choices. A systematic mode of information processing is necessary since food marketing and labeling can be misleading and confusing. Even then, the consumer must have the education necessary to assess food health claims.

**Equivocation and tricky terms**

The fallacy of equivocation plays a part in understanding the why misleading food marketing practices can deceive consumers. Equivocation is a logical fallacy that refers to the misleading use of a term with more than one meaning or sense. Bello and Edwards (2005) define equivocation simply as the use of ambiguity or vagueness (Bello & Edwards, 2005). Kline, Simunich, and Weber (2009) define equivocation similarly as the use of strategic ambiguity (Kline, Simunich, & Weber). Bavelas, Black, Chovil, and Mullet, (1990) define equivocation as the use of strategic language to provide reasonable answers for questions that, if confronted with clear communication, would otherwise result in negative repercussions (Bavelas, Black, Chovil, & Mullet, 1990).

Some food marketing attempts rely on ambiguity arising from the use of a word. For example, take the use of the term “natural” or “all natural” on product packaging. The FDA has not provided a definition for the term “natural”. Since the term is not defined, it is not regulated. An advertiser may use the term “natural” at their own
discretion. The term “natural” can have different meanings depending on the understandings and assumptions of a consumer and an advertiser. The consumer may believe the term “natural” signifies that a product is made with only pure ingredients from nature, or that the product is somehow more healthy or better than a similar product without the term “natural” on its packaging. The product marketer may have labeled the product as “natural” simply because the main ingredient is from a natural source. A product labeled as all natural can legally contain artificial flavorings and chemically processed ingredients.

For example, Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream was labeled as “All Natural”. Many consumers bought Ben & Jerry’s product because it was understood to be a higher quality, natural product based on the labeling of the ice cream as an all-natural product (see appendix C). Ben & Jerry’s officially dropped the “all natural” claim from their products after the Center for Science in the Public Interest asked the company to stop using “all natural” claims on the products that contained ingredients like alkalized cocoa, vanillin (an artificial flavor), corn syrup, and partially hydrogenated soybean oil (Fulton, 2010). The success of equivocation as a form of marketing depends on the consumer assigning an assumed positive meaning to the term. The consumer will ideally identify the term, associate it with something positive in regard to health, and purchase the product without consulting the actual nutritional information or ingredients. The consumer assumes that the terms meaning is parallel to his or her own understanding of the term. The term ceases to hold meaning as a singular, defined term and becomes an
individually constructed idea. The ambiguity surrounding the term “natural” is vast, and is most likely why it is seen frequently on food product packaging.

Another example of ambiguity in terms is the word “local”. The term can hold multiple meanings depending on how both the manufacturer and consumer interprets the term. Local can mean local to a town, a city, or even a state. The most common use of the term refers to a product which has traveled less than 400 miles from its place of origin. The place of origin could be a factory. Local foods do not always support local farmers or economy like is suggested with the use of the term (Gosselin, 2010).

The term “organic” can also be seen as ambiguous. There are many different entities that certify products as organic. Each certifier has a different set of requirements that are necessary in order to earn the certification of organic. The USA is notorious for having lax standards for organic certification. Horizon, the nation’s largest suppliers of organic dairy products, has been accused of violating the already lax organic standards, but still retains the USDA organic certification (Kastel, 2005). One study acknowledges the fact that average consumers do not know what makes a product organic, but still view it to be healthier than nonorganic alternatives (Schuldt & Schwarz, 2010).

Terms like “natural” and “all natural” are frequently used in food marketing messages to gain attention, and elicit certain thoughts associated with the terms. Through my own experiences and speaking to others, I find that terms like “natural”, “pure”, “organic”, “local”, and “wholesome” tend to conjure thoughts associated with health and nutrition regardless of whether or not the term warrants such a claim. A study found that people infer that cookies labeled as “organic” are lower in calories, and can be consumed
more often than conventional cookies. The inferences were observed even though the packaging on both products had nutritional labels that conveyed an identical calorie count (Schuldt & Schwarz, 2010). Schuldt and Schwarz (2010) state that “These results reflect an “organic/natural”-“healthy” association that is capable of biasing everyday judgments about diet and exercise” (p. 144). A quick look at products on the grocery store shelves reveals that there are many products that feature these words. All of these terms are buzz words, defined by Merriam-Webster (n.d.) as important sounding words or phrases, usually of little meaning, used mainly to impress (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). These buzz words are prime for the potential of equivocal meanings. The terms are general, and ambiguous. Food marketing messages capitalize on the vagueness of the terms to capture attention, and sell products. The vagueness of these terms is problematic because the consumer can assign a multitude of meanings that are applied to the contents of the packaging. This master’s project provides the consumer with information about what these terms mean and how they are regulated by the FDA. A clear understanding of what the FDA requires for a product to be labeled as “natural”, “organic”, and the like, gives the consumer the power to analyze the packages in a critical way.

There is a deficit of knowledge in three main areas; understanding nutritional information, recognizing food marketing jargon, and familiarity with federal regulations concerning the labeling of food. Most people do not carry around a copy of the FDA’s regulations and qualifications for what terms are allowed to be used in what situations. In order to fully understand what one is buying, an individual needs to possess and comprehend an ever-changing vocabulary. To fully understand the contents of a product,
the consumer must understand terms like “interesterified fat”, “acesulfame potassium”, “sucralose”, and “BHT”. There is no dictionary, guide, or booklet that is easily accessible to the public that provides definitions for these terms. Making a guide for all of the terms used in ingredients lists would be difficult due to the magnitude of terms and education needed to understand the definitions.

The nutritional labeling and information systems that are currently used are often complicated and require specific knowledge and education to translate and fully understand. There are mathematical equations needed to translate the information on nutrition panels into practical, meaningful measurements. For example, in order to understand how many teaspoons of sugar a bottle of Gatorade contains, a consumer would have to take the amount of grams of sugar shown on the label, multiply it by how many servings the bottle contains, then divide that number by four, just to get an accurate understanding of how much sugar one bottle contains.

Most people do not have the time or skills necessary to devise how much sugar or other components a food or beverage contains in practical terms. This renders the use of the numbers on nutritional labels ineffective in informing the consumer, besides for purposes of comparison. The purpose of the nutrition label is somewhat negated unless the consumer is educated on how to read them. This master’s project provides the consumer with a basic nutrition facts panel guide to help alleviate some of the problems that may arise from the complicated nature of the standard nutrition panel.

In less common, though highly publicized occurrences, food marketing messages can also be misleading through outright deceit. In some cases, food marketing messages
prey on the consumer who is in search of health promoting foods, not only by using buzz words or exaggerating claims on the packaging, but by fabricating research. In one such case, the Federal Trade Commission recently ordered Dannon, the makers of Activia and DanActive, to pay 21 million dollars to settle charges of deceptive marketing. The settlement was focused on unproven health claims present in the yogurts advertisements and packaging. The complaint filed with the Federal Trade Commission (2010) stated that Dannon claimed in nationwide advertising campaigns that scientific research supported the claims that one daily serving of Activia would relieve irregular digestion and improve the speed at which food moves through the intestines. The campaigns also claimed that scientific research showed that DanActive could prevent cold and flu symptoms. The FTC found that there was insufficient substantiation for the claims, and that the claims that were clinically proven were false (Federal Trade Commission, 2010).

Though Dannon was exposed for their fraudulent marketing, few changes were made to the campaign. Dannon made slight changes to the ads, removing definitive statements about health benefits and research. Dannon was not forced to publically retract the claims (Forgione, 2010). The yogurt products may continue to be associated with the false information given in the advertisements because the law suit was not publicized. The left over association of the yogurt and the false claims may lead to purchase of the product based on fraudulent information. Thus, food marketing messages can contain misleading and in some cases, completely fabricated claims. The potentially misleading nature of food marketing messages increases the need for consumer awareness and a critical analysis of food marketing messages.
Filling the gap

The consumer is provided with a multitude of persuasive food marketing messages. Advertisements and product labels are full of health claims, buzz words, and gimmicks designed to capture attention and entice. There is no shortage of advertising in the food marketing world. There is, however, a deficit in easily accessible information that serves as a guide for how to understand and navigate through all of the food marketing messages that individuals are exposed to on a daily basis.

As discussed in the prior sections of this paper, this project primarily seeks to address the lack of education and awareness about the persuasive use of food marketing messages, including the lack of the tools and skills necessary to comprehend and critically analyze health claims and nutritional information. The intent of this project is to address the issues discussed above by providing the consumer with a book that is conducive to food media literacy as a means of promoting a critical analysis of food marketing messages. *Clear Thinking, Clean Eating* promotes the awareness and acknowledgement of the ways in which food marketing messages can rely on persuasion through heuristic cues and equivocation by providing the consumer with information regarding potentially misleading or confusing messages that may arise in food marketing messages.

Method

The cookbook serves as an informational guide about how to understand the communication that surrounds food marketing. The main goal of the book is to foster “food media literacy” by providing the consumer with information that encourages a
critical view of food marketing messages. The book provides the consumer with relevant information regarding topics in the food industry that have become confusing due to media messages. The information in the cook will help the consumer get a well-rounded understanding of each topic so he or she is able make decisions about the foods he or she chooses based on his or her own needs illuminated by academic research rather than food marketing messages. The cookbook also includes recipes that feature foods and meals he or she can make at home, made from simple, whole ingredients. Making recipes at home provides the consumer with a greater amount of control over what goes into the foods he or she eats or feeds his or her family.

The cookbook consists of two parts. The first section highlights the informational aspect of the project. The key to the success of this project is the distribution of information. In media literacy, knowledge is indeed power. As Potter (2010) states, “The purpose of becoming more media literate is to gain greater control over influences in one’s life, particularly the constant influence from the mass media” (pg. 681). Empowering a consumer with the knowledge and information he or she needs to be critical of food marketing messages allows the consumer to take control over the media experience.

The first part of the book provides the consumer with potentially misleading terms used in food media marketing and what the terms mean. The book also provides the consumer with a guide for how to understand and analyze food labeling practices. The first part of the book also addresses common misconceptions and debates present in the media about food and nutrition. And lastly, the first section of the book provides the
consumer with a listing of seasonal foods and why fresh foods are so important along with tips for how to stock a healthy pantry. The aim of the first section of the book is to foster a well-rounded education about communication in the food industry that serves as a basic lesson in food media literacy.

The second part of the cookbook provides the consumer with real world, practical ways in which he or she can apply the information from the first section of the book to everyday life. The recipes will consist of “make at home foods”. Cooking at home, from scratch, with whole foods is the best way to really understand what is going into a meal. The recipes will also feature tips or facts relating back to the information in the first section of the book. These tips and facts will function in multiple ways. The tips reaffirm the information provided in the beginning of the book as well as give the consumer a way to relate the information back to real world applications.

For example, in a recipe for fresh pressed juice, the additional note reads, “The cereal aisle is probably one of the most confusing places in the grocery store. There seems to be an endless sea of choices full of health claims and eye catching packaging. The terms “essential vitamins and minerals”, “whole grain”, “fiber”, and “antioxidants” are everywhere. Cereals may claim health benefits, but when you get right down to it, most are full of sugar and have been highly processed. Make your own cereal at home to ensure a nutritious breakfast.” The excerpt points out to the consumer that just because a product features a health claim, does not mean the product is an overall healthy choice. The note provided with a recipe for white chili reads, “Canned chilies are usually high in sodium and saturated fat. Even if the can is labeled “lower sodium” or “reduced sodium”, 
the chili can still contain high levels of sodium. Control the sodium and saturated fat by making this delicious and nutritious vegetarian chili.” The addition note reminds the consumer that a lower sodium label does not mean that the product is low in sodium. It only relates to another product and insinuates a low sodium level by comparing the two. The best way to control the sodium levels of soup is to make it at home from fresh ingredients.

*Clear Thinking, Clean Eating* intends to empower the consumer. Much like the goal of media literacy, the book seeks to give the viewer control over his or her own experience with media, be it television or print, through active participation and critical analysis. *Clear Thinking, Clean Eating* is intended be to a guide for those interested in bettering his or her understanding of food marketing messages and nutritional panels by encouraging individual critical analysis. The consumer is reminded that it is not written from the perspective of a doctor or an expert, rather a well-informed home cook with food allergies. The book states that it is a guide, consisting of advice and information that I found to be helpful through personal struggles with understanding food marketing messages.

**Parameters of the project**

Creating the entire cookbook, Clear Thinking, Clean Eating from scratch was a labor of love. It all began with an idea, and evolved into a completed manuscript. This process was no easy feat. There is much more that goes into the development and creation of a cookbook than meets the eye.
For the creation of my cookbook, I took two main aspects into consideration: content and aesthetics. First, the content of the cookbook took a good deal of conceptualizing. I started with the content because I knew it would shape and guide the aesthetics of the book. I had to consider how and in what style I wanted to write the book. I had to weigh the benefits and detriments of different writing styles. I ultimately chose to write in a relatable, accessible voice. I chose this style over a more academic voice because I felt that the subject matter and general nature of the book lent itself better to familiar tone. I did not put myself in the position of an expert or doctor, so I did not want to sound like one. Rather, I wanted embody the voice of a friend or loved one, sharing my own trials and tribulations with food. I also had to develop the flow of the book and how I wanted it to be organized. I went through six or seven different versions of how to organize the text sections and how to organize the recipes. I had to consider what would be left out, and what to use. It took a great deal of conceptualizing, editing, and re-editing, to end up with what I thought was most salient and practical for the reader. I had to consider what information I wanted to present, and how to present it in a way that is consistent with the overall message of the book. I had to consider what I wanted the reader to take away from the book, and how I could convey my message in a way that would inspire someone to want to learn more.

Developing, testing, and retesting all the recipes I included in the book was also an arduous task. Conceptualizing flavor combinations, tinkering with scant amounts of spices, considering more or less liquid to solid ratios, experimenting with baking times, adjusting seasoning, scrutinizing textures, and perfecting appearances all became
meticulous but important details. Not only did the recipes have to taste good enough to get the reader to want to try more, but they had to look good enough for the reader to want to try in the first place.

The second aspect to a cookbook, and arguably the most important, is the aesthetics. I have never picked up a recipe book written in plain text and wanted to make a recipe from it, much less purchase it. The visual aspects of a cookbook are what draw readers in. I believe we all eat with our eyes first, and the aesthetic qualities to a cookbook is what draws us in. I used the program Photoshop CS2 to create and edit all visual aspects of the book, including text, photographs, and the layout. First I had to develop an appealing layout for the book. I made six different layouts, each in different colors and designs, featuring different combinations of font and size. The use of different fonts is an art in itself. I spent hours deciding on the right combinations of fonts for the book. I finally decided on the layout used in the book for its balance and bright, fresh look. When I think of food, I like to think of it as being a source of energy, and the layout I chose reflects that.

After I settled on the layout, it was time to start making and photographing the images of the food. Any experienced photographer will tell you food is one of the hardest subjects to photograph. Many food stylists and photographers resort to using food props instead of real food due to the difficult nature of the subject. It is important to note that I used no artificial props or lighting in my photographs. Every day around 3:00 pm the sun lit the deck at my home in such a way that lent itself greatly to photographing my recipes. I had to wait until that time, every day to photograph each recipe. I plated and
photographed each recipe in a series of different ways. The food had to be styled in a way that would read as aesthetically pleasing to the eye. No one wants to make a recipe that does not look appetizing. The goal of each of the shoots was to make the food the star. Some plating techniques failed because the plate or setup would visually distract from the food, or the angles of the plates would not read well on camera. Four or five different plates were made of each food, at different intervals to ensure the food being photographed looked fresh, or still frozen. The Coconut Ice Cream shoot was particularly difficult because the ice cream melted and lost shape after the first 20 photos and had to be refrozen and reshaped four times. Each photo shoot consisted of around 150 – 200 photographs which had to be downloaded and sorted through. I narrowed the photographs down to about 20 pictures, and chose the final photograph from there. Then it was all a matter of putting it all together. Each recipe page took around five hours to complete in its entirety, not including recipe testing and development time.

The hardest part about making this cookbook was deciding exactly what my message was. I had so much to say, too much to say, for one book. It took almost until the completion of the project to realize the full vision of what Clear Thinking, Clean Eating was. Making the book was as rewarding as finishing it. The journey I went on in the conceptualization and creation of the book made it into what it is, a manuscript that will hopefully change the way people view food and food marketing.

**Significance and implications**

There is a large gap in research in the communication field with regard to the misleading use of media and marketing in the food industry, and the possible negative
implications food marketing messages may have on health in the long term. There is also
a gap in media literacy research focusing on food marketing messages as they relate to
health. Media literacy research has addressed some serious health issues including
smoking, body image, eating disorders, and violence. Food can be a main contributor to
major illnesses like obesity and heart disease, both of which are major contributors to
death in America.

According to the Center for Disease Control (n.d.), heart disease is the leading
cause of death in both women and men in America. Nearly one in every four deaths can
be attributed to heart disease. The deaths and complications from heart disease can be
prevented through lowering cholesterol and blood pressure, both of which can be
managed through food choice (Center for Disease Control, n.d.). A project focused on the
importance of awareness and education about food marketing messages in relation to
health and nutrition is sorely needed.

Food can play a major role in both promoting and deteriorating health. Further
research in misleading marketing in the food industry and food media literacy is needed
in the communication field. The communication field would benefit from research on the
effectiveness of food media literacy as a tool for education and awareness concerning
food choice and health. This project does not address other aspects that may contribute to
the problems associated with misleading or confusing marketing in the food industry.
These other topics include the government’s role in producing regulation on food and the
possible conflicts of interest between government entities and the entities which they are
supposed to regulate and the interpersonal level of communication through which
misleading information about food and nutrition is perpetuated. There are also certain situations in which food media literacy would have a limited effect on a consumer’s ability to change the way he or she eats. Being knowledgeable about food media and marketing enables the consumer to question and critically analyze the messages he or she is exposed to. However, simply being aware does not guarantee that the consumer is able to make the changes needed to supplement a healthier lifestyle. Limited access to healthy foods, and limits on the time needed to prepare healthy meals from scratch is a serious obstacle to individuals and families eating healthy. Knowledge and information empower the consumer intellectually, but do little to improve upon financial and class related situations. Limited access and time should be taken into account because they pertain to so many consumers. A cookbook featuring quick, nourishing, budget friendly meals would be beneficial for consumers living on a low income, or those who are short on time. Time and money saving tips could be featured alongside the recipes. Fresh and healthy foods should be available to everyone. Since fresh, healthy foods are not as readily available to some consumers, a book addressing the issue would be helpful and deserves further consideration. More research is needed in these areas as they pertain to the communication discipline as well.
Appendix A

Sunshine® Cheez-It® Whole Grain

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 27 Crackers (30g)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount Per Serving</th>
<th>% Daily Value*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fat</td>
<td>8g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat</td>
<td>2g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans Fat</td>
<td>0g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyunsaturated Fat</td>
<td>4g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monounsaturated Fat</td>
<td>2g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol</td>
<td>0mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td>250mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate</td>
<td>17g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary Fiber</td>
<td>1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars</td>
<td>0g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>3g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vitamin A 2% • Vitamin C 0% • Calcium 2% • Iron 6%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.
Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

INGREDIENTS: ENRICHED FLOUR (WHEAT FLOUR, NACIN, REDUCED IRON, THIAMIN MONONITRATE [VITAMIN B1], RIBOFLAVIN [VITAMIN B2], FOLIC ACID), SOYBEAN AND PALM OIL WITH TBHQ FOR FRESHNESS, WHOLE WHEAT FLOUR, SKIM MILK CHEESE (SKIM MILK, WHEY PROTEIN, CHEESE CULTURES, SALT, ENZYMES), ANNATTO EXTRACT FOR COLOR), CONTAINS TWO PERCENT OR LESS OF SALT, PAPRIKA, YEAST, PAPRIKA OLEORESIN (FOR COLOR), SOY LECITHIN.

CONTAINS WHEAT, MILK AND SOY INGREDIENTS.
Appendix C

Chubby Hubby®
Fudge Covered Peanut Butter Filled Pretzels in Vanilla Malt Ice Cream
Ripped with Fudge & Peanut Butter

It began with two office jokers pulling a prank on a colleague whose endless tales of his love for Ben & Jerry's made them nuts. They hatched an imaginary batch packed with pretzels, peanut butter, & fudge in vanilla malt ice cream & spread a rumor of a brand new Ben & Jerry's hit called "Chubby Hubby". After searching obsessively, he was crushed when the hoax was revealed, so the jokers home-made a pint. He proclaimed it too good to be a joke & after one taste, so did we. The rest is history. Chubby Hubby – It's no joke!

Ingredients: Cream, Skim Milk, Liquid Sugar (Sugar, Water), Water, Sugar, Peanuts, Enriched Wheat Flour (Wheat Flour, Nicotinic Acid, Reduced Iron, Thiamin Mononitrate, Riboflavin, Folic Acid), Coconut Oil, Egg Yolks, Wheat And Malt Barley Flour Extract, Cocoa (Processed With Alkali), Corn Oil, Milk, Chocolate Liquor, Vanilla Extract, Butter (Cream, Salt), Partially Hydrogenated Soybean Oil, Salt, Guar Gum, Natural Flavor, Soy Lecithin, Corn Syrup, Sodium Bicarbonate, Yeast, Carrageenan

Rate this Flavor

1129 Fans
Become a Fan
Clear Thinking Clean Eating

Advice and recipes for transforming your view of food.

Written and photographed by: Denise Karapinar
Dedication

This book would not have been possible without the tremendous support of my wonderful family. This book is dedicated to first and foremost, my mother and father who have always supported me in pursuing whatever I am passionate about.
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>pg. 1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pitch</td>
<td>pg. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition Label Guide</td>
<td>pg. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misconceptions and Debates</td>
<td>pg. 5 - 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricky Terms</td>
<td>pg. 8, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Pantry</td>
<td>pg. 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal Foods</td>
<td>pg. 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Get Cooking?</td>
<td>pg. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipe Guide</td>
<td>pg. 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Mornings</td>
<td>pg. 14 - 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sides and Snacks</td>
<td>pg. 23 - 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Dishes</td>
<td>pg. 36 - 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desserts</td>
<td>pg. 49 - 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipe Index</td>
<td>pg. 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

From the time I was a young child until my late teens I suffered from an undiagnosed illness. I had debilitating stomach pains, chronic fatigue, and a litany of digestive issues. I can remember being in the grocery store with my father and falling to the floor in the aisles from stomach pain, not being able to get up and walk around until the feeling passed. It was an illness that affected me quite profoundly on a daily basis. My mother took me to multiple doctors and experts. I was tested for seemingly hundreds of things, all to no avail. My mother took the advice of the doctors and things she read or heard about on television. She made sure I got lots of milk every day to help me grow up strong and made sure I got lots of whole grain by making all my school lunches with whole wheat bread. She would give me a warm glass of milk before bed to help settle my stomach, because she heard about it from a doctor show on television. She did these things because it was repeated in media, and perpetuated for years as being a sort of nutritional and health fact that went unscrutinized. I was desperate for answers, but no doctor, no medication, and no special product seemed to help me.

My freshman year of college at the University of California, Santa Barbara I was still suffering through this undiagnosed illness. One of my advisors recommended that I take an introductory nutrition course because it was a great life skills course. I was admittedly not very interested, but decided to take it anyways. Taking that course was one of the best decisions I could have made for my health. The class did something to me. It opened up a whole new field of information. It was like something suddenly clicked for me. If there was one thing I took away from college, it was the ability and the desire to question everything. I was taught to look at everything through a critical lens. I was encouraged to never take anyone or anything at face value. It dawned on me, why had my mother and I both just taken everything we heard from the television and advertisements as the last word on health? Why had we never questioned any of the media that surrounds food? Why did I never look at food advertising critically? Advertising still boils down to someone trying to sell something. Why would I not be suspicious of marketing ploys as I would any other persuasive message? This epiphany lit a fire within me. I began researching. The more information I could get my hands on the better. I was reading every article, every book, every press release, anything I could find about food advertising regulation or nutrition. To this day I still attend at least one seminar a month to stay current with nutritional information and food regulation because it seems to constantly evolve and change.
Introduction

After a lot of research, and much trial and error, I finally realized that I was gluten intolerant and lactose intolerant. This means my body does not produce the enzymes needed to digest lactose or gluten. Simply put, my body cannot digest dairy or wheat (and other grains containing gluten). After all of these years the foods I was eating to make sure I was healthy were the very foods that were making me sick. The contradiction between what food media messages were telling me was healthy, and what was healthy for me as an individual made me wonder what else I had believed without question. The more research I did, the more I began to understand how the food industry uses media and marketing to capture a consumer’s attention. I began to understand that profit takes priority over consumer wellbeing in a competitive market. I learned how to read labels, and understand how to look past the flashy sales pitch and identify ingredients that could be harmful to my health. Learning to look beyond the flashy packaging helped me to find foods my body needed to be healthy, not what media made me believe I needed.

This book is not just for people struggling with food allergies like me. I wrote this book for anyone trying to achieve a healthier lifestyle for themselves or their families, but don’t know where to start. This book is for anyone who is fed up and confused by all the conflicting information they have heard about food and nutrition in the media. This book is for anyone who wants help navigating through a sea of marketing messages. More than anything, I wrote this book to inform those who are desperate for information like I was. I am aware that there are individuals who are not interested or concerned with whether or not the claims on the front packaging of a product represents what is inside. I used to be one of those people. It was not until I found a need to seek out information that my eyes were opened, and I began to care. The important thing is that if an individual decides he or she wants the information, it is available.

This book consists of two sections. The first section offers a foundation of basic information that is needed to make informed decisions about food based on individual concerns. The second section of the book provides recipes made from whole, nutritious ingredients. No tricks, no ploys, no smoke and mirrors. Just meals made from simple ingredients.

I believe it is advantageous to view food media messages and marketing in a critical way. There will always be companies out there trying to take advantage of you, and it is your job if you wish to be a responsible, informed consumer, to have the tools you need to know if you are being misled or not.
I see food product packaging as a type of sales pitch. The front of the package is the flashy sales pitch. Its sole purpose is to catch your attention, draw you in, and get you to make a purchase. The front of the package usually features gimmicks and buzz words to get you interested. Every package is fighting for the consumer’s attention. The side panel of the package is like the fine print. The fine print consists of the actual nutritional information and ingredients. The fine print is where aspects of the products are laid out in detail. It is where you will find what the product actually consists of. If something seems too good to be true, it usually is. This adage proves true not only for sales pitches and infomercials, but for food as well. Food packaging, and even food marketing messages can be as full of as many ploys and gimmicks as infomercials and sales pitches.
Nutrition Label Guide

Tips for how to read a nutrition label

Servings: Always start by acknowledging the serving size. Everything on the nutrition label is representative of one serving. So in this case, if you are going to eat more or less than 18 crackers, you will have to adjust the values.

Nutrients: A list of general nutrients that make up any food product.

Footnote: This section reminds you that the % daily values are based on a 2,000 calorie per day diet. General individual needs for fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrate, and fiber is given. The needs listed under 2,000 calories are for an average person, and the needs listed under 2,500 calories are for an active person.

Common allergy warning: Sometimes a nutrition label will warn you if the product contains, or is processed on the same equipment as common allergy goods like milk, wheat, soy, eggs, and nuts.

Nutrition Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount Per Serving</th>
<th>Calories 120 Calories from Fat 50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Daily Value*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fat 6g</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat 1g</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans Fat 0g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyunsaturated Fat 3.5g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monounsaturated Fat 1.5g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol 0mg</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium 210mg</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate 20g</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary Fiber 5g</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars 4g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein 3g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calories: This is the amount of energy that is supplied from the food. Any amount of energy you do not use through the day will be stored as fat.

Percent daily value: these percentages represent the recommended intake levels set by the Food and Drug Administration.

Ingredients: The ingredients are listed in descending order of total percentage of the product beginning with the largest, ending with the smallest. Be sure to consider this carefully in deciding whether or not a food is right for you or not.

Contains wheat and soy ingredients.
Misconceptions and Debates

common misconceptions about food and nutrition

“Milk does a body good”

This is something we have all heard since we were little. We have all seen countless milk advertisements boasting the incredible benefits of milk. If you want strong bones, drink lots of milk. Many experts stand by the notion that dairy products are the best source of calcium available and that it is needed for a well-balanced diet. Most people do not know that this concept is highly debated in the medical community. The other side of the debate has not gained much media attention yet, but many contemporary nutritional experts are convinced that milk does not live up to its highly touted health claims. The concept is that the protein in milk inhibits the body’s ability to absorb the calcium present in milk. It does not stop there. High levels of protein can actually leech calcium from the bones. Some experts argue that dairy products are high in saturated fats and cholesterol, which makes them unhealthy for the heart. If you do eat dairy, make sure it is fat free. This reduces risk of heart disease associated with over consumption of foods high in saturated fat, like dairy. You have to weigh the benefits and costs of milk for yourself, and make a decision based on your own needs, not what the television tells you.

“Eating fat will make me fat”

Media has perpetuated the notion that in order to stay healthy, you should avoid fats. Many people trying to obtain a healthier body weight or healthier lifestyle have become afraid of fat. This fear stems from an oversimplified view of nutrition and can be dangerous. The body needs fat to function properly. Eating the right amount and right type of fat is essential to maintaining a healthy body and healthy body weight. Many low fat or fat free products have come out to capitalize on this fear of fat fad. The problem with these products is, when the manufacturer removes the fat, they usually add more sugar, salt, or artificial flavorings to make up for the flavor that is lost from removing the fat. Studies have suggested that low fat or fat free snack foods can actually contribute to weight gain. Fat does not make you fat. Weight gain is attributable to excess calories (i.e. if you consume more calories than you burn, the extra calories are stored in your body). Fat needs to be a part of any well-balanced diet.
“Eating fat will make me fat” (cont)
Not all fats are created equal. There are fats that are beneficial to your health when consumed in moderation and there are fats that are detrimental to your health.
Unsaturated fats (polyunsaturated, monounsaturated, omega): these are the good fats that usually come from plant based sources like avocados, nuts, seed, and sometimes animal sources like fish. These are the kinds of fats you want to incorporate into your diet.
Saturated fats: these fats are usually from animal products like dairy, meat, and eggs. Be sure to limit your consumption of these because they raise cholesterol levels.
Trans fats: these fats are the result of a chemical process called hydrogenation. These fats should be avoided because they not only raise your bad cholesterol, they lower your good cholesterol as well.
One additional note about trans fats. Do not be deceived, if hydrogenated oil (fully or partially) is listed in the ingredients, the food does contain trans fats, even if the nutrition panel says it contains 0g or if it is labeled “0g trans fat” on the front of the package. How do they get away with this? A product is not required to list fats on a nutritional panel if the serving size contains less than 1g. Most serving sizes are unrealistically small, so you could end up consuming much more trans fats than you intend to.

“Vitamin fortified foods are healthy”
Just because a manufacturer added some vitamins and minerals to an unhealthy snack or treat, does not mean it is good for you. A cookie that has 100% of your daily intake of vitamin C is still a cookie. It still is high in fat, sugar, and refined carbohydrates. The added vitamins do not negate the fact you are eating a cookie. Don’t let clever advertising tactics fool you into thinking a cookie is anything but a cookie. There have also been debates about whether or not vitamins are properly absorbed and put to use when gotten from an enriched or fortified product. If you want vitamin C, eat an orange. This is just one example, but it applies to all the “vitamin rich” junk foods out on the market right now. It isn’t horrible to indulge every now and then, but don’t eat junk food in place of fresh produce and vitamins.
"Organic is always healthy"

Don’t let me wrong, organic foods are usually a smarter choice, but similar to vitamin enrichment, the organic label does not mean the product is healthy. Organic junk food is still junk food. It may be a better choice than regular junk food, but should not be consumed on a regular basis. The term organic can also mean many different things depending on who is providing the certification. Some entities (like the USDA) have comparatively relaxed qualifications and standards for what can be considered organic. When you buy organic, try to choose foods that are certified by certifiers with high standards like Oregon Tilth.

"Sugar free is healthier"

When you see the term “sugar free” on a package, BEWARE. This is a huge indicator that a product contains artificial ingredients. Sometimes it simply means that no sugar has been added to a food, but it is much more likely that it means an artificial sweetener has been added. Artificial sweeteners have been linked to all kinds of health problems including bladder cancer, liver disease, headaches, bloating, abdominal pain, indigestion, and even weight gain (which likely defeats the purpose of choosing a sugar free options in the first place). These harmful sweeteners are known by many names. If you see sucrose, aspartame, Splenda, Nutrasweet, acesulfame-K, acesulfame potassium, or Aspartame, put the product back. It is not worth the potential risk to save a few calories. It is never a good idea to put a non food product into something that is intended to be eaten. It is no wonder some individuals suffer stomach pain and digestion problems from these products. The body is not used to digesting non food items.
Tricky Terms

Terms you might come across in your grocery store

Natural or All Natural: This term is not defined by the FDA, and therefore cannot be regulated. Anytime you see this on a food package, remember it can be slapped onto just about anything! If you are buying something based on the fact that it is “natural” check the ingredients to be sure your understanding of the term is aligned with the manufacturer’s use of the term.

Pure/ Natural/ Farm/ Fresh/ Home Style/ Wholesome/ Valley: These words, among many others can often conjure images of healthy, homemade, wholesome food. There is no regulation for the use of these terms, so there are no set standards for their use. You have to be able to separate what these terms imply from what they mean with regard to the product. The presence of these terms does not always guarantee the product is healthy.

Organic or Certified Organic: This term can have multiple meanings, depending on who is doing the certifying. There is more than one entity that can certify something as organic. Each certifier has different requirements for what is considered “organic”. Third party certifiers like Oregon Tilth have high standards for what can be certified. The USDA certification for organic is more relaxed. If buying organic is important to you, make sure to look up what each certifier requires for a product to be labeled as organic.

Local: This term does not always mean the product is healthy. The term local can mean a few different things. It can mean that it came from a neighboring farm, or it could simply mean that the factory a product was processed in is local to your area. There are also debates about what constitutes “local”. Is a product local to your town, or local to your state? If supporting businesses in your immediate area is important to you, you have to investigate to find out just what that “local” label means.

100% Wheat: This term is a tricky one. Most baked items are made from wheat. This term usually means it is made with processed white flour. Not all wheat products contain the nutrients from the whole grain. If you are looking for WHOLE GRAIN wheat, make sure the product is made from 100% whole grain wheat.

Reduced or Lower Sodium: This term refers to products that have lower sodium than the original product, or competing products. Do not assume this means the product contains low levels of sodium.
Tricky Terms

buyer beware, not all is as it seems!

0g Trans Fat or Trans Fat Free: Trans fats are fats that result from the hydrogenation process of oil. Trans fats (hydrogenated oil) raise bad cholesterol and lower good cholesterol. If the ingredients contain hydrogenated oil, then the product contains trans fats. Products can be labeled as trans fat free as long as each serving has less than 0.5g of trans fats. If you eat two or more servings, as most of us usually do, you could be getting a substantial amount of trans fats. If you are trying to avoid trans fats, make sure to read the ingredients to check for fully hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oil.

Sugar Free or No Sugar Added: This is usually a red flag if you are trying to avoid artificial or chemical sweeteners. Artificial sweeteners can cause digestive discomfort and illness in some individuals. Sugar free usually means an artificial sweetener has been added to the product. Check the ingredients to be sure. Artificial sweeteners go by many names, including: sucralose, Splenda, Nutrasweet, saccharine, acesulfame potassium, acesulfame-K, aspartame, and others.

Cage Free or Free Range: These terms can mean different things depending on how they are interpreted. Cage free and free range are usually used to describe poultry and eggs. These terms can conjure images of chickens roaming freely on a family farm. This is may be the case, but it is usually not. Cage free simply means the animals cannot be kept in cages. They can still be kept indoors, in extremely crowded conditions. The term free range means the animals must have access to the outdoors. The outdoor area can still be closed in. In some cases the housings the animals are kept in are so crowded that many of the animals cannot reach the access point. If the humane treatment of animals is important to you, make sure you understand what the label means to the producer of the product.

Fat Free/ Low Fat: This usually means fat has been removed or reduced, but with the addition of extra sugar, salt, and/or artificial fillers to restore the flavor or texture. Do not assume that fat free or low fat means healthier. Check the differences between the lower fat version and the original. Studies have shown that people tend to actually eat more calories when consuming lower fat snack foods. Fat isn’t always the enemy.

When it comes down to it, your best bet is to ignore what is on the front packaging, and go straight for the nutrition panel and ingredients list. The better informed you are about what the product contains; the less likely you are to get sucked in by these tricky terms!
Healthy Pantry

Tips for keeping a well stocked, healthy pantry

One way to help ensure you can throw together a quick, healthy meal, is to keep your pantry stocked with healthy, whole foods. A great way to help you keep away from snacking on junk foods, or foods that make you feel bad, is to not have them on hand. You won’t be as tempted to eat something that will make you and your body feel sick if it is not easily accessible.

When you are at the grocery store, shopping to restock your shelves, keep to the outside aisles of the grocery store. The outside aisles usually contain all the whole foods like fruits, vegetables, and proteins. It is when you enter the center aisles that you run into trouble. The center aisles are usually stocked with chips, cookies, canned meals, crackers, sugary cereals, and other highly processed food products.

Visit the bulk bins to keep well stocked on grains, nuts, seeds, legumes, and beans. You can get as much or as little of a food as you want. If you are sensitive to gluten however, you will want to avoid the bulk bins due to the risk of contamination.

It is also great to have a well-stocked herb and spice rack. Herbs and spices not only lend personality to a dish, they can be beneficial to your health as well! For example, turmeric contains curcumin, which can inhibit the growth of cancer cells. Cinnamon can help lower blood sugar and cholesterol. Rosemary can help stop gene mutations that could lead to cancer and may help prevent damage to the blood vessels that raise heart attack risk. Using herbs and spices can add flavor and a health boost!

I try to always keep dried beans, brown rice, raw nuts, steel cut oats, raw seeds, whole grain flours, fresh pressed olive and grape seed oils, and fresh fruit and vegetables that are in season well stocked in my kitchen.

Please keep in mind that I am both lactose and gluten intolerant. Your healthy pantry should reflect the foods that make you feel at your best as an individual. For example, my mother cannot digest nuts well. Even though many television shows have endorsed eating almonds as a healthy snack, for her, it is a recipe for an upset stomach. Always consider your own needs first before taking generic advice. Even my advice!
Seasonal Produce

when produce is at its peak, both in taste and nutrition

Why Buy Seasonally?
Foods obtain nutrients from soil, the sun, and water. The longer a food is allowed to ripen on the plant, the more nutrients it accumulates. Foods begin losing nutrients as soon as they are harvested. Many out of season foods are picked before they are ripe so that they do not rot before they are shipped to their destination. By the time most out of season foods reach the supermarket, they have diminished nutrients. Buying fresh, seasonal, local produce increases the odds you are getting fresher, plant ripened, nutrient packed foods. Buying foods that are in season can also be more budget friendly than foods that need to be shipped in from other parts of the world. Visit local farms, farmers markets, or better yet, grow your own! The less amount of time between when a food is harvested to the time it ends up on your table the better. The closer you are to your food, the better.

Spring
Artichokes, Scallions, Green Beans, Rhubarb, Peas (snow, garden, sugar snap), New Potatoes, Spinach, Strawberries, Cherries, Asparagus, Radishes, Baby Lettuces

Summer
Beets, Summer Squash, Bell Peppers, Corn, Eggplant, Peaches, Cucumbers, Basil, Chard, Tomatoes, Arugula, Raspberries, Blackberries, Blueberries

Fall
Sweet Potato, Pomegranates, Apples, Pears, Leeks, Cauliflower, Butternut Squash, Mushrooms, Broccoli, Grapes, Brussels Sprouts, Potatoes.

Winter
Fennel, Kale, Parsnips, Oranges, Lemons, Grapefruit, Clementines, Collard Greens, Acorn Squash, Cabbage, Radicchio, Turnips.
Why Get Cooking?

All of my food intolerances proved to make grocery shopping a daunting task. I would spend hours in the grocery store examining labels and scrutinizing ingredients lists. In a rush, I would snag foods I perceived to be safe for my diet, only to get home to find upon further investigation that the packaging was misleading. It made the process of shopping for food an unpleasant experience. I found that there was so much to consider and I became overwhelmed easily. I learned pretty quickly that my best bet was to make food for myself, at home. Cooking my own meals from scratch allowed me to control exactly what went into my foods. I found cooking my own meals from whole foods a very empowering experience. There is something so rewarding about creating a meal from scratch. I became very passionate about cooking and began baking and making dinners for my entire family every night. Certain family favorites emerged out of my daily cooking experiments, and I want to share them here.

Please keep in mind that I have developed the following recipes over the years to suit my own tastes and health conditions. All of the recipes that follow are dairy free. Most of the recipes are gluten free, but I have also included some recipes I developed for my family that include wheat ingredients to provide some variety. Please remember, I am a well-informed home cook, not a doctor or expert. I have done research based on my own health needs and curiosities. Though I would consider these recipes as generally healthy, you should always follow the advice of what is relevant to your own health, not what is healthy for someone else.
Recipe Guide

some quick tips to help you navigate the recipes

Nutritional Guide

Throughout the cookbook you will see these icons in the top right hand corner of every recipe. Each symbol signifies a certain nutritional aspect about the recipe to help people with special diets.

_leaf_ Vegan (the recipe contains no animal products)
_leaf_ Heart Healthy (the recipe is low in bad cholesterol)
_leaf_ Low Sodium (the recipe contains minimal amounts of sodium)
_leaf_ Gluten Free (the recipe contains no gluten)

Note about the ingredients

Make sure to use organic ingredients whenever possible. Visit farmer’s markets or local farms to buy fresh produce. If you are lucky enough to live somewhere with fresh local ingredients, take advantage of it! Buying local, seasonal, and organic are all good ways to ensure that the foods you eat are as fresh and nutrient dense as possible, and free of commercial pesticides. Not to mention you are supporting your community too! Though the ingredients are not always labeled as organic in the recipes, be an over achiever when it comes to your health and buy the best quality food you can!
Good Mornings
Good Morning Boost Juice

Ingredients
3 spears pineapple
1 green apple
1 handful of spinach
1 handful of kale
½ mango
1 orange
½ medium cucumber
½ lemon

Boxed and bottled juices may start with real fruit, but after the fruit juices are processed, watered down, and sugar is added, the benefits from eating fresh fruits are minimized. Even the 100% juice varieties can be made from concentrate. Juice is always pasteurized to ensure the juice is safe to drink. Unfortunately, pasteurization also cooks the fruits, which robs you of many live vitamins and minerals you would get from fresh fruit juice. You essentially end up drinking sugar water! Ditch the bottle, and enjoy the benefits of fresh pressed juice!

Method
Thoroughly wash and prep the fruits and vegetables. Run all of the produce through a juicer and enjoy fresh!
Perfect Pancakes

Ingredients

- ¾ cup whole-wheat pastry flour
- ¾ cup unbleached flour
- 2 tablespoons unrefined sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ tsp sea salt
- 1 ¼ cups almond or soy milk
- 2 tbsp grape seed oil
- 1 organic free range egg, lightly beaten

Toppings: pure maple syrup, honey, agave nectar, sliced bananas or berries

Forget the processed ingredients and preservatives in boxed mixes and frozen toaster pancakes. They are so easy to make at home, and fun to customize, you will wonder why you ever used a mix!

Method

Whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. Whisk in milk, oil, and egg. Let stand 10 minutes. Coat a nonstick skillet with cooking spray, and heat over medium heat. Spoon in 1 tablespoon of batter into the skillet for each pancake. Cook until bubbles appear. Flip, and cook until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Top the pancakes with fruit and pure maple syrup or honey. You can also customize the pancakes with add ins. Stir in a ¼ cup chopped nuts or diced fruit to pump up the flavor!
Curried Tofu Scramble

serves: 3-4

Ingredients
14 oz firm tofu
2 tbsp olive oil
¼ onion, chopped
1 clove of garlic, minced
¼ tsp salt
1 tbsp curry powder
1 tsp tumeric
1 tsp cumin seed
2 cups mushrooms, sliced
¼ cup fresh cilantro
2 tbsp minced green onion
2 tbsp vegetable broth or water

Try using tofu instead of eggs in your morning scramble. This quick switch can cut out a good deal of fat and cholesterol from your morning meal. It also provides a good dose of protein and fiber!

Method
Drain and press all of the liquid out of the tofu (for best results, press for an hour or more). Heat the oil in skillet and add the onions and garlic. Cook until the onions become translucent. Crumble the tofu into the skillet, and cook until browned. Add the mushrooms, curry powder, tumeric, cumin seed, broth, salt, green onions, and cilantro. Reduce the heat and cook for an additional 5 minutes of so, or until the mushrooms are cooked through. Top with additional cilantro and green onions if desired. Serve hot.
Garden Tofu Scramble

Ingredients

- 14 oz firm tofu
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- ¼ onion, chopped
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 12 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 3 fresh basil leaves, chopped
- ¾ tsp salt
- 1 cup spinach, chopped
- ¼ cup tbsp nutritional yeast
+ 1 tbsp for topping

Start your morning with this power packed meal! This scramble provides protein, fiber, loads of veggie goodness, and an added healthy b12 vitamin boost from the nutritional yeast.

Method

Drain and press all the liquid out of the tofu (for best results, press for an hour or more). Heat the oil in skillet and add the onions and garlic. Cook until the onions become translucent. Crumble the tofu into the skillet, and cook until browned. Add the vinegar, tomatoes, basil, salt, and spinach. Reduce the heat and cook just until the spinach is wilted and the tomatoes are warmed through. Top with additional nutritional yeast if desired. Serve hot.
Rise and Shine Muffins

Serves: 12

Ingredients

1 ¾ cups whole wheat pastry flour
2 ½ cup packed brown sugar
¾ tsp baking soda
⅜ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp ground nutmeg
⅓ tsp coarse sea salt
1 cup rolled oats
½ cup raisins
½ cup walnuts
2 tbsp orange zest
3 tablespoons grape seed or olive oil
1 large orange free range egg
⅔ cup soy, almond, or coconut milk
1 cup carrots, shredded
1 large ripe banana, mashed

These muffins are full of foods that will give your morning a boost! Hearty oats and heart healthy walnuts will keep your stomach full and give you energy to power through the morning.

Method

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, brown sugar, baking soda, baking powder, nutmeg, oats, and salt until there are no lumps. In a separate bowl, mix the oil, egg, soy milk, orange zest, carrots, and banana. Add the wet mixture to the dry and stir until just blended. Add in the walnuts and raisins and mix until just blended. Fill each muffin cup with ⅛ cup batter. Bake until a toothpick inserted in center of a muffin comes out clean, 23 to 25 minutes. Serve muffins warm or at room temperature.
Pumpkin Spice Muffins

Ingredients

1 ½ cup whole wheat pastry flour
1 cup pumpkin puree
¼ cup sugar
¼ cup brown sugar, packed
3 tbsp grape seed oil or canola oil
1 tbsp ground flax seed
3 tbsp warm water
2 tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp ginger
½ tsp nutmeg
⅛ tsp salt
2 tsp baking powder
½ cup orange juice
2 tsp lemon zest
1 cup chopped walnuts, raisins, or crystallized ginger (optional)

Method

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees and line a muffin tin. In a small bowl, mix the ground flax and warm water and set aside for 5 minutes to create a "flax egg". Combine the melted vegan buttery spread, brown sugar, white sugar, flax egg, lemon zest, orange juice and pumpkin puree in a large bowl. In a medium bowl, sift together the flour, salt, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, and baking powder. Slowly add the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients. Stir until the ingredients are just mixed together. Stir in any of the optional add-ins. Divide the batter evenly between 12 muffin cups and sprinkle on raw sugar if desired. Bake for 25 – 30 min. Let the muffins cool for 15 minutes and enjoy!

Using flax seeds instead of an egg removes 210 mgs of cholesterol and provides healthy Omega 3 and 6 fats!
Steel Cut Oatmeal

serves: 4

Ingredients
1 cup steel cut oats
4 cups water
¼ tsp salt
(see variations below)

A big warm bowl of oatmeal is a tasty and healthy way to start the day. Forget about the prepackaged flavored oatmeals. They are highly processed and often full of refined sugars and nasty preservatives. Make your own at home with hearty, minimally processed steel cut oats to ensure a delicious wholesome breakfast.

Method
Bring the water and salt to boil in a large sauce pan. While the water is warming up, toast the oats until golden brown in a large skillet over the stove. Be sure to stir the oats around so they do not burn. Add the toasted oats to the water, stir, and return to boil. Reduce the heat down to the lowest setting, and let it cook for about 35 minutes.

Variations
Berry Almond Oats: add 1 cup mixed berries, ½ cup slivered almonds, and 1 tsp pure vanilla extract in the last 10 minutes of cooking. Top with honey to taste.
Banana Walnut Oats: add 1 sliced banana, ¼ tsp nutmeg, and 1 tsp cinnamon in the last 10 minutes of cooking. Top with pure maple syrup to taste.
Apple Raisin Cinnamon Oats: add 1 diced apple, ¼ cup raisins, and ½ tsp cinnamon in the last 10 minutes of cooking. Top with pure maple syrup to taste.
Homemade Cereal

serves: 8

Ingredients
3 cups gluten free rolled oats
½ cup sliced almonds
½ cup cranberries
½ cup raisins
½ cup pumpkin seeds
¼ cup sunflower seeds
2 tbsp grade seed oil
¼ cup honey
½ tsp sea salt

Method
Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a cookie sheet with wax paper and set aside. Combine all the ingredients into a bowl and spread over the cookie sheet in a single layer. Bake for about 45 minutes, or until golden brown, stirring every 15 minutes or so. Let the mixture cool completely, and serve with soymilk and fresh fruit, or just munch on it dry. You can switch up the seeds, nuts, and dried fruit to your liking!

The cereal aisle is probably one of the most confusing places in the grocery store. There seems to be an endless sea of choices full of health claims and eye-catching packing. The terms “essential vitamins and minerals”, “whole grain”, “fiber”, and “antioxidants” are everywhere. Cereals may claim health benefits, but when you get right down to it, most are full of sugar and have been highly processed. Make your own cereal at home to ensure a nutritious breakfast.
Sides and Snacks
Wild Rice Pilaf

Ingredients

4 cups good quality vegetable stock
1 cup wild rice
2 cups chickpeas
2 tbsp vegan buttery spread
¼ cup mixed dehydrated vegetable flakes
Additional water or stock as needed

Method

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. You will need a heavy bottomed skillet that can be moved from the stove top to the oven. First rinse wild rice in a mesh colander until the water runs through clean. Add the buttery spread to the skillet and let it melt. Add the rice to the skillet and let it brown. After about 2 minutes, add the chickpeas and the vegetable flakes and let it brown for another 2 or 3 minutes. Finally, add the vegetable stock and transfer the skillet into the oven. Let the rice cook for about an hour, or until desired tenderness. You may need to add additional water or stock to the rice if it dries out too quickly. If the rice looks dry, add a ¼ cup of stock at a time until desired tenderness is achieved. Remove from the oven and serve. This dish also makes great leftovers.

Boxed rice mixes usually contain highly processed white rice and extremely high levels of sodium. They can also contain MSG, trans fats, and preservatives. So ditch the box and make your own!
Southwestern Corn Salad

Ingredients
3 ears white corn, grilled  
½ cup prepared black beans  
¾ large red onion, diced  
1 extra large avocado, chopped  
½ cup fresh cilantro, chopped  
1 finely diced jalapeno pepper  

Dressing:  
2 tbsp white wine vinegar  
½ tsp salt  
⅛ tsp cumin  
⅛ tsp paprika  
Juice of 1 – 2 limes  
2 cloves of garlic, minced

Method
Grill the ears of corn (or boil) and allow to cool. After the corn has cooled remove the kernels from the ear. In a large bowl, add the corn, onion, avocado, black beans, and jalapeno. In a small bowl, mix together the lime juice, vinegar, paprika, garlic, cumin, and salt. Pour the mixture into the large bowl and add the fresh chopped cilantro. Gently toss the salad together and allow marinating for at least half an hour. Garnish with additional cilantro if desired.
Earthly Kale Salad

Ingredients
1 bunch of kale, finely chopped
1 cup pine nuts, dry toasted
¾ sweet onion, chopped
¼ cup raisins
2 cups sliced mushrooms
¼ cup Bragg Liquid Aminos
Juice of 2 lemons
Zest of one lemon
1 tsp honey

Method
Chop one bunch of kale into small pieces. Place the kale into a colander and run water over it while you massage the leaves for about 5 minutes. Massaging the kale will help remove any bitterness. Toast the pine nuts in a pan over dry heat until just brown. Be careful, they go from perfectly golden brown, to burnt in a flash! So really watch them. Add the kale, pine nuts, onion, raisins, and mushrooms into a large bowl. In a smaller bowl whisk together all of the dressing ingredients. Pour the dressing over the salad and give it a light toss. Let the kale marinate for at least 2 hours. Serve cold.
Lentil Salad

serves: 8-10

Ingredients
1 cup French lentils
1 cup fresh white corn
½ cup fennel, thinly sliced
4 green onions, thinly sliced
1 ½ tbsp red wine vinegar
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
Juice of one lemon
¾ cup extra virgin olive oil
2 cloves of garlic, minced
½ tsp salt
½ tsp fresh ground pepper
Fresh cilantro for garnishing (optional)

Traditional deli counter salads, like potato and macaroni, are loaded with saturated fat and refined carbohydrates. Treat everyone to this fresh and delicious salad instead. Lentils are high in fiber and protein, and can help to lower cholesterol.

Method
In a small pot, cover the lentils with water by about ½ inch. Bring the lentils to a boil and reduce the heat. Let the lentils simmer for about 30 minutes or until tender. Drain the water out and allow the lentils to cool. For the vinaigrette, whisk together the vinegar, mustard, lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, salt, and pepper. Add the corn, fennel, green onions, and vinaigrette. Let the salad marinate for at least 4 hours in the refrigerator. For an even more developed flavor, allow the salad to marinate overnight. Serve cold.
Roasted Vegetables

serves: 8

Ingredients

- 1 small head of cauliflower
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms
- 2 small sweet potatoes
- 2 cups fingerling potatoes
- 3 large carrots
- 1 sweet onion
- 10 whole cloves of garlic
- ½ cup cold pressed olive oil
- 2 tbsp pure maple syrup
- 1 tsp sea salt
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp fresh rosemary, finely diced

Ditch the salty, greasy french fries and roast some mixed vegetables instead. Lots of vegetables make for complex textures and flavors, not to mention a cornucopia of vitamins and minerals.

Method

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Chop up all of the vegetables and put them into a large bowl or freezer bag. In a small bowl, whisk the olive oil, maple syrup, salt, pepper, and rosemary together. Pour the mixture over the vegetables and mix until all the vegetables are evenly coated. Transfer the vegetables onto 2 baking sheets and bake for 35 – 40 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes, or until all of the vegetables are golden brown.
Channa Masala

Ingredients
2 cups garbanzo beans
¾ sweet onion
1 ½ tbsp olive oil
1 cup diced tomatoes
¼ cup reduced fat coconut milk
1 tbsp curry powder
1 tsp garam masala
1 tsp fresh grated ginger
2 garlic gloves, minced
¾ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
1 small jalapeno pepper
sea salt to taste

Prepackaged Indian meals can be high in fat, cholesterol, and sodium. Control the amount of fat and salt in your meal by making it fresh yourself. It not only tastes better, but it is better for you too.

Method
Heat oil in a large skillet on medium heat. Add the onions and garlic to oil and sauté until the onions are translucent. Add the garbanzo beans to the pan and cook until they are slightly browned. Reduce the heat and add the ginger, curry powder, and garam masala and stir. Add in the coconut milk, tomatoes, and jalapeno. Reduce the heat again and let the mixture cook down. Add in the chopped cilantro and salt to taste right before serving.
Carrot Slaw

Ingredients

2 lbs carrots, shredded
⅓ cup raisins
¼ cup currants
1 cup dry toasted cashews, chopped
⅛ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
1 tbsp fresh ginger puree
(or ½ tsp ginger powder)
2 tbsp Lime juice
1 tsp sea salt
¼ cup rice vinegar
1 tbsp agave

This carrot slaw is a delicious, healthy, fresh take on coleslaw. This slaw is so flavorful, no one will miss the regular mayonnaise saturated cabbage slaw. Carrots are high in beta-carotene, which is excellent for eye health. Carrots also have anti-aging properties and can improve skin health.

Method

Put the shredded carrots, cashews, raisins, and currants into a large bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together all of the dressing ingredients. Pour the dressing over the slaw and toss lightly. Let everything marinate for around 2 hours. Before serving, add the cilantro, lightly toss, and garnish with more cilantro.
Bok Choy Salad

**Ingredients**
- 4 cups bok choy, chopped
- 1 cup purple cabbage, chopped
- ¾ cup orange bell pepper, diced
- 8 oz sliced water chestnuts
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp grape seed or olive oil
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp wheat free tamari
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp ginger
- 1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- ½ cup sliced almonds

Try a vegetable based oriental salad in place of a noodle based one. Bok choy is low in calories and high in antioxidants, which are a category of vitamins that help ward off a variety of disease. Bok choy is also a good source of folic acid and potassium.

**Method**
In a small bowl, whisk together the vinegar, oils, tamari, honey, and ginger. In a large bowl, add the bok choy, cabbage, bell pepper, and water chestnuts. Moisten the vegetables with the dressing. Add in the sesame seeds and sliced almonds and lightly toss. Let the salad marinate for several hours or overnight in the refrigerator. Serve cold.
Red Quinoa Salad

Ingredients
1 cup quinoa (red or white)
2 cups water
1 mango, chopped
1 avocado, chopped
1 red bell pepper, chopped
1/4 cup slivered almonds
1/4 cup red onion, diced
1/4 cup edamame
1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
Juice and zest of one lime
1/8 tsp salt
2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
1 tbsp honey

Quinoa is an amazing, underutilized grain. It is high in protein and fiber, and has a delicious warm nutty flavor. It is also quick cooking and comes in red and white varieties.

Method
Soak the quinoa in water for at least 10 minutes. Discard the water and rinse the quinoa under running water. Add the quinoa and water to a pot and bring it to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and let it cook for 20 minutes. Take the quinoa off the heat, fluff with a fork, cover and let it sit for another 10 minutes. In a small bowl, mix the lime juice, lime zest, honey, vinegar, and salt and set aside. In a large serving bowl, add the quinoa, mango, avocado, edamame, almonds, bell pepper, and cilantro. Pour the dressing over the salad and let it marinate for at least 20 minutes, and serve at room temperature.
Granola Bars

Ingredients

1 cup gluten free rolled oats
\( \frac{1}{4} \) cup gluten free oat bran
\( \frac{1}{4} \) tsp salt
\( \frac{1}{2} \) cup honey
\( \frac{1}{4} \) cup almond butter
\( \frac{1}{4} \) cup prune puree
\( \frac{1}{4} \) cup tart cherries
\( \frac{1}{4} \) cup slivered almonds
\( \frac{1}{4} \) cup cranberries
\( \frac{1}{4} \) cup walnuts
\( \frac{1}{4} \) cup pumpkin seeds

Popular packaged granola bars are often full of refined sugar and even trans fats. What should be a healthy snack for both kids and adults is turned into something that resembles a processed dessert. Making your own custom granola bars is easier than you think!

Method

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Line a shallow baking dish with wax paper and set aside. Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and mix until everything is combined. Press the mixture into the pan and bake for 25 - 30 minutes. Allow the mixture to cool for about 30 minutes. Cut the mixture into individual bars and enjoy! Store in an air tight container. Feel free to experiment with your own combinations of nuts, seeds, and fruits. The possibilities are endless!
Baked Beans

serves: 8

Ingredients

16 oz. dry white beans
6 cups water
2 tbsp olive oil
2 cups chopped sweet onions
1 garlic clove, minced
2 cups fresh tomato puree
2 tbsp pure maple syrup
1/4 cup molasses
2 tbsp cider vinegar
3 bay leaves
1 tsp dry mustard
A pinch ground nutmeg
Salt and pepper to taste

Canned baked beans are usually high in sodium and refined sugar. In many cases, lard or other animal fats are used to flavor the beans. Bake the beans at home and let the flavor come from fresh ingredients, herbs and spices.

Method

Bring the beans and water to a boil in a large pot. Reduce the heat to medium, and continue cooking 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Drain the beans and transfer to a large baking dish. Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the onions, and cook until translucent. Mix in garlic, and cook until golden brown. Add the onions, garlic, tomato puree, maple syrup, molasses, vinegar, bay leaves, mustard, pepper, nutmeg, and salt to the beans. Cover the dish and bake 3 1/2 hours, stirring frequently and adding water if necessary. Remove cover, and continue baking 30 minutes. Garnish with fresh herbs if desired.
Roasted Butternut Squash

serves: 4-6

Ingredients
1 medium butternut squash
1 medium onion, chopped
2 tbsp cranberries
¾ cup walnut pieces, dry toasted
1 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp pure maple syrup
¾ cup fresh orange juice
½ tsp sea salt
½ tsp fresh ground black pepper
2 tsp fresh sage, chopped

Low in fat and high in fiber, butternut squash is considered an extremely heart healthy food. Butternut squash is also full of carotenoids and folate, also known to protect the heart. This powerhouse squash contains a plethora of other essential vitamins and minerals. You really cannot go wrong with this dish.

Method
Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Remove the skin and seeds from the butternut squash. Cut the squash into 1 inch cubes and place into a baking dish with the onions, cranberries, and walnuts. In a small bowl, whisk together the oil, maple syrup, orange juice, salt, and pepper. Pour the dressing over the squash and sprinkle with sage. Bake for 30 - 40 minutes, stirring occasionally. This salad is great warm or at room temperature.
Main Dishes
Balsamic Beans and Brown Rice

serves: 2

Ingredients

- ⁷⁄₈ cup prepared dark kidney beans
- ¹⁄₃ cup prepared black beans
- ¹⁄₃ cup prepared pinto beans
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 tsp agave nectar
- 1 tbsp good quality balsamic vinegar
- ¹⁄₃ tsp sea salt
- ¾ chopped red onion
- 2 cups spinach
- ¹⁄₃ cup chopped carrots

To serve: brown rice, cilantro, your favorite salsa (I use homemade), sliced avocado, and alfalfa sprouts

Beans are high in protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. They are also low in fat and cholesterol free. Beans really are a perfect food. A perfect mixture of plant based protein, heart healthy fat, and fiber makes this dish one super packed supper!

Method

Add all the beans to a medium sized bowl. Whisk together the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, salt, agave, and garlic. Pour the mixture over the beans and allow the beans to marinate for about an hour. Add the beans, onions, and carrots to a large skillet and cook until the carrots reach desired tenderness. Add in the spinach and cook until it is wilted. In a large plate or bowl, spoon a desired amount of brown rice and top with the bean mixture. Garnish with sprouts, salsa, cilantro, and avocado and enjoy!
Sesame Ginger Tuna Steak

**Ingredients**

- 4 2 oz. sushi grade ahi tuna steaks
- 2 tbsp grape seed oil
- Sesame seeds for coating
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ cup rice vinegar
- 1 tbsp wheat free tamari
- 1 tbsp fresh ginger, grated
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp toasted sesame oil
- 2 tbsp grape seed oil
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds (optional)

Swap out the beef steak for a nutrient rich tuna steak. Fresh tuna is high in protein and B vitamins. The fantastic fish also contains heart healthy omega fats. The ginger in the sauce also helps protect against cancer and sour stomachs.

**Method**

Whisk together the dressing ingredients in a small bowl. Pour sesame seeds into a shallow dish. Season each tuna steak with salt and pepper to taste. Press each side of the tuna steak into the sesame seeds to evenly coat each side. Heat the oil in a skillet and sear each side of the tuna until the sesame seeds are browned on each side (about 1 - 2 minutes per side depending on preference). Fresh tuna can be eaten very rare, but if you prefer your fish cooked through, cook for a longer amount of time. Slice the tuna steaks and serve over brown rice. Drizzle the dressing over to taste.
Baked Falafel

serves: 3-4

Ingredients
15 oz garbanzo beans
2 tbsp garbanzo bean flour
¼ cup onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
3 tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped
1 tsp cumin
1 tsp paprika
½ tsp salt
⅛ tsp fresh ground black pepper
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp olive oil

Baking your own falafel patties instead of frying up the patties from a boxed mix cuts down on sodium and fat. Using real fresh chickpeas boosts the fiber and protein contents of the sandwich too!

Method
Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with wax paper and set aside. Add the chickpeas to a food processor or blender. Blend until it forms a smooth paste. Add the rest of the ingredients and blend until a sticky dough forms. Using your hands, form the mixture into flat patties. Bake for 20 minutes or until the patties are golden brown. Serve in a gluten free or whole grain pita with lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber, sorouts, and tahini sauce, or whatever sandwich toppings you prefer.
Summer Squash and Beans

Serves: 4-6

Ingredients

- 3 cups cubed delicata squash
- 1 cup great northern white beans
- ¼ cup raisins
- 1 cup broccoli
- 1 ½ cups vegetable broth
- ½ cup onions
- 2 gloves of garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp grape seed or olive oil
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 1 ½ tbsp curry powder
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp fresh grated ginger
- ½ tsp sea salt

Fiber and protein from the beans, antioxidants and B vitamins from the squash, cancer fighting properties from the broccoli, and calcium and iron from the raisins make for one winning dish.

Method

Boil the squash until tender. Allow the squash to cool. Peel, remove the seeds, and cube the squash. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onions and cook for about 5 minutes or until the onions have browned. Add the garlic, broccoli, and squash and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes. Add the beans, broth, raisins, lime juice, curry powder, cinnamon, ginger, and salt and reduce the heat. Allow it to simmer for another 5 minutes, or until the broth has cooked down into a sauce. Serve warm.
Coconut Tofu Stirfry

serves: 4

Ingredients
1 package firm tofu
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
3 medium bell peppers, sliced
½ cup vegetable stock
½ cup reduced fat coconut milk
½ tsp red pepper flakes
5 Thai basil leaves, chopped
1 tsp curry powder
1 tbsp peanut butter
1 tsp ginger
1 tbsp wheat free tamari
peanuts for garnish (optional)

Tofu is a great replacement for meat. It is extremely inexpensive, high in protein, low in fat, and can help lower cholesterol. The trick to good tofu is to press all the water out of it so it can soak flavor up like a sponge!

Method
Press all the moisture out of the block of tofu. Slice the tofu into ½ inch thick pieces. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the tofu and brown on each side. Add the vegetable broth, broccoli, and bell peppers and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add the coconut milk, ginger, curry powder, and red pepper flakes, and cook for another minute. Stir in the peanut butter and tamari and cook until the peanut butter is dissolved into the dish. Serve hot over brown rice. Garnish with additional basil leaves and peanuts if desired.
Spicy Turkey Curry

Ingredients

- 1 lb organic free range turkey breast
- 1 tbsp grade seed oil
- ½ cup fresh tomato puree
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 shallot, diced
- 2 tbsp curry powder
- 1 tsp fresh grated ginger
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 tsp lemon grass puree
- 1 sliced chili pepper, seeds removed
- ¼ cup cilantro
- Juice and zest of one lime

Method

Whisk the coconut milk, tomato puree, ginger, lemon grass, lime juice, lime zest, and curry powder in a medium bowl. Shred up some leftover cooked turkey breast and set aside. Heat the oil in large skillet. Add the shallots and garlic and cook until browned. Add in the turkey and allow it to brown. Pour the coconut milk mixture into the skillet and the chili peppers. Allow the mixture to simmer for about 5 minutes. Mix in the chopped cilantro and serve over brown rice couscous.

A restaurant quality dish is easier to make than you think. This recipe is great for turning leftovers into an exotic food experience. Lots of fresh ingredients come together to make a balanced dish. Serve with brown rice and steamed vegetables for a well rounded meal.
White Chili

**Ingredients**

- 16 oz vegetable stock
- 3 cups mixed white beans
- 2 cups white hominy
- 1 avocado, diced
- 6 tomatillos, diced
- 3 green chilies, diced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¾ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp chili powder
- ¼ cup polenta
- Juice from one lime
- Salt to taste

*Canned chilies are usually high in sodium and saturated fat. Even if the can is labeled “lower sodium” or “reduced sodium,” the chili can still contain high levels of sodium. Control the sodium and saturated fat by making this delicious and nutritious vegetarian chili.*

**Method**

Heat the olive oil over a skillet. Add the onions and cook until golden. Add the garlic and cook for an additional 1-2 minutes. Add all of the ingredients into a large pot or slow cooker, including the garlic and onions. Bring the chili to boil, then reduce the heat and allow it to cook for at least an hour. Serve hot and garnish with avocado slices and fresh cilantro.
Harvest Veggie Burger

serves: 4-8

nutrition:

Ingredients

- ½ cup cooked black beans
- ½ small onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp ground flaxseed
- 4 tbsp water
- 1/3 cup cooked short grain brown rice
- 2/3 cup mashed sweet potato (with skin)
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1 tbsp pure maple syrup
- 1 tsp fresh rosemary, chopped
- ¼ tsp nutmeg

- ⅛ tsp cinnamon
- 2 large carrots, chopped
- ¼ cup walnuts, chopped
- ½ cup pea flour or brown rice flour
- 1 tbsp olive oil

An average 1/3 lb. frozen hamburger patty contains 420 calories, 35g of fat, and 110mg of cholesterol. The saturated fat content of just one patty adds up to 75% of the recommended daily value. Opt instead for a homemade, heart healthy veggie burger. This burger is packed with protein, fiber, and veggie power!

Method

In a small bowl, combine the ground flax and water, stir, and let sit for 15 minutes. In a food processor, add onion, carrots, and garlic. Pulse until the ingredients are finely diced and mixed together. Add the mashed sweet potato, black beans, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, rosemary, maple syrup, and rice. Process until everything is well mixed together. By now the flax and water mixture should be the consistency of an egg. Pour the flax and water mixture in, and process again until everything is well mixed. Transfer the ingredient to a large bowl and fold in the chopped walnuts. Stir in ½ cup of green pea flour. The mixture should become firm enough to form into clean patties. If the mixture is still too wet, add in another ¼ cup flour. Form the mixture into 4-5 patties. Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a frying pan, and brown the patties on both sides. Let the patties cool, and assemble your burger! I love to eat these on a toasted, gluten free bun, with spicy maple mustard, onion, lettuce, tomato, and cucumber. Feel free to add whatever you like!
Veggie Shepherd's Pie

Ingredients

- 1 lb. sweet potatoes
- ¾ cup soy, almond, or rice milk
- 2 tbsp Earth Balance
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup carrots, diced
- ½ cup fresh corn kernels
- 1 cup vegetable broth
- ¼ cup red wine
- 1 cup prepared French lentils
- 1 cup mushrooms, sliced
- 3 tbsp rice flour
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp fresh ground black pepper
- 1 tsp fresh thyme, minced

Method

Boil the sweet potatoes and mash together with the soymilk, earth balance, ground pepper, and ½ tsp salt. This can be done the day before and refrigerated. Set the mash aside and preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Set out 4 12 oz. oven safe ramekins on a baking dish. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet. Add the onions and garlic and sauté until slightly browned. Add the corn, carrots, mushrooms, thyme, and wine. Cook for an additional 2 minutes and stir in the rice flour. Add the broth, lentils, and remaining ½ tsp salt. Cook for an additional 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Divide the hot mixture among the ramekins evenly. Top each ramekin with ¼ of the sweet potato mixture. Bake the pies for 10 minutes, or until the tops are golden brown. Allow the pies to cool for 10 minutes and serve warm.

Savory pies from the frozen, or pre-made sections of the grocery store are usually full of fat, cholesterol, and refined carbs. Making a savory pie at home is easier than you would think. Ditch the deep freeze, and put some vegetables, hearty lentils, and your oven to good use.
Lemon Dijon Salmon

Serves: 4

Ingredients

4 wild caught salmon fillets
Salt and pepper to taste

3 tbsp whole grain Dijon mustard
2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
1 tbsp honey
1 tbsp grape seed oil or olive oil
1 tbsp fresh dill
Lemon slices and zest for garnish

Frozen, processed fish sticks pale in comparison to fresh caught wild salmon in taste and nutrition. Frozen fish sticks are usually high in sodium and coated with processed grain. Ditch the sticks, and bake up your own fish. The healthy omega-3 fats found in salmon promote cardiovascular health, and healthy skin and hair. Salmon is also high in D and B vitamins, protein, and can help prevent certain cancers.

Method

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. In a small bowl, whisk together the Dijon mustard, oil, lemon juice, honey, and dill. Season each fillet with salt and pepper. Place the fillets on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Spread an equal amount of the lemon Dijon sauce over each fillet. Bake the salmon for about 10 minutes or until the fish flakes easily. Serve with wild rice and asparagus to round out the meal. The sauce works well over vegetables and rice as well.
Desserts
**Fruit & Nut Bark**

**Ingredients**
- 1 lb 70% cocoa dark chocolate
- ¾ cup dried fruit
  (I used organic dried cranberries)
- ¾ cup chopped raw nuts
  (I used organic raw pistachios)

---

I am sure we have all heard the good news. Chocolate is healthy now, right? The antioxidants in a few squares of dark chocolate can help keep your heart strong. But that doesn’t mean you should go to the store and stock up on chocolate candy bars. Most commercial chocolate bars contain an excess of 15 or 20 ingredients, most of which you do not want in your body. Keep it simple, and make your own minimally processed dark chocolate fruit and nut bark.

**Method**
Set aside a large piece of wax paper. Break up the dark chocolate into chunks and add to a large microwave safe bowl. Microwave on high at 30 second intervals, stirring between each time. After the chocolate is smoothly melted, pour it over the wax paper and smooth out into a rectangular shape. Sprinkle the fruit and nuts over the chocolate, and let it harden for about 30 minutes. After the chocolate is cooled, break it into pieces. Store in the refrigerator.
Ginger Cookies

serves: 24

Ingredients

- 2 cups white whole wheat flour
- 1/4 cup organic sugar
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1/4 cup boiling water
- 1/2 cup Earth Balance, softened
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 2 tsp powdered ginger
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp allspice
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp baking powder
- Raw sugar for rolling (optional)

Method

Preheat the oven to 375. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper and set aside. Cream together the sugar and Earth Balance. Add the molasses, boiling water, and vanilla. In a separate large bowl, sift together the flour, salt, ginger, cinnamon, allspice, baking powder, and baking soda. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients slowly until a ball of dough forms. Roll the dough into tablespoon sized balls. If desired, roll the cookie balls in raw sugar until evenly coated. Place the cookies about 3 inches apart, and press to slightly flatten the cookie. Bake the cookies for 8 – 10 minutes. Move the cookies to a cooling rack, let cool for at least 20 minutes and enjoy. They will harden as they cool and are fabulous the next day too!
Walnut Chocolate Chip Cookies

**Ingredients**

- 1 cup white whole wheat flour
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- ¾ cup white sugar
- ½ cup Earth Balance, softened
- 1 tbsp grund flax seed
- 3 tbsp warm water
- 2 cups vegan chocolate chips
- 1 cup raw walnut pieces
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- ½ tsp baking soda

Nothing compares to the smell of fresh baked cookies. This cookie has fiber, heart healthy omega fats, and no animal products, making it a healthier treat.

**Method**

Preheat the oven to 375. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper and set aside. Mix the flax and water together in a small bowl and set aside. Cream together the sugar and Earth Balance. Add the flax mixture and vanilla extract. In a separate large bowl, sift together the flour, salt, and baking soda. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients slowly until the batter comes together. Add the walnuts and chocolate chips and stir until just combined. Drop about a tablespoon of batter onto the cookie sheet about 3 inches apart. Bake the cookies for 8 – 10 minutes. Move the cookies to a cooling rack, let cool for at least 5 minutes and enjoy!
Sweetheart Cupcakes

Ingredients
1 cup whole wheat white flour
1/2 cup non alkalized cocoa powder
3/4 cup unrefined sugar
1/2 cup grape seed oil
1 cup almond or soymilk
1 tsp apple cider vinegar
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 tsp orange zest
1 tsp cinnamon
1/4 tsp nutmeg
3/4 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt
2 cups organic powdered sugar
1/4 cup Earth Balance, softened
2 tbsp non alkaline cocoa powder
3 tbsp chocolate almond or soymilk

Premade cupcakes are almost always calorie, sugar, and trans fat bombs in pretty paper packaging. They are usually made with refined, highly processed ingredients. Do yourself and your loved ones a favor, and make them yourself.

Method
Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line 12 cupcake tins with paper liners. Beat the soymilk, vinegar, vanilla extract, sugar, orange zest, and oil together in a medium bowl. In a separate bowl, sift together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg and cocoa powder. Add the wet ingredients to the dry and combine. Distribute the batter evenly between the cupcake tins and bake for about 18-20 minutes, or until a toothpick comes cleanly from the center of the cake. Let the cupcakes cool completely. For the frosting, beat together the Earth Balance, soymilk, cocoa powder, and powdered sugar. Frost, decorate, and enjoy.
Tropical Coconut “Ice Cream”

**Ingredients**
- 14 oz unsweetened coconut milk
- ¾ cup organic evaporated cane sugar
- ¾ cup fresh orange juice
- 1 ½ cups chopped ripe mango
- 1 tbsp orange zest
- 1 tsp pure vanilla
- Pinch of sea salt

Store bought ice creams are usually full of artificial flavors, colors, fat, and preservatives. Even if you buy an “all natural” variety, it is still made mostly from dairy cream which contains animal fats that are detrimental to heart health. Try this non-dairy, coconut milk based ice cream packed with vitamin C and healthy medium chain fatty acids!

**Method**

Combine the coconut milk, sugar, salt, orange juice, and mango in a blender or food processor. Add orange zest and vanilla and blend to combine. Cover and refrigerate coconut mixture at about 4 hours. Freeze in an ice cream maker according to the machine’s directions. If you do not have an ice cream maker, place the mixture in a tightly sealed container in the freezer. Take the mixture out and vigorously stir about every half hour for about 3 hours.
Fruit Salad

serves: 8

Ingredients

2 cups strawberries, sliced
1 cup blueberries
2 bananas, sliced
2 Granny Smith apples
1 orange, peeled and sliced
3 kiwis, peeled and sliced
1 pear, sliced
2 tbsp honey
½ cup fresh lemon juice
½ cup sliced almonds
Mint and poppy seeds for garnishing

Method

Thoroughly wash and prep all of the fruits. Add all of the fruit to a large serving dish and set aside. In a small bowl, mix together the honey and lemon juice. Pour the mixture over the fruit along with the sliced almonds and lemon zest. Give the salad a light toss, and serve! You can garnish the salad with some fresh mint, and poppy seeds if desired. You can use any fruits that are in season.

Fruit makes an excellent dessert. It is sweet, light, refreshing, and best of all, nutrient packed! Your immune system and waistline will thank you for ending your day with a dessert as healthy as this one.
Honey Almond Truffles

Ingredients

1 lb 70% cocoa dark chocolate
¼ cup honey
1 ½ cups almond pieces
Pinch of sea salt

These treats not only look beautifully simple, they are made from simple, healthful ingredients too. When it is so easy to make your own chocolate goodies, why spend good money on chocolates full of artificial ingredients and colors?

Method

Line 2 baking dishes with wax paper and set aside. Add almond pieces and salt to a food processor and process until the almonds become a fine meal consistency. Add the honey to the almond meal in a slow stream with the processor still on. Keep the processor running until a dough forms. If a dough ball does not form within a few minutes, slowly add more honey. Pinch off teaspoon sized amounts of the dough and roll between your hands to form small balls. Set the balls aside on the cookie sheets. After the balls have all been formed, break up the chocolate and place in a large microwave safe bowl.

Microwave the chocolate at intervals of 30 seconds, stirring in between, until the chocolate is smooth. Using a large spoon, dip the almond honey balls into the melted chocolate and place onto the wax paper. Top each truffle with a sliced almond while the chocolate is still warm. Let the chocolate cool for around 30 – 40 minutes. If the chocolate does not harden, transfer the truffles to the refrigerator or freeze to help the chocolate set. Store the truffles in the refrigerator.
Rainbow Wine Cooler

Ingredients

- ½ cup blueberries
- 3 kiwi fruit, peeled and chopped
- ½ cup fresh sliced pineapple
- 2 oranges, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup strawberries, chopped
- 3 cups sparkling water
- 3 cups sweet rose wine

Store bought wine coolers are full of highly processed sugars, calories, and sometimes fat. An average beverage contains 250 calories and a whopping 38g of sugar. Wine can be good for the heart, but when you drink alcoholic beverages loaded with sweeteners, the benefits are negated. Try making this fat free, no added sugar wine cooler at home. It is easy, beautiful, and sure to impress!

Method

Thoroughly wash and prep the fruits. Arrange the fruits in a tall, narrow glass in the order they appear to create a rainbow effect. Add the wine and sparkling water to a pitcher and pour into the glasses over the fruit. You can substitute the fruits with whatever is in season or what is available. Blackberries, peaches, grapes, tangerines, and grapefruits are also great for adding a splash of color.
Baked Apples

Ingredients

4 tart baking apples
¼ cup walnuts
2 tbsp maple syrup
¼ tsp salt
¼ tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp nutmeg
¼ tsp allspice
1 tbsp walnuts, chopped for topping
¼ tsp cinnamon
Boiling water

There is nothing like a warm baked apple on a chilly night. These apples fill your entire home with an amazing warm aroma and are reminiscent of an apple pie, without the saturated fat from the crust and refined sugars in the filling.

Method

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Thoroughly wash the apples and remove the stems and cores. In a food processor, mix the walnuts, maple syrup, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt until a coarse paste forms. Stuff the apples with the nut and maple mixture. Place the apples in shallow baking dish and add the water to the baking dish. Make sure the apples are sitting in a shallow bath of water (about 1 inch). Bake about 30 – 40 minutes or until the apples are tender. Remove the apples from the baking dish and allow them to cool slightly. Garnish with walnuts and serve warm.
Beet Red Velvet Cake

serves: 12

Ingredients

- 2 ½ cups whole wheat white flour
- 1 ½ cups unrefined sugar
- ¾ cup cocoa powder (not Dutch or alkalized)
- 1 cup grapeseed oil
- 2 organic, free range eggs
- ¾ cup fresh beet puree
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- ½ cup almond or soymilk
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp white vinegar
- 2 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp salt

Frosting:

- 3 cups organic powdered sugar
- ¾ cup Earth Balance, softened
- 4-5 tbsp vanilla almond or soymilk
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract

Store bought red velvet cakes can contain an entire bottle of artificial food coloring. The safety of consumption of these dyes is under debate. Don’t chance it! Make the cake from scratch using beets to naturally color the cake!

Method

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line two 9 inch cake pans with parchment paper. Beat the eggs, soymilk, vinegar, lemon juice, vanilla extract, beet puree, and oil together in a medium bowl. In a separate bowl, sift together the flour, sugar, baking soda, salt, and cocoa powder. Add the wet ingredients to the dry and beat until smooth. Distribute the batter evenly between the pans and bake for about 30 – 35 minutes, or until a toothpick comes cleanly from the center of the cake. Put the cakes aside to cool completely. For the frosting, beat together the Earth Balance, soymilk, vanilla, and powdered sugar. Assemble the cake, frost, and enjoy.
Recipe Index

Good Mornings
Good Morning Boost Juice / pg. 18
Perfect Pancakes / pg. 16
Curried Tofu Scramble / pg. 17
Garden Tofu Scramble / pg. 18
Rise and Shine Muffins / pg. 19
Pumpkin Spice Muffins / pg. 20
Steel Cut Oats / pg. 21
Homemade Cereal / pg. 22

Main Dishes
Balsamic Beans and Brown Rice / pg. 37, 38
Sesame Ginger Tuna Steak / pg. 39
Baked Falafel / pg. 40
Summer Squash and Beans / pg. 41
Coconut Tofu Stir Fry / pg. 42
Spicy Turkey Curry / pg. 43
White Chili / pg. 44
Harvest Veggie Burger / pg. 45, 46
Veggie Shepherd’s Pie / pg. 47
Lemon Dijon Salmon / pg. 48

Sides and Snacks
Wild Rice Pilaf / pg. 24
Southwestern Corn Salad / pg. 25
Earthly Kale Salad / pg. 26
Lentil Salad / pg. 27
Roasted Vegetables / pg. 28
Channa Masala / pg. 29
Carrot Slaw / pg. 30
Bok Choy Salad / pg. 31
Red Quinoa Salad / pg. 32
Granola Bars / pg. 33
Baked Beans / pg. 34
Roasted Butternut Squash / pg. 35

Desserts
Fruit and Nut Bark / pg. 50
Ginger Cookies / pg. 51
Walnut Chocolate Chip Cookies / pg. 52
Sweetheart Cupcakes / pg. 53
Tropical Coconut "Ice Cream" / pg. 54
Fruit Salad / pg. 55
Honey Almond Truffles / pg. 56
Rainbow Wine Cooler / pg. 57
Baked Apples / pg. 58
Beet Red Velvet Cake / pg. 59
References


Forgione, M. (2010). Activia health claims were a little overblown -- even for yogurt.


http://shine.yahoo.com/channel/food/food-label-lies-how-to-sort-truth-from-hype-2396210/

Greer, F., & Krebs, N. (2006). Optimizing bone health and calcium intakes of infants,

Cambridge, MA: CABI.

Harris, J. L. (2010). Trends in food advertising to young people. Retrieved from

Harvard School of Public Health. (n.d.). Food pyramids and plates: What should you


