



Cheat Sheet

to a Healthy Diet

in Ten Easy Steps



by Kimberly Harris

Transitioning to a nourishing diet can be a daunting task if the foods are unfamiliar and you are new to many of the cooking techniques. But don't fear the transition. There are very easy and simple things you can change right now that will put you light years ahead nutritionally. This little guide is meant to give you some easy first steps you can take at your own pace. Choose one to tackle every week, month or day depending on your goals and comfort level. There is no need to tackle these changes in order, but start wherever you like!

To keep this guide from becoming an overwhelming amount of information, I've chosen to keep descriptions of the "why" behind the changes concise. Instead, I share a variety of in-depth resources for those who want it. This approach prevents you from having to slog through a lot of information before you make your step.

My hope is that as you make these changes, you will be encouraged to find that your food tastes great, and that it's not half as hard as you thought it would be to make good eating choices.

Enjoy!

Kimi at The Nourishing Gourmet

Step One: Print out the Nutrient Dense Food PDF Cheat Sheet

Too often, people correlate healthy eating with simply taking out junk food. But it's so much more. Eating a healthy diet is all about giving your body the building blocks it needs to thrive through eating lots of nutrient dense foods. I have been influenced by Dr. Weston A. Price's work to include traditional nutrient dense foods in our family's diet. It's an old fashioned diet full of satisfying, body building foods. Really, it's just about eating unprocessed foods with a focus on foods especially nutrient dense.

You may be surprised at how many nutrient dense foods you already have in your diet! Print out the nutrient dense PDF food chart today, and keep it handy. It's a cheat sheet guide to help you include more nutrient dense foods in your diet on a regular basis. Look over this chart and consider which foods you already regularly eat. Do any categories have foods rarely eaten? If so, keep that in mind when meal planning, as you want to consume a wide range of nutrient dense foods. This little chart will keep you on track as you work towards including more nutrient dense foods in your diet on a weekly and daily basis.

To learn more about nutrient dense foods, and Dr. Price, read the following:

Dr. Price and the Underlining Theme of Nutrition and Physical Degeneration

Why We Need a Synergy of Nutrients

Are you really eating a nutrient dense diet?

Step Two: Switch to Traditional Fats

In our human efforts to make food cheaper and "healthier" we often take a very good thing and turn it into a monster. More research is validating that the move from traditional fats to processed and refined oils and fats has been hurting our health for the last 40+ years. It turns out that trans fats are truly horrific, but saturated fats (found in most traditional diets) are not only unfairly maligned but in fact health-giving. Our efforts to get healthier by using very processed, and perhaps even toxic cheap oils, have been a sad failure. Thankfully, moving back to the fats and oils used for thousands of years is a delicious and easy change! Your taste buds will thank you. The great thing about this step is that all it takes is switching out what you buy and experimenting with it one recipe at a time.

Easy Switches:

Refined vegetable oils in salad dressing --> extra virgin olive oil (preferably organic and from a trusted source)

Canola oil in baking --> melted butter or coconut oil

Margarine --> butter! The real deal

Fats to sauté with --> coconut oil, home or small batch non-hydrogenated tallow and lard from pastured or organic sources, ghee

Reaching for butter for your bread? Reach for the best quality butter you can afford. Making cookies? Use the real thing (butter!) instead of Crisco or margarine. Melt coconut oil (use refined for no coconut taste) or melted butter instead of canola oil for use in baked goods. Making a vegetable rich stir fry? Leave out the cheap vegetable oil and use a little bit of ghee (a clarified butter that does well at high temperatures) or a bit of highest quality tallow or lard. Take it one application and recipe at a time, and I think you will be very pleased with how beautiful food tastes with traditional fats and oils.

Resources and Research:

Guide to Traditional Fats and Oils (check out the many resources linked at the bottom of the page as well)

The Diet-Heart Myth: Cholesterol and Saturated Fats are not the Enemy

8 Reasons Not to Fear Saturated Fats

Books:

Real Food by Nina Planck, *Nourishing Traditions* by Sally Fallon Morrell.

Recipes Featuring Traditional Fats:

How to render lard

How to make your own ghee

Mashed Potatoes made with real fats

Sauteed Cabbage and Apples (use your choice of traditional fats, and be amazed at how even simple dishes can be so delicious)

Gluten-free Apple Muffins (made with coconut oil)



Step Three: Make Your Own Salad Dressing with Healthy Oils & Vinegars

This is a five-minute project that gives you delicious results and saves you from a number of preservatives and other unfortunate ingredients. Take a look at the ingredient list of a popular store bought salad dressing, Creamy Italian from Kraft: *Water, Soybean Oil, Vinegar, Sugar, Salt, Garlic, Xanthan Gum, Onions, Propylene Glycol Alginate, Spice, Polysorbate 60, Red Bell Peppers, Citric Acid, Potassium Sorbate, and Calcium Disodium EDTA, Natural Flavors.*

There isn't anything in that ingredient list to redeem it!

Once you get in the habit, you will find it hard to turn back to store bought salad dressings because of how much better homemade tastes. Beyond that, salad dressings are very basic and simple to make, yet so many store bought versions are full of food preservatives, additives, and cheap and unhealthy ingredients. After water is taken out of the equation of the above salad dressing, we have highly processed, GMO oil, a cheap vinegar (also likely from genetically modified ingredients), and then sugar (once again, highly refined, likely from genetically modified beets). That's before we even get to the rest of the ingredients!

But don't worry, there are so many delicious recipes to choose from. You can use extra virgin olive oil, or you can use *this mix of three oils from Mary Enig*. My two "go to" vinegars are raw apple cider vinegar and balsamic vinegar. You can make a wide variety of delicious salad dressings with just those two vinegars. (That's all I use in my entire salad cookbook!)

Here are eight recipes to get you started:

Creamy Balsamic Vinaigrette, plus seven other homemade salad dressing recipes

Plus, you can also check out my cookbook:

Fresh: Nourishing Salads for All Seasons

Step Four: Add a Main Dish Green Salad into Your Lunch Rotation

Now that you know how to make your own easy salad dressing, it's time to incorporate a beautiful green salad into your diet. Don't go for the iceberg lettuce though, but instead pick out dark green lettuce leaves such as arugula, romaine, butter leaf, or one of the delightful salad mixes. Top that with chilled cooked beans (use canned if you want), leftover meats or seafood from dinners, grated cheese, cucumbers, red peppers, sprouts, avocado slices, or whatever else catches your fancy! This protein and vegetable rich meal can be incredibly satisfying if hearty enough, and gives you a large boost of nutrients. When I was writing my cookbook, *Fresh: Nourishing Salads for all Seasons*, and eating many salads I noticed a significant energy increase. You can ***read that story here***.

Salad is easily portable, so it is a perfect healthy lunch to bring to work, too.

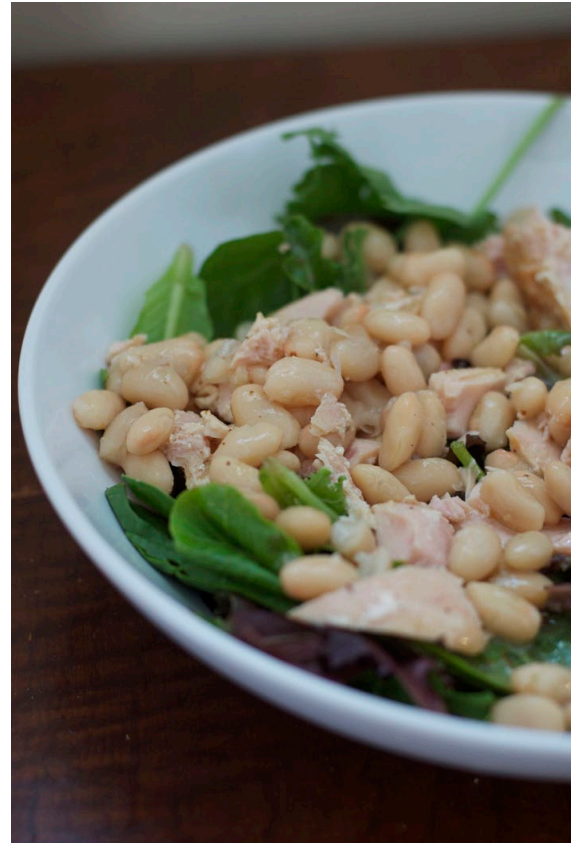
Grated Nut Cheese

Fresh: Nourishing Salads for all Seasons

Step Five: Make One New Main Dish a Week

It can be daunting to overhaul your entire diet. Every time we have had to change our diet around for a variety of reasons, we've quickly realized how stressful and time-consuming that process can become while you learn the ropes. Included in all of that is a lot of new recipe testing. It can be overwhelming, and perhaps that is where you're at right now.

Why not try this? Once a week, every week, try a new main dish recipe. In this new main dish, try to include important nutrient dense foods from the chart you've already printed out (bonus points for including more than one!), leaving out any processed or packaged foods. It won't take long before you discover new favorites and leave any failures behind. If you continue this for a year, you will have tried out 52 new main dishes!



Remember that dietary changes happen like the rest of life – one step at a time. Or one meal at a time. It can take a little time to discover new ways of cooking (and living!) that work for you, so give yourself grace to make changes in a timely, effective manner.



Because eating a healthy diet is a lot about switching to unprocessed foods, I have found that many resources featuring recipes for the gourmet cook are a good choice (think *Bon Appetit* magazine and epicurious.com). See? Eating healthy isn't about eating "rabbit food." It's a wonderful way to dine.

You can check out *a list of main dishes here*.

You may find helpful:
Epicurious.com, Bonappetit.com

Step Six: Cut Back on Desserts and Eat Fruit Instead

Today the average American consumes 77 pounds of sugar a year, which translates into more than 22 teaspoons a day.

(Many recommend that healthy adults should consume 8 teaspoons at most every day). Few disagree that our sugar consumption is over the top and a major factor contributing to our health issues. Common offenses include soda pop, desserts, ice cream, candy, candy bars, packaged and processed foods, and the added sugar to pretty much everything boxed, canned, or pre-made.

But you can get off the hamster wheel of sugar consumption! One lovely way to enjoy something sweet but in its "natural" packaging is to enjoy fruit instead of desserts. Tempted to buy a fast food milkshake? Instead, blend up a whole fruit smoothie with some healthy coconut milk for creaminess and added traditional fats.

Reaching for that package of cookies in an afternoon slump? Slice yourself up an apple. Wanting to eat that lovely, heavily sweetened pie? Have a bowl of fresh raspberries with a drizzle of pastured organic cream or coconut cream.



Yes, there is something very special about cakes, cookies, brownies, and milkshakes, but in order for them to be special, we shouldn't be consuming them all the time! We can satisfy our natural desire for sweetness by enjoying fruit, especially in-season fruit, on a normal basis. Fruit contains fiber, antioxidants, and many important health benefits. Sugar? Not so much. In fact, it could be doing us a world of harm.

Recipes:

Simple Baked Apples

Sauteed Apples

Mango Orange Smoothie

Step Seven: Make your own chicken broth

There are three things you need to know about making chicken broth. 1) It's good for you. 2) It's super easy to make and 3) It's delicious!

Really, it is as simple as dumping raw chicken pieces or leftover chicken bones (from a roasted chicken or bone-in chicken dish) into a pot with a couple of basic vegetables and spices, covering with water, and simmering gently. Voila! Chicken broth.

The trick to a good tasting broth is making sure you salt it well (I salt at the end of the cooking process). Broth needs to be properly seasoned to keep it from tasting very bland, but salt will highlight and bring out the delicious natural flavors of chicken and vegetables.



A quick cheat? Try out ***this chicken noodle soup recipe*** that makes the broth while it cooks. Homemade broth + soup at the same time!

Resources:

How to make chicken broth for practically free

Beef Broth

6 reasons to make your own chicken broth

Ladled: Nourishing Soups for all Seasons (my other cookbook)

Step Eight: Learn a Soup Recipe That You (and your family!) Love

Now that you have made your chicken broth, try out a hearty soup recipe! If all that you have experienced is soup from cans or restaurants (where many soups are pre-made junk reheated by the restaurant), you are in for a pleasant surprise! A hearty lentil vegetable bacon soup served with buttered bread (real butter, of course) and a green salad (made with homemade dressing) is a gourmet, delicious, and filling meal that I could eat everyday happily. Unless you are especially adventuresome, I'd suggest starting out with some basic soups, like chicken noodle or chicken rice soup. From that point on, there is a wide range of unique and flavorful soups just waiting to be explored.



While my children can be picky (just like every other child out there), I have been pleasantly surprised to find that when I introduce them to homemade soups early, it is a natural food for them to enjoy. It still gives me a thrill of pleasure to watch them enjoy a big bowl of clam chowder or chicken rice soup that I have made for them.

Resources:

Soups on my blog

Ladled: Nourishing Soups for All Seasons

Step Nine: Try a Store Bought Brand of Lacto–Fermented Vegetables or Beverages

One thing that scares a lot of people about a nourishing lifestyle is the cultured, or lacto–fermented foods that we consume for their amazing good bacteria benefits. Not only are people intimidated by the taste, they are scared to make it themselves. While granted, there is little to fear from the process, I think the best first step to take is to try some of the wonderful fermented vegetables or beverages out there that you can buy!

You are looking for unpasteurized, “live” foods here. If you have a Whole Foods or similar store near you, check out their selection. They should be kept in the refrigerator case at the store because they are

perishable. Try out a live sauerkraut and enjoy a little on a roast beef sandwich. Get a fruit flavored kombucha and if it’s still too strong for you, mix with coconut water and enjoy as a refreshing drink on a hot summer day. Find a brand of live cultured yogurt, and put it in a smoothie, homemade popsicle, or simple stir in frozen blueberries and a little natural sweetener for a sort of slushie. Mix a little fermented beets into a salad for extra flavor (or whatever other fermented vegetables you find).

Look and see what you can find locally, and then experiment, giving yourself permission to try just one bite. Then, if you aren’t sure of the flavor, try another bite the next day (and the next!) as you adjust to the new flavors and textures of fermented foods. Some of us found it an easy transition, but others may need to give themselves more time to learn to enjoy it. By trying out some store bought brands first, you will also learn to know what taste profiles to look for when making your own ferments some day!

Resources:

Health benefits of naturally fermented foods

Buy cultured foods online at wisechoicemarket.com



Step Ten: Cut Back on Packaged Foods

You probably expected this to be the first point instead of the last. But here's the deal: Once you know what to eat instead of packaged foods, it's a lot easier to remove them from your diet! Now that you have worked in main dish salads, switched to healthier fats, made your own salad dressing, tried out soup recipes, and got in the habit of trying out new main dish recipes containing nutrient dense foods, this is the time to cut back on all of that packaged food in your cupboard.

Let's take a peek into your cupboard and see what we can do.

- Sugar cereal? Make a hearty bowl of oatmeal, scrambled eggs and toast, or a smoothie instead!
- Canned broths, soups, and cream of everything cans? You can make your own now!
- Packages of cookies that are highly sweetened, spiked with preservatives and unhealthy fats? Make your own with real food ingredients or reach for an apple or orange instead.
- Big bags of artificially flavored chips? Stovetop popcorn, gently butter and salt, and serve with pride.

The fact is, there is little that you can't find real food substitutes for in your pantry. Remember that you are going back to the original REAL version of said food when you toss the packaged versions. You will find your cookies better tasting, your soups more delicious, and your body thanking you as you cut back on processed foods.

That's not to say that we personally never buy any packaged foods. We've found some helpful real food ingredient brands for certain items. But as a general rule, the more you cut back on packaged foods and replace them with whole foods, the better it is for your health.

We are back where we started. Eating healthy isn't just about cutting out junk food, it's about adding in foods that nourish and build the body up. And that diet is a beautiful diet full of beautiful, satisfying foods. Bon Appetit!