



# The Everyday Gourmet

## Making Healthy Food Taste Great

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Connie Guttersen, Nutrition Instructor

The Culinary Institute of America



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## Bill Briwa, C.E.C., C.H.E.

Chef-Instructor  
The Culinary Institute of America  
at Greystone

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A 1980 graduate of The Culinary Institute of America (CIA), Chef Bill Briwa has worked in the hospitality industry for over 30 years and is a Certified Executive Chef and Certified Hospitality Educator. In addition to being the resident chef for The Hess Collection winery in California's Napa Valley, Chef Briwa owned and operated his own bistro and worked at Thomas Keller's award-winning restaurant The French Laundry. He was also the executive chef for The Wine Spectator Restaurant at The CIA at Greystone and served as an officer on the board of the St. Helena Farmers' Market. As culinary chair of the 2004 Napa Valley Wine Auction, Chef Briwa helped raise more than five million dollars for local charities. In addition to his work as a cook and chef, he has worked as both a baker and pastry chef. His writing on food and wine, olive oil, and cooking has been featured locally and in *Fine Cooking*, *Mise en Place*, and *Sunset* as well as in the trade publications *Flavor & the Menu* and *Practical Winery & Vineyard Journal*.

As a Chef-Instructor at the CIA, Chef Briwa has developed curricula and has taught cooking, flavor dynamics, gastronomy, and food-and-wine pairing full time for the past 15 years. He has traveled to both teach and study cooking across the United States and to China, Mexico, South and Central America, Europe, and around the Mediterranean. In addition, he is part of the Industry Services Group at the CIA and works closely with a broad range of corporate clients to help them realize their culinary goals.

Chef Briwa has been a speaker at many professional conferences, and he takes part in the Healthy Kitchens, Healthy Lives conference held twice each year at The CIA at Greystone. The conference is copresented by Harvard School of Public Health and the CIA. Chef Briwa has collaborated with



Dr. Connie Guttersen, an instructor at the CIA and author of *The Sonoma Diet*, on numerous presentations on nutrition and cooking, including a course on the science of healthy cooking produced by The Great Courses. In 2003, Chef Briwa was a judge for the American Cheese Society, and in 2005, he presented on gastronomy at the annual conference of the International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP). In 2005, 2006, and 2007, he presented at the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association's (IFMA) Chain Operators Exchange (COEX) conference, and in 2008 and 2009, he spoke at the National Restaurant Association (NRA) Show in Chicago, Illinois. Chef Briwa also presented at Beyond Extra Virgin IV, a conference on superpremium olive oil, in Verona, Italy.

Over the last 30 years of cooking and teaching, Chef Briwa has taken one short break from the stove to become a puppeteer. He lives in Yountville, California, with his wife and a border collie—both of whom think highly of his cooking. ■



## Connie Guttersen, R.D., Ph.D.

Nutrition Instructor  
The Culinary Institute of America  
at Greystone

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Professor Connie Guttersen, R.D., Ph.D., is a Nutrition Instructor at The Culinary Institute of America (CIA) at Greystone and a registered dietitian and culinary professional. She is also the nationally and internationally renowned author of *The Sonoma Diet*, a *New York Times* best seller. Professor Guttersen served as an instructor on nutrition and food science at Texas

Christian University, where she earned her undergraduate degree in Nutrition and Dietetics. She received her Ph.D. in Nutritional Physiology from Texas Woman's University.

A leading expert on the health benefits of diets inspired by Mediterranean, Latin American, and Asian cuisines, Professor Guttersen has spent her career focusing on the development of flavorful and nutritious approaches to healthy eating and weight reduction. Her first two best sellers, *The Sonoma Diet* and *The Sonoma Diet Cookbook*, present recipes and meals that promote weight loss while still celebrating the pleasures of good food. The success and following of *The Sonoma Diet* created a trend in the way that people think about eating.



With the publication of *The New Sonoma Diet*, Professor Guttersen incorporates a whole-health lifestyle approach with the latest nutrition science, focusing on foods to maintain and improve vitality, heart health, and overall health. *The New Sonoma Cookbook* includes new power foods, new recipes, and a new food philosophy.

A sought-after media personality, Professor Guttersen has appeared on national broadcast programs, including the *TODAY* show, *The View*, *Fox & Friends*, *Extra*, and CNBC's *Power Lunch*, and has contributed to articles in *USA TODAY*; the *Los Angeles Times*; *O, The Oprah Magazine*; *More*;

*Woman's World*; *Us Weekly*; and *The New York Times*, discussing healthy food combinations and the joy of eating flavorful foods.

Professor Guttersen's many accomplishments include developing the standards of care for a medical obesity treatment center in Bellevue, Washington. She also has consulted with a broad range of corporations and Fortune 500 companies—including Kraft Foods, Nestlé, Marriott, Radisson, Hyatt, Bush Brothers, and Panera Bread—on food trends and on the topic of world flavors as healthy inspirations. As a guest speaker of the nationally acclaimed Healthy Kitchens, Healthy Lives program, which is copresented by the Harvard School of Public Health and the CIA, Professor Guttersen stresses the importance of flavor as a health issue in the latest treatments for obesity and metabolic disorders. In addition, she has collaborated with Chef Bill Briwa, a Chef-Instructor at The CIA at Greystone, on numerous presentations on nutrition and cooking. Chef Briwa is the instructor of *The Everyday Gourmet: Rediscovering the Lost Art of Cooking*, produced by The Great Courses.

Professor Guttersen lives in Northern California's wine country with her husband and two children. ■

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This course focuses on cooking techniques, ingredients, and flavor. Shopping lists for ingredients are included, but the proportions will be up to you! Our Chef-Instructor encourages you to taste and experiment to become a more confident and competent cook.





# Good, Better, Best Strategies

## Lesson 1

**H**ow you eat and what you eat can really impact the length of time you live, but it can also affect how you look and feel. You may already know that, but what may surprise you is the science that supports the facts of healthy eating. One of the goals of these lessons is to help separate fact from fiction. Maybe you are already trying to eat healthily, but you find that the foods don't taste that great or that the meals are difficult to prepare. That happens to be another goal of these lessons—to show you how easily healthy meals can be prepared and how enjoyable they can be.

### The Science of Healthy Eating

Rather than looking at food and eating as a diet, think of it more as a lifestyle, where meals are celebrations and where you indulge in healthy and delicious foods. Words like “healthy,” “indulgence,” and “celebration” typically don't go together, but you will find that good food that is prepared well is actually a treat to the palate.

Multiple studies are confirming the health benefits of Mediterranean, Asian, and Latin American cuisines to protect people against lifestyle-related diseases, mostly by reducing risk factors against obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and even certain cancers. For example, an eight-year study that followed 20,000 Greek men and women found compelling evidence for the Mediterranean diet to help people live a longer and healthier life.

Studies have shown that in addition to what you eat, how you eat can impact your health. Keys to a healthier lifestyle include eating mindfully, taking the time to savor your food—maybe even enjoying your meal with a glass of wine—and emphasizing wholesome meals that are seasonal and sustainable. The emphasis should be on creating foods that are so good that you want to savor them.

### The Sonoma Smart Plate

The Sonoma Smart Plate, which is similar to the USDA's MyPlate, is one of the easiest strategies that leads to healthy eating. It is a guide that helps you keep tabs on the right portions of foods but also on the smartest combinations



of foods to help you look and feel your best. The Sonoma Smart Plate is the first step to making healthy eating an enjoyable lifestyle.

To create a healthy plate, the size of the plate is critical. It is recommended that you use a plate with a nine-inch diameter as a guideline for keeping the right portions. Think of it this way: If you have a larger plate, there's just more room to put more food on it, resulting in too many calories and a larger quantity of food than you would want to eat—even if the meal is healthy. Fill your nine-inch plate with 50 percent colorful fruits and vegetables; 30 percent lean proteins, such as lean beef, poultry, or fish; and 20 percent whole grains.

With the Sonoma Smart Plate, color is also an important guideline. The more color you have on your plate, the more healthful properties you are going to receive from your foods. Another component is mindfulness, or being aware of what you are eating, how you are eating, and how much you are eating. Studies have shown that mindfulness is very important to health, and learning when to stop eating—when you feel full or satisfied—is critical. When you are eating, pay attention to when you feel 80 percent satisfied or full and learn to stop eating at that point.

The Sonoma Smart Plate emphasizes combinations of foods to help make eating healthy become second nature. It's not about micromanaging how much food you eat or how many calories or grams of fat you consume; instead, it's about being more mindful about the combinations and amounts of foods that you include on your plate. The Sonoma Smart Plate also helps you shift your focus to what has been shown to be the healthiest diet—a more plant-based diet—by recommending that 50 to 75 percent of your plate should be made

up of grains and colorful fruits and vegetables. The shift to a more plant-based diet is what will give you more protective qualities to help you reduce the risk factors for diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and even certain types of cancer.

## Breakfast of Champions

The following is a strategy for making incremental changes to your diet that can move your food choices in a positive direction nutritionally—from good to better to best.

### Good: Instant Oatmeal

If you are trying to eat a healthy breakfast and decide that you are going to have oatmeal—a good whole grain—you might choose instant oatmeal, which is ground and rolled very finely. You cook it by boiling some water and then pouring it on top of the oatmeal, and after about 20 seconds, it's ready for you to eat. As much as you like the idea of oats, you realize that you would be happier if you poured some heavy cream on top, along with a pat of butter. When you taste it, you decide that it's not quite sweet enough, so you add some white sugar as well.

### Better: Rolled Oats

Instead of instant oats, you could eat rolled oats for breakfast. They take a little bit longer to cook, but they don't take longer than about 10 or 15 minutes. Instead of heavy cream, use warm milk, and instead of white sugar, add a little bit of honey—but not before you sweeten the oats with some fresh fruit, such as peaches and plums.

### Best: Steel-Cut Oats with Yogurt, Flaxseed, and Berries

#### Shopping List

proportions to taste

steel-cut oats  
yogurt  
flaxseed, toasted  
cinnamon  
selection of berries, such as  
blackberries, raspberries,  
and blueberries  
honey





If you are going to have oatmeal for breakfast, the best option is steel-cut oats, which are whole oats that have been cut and are very close to a whole grain. Admittedly, they take longer to cook—between 35 and 45 minutes—but if you soak them the night before, they'll cook in about five minutes in the morning. This time, the dairy product that you should add is yogurt. Then, add some toasted flaxseed, which contains great fats and has a wonderful nutty flavor. Mix the flaxseed with some cinnamon to add sweetness to the preparation. To make it even sweeter and more delicious, add a selection of berries, such as blackberries, raspberries, and blueberries. With all of that sweetness, you won't need more than a drizzle of honey—if you use any at all.

## Doing Lunch Right

### Good: Chef's Salad

To keep you on track with your commitment to be healthy, you decide to eat a salad for lunch. You choose a chef's salad with iceberg lettuce (which is sort of the white bread of lettuces). It is covered with luncheon meat, cheese, and bacon, but you ask for the ranch dressing on the side. It is great to have a salad for lunch, but each time you add ingredients, ask yourself if you are getting the most benefits and the least drawbacks that you possibly can. Hardboiled eggs are a beneficial topping, but luncheon meats, cheese, and a creamy dressing don't come with as many rewards as they should to be worth the calories. In addition, while the idea of asking for the dressing on the side is a good one, if having the dressing on the side means that you are going to use too much of it, then just have them dress it in the kitchen and let them do the work for you.

## Better: Caesar Salad

In contrast to a chef’s salad, a Caesar salad has darker, leafier greens that likely have more nutrition. Caesar salad also has cheese on it. A little bit of cheese—especially a full-flavored cheese like parmesan—can be leveraged to bring a lot of nutrient-dense food like lettuce to you in a tasty way. The dressing on a Caesar salad is a little bit creamy, but grilled chicken adds some lean protein to this salad. The croutons are made from white bread, so ask yourself if you can make those healthier.

## Best: Niçoise Salad

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

tuna, canned or seared  
green beans  
potatoes, roasted  
eggs, hardboiled

olives  
tomatoes  
anchovies



A niçoise salad serves as an expression of what’s best and brightest in the produce market in the south of France and is rounded out by tuna, which is a very popular seafood in that part of the world. Traditionally, this salad contains canned tuna soaked in olive oil, but seared tuna would be a better option for protein. Because this salad also contains green beans, roasted potatoes, hardboiled eggs, olives, tomatoes, and anchovies, it is difficult to find anything that is unhealthy about it.





## What's for Dinner?

### Good: Fish and Chips

For dinner, you might think about eating fish because it seems healthier than red meat, so you decide to eat fried fish, french fries, and a little bit of coleslaw with a really rich mayonnaise dressing. After all, you are eating fish, and there are some vegetables on the plate, but this dish is not really representative of making great nutritional choices.

### Better: Sautéed Whitefish with Rice and Broccoli

The better option is plain boiled white rice with steamed broccoli and a small piece of whitefish that has been sautéed but does not have a rich sauce. The problem with this dish is that there is nothing enticing about it, so it doesn't matter how healthy it is. If it's not eaten, it's not food—it's nutritional garbage.

### Best: Wild Salmon, Zucchini Carpaccio, and Brown Rice Pilaf

You need to find the middle ground between being unhealthy and being bland. You want to find something that looks good, tastes good, is appealing, and is also healthy—for example, wild salmon with zucchini carpaccio and brown rice pilaf.

#### A Challenge with Whole Grains

One of the challenges of whole grains is that, for the most part, they take longer to cook than other grains. For example, white rice cooks in about 15 minutes while brown rice cooks in about 45 minutes. Solution: cook for several meals at once!



When you cook brown rice pilaf, make extra so that you can repurpose it and use it not once for dinner, but again as fried rice or as part of an omelet, salad, or grain medley. In other words, cook it once and eat it two or three times. Because you can repurpose it, make sure that you take good care to package it well before you put it in the refrigerator or freezer.

To make brown rice pilaf, start by adding some olive oil and diced onions to a hot pan. It doesn't take very long for onions cut up small to turn translucent, which is what you want to happen. While the onions are cooking, add a branch of thyme, a bay leaf, and a few cloves of garlic to the pan. Then, turn the heat down, put a lid on the pan, and wait for the onions to become translucent.

## Shopping List

proportions to taste

wild salmon  
salt  
ground black pepper  
hot sauce

### Brown Rice Pilaf

olive oil  
onions, diced  
thyme  
bay leaf  
garlic cloves  
medium-grain brown rice  
water  
salt  
ground black pepper

### Sauce for Salmon

olive oil  
onions  
garlic  
white wine, such as sauvignon blanc  
tomatoes, canned or fresh  
capers  
red pepper flakes  
green olives, quartered and pitted  
bay leaf  
mint chiffonade  
basil chiffonade  
salt

### Zucchini Carpaccio

fresh zucchini, cut into thin ribbons  
olive oil  
lemon juice  
salt  
ground black pepper  
mint  
parmesan cheese



The next step is to add a measured amount of medium-grain brown rice to the pan. With brown rice, the bran layer and the germ is intact—exactly the way it comes from the plant. Coat all of the grains with the flavorful fat that is in the pan and cook them a little bit to gelatinize the starch on the outside of the grain. The oily layer in addition to the gelatinized starch will help the rice remain fluffy and loose and prevent it from becoming clumpy. Initially, the rice will turn white as it cooks, and then you might notice a golden color that begins to take hold. You will probably also notice a nutty aroma coming off of the pan. All of those are great signs. While the rice is cooking in the pan, season it with salt and pepper.

Each type of grain that you cook demands a specific quantity of liquid. When you make brown rice pilaf, be aware that brown rice cooks in two-and-a-half times as much liquid as rice. Measure the liquid, add it to the pan, and bring it



### Easy steps to a satisfying meal.

up to a boil. The water that rice cooks in should actually taste like a properly seasoned soup, so add some more salt and pepper if needed.

Once the rice comes up to a boil, turn the heat down to a simmer and cover it with a tight-fitting lid. Keep the pan on a low heat so that it simmers gently for about 40 minutes, at which point all of the liquid should be absorbed by the rice. In addition, the bay leaves and thyme branches should float to the top, so you can remove them at that point. Once the rice is fully cooked, let it rest for about 10 to 15 minutes because grains can be tender right after they finish cooking. Then, you can fluff the rice up with a fork.

Next, make the sauce that will accompany the salmon by putting another pan on the stove with some olive oil and onions. The sauce is going to be a very versatile sauce that takes its inspiration from the flavors of Sicily and that you



can put on not just salmon, but also on some tuna or grilled chicken breast. Sweat the onions until they are tender and translucent.

Once the onions are translucent, add some garlic. Be careful not to burn the garlic because as it browns, it very quickly turns bitter. When garlic becomes aromatic, it does not need to be cooked any longer. Neither the onions nor the garlic should brown. Once they are fully cooked, deglaze the pan with some white wine, such as sauvignon blanc, which has an acidic backbone. Turn the heat up and let the liquid reduce until it is nearly dry. The acidity in the wine will brighten the sauce, and that will be important when you add salmon because salmon is a rich fish that contains a lot of fat, and that richness needs the counterpoint of some acidity.

After the liquid has reduced by about half, add some tomatoes to the pan. Depending on the time of the year, canned tomatoes might be your best option. In fact, you can find canned tomatoes that have less salt in them than other cans of tomatoes. If you are using canned tomatoes, remember that they have already been cooked a little bit.

Flavor the sauce with some capers. In Sicily, a large pinch of pepper flakes might be appropriate as well, but don't overdo it. Then, add some green olives that have been quartered and pitted. Finally, add a bay leaf to the pan. Turn the heat down and let the sauce simmer for about five minutes so that the flavors can mingle.

To finish the sauce, add some mint and basil. Both of these herbs need to be chopped in a careful way. If you chop them in a careless way, they will often turn black. Instead, stack up each herb into a small pile of leaves that you can roll up and slice each pile into thin ribbons with a knife. This technique is called chiffonade, and it guarantees that the herbs don't turn black. It is the least invasive way to chop these types of herbs.

With this sauce—just as with the rice pilaf—you can make it once and eat it two or three times, so make a larger batch than you will use for one meal. In addition to eating it with the salmon, you could eat it with tuna, a chicken



## Cooking with Canned Tomatoes

When adding canned tomatoes to your food, don't just open the can and assume that all tomatoes are the same. Instead, open the can and be critical. Taste the tomatoes and make sure that you are happy with the flavor. If you are not happy with the flavor, then try different brands and decide on one that you are happy with.



breast, or even with a poached egg as part of a simple supper. To store it, put the sauce into a yogurt container or other small plastic container and keep it in the fridge.

When seasoning the sauce, remember that canned tomatoes, olives, and capers all contain salt, so you don't need to add a tremendous amount of salt to the sauce. In addition, you don't need to add pepper because you added pepper flakes earlier. However, you can add a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil to enrich the sauce.

When you are ready to cook the main part of this meal—wild salmon—start by seasoning each piece of salmon with salt and pepper. Then, lay them in a pan on the heat and nestle them in hot sauce. Put a lid on the pan so that the salmon will cook from the bottom but also from the top. Allow the salmon to cook for about 15 minutes.



Finally, make a simple and healthy vegetable accompaniment to go along with the salmon and rice. Cut some fresh zucchini into thin ribbons with a vegetable peeler or a mandoline, which is a utensil that slices and shreds food. In a bowl, season the raw zucchini with good-quality olive oil, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and mint. Finally, add some parmesan cheese and briefly toss everything together. Be generous with the seasonings because you want the salad to have plenty of flavor. If it doesn't, it will simply taste like raw zucchini. If you cut the zucchini on the thicker side, then let it marinate for about five minutes, and it will soften up.

When you are ready to eat, assemble the rice pilaf, salmon, and zucchini salad on a plate. You will notice that a small amount of an indulgence ingredient like cheese can be leveraged to make a lot of nutrient-dense food taste great.

# Nutritious and Satisfying Whole Grains

## Lesson 2

In today's world, there is so much information about carbohydrates that is misleading and often confusing. Rather than eliminating an entire category of food, think about how to make the best choices within each category of food. For example, you can use nutrition labels to help you identify sources of whole grains and foods that have a low glycemic index. However, not all foods that have a low glycemic index are necessarily healthy. In addition to checking nutrition labels, look for a stamp from the Whole Grains Council that identifies a food as a whole grain. In this lesson, you will be introduced to some interesting and delicious recipes that will help you appreciate whole grains.

### What Are Whole Grains?

Harvard University conducted a six-year study that followed 65,000 women and found that those women who had a diet high in refined carbohydrates—



including white breads, pastas, and cereals—had more than twice the risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes than those who had a diet rich in whole grains. In fact, foods that are whole grains and have a low glycemic index are becoming markers for how healthful foods are. Such foods tend to be associated with lower risks of inflammation, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and even Alzheimer’s disease.

Whole grains contain three key components: bran, endosperm, and germ. Because of these components, whole grains are filled with nutrient-rich substances. Historically, one or more of those components were removed from the grain—perhaps to create a lighter, whiter, fluffier product, but in essence,

### Daily Dose of Whole Grains

Dietary guidelines recommend that people eat three to five servings of whole grains every day, which equates to about 16 grams of whole grains per serving.

key nutrients were lost in the process. In modern times, those key nutrients have been identified and replaced through the process of enrichment, which restores thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, and iron. In the process of refinement, some of the key nutrients are added, but not all of them.

In recent years, science has come to appreciate the micronutrients that weren’t replaced through the enrichment process and the synergistic effect of combining the entire package that is found in whole grains. These include the health benefits of

selenium, magnesium, and even some vital chemicals and proteins that, when in the company of each other, actually exert a greater health benefit than they would alone. Take advantage of the entire package of your whole grains by looking for those that are high in fiber or protein. Beyond their taste, one of the benefits of eating whole grains is receiving more nutrition for your calories.

## Cooking Whole Grains

Cooking whole grains is not the easiest task; if it were, everyone would cook whole grains instead of refined grains all the time. As a refined grain, white rice has been stripped of the germ and bran layers. The germ layer has a lot of nutrition, and the bran layer has a lot of fiber. Because it is a refined grain, white rice will cook in only about 15 minutes, but it is lacking a lot of nutrition.

On the other hand, brown rice has both the bran layer and the germ layer intact. Brown rice contains much more nutrition and fiber than white rice, but because of the bran layer, it takes longer to cook. While white rice takes about 15 minutes to cook, brown rice takes about 45 minutes. However, neither needs your full attention, so you can multitask while the rice is cooking.





When you plan to cook whole grains, give yourself enough time to prepare them. Because whole grains take extra time to cook, give yourself an advantage by making a large quantity of the grain so that you can use it in subsequent recipes. Make sure to carefully store the leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer.


### Tabbouleh

#### Shopping List

proportions to taste

bulgur	
garlic	
olive oil	
lemon juice	
salt	
ground black pepper	

parsley  
green onions  
tomatoes, diced  
cucumber, diced  
mint



You may know tabbouleh as a bulgur salad, but that is not quite right. Bulgur is a wheat product that consists of whole wheat berries that have been steamed, dried, and then cracked. Originally, this was done because whole wheat berries



## Adding Garlic

Be careful when adding garlic to any dish. Keep in mind that you can always add more garlic to a dish, but you can't usually take it out once you have added it. Therefore, it is a good idea to start with half or three-quarters of the amount of garlic that a recipe calls for.

can take three or four hours to cook—far too long to be convenient—so bulgur is precooked, dried, and cracked for convenience. Because bulgur has already been cooked, you just need to rehydrate it by covering it with boiling water and letting it sit for about 20 minutes, during which time the grain swells considerably and becomes tender.

In the eastern Mediterranean, where tabbouleh comes from, people do not consider tabbouleh to be a bulgur salad. Instead, they consider it to be a parsley salad. With tabbouleh, you get the benefit of whole grains along with the benefit of a lighter salad. Some people would say that whole grains are heavy and contain too much roughage. With this dish, you can

prove that whole grains can be light by setting the right proportion of grains to vegetable matter.

After rehydrating some bulgur, add some garlic, olive oil, and lemon juice to it and stir it together. Then, season it with salt and a little bit of pepper. Chop a bunch of parsley and add it to the mixture. Don't be shy about adding too much



parsley. Then, add some green onions to give the tabbouleh a savory flavor. Finally, add some diced tomatoes and cucumber.

Because there are so many vegetables in the tabbouleh, the role of the bulgur is really just to bind the salad together. Often, tabbouleh contains not only parsley, but also some mint, so you can add some mint to your tabbouleh as well if you want to. Toss everything together and then taste it. Parsley is so assertive that you might want to add more lemon juice after tasting it. You might also want to add some more olive oil and salt. Whole grains have a lot of flavor, and anything with a lot of flavor demands an assertive dressing.

Put some of the tabbouleh onto a plate. If you have leftover tabbouleh, put it in a bowl, and you can keep it in the refrigerator for two or three days. Before using it again, you might want to check it to see if you need to bump up the seasoning a little bit because sometimes as the seasoning is absorbed, it can taste a little flat. In the eastern Mediterranean, it wouldn't be uncommon to see tabbouleh served side by side with some sort of kebab. You can also serve tabbouleh with some grilled meat, such as lamb, and some grilled vegetables on the side.

## Basil Quinoa Salad

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

oil  
onions  
garlic  
thyme  
quinoa

water  
salt  
sun-dried tomatoes  
basil chiffonade  
ground black pepper



Quinoa is a very special whole grain because it is a complete protein on its own, so it is perfect for vegan meals. It is also gluten-free. Better still is the fact that it is a whole grain that cooks in only 15 minutes because the grain is very small. Quinoa has a very interesting compound on the outside of the grain itself called saponin, which is a natural pesticide that grows on the grain to protect it from animals that try to eat it. Saponin doesn't harm people, but it does have a little bit of a bitter flavor, so when dealing with quinoa, rinse it first in a strainer and then drain it, put it into a bowl, and let it sit for about 15 minutes so that it's moist but not wet.



To make a basil quinoa salad, start by making a quinoa pilaf. First, add some oil to a pan that's on the heat. Then, add some onions, garlic, and a little bit of thyme. Cook the onions until they become translucent. Once the onions are fully cooked, add some quinoa to the pan. If it looks a little dry after adding the quinoa, add a tad more oil and then toast the grain in that hot fat. Each grain is coated with an oily jacket that keeps the grain light and fluffy when

it's cooked. You are going to create a roasted grain flavor that is not inherent in the grain until you cook it. The ancillary benefit of toasting the grain is that the starch becomes gelatinized on the outside.

### Grain-to-Water Ratio

Every grain demands a specific amount of water that it likes to cook in. For example, with brown rice, you can use the ratio of one part rice to two-and-a-half parts water. Because quinoa is smaller, you can use the ratio of one part grain to one-and-a-quarter parts water.

As the quinoa cooks, you will hear it sort of popping in the pan, and every so often, you will see a grain jump. When you get to that point, it should be toasted enough. You will also begin to smell a wonderful roasted aroma that is similar to the smell of fresh-baked bread. Then, add water in the amount of one-and-a-quarter parts of water to one part quinoa. Once the water comes up to a boil, reduce the heat until the pan is simmering, add some salt, and

cover the pan with a tight-fitting lid. Let it simmer for about 15 minutes or until all of the moisture has been absorbed by the grain. The mixture should be loose and very light. If you were to taste it, it should be tender.



It might surprise you that if you cook a pot of grain and put the salt in the water when it cooks, it will taste one way, and if you cook the same grain and add the same amount of salt after it comes off the heat, it will taste very different. When you add salt at the end of the cooking process, it stays on the outside of the grain—it doesn't get absorbed into the grain.

Once the quinoa pilaf is cooked, you can alter it in many different ways, but to make this dish, add sun-dried tomatoes and basil to the quinoa to give it some flavor. Because basil likes to turn black when it is manipulated too much, cut the basil using the chiffonade technique: stack the leaves on top of each other, roll them into a small cigar, and then cut it very carefully. The word “chiffon” is in the word “chiffonade,” so you can expect something that is light and airy.

Finally, add just a little bit of salt and pepper and stir everything together. Taste the salad until you get the seasoning right. When you have a grain that has a lot of flavor and depth—a whole grain like quinoa, for example—the seasoning has to be assertive. Unless you taste it, there is a chance that you won't get the seasoning quite right, and if it doesn't taste good to you, then you won't want to eat it, so spend some extra time in the kitchen fine-tuning the flavorings of your dishes so that you're happy with the results.

This basil quinoa salad is best served with some fish. You could also make quinoa pilaf into a salad by putting a vinaigrette on it; then, you could serve it side by side with a fish sandwich. Quinoa pilaf could also be a filling that goes into a pita bread along with garden vegetables.

## Mediterranean Grain Medley

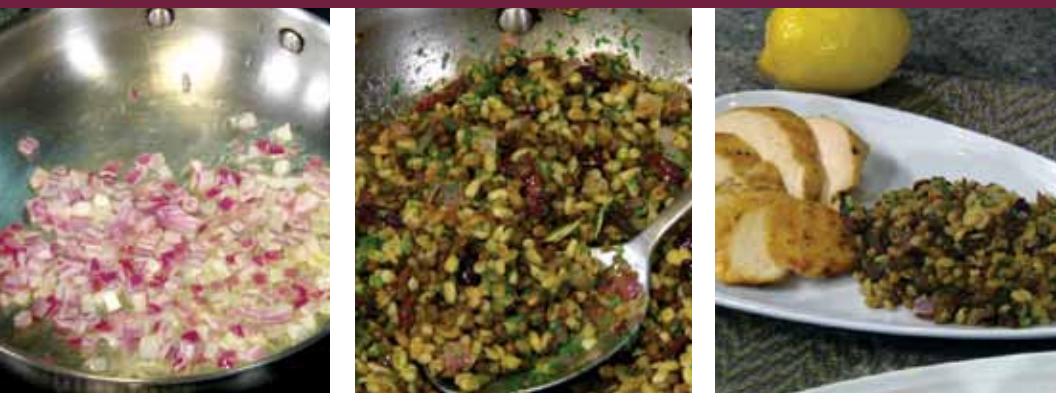
### Shopping List

proportions to taste

water  
barley  
farro  
french green lentils  
thyme  
garlic cloves  
salt  
red onions  
celery

bay leaves  
parsley  
olive oil  
ground black pepper  
black olives, such as  
kalamata olives  
oregano  
lemon juice





### **Mediterranean Grain Medley.**

To make a Mediterranean grain medley, start with three pots of boiling water, to which you will add two different grains and a bean: barley, farro (a precursor of modern-day wheat), and french green lentils. All three of these items will come together in a single dish. Bring the three items up to a boil in their respective pots, stirring each briefly to make sure that the contents are not clumped together.

For these three items, you have a couple of different flavoring options. For the barley, add a few branches of thyme and a few cloves of garlic to the water. Season the water with salt and allow it to cook for the requisite 45 minutes.

To the pot of farro, add a few pieces of onion, a slice of celery, a few bay leaves, and a few stalks of parsley. Season the water with salt and let the vegetables lend their flavor to the grain as they cook.

Finally, lentils taste great with garlic, so add a few cloves of garlic to the pot containing lentils. Then, drizzle some olive oil, which the beans will absorb as they cook and will become richer as a result. Also season the water with salt. If you like pepper, add some to each of the pots. Then, turn the temperature down on the pots until each is gently simmering. In about 30 minutes, check on the lentils to make sure that they are done.

As soon as the grains finish cooking, drain them and set them aside to cool. Once the lentils are done cooking, let them cool in the liquid because they maintain a better texture. You can then drain the liquid by using a strainer. Once they are all cooled and drained, bring all three together into a grain medley, which is going to look almost like tweed. The colors and textures will remain very distinct. By combining them, they will nutritionally become better

than the sum of the parts. In other words, when you take grains like barley and farro and mix them with beans like lentils, you end up with a complete protein that you would not get from any of them separately.

You could flavor the grain medley in a number of ways, but for this grain medley, you will add the flavors of the Mediterranean. Start by adding some red onions, which will bring some color to this dish, to a hot pan with some good-quality olive oil, which is the fat of choice in the Mediterranean. Because onions have sort of a harsh flavor—the sulfurous quality that can be felt as a burning sensation when you eat raw onions—most recipes tell you to add onions to the hot pan first and let them cook so that some of the harshness can cook off. Once the onions start to turn a little bit golden, add some thinly sliced garlic to the pan and turn the heat down because you don't want the garlic to burn.

Once the garlic becomes aromatic, flavor the mixture with some black olives, such as kalamata olives, which are a type of olive that you might find in Greece. Then, add oregano to the preparation, and don't be shy about adding too much.

### Smashing Garlic

If you're not comfortable with slicing garlic because it's so small, take a clove of garlic, put it on a cutting board, and smash it until it is flat. The peel will slip off easily, and you can then simply chop it a few times and add it to whatever you are cooking.



Add the barley, farro, and lentils to the pan to reheat them, tossing them in the flavorful oil. In terms of tossing, it is tremendously efficient to use a sauteuse, which is a pan that has curved sides, because when you flip food in the pan, it jumps back onto itself.

Taste the mixture and season it with parsley, which will add some great color. Then, add salt and pepper. Finally, a big squeeze of lemon juice will help this dish really show off its flavor. Remember that the big flavors of whole grains demand full-flavored seasoning. It shouldn't take more than a few minutes to cook everything together. Once grains and beans are cooked, you can cook something like this very quickly.

To make a meal out of the grain medley, serve it with some grilled chicken. The grain medley will keep very well in your refrigerator for a few days, so you can eat it as a hot dish when you cook it and then turn the leftovers into a salad.

If you want to make a grain medley that has the flavors of Latin America, you could add cilantro and roasted corn instead of olives. If you want to make an Asian grain medley, you could sauté some garlic and scallions and then add a splash of soy sauce. You might even include edamame, which would add bright green pops of color to the grain medley.

## Citrus Cooler

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

citrus, such as lemons,  
limes, and oranges  
cucumber  
ice water

lemon verbena  
mint or other  
aromatic herb



Instead of drinking soda, which is a beverage that is loaded with sugar, try making a citrus cooler. Start with some citrus—such as lemons, limes, and oranges—and cucumber, which is in the melon family, and add them to a jar of ice water. Then, add a little bit of lemon verbena and some sort of aromatic herb, such as mint. Use whatever is fresh and available to you. Mix everything together and let it sit for about 20 minutes. You will discover that there is a wonderful astringency in cucumbers that is very refreshing, and you will taste some acidity and sweetness, which comes from the citrus. You will also notice the aroma of the lemon verbena.







# Adding Flavor with Healthy Oils

## Lesson 3

**R**egardless of what you think you might know about fats and oils, plant oils are actually vital to your health, and they are also important for flavor development. Gone are the days when fat-free or even low-fat diets are synonymous with a trimmer waist or healthier life. What really matters is the quality of the fats and oils that you consume—not the quantity. In this lesson, you are going to learn which fats are healthy and how to use those healthy fats in your cooking.

### Healthy Fats and Oils

Healthy plant oils may actually be the best prescription to a happier and healthier mind. Your brain is more than 60 percent fat, so it shouldn't surprise you that choosing healthy oils like omega-3 fatty acids can actually boost your mood and health.

Research has shown that plant oils contain antioxidants, which are key components that decrease inflammation, one of the most common triggers of many diseases, such as diabetes, certain types of cancers, and possibly Alzheimer's disease. Choose your oils carefully, and you may even find that they help you keep a slimmer and trimmer waste.

#### Can a Low-Fat Diet Make You Fat?

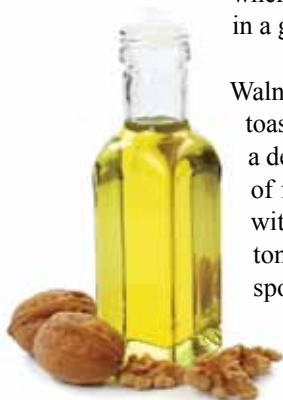
A study found that women who ate the most amount of fat were the least likely to be obese while those who ate a very low-fat diet were most likely to be obese. Surprisingly, the study found almost an inverse relationship between fat consumption and putting on extra weight.

People tend to be afraid of fat, but it is a great ingredient. It helps bring heat to food in an even, controlled way, but more importantly, it tastes good. In fact, there are a few very flavorful oils that are healthy, such as olive oil, walnut oil, and toasted sesame oil.

Olive oil is a healthy fat, but in addition to being healthy, it has a lot of flavor. When you sip some olive oils, they may make you cough a few times—whether you want to or not—and that's not a bad thing. That peppery, vegetal, bitter quality is something that people try to create in an olive oil. The flavors of olive oils

run the gamut from very buttery, soft, and nutty to green, bitter, pungent, and peppery.

There is a regional style to olive oil, so if you like soft oils, try an olive oil from the south of France. Typically, in France, the olives are allowed to ripen a little bit more, resulting in a softer, rounder, more buttery oil. Spanish oils tend to be a little bit soft and fruity but not quite as peppery and aggressive as olive oils. If you like a peppery quality in your olive oil, look for olive oils from Tuscany, where the olives are harvested early in the season, resulting in a green, peppery, aggressive, and often bitter oil.



Walnut oil is also very healthy for you. The walnuts are toasted before the oil is extracted, and if you smell it, it has a delicious aroma. Walnut oil is a powerful oil that has a lot of flavor. Typically, you will find that blending walnut oil with an oil that is more neutral, such as canola oil, will help tone it down. Be very careful with walnut oils because they spoil quickly. They oxidize and go rancid; for that reason, it's a great idea to buy small quantities of it and keep it refrigerated, which will guarantee that it stays fresh for as long as possible.

Toasted sesame oil is a very dark oil that is usually reserved for Asian food—specifically Chinese stir-fries, but sometimes it is used in Japan as well. Not surprisingly, toasted sesame oil smells just like toasted sesame seeds. Because it is such an aromatic oil, it is most often reserved as a garnishing oil.

## Types of Fats and Oils

All fats and oils have the same number of calories, but the way that they differ is how they affect your health, so it is important to focus on the quality of fats and oils as opposed to the quantity.

Saturated fats include the solid fats, such as butter, cream, lard, and even coconut and palm oil. Saturated fats are the fats that you want to limit because they are solid at room temperature, and they promote the aggressive steps toward heart disease and maybe even diabetes.

Partially hydrogenated oils are non-naturally-occurring fats and should be avoided entirely. They are found in margarines, shortenings, and many processed foods. Partially hydrogenated oils are associated with just about every negative health condition imaginable. The food industry has made great strides in trying to eliminate these from processed foods and snack foods, but





you should still look for the words “partially hydrogenated oils” on ingredients lists and know to avoid those foods.

Polyunsaturated oils are the most common type of fat that many people eat. They are referred to as seed oils or omega-6 fatty acids. Seed oils are very common and are obtained from sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds, for example. Soybean oil and corn oil are also seed oils.

Another type of polyunsaturated oil is omega-3, and omega-3 fatty acids are highly recognized for their anti-inflammatory properties, which means that omega-3 fatty acids help reduce the risk of heart disease and maybe even diabetes. They definitely help boost your mood. Recent studies are looking at the role of omega-3 fatty acids in helping to boost your immune system.

Omega-3 fatty acids are typically found in marine sources, such as salmon, mackerel, tuna, and herring. These are also the most powerful forms of omega-3 fatty acids. If you don't like or don't eat seafood, then you can also get omega-3 fatty acids from plant sources, such as walnuts, which are a very rich source of omega-3 fatty acids. In modern times, eggs are a popular source of omega-3 fatty acids. Both brown and white eggs are available with omega-3 fatty acids. Flaxseed also contains omega-3 fatty acids, but in addition, it is filled with vital nutrients and fiber.

Monounsaturated fats are the most flavorful of all the fats, and monounsaturated oils are the everyday oils that you might cook with. For example, canola oil is very popular and rich in monounsaturated oils—as are avocado and peanut

## Shopping for Olive Oil

When you are shopping for olive oil, you will find that there are many different choices. Look for oils that don't stay on the shelf for an extremely long time. When you check the label, note that the "extra-virgin" designation is an indicator of quality. Make sure to also check the back label for a vintage date. Typically, oils will last for one or two years. After that, they begin to decline in flavor, and ultimately, they will go rancid. A vintage date is a good indicator that the producer is interested in quality.

oils. Extra-virgin olive oil is a unique oil because it is made directly from the fruit through a cold-press process, which means that you get all of the benefits of a monounsaturated oil but also the additional health benefits that are contained within the fruit of the olive. Many of these benefits are related to anti-inflammatory compounds. Extra-virgin olive oil is delicious and very healthy.

Another category of monounsaturated oils that are popular is nuts. All nuts offer health benefits, but because nuts are high in calories—even though they are nutrient-rich sources of calories—learning how to balance your portions of nuts with the health benefits they offer is key. One ounce of nuts eaten every day has been associated with a 50 percent reduction of heart disease. In the Mediterranean, Asia, and Latin America, nuts are associated with healthier body weight.

Current studies are taking a closer look at why nuts are not found to be related to obesity, even though they are calorically rich. For example, studies of almonds are finding that nuts may be related to satiety, which means that they satisfy hunger. Perhaps they curb your appetite to help you get through a weight-loss plan. Research is also looking at the possibility that not all of the calories from nuts are absorbed.

There are health benefits in all nuts—from omega-3 fatty acids found in walnuts to rich antioxidant sources found in pistachios and powerful amino acids, such as arginine, found in peanuts. If you like peanuts, peanut butter, almond butter, tahini, or even almond milk, the benefits and flavor are just waiting for you.

## Quesadilla with Salsa

Ordinarily, people use white flour tortillas when they make quesadillas. The problem with white flour tortillas is that there is no fiber left in them, and a lot of the nutrition has been robbed from that grain. Healthier options include

## Shopping List

proportions to taste

eggs  
assertively flavored cheese,  
such as sharp cheddar  
or fontina  
salt  
ground black pepper

olive oil  
whole grain tortilla  
avocado  
salsa



corn tortillas and whole grain tortillas. Typically, when making a quesadilla, a tortilla is placed on the heat and a massive amount of cheese is mounded on top. However, you can replace some of the saturated fat that is found in cheese with egg.

To make a healthier quesadilla, use eggs that have been raised to have healthy omega-3 fats in them. You can find that information on the egg carton. Because you are getting rid of some of the cheese and replacing it with egg, choose a cheese that is not mild but has a bold flavor, such as sharp cheddar or even fontina.

Start by cracking a few eggs into a bowl. Whip them and season them with a little bit of salt and pepper. In a hot pan, cook the eggs in olive oil, a healthy



fat. Choose an olive oil that has a lot of flavor, and don't be shy about adding a good amount of it to the pan. The eggs will cook very quickly, and you can even pull the pan off the heat toward the end because there will be enough heat in the pan to finish cooking the eggs.

Once they are fully cooked, remove the eggs from the pan and put a tortilla in it. Turn the heat up slightly and top the tortilla with some assertively flavored cheese—but don't use very much. While

## Why Grind Flaxseed?

If you eat flaxseed whole, it will go through your entire system and will not break down. To get the benefit of it, it needs to be ground up. However, once it's ground, it will oxidize and turn rancid very quickly. If you buy it ground, keep it in the freezer and just take it out when you need it. If you buy it whole, grind it only when you are going to use it.

you are waiting for the cheese to begin to melt, taste the eggs to make sure that they are properly seasoned. Once the cheese starts to melt, add the eggs to one half of the tortilla and fold the other half of the tortilla over the top of the eggs to make a quesadilla.

Once the quesadilla is browned on the outside, move it to a cutting board. The whole quesadilla is a pretty big portion, so cut it into sections. Then, put the quesadilla on a plate. If you like avocado, which is another healthy fat, you could even add some avocado to the plate.

Serve the quesadilla with salsa, which is going to make this dish taste great. From

a health perspective, adding salsa to a plate is similar to adding a salad to the plate. This quesadilla with salsa is a quick breakfast option that is delicious, easy, and full of healthy fats.

## Toasting and Grinding Flaxseed

Toasting flaxseed gives it a wonderful roasted flavor. To toast flaxseed, add some flaxseed to a dry pan that is on the heat—there is no need to add fat to the pan. While the flaxseed heats, keep it moving in the pan so that it doesn't burn.

There are a few signposts along the way that will tell you when the flaxseed is done toasting. The first thing that you will notice is that it will become a little bit more aromatic, so pay attention to the way it smells. It should ultimately smell nutty and roasted. You will also see and hear the seeds pop a little bit—almost like popcorn. If the flaxseed is popping all over your kitchen, you can put a lid on the pan. Once the flaxseed is fully toasted, take it out of the pan so that it doesn't continue to cook.



Flaxseed needs to be ground up so that your body can digest it. You can grind it in a mortar and pestle, and you will get a nice workout doing so. You can also grind it in a spice grinder.

Toasted, ground flaxseed can be added to all kinds of preparations. You may use it on a cereal in the morning or on a salad, for example. It is helpful to have strategies for incorporating flaxseed into your meals across the day so that you don't have to have all of the flaxseed you want to eat for the day in one meal.

## Flaxseed with Yogurt

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

flaxseed  
cinnamon  
yogurt

fruit  
honey



For breakfast, you can add some flaxseed to a bowl of cinnamon and stir them together. Then, when you put the mixture on top of a bowl of yogurt and fruit, it is as if you are adding sweet spices and



nuts to the yogurt. It smells great when the hot flaxseed hits the cinnamon. If you love the idea of adding a bit of honey to your fruit in the morning, drizzle some honey on top.

## Flaxseed with Parmesan

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

flaxseed  
parmesan cheese

herbs, such as  
parsley, chopped  
ground black pepper



For lunch, mix some flaxseed with parmesan cheese. Because this combination might look a bit strange, you can disguise the flaxseed by adding some chopped herbs, such as parsley, and cracked pepper. Then, you could add this mixture to a salad, a soup, or even a pizza.

## Flaxseed with Lemon Pepper

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

flaxseed  
lemon pepper



### The Presentation Side

When you cook a piece of fish in a pan, always choose the best side—or the presentation side—of the fish to go into the pan first, making sure to lay it in the pan away from yourself so that if it splashes, it won't burn you.

For dinner, try adding flaxseed to a spice mix like lemon pepper, which has no salt in it. The lemon pepper disguises the flaxseed so that it will barely be detected. In fact, flaxseed improves the texture of the spice. You can use the mixture as a rub on a piece of fish, such as salmon, or chicken before you put it into a hot pan with olive oil. In addition, you can add salt. You want the spices to stick to the outside of the fish so that they provide a nice crust and wonderful flavor. Once you add the fish to

the pan, regulate the heat and let it cook. Make sure that you don't cook it so hot that the spices burn.

## **Cooking with Nuts**

Nuts are a great way to bring nutrition to your diet. Often, if you eat nuts raw, they can seem a little bit bland, but it doesn't take much time to toast them. For example, walnuts can be spread out into a shallow pan or cookie sheet and baked in the oven at about 375 degrees for 10 to 15 minutes. Monitor them for a slight change in color and a very distinctive change in texture—they will become a little bit crispy with a much deeper flavor. However, if they become too dark, they will become bitter.

You can also toss some almonds with a little bit of olive oil and put them into the oven at the same temperature for at least 15 minutes because they are denser than walnuts. To determine when the almonds are done toasting, bite into one and look for the color in the cross section to change. It should be a little bit golden and toward brown—but not too dark.

## **Toasted Almonds with Fried Capers and Golden Raisins**

To make this fun snack, start by frying some capers by putting them into a heated pan with oil. Dry the capers before adding them to the pan by blotting them in a towel. There is a lot of moisture in capers initially, and you will see the pan begin to bubble and seethe as it comes up to temperature. Continue to cook the capers until the bubbling begins to subside, at which point you can drain them from the oil. Add the fried capers to some almonds that have been toasted in the oven with a little bit of oil. Then, add some golden raisins and





**A savory snack that will satisfy your cravings.**

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

capers, fried  
oil  
almonds, toasted

golden raisins  
salt



toss everything together. Season the mixture with salt while it is still glistening with oil so that the salt will stick.

If you put health aside and just think about flavor, capers are a little bit salty, and they become crunchy when they are fried. The raisins are soft and sweet, so this snack presents an interesting contrast of flavor and texture.

## Muhammara with Crudités

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

roasted peppers, canned,  
jarred, or fresh  
cumin and chili paste, Tabasco  
sauce, or cayenne pepper  
bread crumbs

walnuts  
salt  
pomegranate molasses  
olive oil  
crudités





Muhammara is a nut-enriched dip that comes from the eastern Mediterranean. “Muhammara” translates as “brick colored.” To make this dip, start by adding some roasted peppers, which you can even buy in a can or jar, to a food processor. Flavor the peppers with some cumin and chili paste; instead, you could use Tabasco sauce or a pinch of cayenne. This dish is really not meant to be fiery hot.

To bind the mixture, add a few bread crumbs, which don’t have to be whole grain bread crumbs because you don’t need to add too many, and there is plenty of fiber in the vegetables and walnuts that also go into this dip. Add some walnuts and then grind everything up. Stop the food processor every so often and scrape the sides so that everything grinds up evenly. When the mixture is smooth, taste it and add salt as needed.

The ingredient that makes this dish great is a product called pomegranate molasses, which is pomegranate juice that has been reduced to a syrup. It has a sweet, fruity flavor. You can find it in most grocery stores or possibly in a Mediterranean grocery store. Add a little bit of olive oil to smooth out the dip and make it just a little bit richer.

Muhammara makes a great dip that can be served with crudités—pieces of nutrient-dense raw vegetables. The unhealthiest option would be to serve this dip with pita chips made from white flour that have been fried. A better option would be to serve it with baked whole grain pita chips. Muhammara can also be used as a spread on sandwiches. For example, you can mix it with mayonnaise and use it on a grilled vegetable sandwich. Muhammara should be stored in the refrigerator.



# Protein—Understanding Your Choices

## Lesson 4

**W**hile dietary proteins may not be your major source of fuel (like carbohydrates), they can be a source of energy within your body, and they can also play an important role in your health. Proteins have the exclusive responsibility of forming other proteins, which are used for building amino acids, hormones, enzymes, and even play a role in proper and healthy immune function in the body. In addition, the balance between lean animal protein and nutrient-rich plant protein is important. Contrary to what many people believe, it's easy to extract flavor out of plant-based proteins, and this lesson will teach you how to do so.

### Benefits of Eating Fruits and Veggies

Individuals who have a diet that is rich in fruits and vegetables have 20 percent less heart disease and 27 percent less stroke. The goal is to balance a moderate amount of protein with a well-balanced diet of nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables and other whole grains.



### Balancing Plant and Animal Protein

Modern large-scale studies that are being published are alluding to the importance of the balance between lean animal protein and nutrient-rich plant protein. For example, the Nurses' Health Study and the Health Professionals' Follow-Up Study found compelling evidence that eating a plant-based diet can actually reduce the risk of heart disease. Emerging science from these same studies also finds that eating nuts and fish can decrease your type 2 diabetes, but at the same time, eating a large amount of processed foods will increase your risk of type 2 diabetes.

### Protein and Your Diet

Research shows that excessive amounts of protein that are out of balance in the daily meals that you eat can actually upset the delicate balance of calcium within your bones. Other evidence suggests that too much protein in your diet puts excessive strain on the function of your kidneys.



Protein has been found to help people achieve a trimmer waist and to minimize the loss of lean muscle mass that everyone experiences as they age. Many high-protein, low-carbohydrate diets—or even high-protein, no-carbohydrate diets—promise immediate weight loss, but the research doesn’t support the success of these types of diets for long-term weight loss. If you’re eating a high-protein, low-carbohydrate diet, you miss out on opportunities to eat healthy carbohydrates.

## Sources of Plant Protein

There is an abundant source of dietary protein in just about all of the foods that you eat. The trick is achieving a natural balance between animal sources and plant sources of protein.

Animal sources of protein include dairy, lean meats, and cheeses. For example, Greek yogurt contains eight essential amino acids, which qualify it as a complete protein—a protein that has a high biological value. In fact, Greek yogurt actually contains the highest amount of protein compared to any other yogurt. It is a great option within the animal sources of protein. It is often tricky to consume animal sources of protein that don’t provide too much saturated fat, but it is important to focus on consuming lean sources of protein that have high biological value.

Plant sources of protein provide a much broader range than animal sources, and the possibilities are almost endless because they are found in a wide variety of foods. However, plant proteins are incomplete proteins—which does not necessarily mean that they are less healthy or that they have less protein.

They are incomplete in the sense of not always containing all of the eight essential amino acids; they are often missing a few of these amino acids. There are a few exceptions, however. Soy, for example, contains the eight essential amino acids and is an excellent source of protein that has high biological value. Another example is quinoa, which is perfect for semivegetarian or strict vegan diets because it contains the eight essential amino acids.

Proteins from plants provide added health benefits beyond protein, including B vitamins, fiber, and vital chemicals that are typically not found in animal sources. Beans—including black beans and white beans—are the vegetable with the most protein and contain healthy compounds that come from antioxidants.

Nuts are another great source of protein. Although they don't contain the eight essential amino acids, an ounce of nuts has as much protein as an ounce of meat. Relying on plant proteins—striving to pick high-quality protein that has high biological value—and focusing on reaping the benefits of the entire package of the plant is really smart eating.

## Latin Barley Salad

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

cilantro  
lemon zest, finely chopped  
parsley  
barley  
corn  
oil  
cherry tomatoes, halved  
pine nuts, toasted

cheese, such as parmesan  
or queso añejo  
onions, chopped  
salt  
ground black pepper  
jalapeños or hot sauce  
olive oil  
lemon juice



To make a barley salad that has a distinctive Latin bend to its flavor profile, start by adding some cilantro, finely chopped zest from the outside of a lemon, and parsley to a bowl that contains barley. Then, put some corn into a hot pan with a little bit of oil and cook it until it begins to brown. That will give the corn a popcorn flavor. The other way to get that flavor is to roast a whole ear of corn on the grill.

Start to finish, the corn should not take much more than a minute to a minute and a half to brown. Be careful not to leave it in the pan so long that it begins



to get dry and hard or that it gets so dark that it becomes bitter. Instead, you want the color to be a light golden brown. When the aroma is full, it is a good sign that the corn is properly browned, and you can add it to the barley mixture. Then, cut some cherry tomatoes in half and add those as well.

Barley is a whole grain, and corn is a fresh grain. Toasted pine nuts carry a lot of protein, and the combination of nuts and grains results in a complete protein. Add some toasted pine nuts and a small amount of a full-flavored cheese (such as parmesan or queso añejo), which brings protein to the mix as well. Finally, add some chopped onions and stir.

Season the barley salad with salt and pepper. In a Latin salad like this, you can add a jalapeño or a little bit of hot sauce if you like your food spicy. Dress the salad with olive oil, a good-quality fat that is healthy. Then, squeeze lemon juice from an entire lemon over the top of the salad and stir everything together.

### **Browning Corn without Oil**

When browning corn, you will find that a little bit of oil will make the corn slide around in the pan, but if you are concerned about calories, then just put the corn in a dry pan. You will be surprised by how easily it begins to brown—as long as the pan is hot.

## **Grilled Veggie Sandwich with White Bean Spread**

You can use leftover vegetables to make a delicious grilled vegetable sandwich that has protein from a vegetable source. You can also fire up the grill and make it fresh. If you are making it fresh, after firing up your grill, add some



## Shopping List

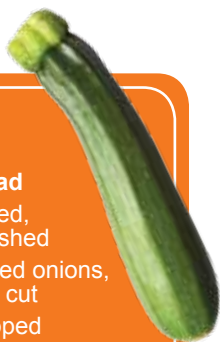
proportions to taste

asparagus  
portobello mushrooms  
onions, sliced  
yellow summer squash  
zucchini  
eggplant  
peppers  
olive oil or Italian  
salad dressing  
salt  
pepper



### White Bean Spread

white beans, cooked,  
drained, and mashed  
chives, scallions, red onions,  
or white onions, cut  
garlic cloves, chopped  
parsley, chopped  
mint leaves, cut  
sun-dried tomatoes, chopped  
lemon juice  
olive oil  
salt  
ground black pepper  
marinated artichokes, chopped  
slices of bread  
arugula



asparagus to it. The bottom of asparagus stalks tend to be a little bit woody, so cut the bottom end off before grilling. You could also break the end off because where asparagus stops being tough and starts to become tender is exactly where it will break, so you won't waste anything.

A portobello mushroom is a great substitute for meat, and grilled mushrooms especially provide a wonderful meatiness that is really satisfying. Some people leave the gills on the mushrooms, but scraping them off prevents them from turning almost black, which can look unappealing.

In a large bowl, toss slices of onion, yellow summer squash, zucchini, eggplant, and peppers in oil so that they grill more evenly. You could add olive oil, but if you have sun-dried tomatoes that come packed in oil, you could repurpose that flavorful oil to coat some of the vegetables. Italian salad dressing would also make a nice marinade. Finally, season the vegetables with salt and pepper and lay them on the grill.

As soon as they start getting some color on them, turn the vegetables 90 degrees so that they have some cross-hatching on them. A little bit of color is good, but too much color causes vegetables to become bitter. If any of the vegetables ever look dry, you can always add a little bit more oil. Be careful—especially on an open fire—that the grill doesn't flame up when you add oil



over the fire because that is not healthy or safe. When they are properly grilled, flip the vegetables over.

While your vegetables are grilling, make a spread for the sandwich. Start with some cooked white beans. Drain them, mash them, and flavor them with a selection of herbs and garlic. First, cut some chives, which add a nice onion flavor. Instead of chives, you could also use scallions, red onions, or white onions. Next, chop some cloves of garlic with parsley so that the parsley absorbs the garlic and so that the garlic doesn't end up on your cutting board but, instead, on the parsley.

Add some mint leaves, which lend freshness to the spread. Gather the mint into a little log and then cut it into a chiffonade so that the mint doesn't turn dark. Chop up some sun-dried tomatoes into big, rustic pieces. Add some lemon juice so that the spread becomes nice and creamy. Then, stir in some olive oil, salt, and pepper. You're looking for the spread to have the consistency of mayonnaise, but it is loaded with flavor and protein. If you have some marinated artichokes, you can chop them up and add them as well.

The vegetables on the grill are done when they are tender. You can either taste a piece or pierce it with the blade of a knife, and the knife should go in easily and come out easily.

### The Art of Cross-Hatching

When grilling, cross-hatching is more than decorative. It is a browning reaction between sugars and high heat, and it translates into hundreds of flavor and aroma compounds—most of which are pleasant, unless you overdo it.



**Grilled vegetables make a tasty sandwich.**

When you grill it, eggplant can be a challenge for a few reasons. First, it is very thirsty, which means it loves oil and will drink almost as much as you give it. Therefore, you have to exercise some restraint. The other problem with eggplant is that unless it's cooked all the way through, it tends to taste bitter and unpleasant, so you want it not just to be marked on the outside, but it should also be soft and tender.

After the grilling is done and the spread is made, you can make your sandwich. Start by adding the spread to both the top and bottom slices of two slices of bread to keep them moist and flavorful. For the sake of time, you could use hummus instead of the homemade white bean spread. Arugula makes a nice addition to the sandwich.

Squeeze the sandwich so that some of the juice comes out of the vegetables and absorbs into the bread. This is the way to get it under control and make it easier to eat. To make it even easier to handle, cut the sandwich in half and insert a toothpick in each half.

## Grain and Beef Burger

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

lean ground beef  
salt  
ground black pepper  
lentils  
wheat berries  
bulgur wheat  
white bean spread  
hamburger bun

ketchup  
mayonnaise  
mustard  
lettuce  
onion  
tomato  
pickles



To make your burgers less expensive and better for you, add some grains—including wheat berries and bulgur wheat—and lentils to the meat. Burgers with these additions are loaded with protein and are possibly even more flavorful than they would be without them.

Start by placing all of the lean ground beef that you are using to make a burger in a bowl. Take about a third to a quarter of the meat out of the bowl and set it aside. Season the meat with salt and pepper. Then, replace the meat that you removed from the bowl with lentils, wheat berries, and bulgur wheat. Mix the



grains into the meat using your hands. Finally, form some of the meat mixture into a patty and place it on the grill.

As the burger cooks, the juices of the meat are absorbed by the grain. You'll get a really interesting textural contrast that comes from the grains and lentils. You can add some of the same spread that you used on your veggie sandwich to the hamburger bun. Then, add ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard, and any other condiments. Add some lettuce, a few pieces of onion, a slice of tomato, and some pickles.

## **Beef and Veggie Stir-Fry**

This dish leverages a small amount of meat to make a large amount of vegetables taste great. It has the vitality of freshly cooked food, but it also has the protein from a small amount of meat—a delicious combination.

Stir-frying unfolds very quickly, so you need to be prepared before you begin. To start, cut some lean beef very thin and marinate it with just a little bit of cornstarch and water. When the beef hits

### **When Is Your Pan Hot?**

When stir-frying, you want your pan to be really hot. One way to tell that it is hot is by adding oil to the pan and watching to see when it creeps up in the pan and even begins to smoke, which tells you that it is as hot as it can get and is starting to break down. Make sure that the pan is dry when you add oil to it; you don't want to put oil into a wet pan because you will get an explosive reaction. Immediately after adding food to the pan, the pan will return to a reasonable temperature.

## Shopping List

proportions to taste

lean beef, cut thin  
cornstarch  
water  
assorted vegetables,  
including mushrooms,  
cut small  
garlic  
ginger  
scallions  
sesame oil  
sherry  
whole grain rice

### Stir-Fry Sauce

orange zest  
hoisin sauce  
oyster sauce  
chili paste  
orange juice  
chicken stock  
soy sauce



the pan, the cornstarch will thicken any juices that want to come out of the meat and will keep them from collecting in the pan. Cut up a selection of vegetables, including mushrooms, very small so that they cook quickly. Gather some aromatics, including garlic, ginger, and scallions. Finally, have some sesame oil on hand.

## Why Use a Wok?

The great thing about a wok is that it's designed to take the food and throw it back to the hottest part of the pan. As you stir the food, it runs up the side of the wok and then falls back down to the hottest part of the pan.

For stir-frying, you can use a wok if you have one. If you don't have a wok, you can use a sauté pan. However, it is far more important to recognize that a home stove often doesn't get as hot as a commercial range. To sidestep any difficulties with the pan not recovering quickly enough, cook this dish in two phases: Cook the meat and mushrooms first, and then stir-fry all of the vegetables with the sauce. Toward the end of stir-frying, the meat and mushrooms can go back into the pan to warm up.

To prepare the stir-fry sauce, zest an orange into a bowl and add some hoisin sauce and oyster sauce to it—both of which are tremendously savory. If you like your food spicy, add a lot of chili paste; if you don't



only add a little. Then, stir everything together, thinning the sauce with orange juice. Finally, add some chicken stock and, for seasoning, a few tablespoons of soy sauce.

When you are ready to start stir-frying, turn up the heat on the pan, making sure that all of the necessary tools are nearby. If you have a hood in your kitchen, then it should be on. Spread the meat out in the pan and give it a chance to brown. Don't feel as though you have to stir the meat constantly; only if the pan is too hot do you need to keep stirring. Your goal is to brown the meat—not to cook it all the way. You want to cook it until it's about three-quarters of the way done. When you add mushrooms to a meat stir-fry, the mushrooms end up tasting almost like meat themselves.

When you are ready to take the meat out of the pan, rinse the pan quickly, dry it, and put it back on the heat. Turn the heat up high. When the pan is hot, add oil to it. As soon as you add ginger and garlic, they will explode into flavor. Then, add the vegetables so that the garlic doesn't burn and begin to stir-fry everything together.

If you want the vegetables to steam, add some sherry, and the steam that results will start the process of cooking the vegetables, which will cook within about a minute. Be careful not to overcook the vegetables; you want them to be crisp and tender. Shortly before they are cooked, add the sauce ingredients. Then, add the meat back to the pan, bring the contents of the pan up to a boil, and evaluate the consistency—thickening it with cornstarch if needed. At the very end, add some scallions and sesame oil, which will give the dish a wonderful aroma. Serve this dish with whole grain rice.





# Powerful Micronutrients— Cooking with Color

## Lesson 5

**I**n this lesson, you are going to learn about the health benefits of ordinary foods that make them extraordinary. In fact, you can think of many of these foods as superfoods because they contain hundreds of micronutrients—in addition to macronutrients, such as vitamins and minerals. In fact, research has shown that nutrients work synergistically to exert their health benefits, so you should mix fruits and vegetables with nuts and grains for a beautiful and appealing plate. Combinations of various colorful foods have the power to decrease various health risks and, more importantly, improve your health.

### Phytochemicals and Your Health

There has been a tremendous amount of research on micronutrients—and in particular, within the phytochemicals, which are nutritive compounds that are found in all plants. The beautiful hues of yellow, red, orange, purple, or even white that characterize fruits and vegetables are actually compounds driven by phytochemicals to influence health benefits.

The bitter flavors found in raw broccoli, the anise-like flavors found in fennel, and the bright citrus flavors found in various fruits contain anti-inflammatory



compounds. In fact, the strong flavors of garlic and onion are related to antiviral and antibacterial properties. Extra-virgin olive oil contains one of the most powerful anti-inflammatory compounds that provides flavor but also delivers health benefits. It is important to note that a plant food doesn't have to be bright to offer health benefits. Even the natural hues of beige, black, white, and brown that characterize nuts, seeds, and beans can influence hormone metabolism in a beneficial way.

## Variety Is the Spice of Life

One of the easiest ways to add more variety and health to your diet is to think about eating from the colors of the rainbow, which contain distinct health-promoting phytochemicals. For example, in leafy greens—such as broccoli rabe, spinach, fennel, and asparagus—are powerful compounds that are related to chlorophyll, which can decrease your risk of heart disease, diabetes, and even cancer. It is recommended by dietary guidelines to eat at least three cups of dark greens per week.

Fruits and vegetables that display tones of red, yellow, and orange contain a compound called carotenoids, which are critical for immune function and possibly even for decreasing your risk of heart disease and cancer. It is recommended that you eat two servings per week of fruits and vegetables that have yellow and orange tones.

Don't forget about fruits and vegetables that display simple white tones, such as cauliflower, garlic, onions, and even pale-colored beans. They are not colorless. The deep white pigment that they contain is due to anthocyanin, a powerful antioxidant that is being researched for decreasing the risk of atherosclerosis, a disease that involves the hardening of the arteries.

Just as white is a very important color, so is the opposite color—black, which is found on the surface of eggplant, dark black beans, and even blueberries and blackberries. Such pigments are being researched for the possibility of decreasing the risk factors associated with Alzheimer's disease and memory loss.



### Ancient Greeks and Health

Ancient Greeks understood and valued the health benefits of plants. It was said that a small sprig of rosemary was worn behind the ear because it was thought to protect against memory loss. In fact, modern research is finding that there are compounds in the very strong and aromatic rosemary that can boost memory.

Phytochemicals and other nutrients offer their best benefits when they are in the company of other nutrients. There is a synergistic effect that supports one another, which is why you should eat colorful fruits and vegetables in combinations. They combine with each other to maximize their health benefits, making cooking a very important component of eating all of the colors of the rainbow.

Contrary to popular belief, taking supplements, which isolate one or a few nutrients such as phytochemicals, may not be the best way to maximize the health benefits of such nutrients. Instead, getting your nutrients from wholesome foods—especially those that are seasonal—is the best way.

## Pasta with Broccoli Rabe

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

whole grain penne  
water  
salt  
broccoli rabe, cut  
lime or lemon juice  
parmesan cheese,  
finely grated

**Sauce for Pasta**  
extra-virgin olive oil  
onions  
garlic, sliced  
red pepper flakes  
fennel seed, ground  
thyme  
golden tomatoes, diced  
salt  
pasta water



This is a pasta dish that is loaded with broccoli rabe, which some people call rapini. From a chef's perspective, bitter greens like broccoli rabe taste great when they're properly seasoned, but if they're not properly seasoned, the bitterness can be overwhelming and unpalatable.

In addition to a number of whole grains, you can find whole grain penne that contains bean flour. Because grains and legumes together create a complete protein, this type of whole grain penne is a complete protein. If you were using conventional pasta to make this dish, you might want to add some white beans, which would provide the same healthy properties as the bean flour.

Broccoli rabe comes in a bunch of about a pound to a pound and a half. The last inch and a half on the bottom of the stems tends to be a little bit coarse, so

you can cut it off and discard it. Then, cut the rabe into about three-inch slices and set it aside.

Start by adding some whole grain penne to an abundant amount of boiling water. For a pound of pasta, use a minimum of about six quarts of water. Season the water so that you can just barely taste the salt. Then, cook the pasta for about 12 minutes; check the pasta package to determine the exact amount of time it needs to cook.

While the pasta is cooking, start making the sauce, which is a very simple one. Turn the heat up on the stove and add a full-flavored olive oil and some onions to a pan. You want the onions to not only become tender, but also maybe even take on a little color in the form of caramelization.

After the pasta has cooked for about six to eight minutes, add the broccoli rabe to the same pot and let them cook together. They will finish cooking at the same time, and by adding them to the same pot, you save some cleanup as well.

As soon as the onions start to brown, add some large pieces of sliced garlic, pepper flakes, ground fennel seed, and thyme to the pan. Be careful that the garlic doesn't burn because it becomes bitter. As soon as the garlic starts to brown, cool the pan down with some diced golden tomatoes at room temperature. Then, turn the heat down. The tomatoes will release some water. Before you add salt to the pan, recognize that the dish will be finished with parmesan, which is a salty cheese, and with some of the cooking water from the pasta, which is also salted, so a modest amount of salt early in the cooking process is appropriate. Taste the contents of the pan to make sure that you are happy with the amount of seasoning.

When the pasta is done cooking, drain it from the water, but do not pour the water down the sink. If you put a colander in the sink and just dump the pot of water into the colander, while

### Taming the Bitterness of Broccoli Rabe

To tame the bitterness of broccoli rabe, make sure to boil it in abundant water. In addition, don't cook it al dente; instead, let it become tender. That way, the cell structure will begin to break down, and some of the bitterness will leach out into the water. Every time you cook broccoli rabe, make sure that the seasoning is bold and assertive, adding salt, pepper flakes, and lemon as needed. In effect, you need to boost the flavor of the seasoning.



you successfully separate the water from the pasta, you lose the water and can't repurpose it. The pasta water has a wonderful flavor and texture for having had pasta cooked in it. Before you dump the pot of water into the colander, take three or four ladles full of the water out of the pot and set it aside. Another way to save the pasta water is by using a special pot with a perforated liner that can be pulled up from the pot, draining all of the water off of the pasta. That way, all of the water will still be available to you.

Once the pasta and broccoli rabe are drained from the water, add them to the pan with the sauce and toss everything together. At this point, the pasta is cooked, but because it is such a starchy preparation, it remains a little bit thirsty, so add a little bit more pasta water and turn the heat back up to let the pasta cook a little bit more with the sauce so that the pasta absorbs the flavor of the sauce. Cook it until the water in the bottom of the pan is almost dry.

After the pasta and sauce are done cooking, add some parmesan cheese, which lends a wonderful savory flavor but also a lot of salt. Because the cheese



**A pasta dish that's good for you!**



contains milk fat, grate it very finely to get the most bang for your buck. A tool called a microplane, which was a woodworking tool that made its way into the kitchen, is perfect for grating cheese very finely so that you get the maximum amount of flavor without using too much cheese. The idea of using less of a full-flavored cheese, rather than more of a cheese that doesn't have much flavor, is a great strategy when you are trying to change the way you eat. Toss everything together before serving it on a plate. Top the pasta with a little more cheese and drizzle it with olive oil.

When cooking this dish, remember that you have the ability to vary the proportion of vegetables to pasta, so if you wanted to boost the nutrition of a dish like this, more vegetables and slightly less pasta would give you the benefit of the garden.

Pasta with broccoli rabe is a healthy dish that is also flavorful. Broccoli rabe has a very bitter flavor as a result of flavonoids, which are very powerful antioxidant compounds that have anti-inflammatory benefits. Because broccoli rabe has a bitter flavor that not many people enjoy, preparing it with extra-virgin olive oil not only reduces some of the bitterness, but it also maximizes the health benefits. Flavonoids—the bitter flavors—are fat-soluble, so combining broccoli rabe with a healthy fat like olive oil results in both great health and taste.

The combination of pasta and broccoli rabe also maximizes the health benefits of tomatoes, which are a rich source of vitamin C. Specifically, the vitamin C that is contained in the tomatoes can help your body absorb the calcium that is contained in the broccoli rabe. If you add lime or lemon juice while cooking the broccoli rabe, it will not only boost the flavor of the dish, but citrus also contains some very powerful compounds that can reduce the risk of high blood pressure. It is very important to combine your foods from a flavor perspective—but also from a health perspective.

## Applying the Sonoma Smart Plate

Even though the dishes in this lesson focus on combining various superfoods, when it comes to portion sizes, you should always refer to the Sonoma Smart Plate. Don't forget that your plate should be composed of 50 percent vegetables, 20 percent whole grains, and 30 percent lean proteins. In this lesson, the food might be arranged in a more appealing way and various food items might be combined, but you are still working with the same smart portions that emphasize plant protein over animal protein.





## Three-Bean Salad

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

green beans  
wax beans  
chickpeas, low-sodium,  
canned  
red onions

#### Vinaigrette Dressing

shallots  
vinegar  
olive oil  
Dijon mustard  
salt  
ground black pepper



This dish will show you how easy it can be to work superfoods into your diet. The dressing for this three-bean salad is a vinaigrette, which is a simple dressing. To make the dressing, start by adding some shallots and a splash of vinegar to a bowl. Then, slowly add some olive oil, whipping the mixture as you add more. Add an emulsifier, such as Dijon mustard, so that the oil and vinegar hold together. The standard oil-to-vinegar ratio is three times as much oil as vinegar. If the dressing ever starts to look greasy or oily, slow down how quickly you add the oil because you want it to be emulsified. Season the dressing with salt and pepper and stir it all together.

Steam some green beans and wax beans. Then, drain some low-sodium, canned chickpeas and add them to the steamed beans. Add some red onion to the beans and then add the vinaigrette. There is a lot of vegetable matter in this dish, so if

you taste it and decide that it needs a little more punch, add a splash of vinegar and a pinch of salt. Then, marinate it for about 15 to 20 minutes.

You could make a number of dressings from this vinaigrette. For example, you could add some pickled ginger, along with the vinegar that it comes in, and some sesame oil to make the dressing an Asian vinaigrette.

## Shrimp and Roasted Pepper Salad

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

roasted peppers, canned  
shrimp, cooked  
vinaigrette dressing  
garlic, chopped

oregano, dried  
lemon juice  
red pepper flakes  
fennel tops, chopped



To make this salad, start with some canned roasted peppers—Pacquiao peppers are great if you can find them—and some cooked shrimp. Season the shrimp with an assertive vinaigrette, such as the one that was used in the three-bean salad (containing shallots, vinegar, olive oil, and Dijon mustard). To the vinaigrette, introduce some chopped garlic, dried oregano, lemon juice, and stir it all together. Then, add some red pepper flakes. Look in your refrigerator for some colorful inspiration. For example, you can chop some fennel tops and add them to the dressing.

## Shrimp, Quinoa, Almond, and Spinach Salad

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

three-bean salad  
shrimp and roasted pepper  
salad  
spinach

quinoa  
almonds, toasted  
extra-virgin olive oil



This salad is made by combining the three-bean salad and the shrimp and roasted pepper salad. Start by adding some of the fresh three-bean salad to spinach, which has dark, leafy greens. Then, add some of the shrimp

and roasted pepper salad, along with some quinoa, and toss everything together. Instead of adding croutons to this salad, sprinkle a few toasted almonds on top to give the salad some crunchiness with added health benefits.

This salad offers a balance of plant protein—from the spinach, almonds, and quinoa—and animal protein, which comes from the shrimp. The balance of proteins is a smart move toward a healthy plate, and it is even better if the portions of proteins are nicely balanced.

This dish contains at least two to three colorful food items. The colors signify powerful antioxidants—from the carotenoids, which are found in plants with orange and red colors, to the flavonoids, which are found in the leafy greens and green beans. Both carotenoids and flavonoids reduce inflammation.

For flavor, this salad is seasoned with extra-virgin olive oil, which is an important source of healthy fat, and almonds are also a source of healthy fat. Carotenoids and flavonoids are fat-soluble, so by adding the healthy fats to this salad, you are maximizing how these antioxidants work in your body.

This salad makes great use of the amount of iron that is contained in folic acid-rich spinach and in shrimp. Vitamin C—which is found in tomatoes, bell peppers, and spinach—helps your body absorb iron found in both plant and animal sources.

Instead of using spinach, which is rich in calcium, folic acid, and vitamin K (which is critical for your eyes and vision), you can also use smart lettuces such as arugula, watercress, and radicchio. The idea is to move away from iceberg, which offers very little nutrition, and toward something more rich in nutrients so that you end up with a delicious and smart salad.





## Fire and Ice Salad

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

melon, diced  
jalapeños, diced  
ginger, diced  
serrano peppers

salt  
lime juice  
cilantro



The “fire” in this salad is represented by chiles in the form of diced jalapeños, and the “ice” is represented by lime juice. To make this salad, start with a bowl full of diced melon, which should be ripe, sweet, delicious, and aromatic. Add some diced ginger to the bowl of melon and then add some diced jalapeños. If you want the salad to be really spicy, add some serrano peppers as well, but be careful not to add too many. Then, toss everything together.

Season the salad with salt, which will help balance the sweetness of the melon. Then, add a lot of lime juice, which will cut through the sweetness, resulting in a more complex salad that tastes almost savory.

This salad can be refrigerated for about two to three days, and it is very refreshing with grilled food or anything that is spicy. It is particularly great with Asian food. You can garnish the salad with just a little bit of cilantro to reinforce the idea of Asian or even Latin flavors.





# Making Healthy Cooking a Lifestyle

## Lesson 6

Throughout this course, you have learned key strategies for healthy cooking and eating. You have learned that not all fats and carbohydrates are bad for you and that to look and feel your best, you need to learn to enjoy these healthy foods. In addition, nutritional balance can be achieved over multiple meals throughout the day. Remember to savor and balance full-flavored, indulgent ingredients with lighter, nutrient-rich foods, such as vegetables, grains, beans, and legumes. Get into the kitchen and try some of the techniques that you have learned, and start sharing healthy meals with the people you care about.

### Guidelines for Healthy Eating

Eating is not just about survival. Of course, it's about satisfying hunger, but it is also about satisfying your innate craving for delicious flavor.

Eat slowly. When you eat slowly, you're actually more mindful about your portions, and you may even eat less. It also takes time for the signals that tell your brain that you are full, which are in your stomach, to reach your brain.

Eat with others. The feeling of being connected is very nourishing, and studies have shown that when you eat in a relaxed setting with others, you're going to make better, more healthful choices and lose weight.

Eat in a relaxed setting as opposed to a stressful setting. The conditions in your body are so different for each of these settings that your food will be metabolized in different ways. In addition, many people do not make good choices when they are under stress.

Eat mindfully. Learning to savor and slow down your meals is going to help you make better decisions. The easiest part of healthy eating has to do with mindfulness because eating mindfully quickly becomes second nature.

### Making Every Calorie Count

Over the years, 20 percent of the original content of vitamins and minerals has decreased in the foods that we eat, so you should focus on making every calorie count by selecting nutrient-rich options.

Eat without distractions. When you eat behind the computer or while driving, for example, you tend to not make the best choices. When you are distracted, it's difficult to know when to stop eating or make good selections—especially if you're not even hungry.

## **Cooking in Your Kitchen**

Cooking for yourself is a great strategy for healthy eating, but if your kitchen is disorganized, dirty, or cramped, it can really affect your motivation to cook a meal.

Invest in a large, sturdy, wooden cutting board. It might cost a lot of money, but it will be worth it. If you have a tiny cutting board (maybe 10 inches by 6 inches) it will probably slide all over your counter, and you won't look forward to using it—or to cooking.

Make sure that your kitchen is an environment that you like to work in. For many people, their garbage can is located underneath the sink. However, if you are working in an area of the counter that is not near the sink, as you generate garbage, you have one of two options: either clutter your station with garbage or stop what you're doing, walk across the kitchen, and throw the garbage away. Then, you might wonder if you have bacteria on your hands, so you might even wash your hands before returning to your work station.

A different model is to have a selection of bowls, using one as a receptacle for the waste you generate that is placed next to your cutting board and another to accept all of the items that you prepare while you're working. When the





vegetables and fruit are sliced and diced, they go into bowls and wait to be cooked. When you're done working, you can throw away the contents of the bowl with the trash and then wash the bowl. Finally, you can take a bowl with you to the refrigerator to help you gather the ingredients that you will need for a particular cooking occasion. Having a selection of bowls can make your life more organized, and they can make your time in the kitchen more fun.

## **Building a Healthy Pantry**

Although it is entirely up to you what you keep in your pantry, there are a few food items that should be removed from your kitchen altogether. For example, potato chips are a problem food for many people, and even if you can turn them down, there isn't much nutritional value to them. Don't bring them into your house, and you will be happier to have made that decision.

Both white sugar and white flour should also be eliminated from your pantry. There are plenty of alternatives for white sugar, and instead of using white flour, you should work on blending whole grain flours into the baking that you do. If you have a favorite cookie, such as ladyfingers, you should probably keep those out of your pantry because they are most likely made of white flour and white sugar with no nutritional content.



Make sure that you don't have any partially hydrogenated fats in your pantry because hydrogenated fats contain trans fats, which are very bad for you. There is not any reason to have them in your kitchen, so get rid of them altogether.

There are many healthy jarred pasta sauces that you can find in the grocery store, but jarred pasta sauces that contain mostly cream, butter, and cheese are not healthy and should be avoided. Don't tempt yourself by buying food items that don't support your healthy eating agenda.

There are a number of different things that you might have in your pantry that are pretty good for you. For example, dark chocolate is not as bad as everybody thinks it is. However, milk chocolate that is really sugary and has a candy coating is not the same as dark chocolate, so make sure that you go into your pantry with your eyes open.

Fruit juice is healthy, and there are vitamins in all fruit juices, but the fiber has been removed from them and some of them are tart to the point that they need to be sweetened with a lot of sugar. If you are concerned about your health, fill a tall glass with ice and then fill it one-quarter of the way up with pomegranate juice, which is pretty tart. Then, top it with sparkling water and a squeeze of lime, which makes it a refreshing drink that is healthier than pomegranate juice on its own.

## Freezing Tomato Paste

If you open a can of tomato paste and don't need the whole can for your meal, pour the leftover paste into an ice cube tray so that you can pop out just a little bit of tomato paste at a time and defrost it for another meal.





Tomato juice is a healthy juice, but in a single small serving of it, you get about a third of your sodium for the day. As an alternative, think about whether a low-sodium version exists or explore the possibility of making your own tomato juice. Canned vegetables often have a lot of salt, so if you use fresh tomatoes and bypass some of the salt, it will lead to a healthier tomato juice.

There are some food items that you should feel great about having in your pantry. For example, nut butters are a great way to start a simple breakfast. Low-sodium canned beans are already cooked, so they will save you time in the kitchen and provide great health benefits. Olives and marinated artichokes are great additions to salads. It's also a great idea to keep on hand a few different cheeses that are full-flavored so that you don't have to use so much.

In your pantry, you should have some healthy oils, including canola oil and olive oil. You should also have some low-sodium chicken broth that you have already tasted and like so that you can cook very efficiently with it.

Quenching thirst is a pretty important consideration, and green tea will do just that for you. Keep a bottle of it in your refrigerator. You might also have some herb or green tea bags so that you can make tea yourself for less money.

There are food items that you should have in your pantry that have a lot of flavor without having the nutritional downsides of too much saturated fat or sugar. For example, a spice blend that you can add to a soup or put onto a piece of meat is a great thing to have on hand. If you like anchovies, then you should keep those stocked as well. If you like canned tuna, buy some canned tuna that is packed in spring water instead of olive oil to spare the calories.



Chutney can be mixed into a vinaigrette, which can be used as a great dressing for a chicken salad that has pineapple and whole grains in it. Hot sauces are a great thing to add to eggs in the morning, and salsas and spice pastes can be used to create quick meals.

There are a few food items that you might want to keep in the freezer. For example, chicken breasts can be frozen individually—not as part of a large pack of chicken breasts—so that you can quickly thaw out a single chicken breast as needed. Make sure that you label and date anything that you put in the freezer so that you know how long it has been in there.

Sauces freeze quite nicely. Leftover mole sauce can be paired with a whole grain rice and some beans, and with a chicken leg and a salad on the side, it becomes a great, quick meal. Leftover romesco sauce can be turned into a vinaigrette and added to grilled vegetables.

## Keeping the Healthy Train on Track

Throughout the day, there are certainly times when you get on the healthy train, but then something comes along and you jump the tracks. When planning your day, try to identify times when you might slip off the rails in terms of healthy eating and change your behavior.

### Breakfast: Berry and Flaxseed Smoothie

#### Shopping List

proportions to taste

yogurt  
berries, such as raspberries  
and blueberries  
banana, ripe  
raw oats or whole grain cereal  
walnuts

flaxseed, toasted  
orange juice concentrate,  
organic, frozen  
soymilk or almond milk  
ice cubes



When you wake up in the morning, think about the fact that you have fasted for at least eight hours, if not more, and your reserves are low. If you don't replace those reserves, chances are that you will crave food—any food—and that's when you start to grab for unhealthy foods like the closest donut, bagel, or stack of pancakes. Therefore, you need to make sure that you have healthy options that are ready for you when you start to crave food.



Whole grain cereals are terrific, but they can take a long time to cook—about 30 to 45 minutes. However, you can cook a large batch of whole grain cereal early in the week and then reheat it a little bit each day. In fact, if you vary the garnishes that you add to the cereal, it won't seem like you're eating the same thing every day. For example, you can serve it with yogurt and berries one day and then apples, cinnamon, and toasted pecans the next day. Then, you can serve it with some pears, almonds, and vanilla yogurt.

If you get tired of eating whole grain cereal, make a quick smoothie that you can put into a to-go cup and eat on your way to work. To a blender, add some yogurt and berries, such as raspberries and blueberries. Then, add a ripe banana for sweetness. Add some raw oats to the blender, but if you already have some cooked cereal in the refrigerator, a few tablespoons will add some complex carbohydrates to your smoothie.

Then, add just a few walnuts for the good-quality fat in them and, if you have it on hand, some toasted flaxseed. Add a tablespoon or two of organic, frozen orange juice concentrate to the blender. However, if your fruit is very ripe, you may not need the orange juice. Then, add either soymilk or almond milk. Finally, if you like your smoothies really cold, add just a few ice cubes.

Make sure the lid is on tight, and blend the mixture for about 30 seconds to a minute, depending on your blender. Just make sure that the nuts and oats are ground up really finely. Then, pour the smoothie into a to-go cup and head out the door.

## Lunch: Asian Chicken Salad with Quinoa

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

quinoa pilaf  
chicken, cooked  
and shredded  
cilantro  
asparagus tips, cooked  
celery stalk, thinly sliced  
red pepper  
scallions  
edamame  
peanuts, toasted

### Asian Vinaigrette Dressing

mustard  
ginger  
garlic  
rice wine vinegar  
lemon juice  
canola oil  
Asian sesame oil  
soy sauce  
honey  
red pepper flakes or ground  
black pepper





Before you leave the house in the morning, give some advanced thought to lunch. You can certainly eat in a restaurant, but that can be expensive and is often not as healthy as you might want it to be. Instead, plan on doing some cooking at home ahead of time.

To prepare a healthy lunch, start with some quinoa pilaf that you can make ahead of time. When making whole grains, always make extra and set some aside so that you can make a salad for the next day's lunch, for example. If you make quinoa for dinner one night and decide to repurpose it the next day, then it will have time to cool down, and you can just grab it and head out the door.

To make an Asian vinaigrette dressing for a chicken salad with quinoa, start by adding some mustard, ginger, and garlic to a bowl. Then, add some rice wine vinegar and a splash of lemon juice, which brings some brightness to the dressing. Add a neutral oil that is very healthy, such as canola oil, in the proportion of three parts oil to one part acidity. As you get close to adding all of the oil to the bowl, stop adding canola oil and add some Asian sesame oil to finish it off. Because this is an Asian dressing, instead of salt, add soy sauce. To add just a hint of sweetness to the dressing, add some honey. If you want your dressing to be spicy, you could also add some pepper flakes or black pepper.

To the quinoa pilaf, add some chicken that has been cooked and shredded. Then, add a selection of different-colored vegetables, including cilantro, cooked asparagus tips, thinly sliced celery stalk, red pepper, and scallions. Add some

edamame so that this salad contains both grains and beans. Edamame is a protein from a vegetable source, and it supplements the chicken nicely. Finally, dress the salad with the Asian vinaigrette and sprinkle the salad with some toasted peanuts, which are another source of protein.

After you dress the salad with the Asian vinaigrette dressing, put the rest of it in a bottle and keep it in the refrigerator. That way, you can continue to use it for about a month.

When you are ready to pack your lunch, put the Asian chicken salad into a container and then place it in the bottom of an insulated lunch bag. Then, add a frozen bottle of water to the bag to keep it cold until lunchtime. You can also add some fruit—such as a plum, a banana, and an orange—to the bag along with some silverware and a napkin. Finally, zip the bag closed, and you are ready for lunch.

## Alternatives to Sweets and Coffee


You might find that every afternoon, you have trouble keeping your eyes open. You might think that a cup of coffee and something sweet sounds good, but while you might get a little burst of energy from a snack like that, when the energy dissipates, you will feel worse than you did before. Instead, try eating some toasted and chocolate-covered walnuts so that you get some protein and a little bit of sugar—but not too much. With the walnuts, try drinking some herb tea instead of something that has caffeine in it. There's already a little bit of caffeine in the chocolate.

### Snack: Jicama, Chiles, and Lime Nuts

#### Shopping List

proportions to taste

chiles	pineapple
kaffir lime leaves	mango
jicama	cucumber



As an afternoon snack, you can make a spicy nut mixture containing chiles, kaffir lime leaves, jicama, pineapple, mango, and cucumber. A mixture like this provides a lot of nutrition and some protein, so you will be satisfied. You might want to drink a big glass of water with this snack because it is spicy and you want to stay hydrated.



## Dinner: Tortilla Soup

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

tomatoes, roasted and peeled  
onions, roasted and peeled  
serrano pepper,  
roasted and peeled  
garlic, roasted and peeled  
chicken broth  
salt  
ground black pepper

tortilla strips, fried  
Mexican oregano, dried  
lime juice  
salty cheese, such as  
queso añejo or feta  
avocado  
cilantro



When you get home at night, you're probably tired, lacking energy, and hungry. When you go to the kitchen, you want to grab the first thing that you see and hope that it's healthy, but it probably isn't. You need a go-to meal that is easy to prepare, and tortilla soup is the perfect choice.

Tortilla soup is not only very easy to make, but it is also very satisfying to eat. To make this soup, start with some tomatoes, onions, a serrano pepper, and a little bit of garlic—which have all been roasted in a hot oven until the tomatoes blacken and collapse, the onions caramelize, the chili darkens and softens, and the garlic roasts. Peel all of the vegetables and put them into a blender along with a flavorful chicken broth. Then, put the soup in a pot on the stove to heat it up, seasoning it with salt and pepper as necessary.

### Confusing Hunger and Thirst

Before you eat any snack, be aware that it's easy to confuse hunger and thirst. If you feel like you need something and you eat some food, thinking that you are hungry, and are not satisfied, before you eat more, recognize that you might just be thirsty. For that reason, always drink something with whatever snack you eat.

If you don't have the energy to roast the vegetables, try using a jar of chipotle salsa that is made with roasted tomatoes instead. Blend the salsa with the chicken stock, and you end up with a similar variation of this soup.

Add some fried tortilla strips to the soup to give it a crunchy quality that makes it more interesting to eat. Then, add some condiments, including dried Mexican oregano, lime juice, and extra strips of chiles if you want the soup to be spicy.



Add a salty cheese, such as queso añejo or feta, and some healthy fat in the form of avocado. Finally, add some fresh cilantro.

Instead of adding the condiments to the soup and then serving it, you can also bring the soup to the table without the condiments added and let people make the soup taste the way they like it. Serve the soup with a few extra tortilla strips on the side and with a refreshing drink, such as pomegranate juice with ice and sparkling water.

In some people's minds, dinner has to be a big production that includes a salad or soup plus an entrée and a dessert, but you might discover that tortilla soup is so satisfying that you don't feel like you need to eat anything else. The best part is that you can tailor it to fit your personal tastes. After you are done eating this soup for dinner, ask yourself in a mindful way if you are satisfied, and if you are, push away from the table and just relax.

### Dessert: Hearty Oat and Cranberry Cookies

#### Shopping List

1 c chopped walnuts,  
toasted  
1 c whole wheat flour  
2 c rolled oats  
½ t baking soda  
½ t baking powder  
½ t salt  
¾ t cinnamon  
¼ t nutmeg

½ c (1 stick) unsalted butter,  
at room temperature  
½ c white sugar  
½ c light brown sugar  
1 large egg,  
at room temperature  
1 t vanilla extract  
1 c dried cranberries





After eating dinner, some people feel deprived if they don't get dessert, and cookies are a perfect after-dinner treat, but you should try to make some cookies that are healthier for you than the typical sugary ones you are used to eating. Baking healthier cookies is just another way to make an incremental change in the food that you eat to move you in a healthier direction.

To make hearty oat cookies with dried cranberries, start by gathering all of the dry ingredients, including toasted walnuts, whole wheat flour, rolled oats, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Mix the dry ingredients together and set them aside. Then, cream the butter with the white and brown sugars. Add the egg (if you double the recipe, add one at a time) and mix thoroughly. Blend in the vanilla. Finally, add the dry ingredients to the creamed butter and fold in the dried cranberries.

Don't overmix. The batter will be fairly stiff, and with all of the whole grains, the batter doesn't spread as easily as you might expect it to. Once you portion some of the batter onto a cookie sheet, press each little mound down with dampened fingers so that the batter doesn't stick to your fingers. Bake the cookies in an oven for about 12 minutes at 350 degrees.

When you eat these cookies, be mindful of the fact that you are doing something good for yourself. Healthy eating is really about understanding the science and then finding a way to make that science taste good. Healthy food that doesn't get eaten is really nothing more than healthy garbage. Get into the kitchen, try your hand at some of the techniques that we've shared, but don't be so busy that you can't take the time to share a healthy meal with people that you care about.

# The Perfect Sonoma Smart Plate

**A**s an example of the perfect Sonoma Smart Plate, this dish should be portioned out as follows: Reserve one-third of the plate for grilled shrimp; one-half of the plate for mixed greens, chopped oranges and cucumbers, sliced red onions, and citrus vinaigrette; and about one-fifth of the plate for quinoa.

## Grilled Shrimp Salad with Citrus Vinaigrette

### Shopping List

proportions to taste

quinoa  
shrimp, fresh or frozen  
garlic cloves, minced  
lemon peel, finely chopped  
mixed greens  
red onion, thinly sliced  
cucumber, quartered  
lengthwise and chopped  
orange, cut into  
bite-size pieces

**Citrus Vinaigrette**  
orange juice  
grapefruit juice  
lemon juice  
red wine vinegar  
orange zest  
soy sauce  
agave syrup  
chili flakes  
extra-virgin olive oil  
salt  
ground black pepper



1. Rinse and drain some quinoa. Heat a pot with olive oil; add quinoa. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, just until aromatic. Add water; bring to simmer. Season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat to low, cover tightly, and cook for 15 minutes. Remove from heat, let sit for 4 minutes, and fluff with fork. Cool for the salad and add it proportionately to each plate (about one-fifth of the plate).
2. Thaw shrimp, if frozen. Peel and devein shrimp. Rinse shrimp; pat dry with paper towels. Mix with garlic and lemon peel; cover and chill for 30 minutes.



3. Meanwhile, make the salad on individual plates or in a bowl.
4. Make the vinaigrette by combining all ingredients in a blender or whisking energetically: orange juice, grapefruit juice, lemon juice, red wine vinegar, orange zest, soy sauce, agave syrup, chili flakes, extra-virgin olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste.
5. Thread shrimp onto 8-inch skewers (if wood, soak skewers in water first), leaving a quarter-inch space between each. Grill for 6 to 8 minutes—or until shrimp are opaque.
6. Portion out the shrimp, salad, and quinoa so that one-third of each plate is shrimp, one-half is salad (including mixed greens, chopped oranges and cucumbers, sliced red onions, and citrus vinaigrette), and about one-fifth is quinoa. Drizzle with dressing and serve.



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