



CRAVINGS CURE

Effortless Energy and Fat Loss
Never Tasted So Good

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This book is dedicated to my beloved Mom (and guardian angel) who fought her battle with cancer with impeccable grace and dignity. Upon losing her, I'm now more than ever dedicated to helping you discover the bitter truth about sugar before it's too late. May this book set you free from your cravings so you can reclaim your right to live the sweet life without sugar.

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21-Day Delicious Detox to Live The Sweet Life *Without* Sugar



Introduction

It's everywhere. If you're alive, you've craved this all-pervasive, seductive white stuff being peddled in stores, your doctor's office, child care, your mild mannered aunt et al... I'm talking about sugar.

Do you identify yourself as a sugar addict?
Do you have sugar cravings that won't quit?
I hear you...

In fact I hear this all the time from clients who say they have wilted willpower when it comes to sweets. But actually your brain processes taste attributes at 195 milliseconds before you even know you're making a choice to go for the chocolate cake (1). Willpower does not even come into play.

My client, Lisa, confessed that she came undone in the presence of a red velvet cup cake. "I was minding my business walking down the sunny side of the street across from Yummy Cupcakes and suddenly my nostrils were assailed with the sweet smell of vanilla. It was almost like the cupcakes had sprung vocal cords and were calling out my name in this seductive falsetto. I felt hijacked by alien forces as my feet marched into the bakery and I had to have it." As she described the experience of biting down into the moist sweetness, her eyes glazed over and her tone became hushed almost as though she were describing a religious experience. "I am helpless in the presence of one of those cup cakes and I gotta have it." Can you relate?

Lisa's story perfectly illustrates our dopamine-fueled culture of "I gotta have it now" which prompts us to be a hostage to our sugar cravings...sugar activates the dopamine receptors in the brain and dopamine aka the "I gotta have it" neurotransmitter delivers the same kind of "high" that we seem to be perpetually seeking.

And for many of us, food is love and just as the heart can look for love in all the wrong places, so too can the body. Both are easily seduced.

Sugar Has Been Around for Ages—Why Is It Such a Menace Now?

The most shocking difference between ancestral and modern diets is the conspicuous consumption of refined sugar which didn't exist in hunter gatherer societies. According to the USDA, we're consuming 152 pounds of refined sugar per person per year compared to 10,000 years ago, we ate only 22 teaspoons a year. This pharmacological dose of sugar hides in all processed and refined foods, even so called "healthy" ones like most commercial energy bars, chai tea lattes, most yogurts, natural chips, whole wheat breads, dried fruits and even fresh squeezed juices.

They deliver a massive blood sugar surge that is creating metabolic mayhem and a pandemic of insulin resistance, pre-diabetes or full blown diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, fatty liver disease etc. And they're now giving liver transplants to 12-year olds because of their soda consumption. Even a so-called "healthy diet" can put you in the danger zone with all these chronic diseases.

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Refined sugar is the fastest way to wreck your health and the all pervasive sugar addiction is the #1 reason I created *Cravings Cure* to offer you a 21-Day Delicious Detox to live the sweet life *without* sugar. So you can finally gain freedom from cravings, fatigue, and stop the inflammatory cascade that leads to degenerative diseases like diabetes and cancer. You'll also turbo charge your fat loss and get lots of extra bonuses including balanced moods and younger looking skin to boot!

This book brings together a deeper understanding of the physiology and psychology of addiction while giving you a practical body-mind-spirit blueprint to permanently break your love affair with sugar without counting calories or an over restrictive diet that deprives you of pleasure. This is an easy-to-follow program that includes all of the following:

- An evidence-based protocol to get you off the refined sugar with wiggle-room as you need it to navigate through the detox no matter what your schedule may be
- Delicious recipes that your whole family will enjoy and that you'll want to make again and again
- Eye-opening insights on how to side-step the sugar "bombs" lurking in your grocery store with simple "ditch this" and "replace with" swap list that you can print out
- Handouts that include a natural sweetener showdown that will open your eyes to how your "healthy" choices are fueling your cravings and keeping you stuck
- *Cravings Cure* Grocery Shopping List and tips on what to do when traveling or eating out to inform and guide you through every step of your detox journey

Been There, Done That!

I know the word detox conjures up images of sweat drenched torture as you go hungry surviving on juices and tasteless chalky shakes while giving up all your favorite foods. But you can check your perceptual baggage at the door as this is *not* that kind of detox. This is an easier, gentler, delicious detox with no deprivation, denial, calorie-counting or sweating your behind off in some insanity workout.

Instead this eBook emphasizes adding in an abundance of yummy whole foods courtesy of Mother Nature, while swapping out the sugary processed junk your body doesn't recognize as food. By the end of these three short weeks, you will have tried out and gradually added more healthy living practices than you ever thought possible. You will have broken old habits and established new ones, reclaiming that lost energy with virtually no stress and minimal effort.

Whether you're a closet chocoholic, a self-confessed legal drug addict who simply can't get through your day without so-called "healthy" stimulants like coffee, cacao, energy drinks and sweets or someone who's struggling with blood sugar issues like insulin resistance, pre-diabetes, type 2 diabetes or gut issues like candida and are looking to get off the wild sugar roller coaster ride, you've come to the right place...fasten your seat belt and enjoy the sugar free ride!

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The Cravings Cure 21-Day Delicious Detox is also for you if you're not diagnosed with any of the above conditions but:

- You tried to cut back on sweets and just can't seem to sustain the new pattern and keep bouncing back and forth in that yo-yo cycle
- You're under a lot of stress...did you know that stress makes you crave sugar? That's because stress lowers your feel-good happy sauce aka serotonin and dopamine and keeps you in a vicious cycle of stress, cravings, weight gain, guilt, loathing, rinse and repeat
- You find that you're irritable, cranky and playing the blame game with your spouse or kids if you don't get your daily sugar fix. (And when I say "sugar", I mean all processed carbs that turn into sugar, including pizza, baked goods, pasta, rice and your fancy coffee drinks)
- You've had a secret stash of candy at your desk and/or you even stole the kids' Halloween candy
- You feel hung-over in some way after consuming sugar. Whether that be
 - Brain fog
 - 2 pm afternoon crash (like falling asleep at work or needing naps)
 - Packing on the pounds especially that spare tire around your belly
 - Anxiety with that hypervigilant racing mind
 - Getting sick more often with every passing cold and flu virus
 - Disrupted sleep or insomnia
- Finally, this detox is definitely for you if you feel you're a hostage to sugar and its controlling your life where perhaps you're:
 - Thinking about it ALL the time
 - Plotting your next sweet escape
 - Mentally rehearsing the explosion of taste on your tongue when you bite into that ooey gooey treat you've been coveting
 - Planning your dessert before you've even finished dinner

I've broken this Cravings Cure Delicious Detox down into three simple phases to ensure you get the most success out of this program:

- **Phase I is all about education and empowerment. Get Ready.** You'll start out with a self-assessment quiz to bring awareness to your relationship with sugar and how it may be manifesting symptoms that you don't normally connect with sugar. You will get the 411 on the different types of sugars, the different classifications of carbs, reading labels, best and worst types of sweeteners, deconstructing your cravings and 15 proven mind-body hacks to cure your cravings;
- **Phase II is about preparation. Get Set.** You will purge your pantry and fridge to get rid of the old sugary, processed junk and replace with healthier, yummiest options. You'll be armed with handy lists you can print out and use for years to come, including grocery shopping list and also learn useful tips for eating out without derailing your progress; and finally

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- **Phase III is all about ACTION. Go!** You'll learn a simple "formula" to include protein, fat and fiber at each meal, so you can naturally balance your blood sugar. To illustrate the formula, I've included a week's worth of tried and tested recipes for breakfast, lunch, dinner and let's not forget drool-worthy decadent snack recipes designed to titillate your taste buds without spiking your blood sugar. At the end of this program, as you master this way of eating, you can simply use your favorite recipes as inspiration to create your own signature dishes as you embrace the sweet life without sugar.

Research has shown that it takes 21 days to develop a new habit which is why I've designed each of the phases to be a week long so you can take empowered, inspired action in bite sized chunks. I encourage you to take your time and take up to a week to digest each of the three phases: Get Ready, Get Set and finally Go.

Remember, we hear only what we are ready to hear...if you race through this in one sitting, you're going to be overcome with overwhelm which creates procrastination and paralysis. This is why I designed the book to be digested in three phases, not to insult your intelligence but to respect the way your brain works. I suspect many of you Type-A personalities will still race ahead, but trust me, I've tested this and this phased approach is going to ensure your sustainable success. And I believe everyone deserves a chance at sweet success.

To The Sweet Life *Without* Sugar,
Rupina Meer

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Cravings Whisperer

Before you dive in to the heart of this eBook, let me tell you a little bit about my journey and what qualifies me to be your cravings whisperer...

I'm a Board Certified Health Coach privileged to be trained by luminaries in the fields of holistic/functional medicine including Drs. Mark Hyman, Andrew Weil and Deepak Chopra to name a few. I've also been trained by Harvard physician, Dr. Sara Gottfried, on the Gottfried Protocol to balance hormones. My training is at the intersection of nutrition science and personal growth, as I look beyond the food on the plate to lifting the veil on what nourishes the heart and soul.

But before I became a health coach, I wasn't very healthy myself! I have an MBA and was steadily climbing the corporate ladder fueling myself with sugar and caffeine, like many of you. I was hurtling through life at 95 mph, a raging self-critic, surviving on frozen monstrosities devoid of any real nutrition. I had no idea that my processed diet high in sugar was practically inviting those rogue cancer cells to make a snugly home in my body. And my addiction to high stress living was exacerbating my health issues...

Did you know that sugar is the preferred fuel for cancer cells? And here's the kicker, groundbreaking new research is now indicating that sugar not only feeds cancer cells but it can actually cause cancer (called oncogenesis)! And the Standard American Diet that many of you are consuming (SAD) is tantamount to throwing gasoline to fire.

Fortunately, my cervical cancer was caught very early on, but it was a powerful wake-up call that influenced me to reevaluate my life and make changes in my diet and lifestyle incorporating REAL foods, yoga, meditation, cooking as if my life depended on it, and breaking my love affair with sugar. I left the corporate world, went back to school ravenously studying about nutrition and functional (root cause) medicine as I was done with the sick care system that we label as healthcare. They say our challenges are our greatest teachers and my health crisis had created a fertile soil, planting those seeds of wanting to find a better way with stress, sugar, hormones and health...

After all this suffering, I know one thing for sure: once we restore homeostasis, give the body the nutrients it needs, and get out of its way, it can recover from ANYTHING including so-called terminal illnesses as I have seen with hundreds of my clients. And initially with my beloved Mom when she was diagnosed with Stage IV cancer. But she eventually lost her battle to cancer and having lost her, now more than ever, I'm dedicated to helping you discover the bitter truth about sugar before it's too late.

My journey to wellness compelled me to explore the streets of my own emotions, organs and cravings to manifest my optimal vitality. And my mission is to empower you with these secrets. I am the Founder of Zen-trition, a mind-body-spirit health coaching practice and feel blessed to have helped hundreds of women naturally balance their blood sugar and hormones so they can reclaim the effortless energy and weight loss that they enjoyed in their youth without diets, drugs or deprivation.

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I'm pretty darn driven when it comes to finding a better way with cravings, stress and health and have a life-long hunger for the science and soul of nourishment. I do this work because I love seeing the magic that happens when someone's health and energy returns because they found the nutritional--or emotional--course correction to make that happen. When their now well nourished and balanced body becomes a vehicle for living a meaningful life and where they leave the world a better place.

Are you ready to join me in getting high on life, instead of sugar? Ready to free yourself from that self-imposed prison of stress, cravings, weight gain, guilt, loathing, rinse and repeat? Ready to say no more...

No more suffering.

No more sugar withdrawals.

No more using sugar to anesthetize your emotions.

No more sitting in the mystery of your body ravaged with cravings feeling like it's betrayed you.

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can...it's not about perfection, it's about progress. And progress is just doing better (making one intelligent swap at a time) than what you did yesterday. It's not about big leaps and radical detoxes, but itty bitty baby steps that will lead you to live the sweet life without the refined, addictive stuff.

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Know Thy Sugars

Our Love Affair with Sweets

Throughout two million years of evolution, we humans have been programmed to love sweet things. Even before we started refining sugar, we desired foods with sweet tastes. In fact, our very first food, mother's milk, was warm and sweet and we've formed an emotional bond with this taste. So, the desire for sweet tastes is quite normal and you shouldn't feel guilty about it. Berating your wilted willpower to fight this desire is not the answer. So what is?

It's all about conscious choices that nourish a sweet life naturally. This self-guided program is designed to empower you with the good, bad and ugly about sugar and your cravings so that you can stop feeling guilty about your food choices and heal your relationship with sugar.

Sugar is a carbohydrate that occurs naturally in foods such as grains, beans, vegetables and fruit. Modern diets are quick to vilify carbs, but in its whole unprocessed state, sugar contains a variety of vitamins, minerals, enzymes and proteins. When brown rice, quinoa or other whole grains are cooked, chewed and digested, the natural carbohydrates break down uniformly into separate glucose molecules. These molecules enter the bloodstream slowly, where they are burned smoothly and evenly, allowing your body to absorb all the good stuff.

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All Sugars are NOT Equal

Refined sugar is an entirely different story. Extracted from either sugar cane or beets, it lacks vitamins, minerals and fiber, and leaches these vital nutrients from your body. The body actually must deplete its own store of minerals and enzymes to absorb refined sugar properly. Therefore, instead of providing the body with nutrition, it creates deficiency.

It enters swiftly into the bloodstream and wreaks havoc on the blood sugar level, first pushing it sky-high—causing excitability, nervous tension and hyperactivity—and then dropping it extremely low—causing fatigue, depression, weariness and exhaustion. You may connect what you eat to your expanding waistline, but often we don't realize the emotional roller coaster ride from our wildly fluctuating blood sugar levels. We feel happy and energetic for a while and then suddenly inexplicably, we find ourselves arguing with our spouse or a friend. In fact, the most common physiological trigger of negative moods is hypoglycemia or low blood sugar.

Blood sugar provides the energy that keeps your brain buzzing and your heart ticking. So it's no wonder there's a complicated hormonal system to nip and nudge at blood sugar to keep it in normal range. But you can mess with the system by overdoing processed sugars which causes your blood sugar to surge and then nose-dive an hour or two later, pushing your body's alarm buttons. After a crash, you'll feel crabby, shaky and prone to violent outbursts. Did you know that one of the most common causes of domestic violence is hypoglycemia? And many of these emotional ups and downs are due to the rise and fall of blood sugar.

The truth is that the mind and body exist on an exquisite continuum, and profoundly impact one another. It's important to understand why and how blood sugar rises, so let's dive into some blood sugar basics.

Blood Sugar 101

When you eat simple carbohydrates, whether as sugar or as starch, they pass almost instantaneously from the gut into the bloodstream. Within seconds your blood sugar levels start to rise. To counter the increase in sugar, the pancreas releases a hormone called insulin. Insulin is the key that unlocks the cells, escorting sugar out of the blood and into the cells. As the amount of sugar in the blood declines, the body restores homeostasis.

An abundance of simple sugars in the diet goads the pancreas into releasing more and more insulin. Over time, when the insulin levels are driven up again and again several times a day, the pancreas becomes worn out and the cells can become resistant to taking in any more sugar. The cellular locks get worn down from overuse, like a key that's lost its teeth, and insulin loses its ability to easily open the cellular door. This sets you up for insulin resistance which is a precursor to full blown diabetes.

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Excess sugar in the blood, unable to be absorbed by the cells, keeps the blood sugar unnaturally high. It lingers there until insulin stores it as fat, often causing abdominal obesity (aka muffin top or beer belly), and high cholesterol. Excess blood sugar also attaches to proteins that may damage or thicken the arterial wall, directly increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease, clots, inflammation, cancer, heart attack, stroke, and a plethora of diseases.

How to Test if Your BS (Blood Sugar) is Creeping into the Danger Zone?

As part of your regular checkup, your doctor routinely tests your fasting blood sugar, but in spite of diabetes rising at alarming rates, the "normal" ranges to screen for pre-diabetes are outdated and many of you at risk are slipping through the cracks. "Normal" reference ranges of standard labs are designed to identify and diagnose DISEASE states only, with the goal of fitting 95% of Americans within the "clinically" normal bell shaped curve. As the population becomes sicker, the number of people who are declared "clinically normal" gets larger, making the definition of abnormal or disease states relative. Some tests just shouldn't be graded on a curve as the reference ranges are so large that they have little practical value.

The absence of disease is not health. And the bigger question is: Is it good enough for you to be compared to the rest of the sick population and be judged as "normal" by conventional medicine or do you have loftier goals, like curing your cravings so you're no longer a hostage to sugar and fluctuating blood sugar levels that make you go up and down constantly?

"Normal" ranges for fasting blood sugar have been between 80-120mg/dL for many years. Once the blood sugar rises above 125mg/dL, you are diagnosed with diabetes. Over 110mg/dl, you are considered "pre-diabetic". Sadly, the medical establishment still calls fasting blood sugar under 99mg/dL "safe," and there are no safety nets or alarm bells that go off until you reach 100 or 110mg/dL. (2)

In functional medicine we like to look at clinically "optimal" ranges versus clinically "normal." **The clinically optimal and truly "safe" range for fasting blood sugar should be between 70-85 mg/dL.** I recommend you pick up an inexpensive glucometer at your local drug store and test your fasting blood sugar first thing in the morning. So if it starts to creep up, you can implement the diet and lifestyle actions steps outlined in Phase 3 to bring it back to the true "safe" range. Also healthy blood sugar two hours after a meal should be lower than 125mg/dL.

It's important to note that **fasting blood sugar is the least sensitive marker for predicting future diabetes and heart disease.** An even more important test that most doctors don't order is your fasting insulin because high insulin levels are the first harbingers of storm clouds that can precede type 2 diabetes by decades. Your fasting insulin should be less than 5 mg/dl. And finally, you also want to be tested for Hemoglobin A1c which is an average of what's going on with your blood sugar over the last 2-3 months and ideally you want it under 5.0% but at least under 5.5%.

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No BS, Just Know thy BS Numbers

Marker	"Normal"	Optimal
Fasting Blood Sugar (mg/dL)	< 99	< 86
Fasting Insulin (mg/dL)	2 – 6	< 5
Hemoglobin A1c (%)	< 6	< 5.5

Carb Classification 101

You know from personal experience that carbohydrate-containing foods vary dramatically in how they affect your body. A liter of cola and a bean burrito both contain a great deal of carbs, but they have vastly different effects on the body. So, in case you're confused trying to navigate this nutritional labyrinth of terms, such as whole vs. refined, simple vs. complex, glycemic index vs. glycemic load, here's the 411 on the different types of carbs and their classification:

Whole carbs are what exist in nature and haven't been significantly altered from their original form, example brown rice has both the bran (outer layer) and germ (inner layer) intact, but with white rice, both of these are removed and you are merely consuming the starchy center which is just a ball of sugar. So white rice, flour and pasta are all refined as is anything that comes in a plastic package, jar or can such as crackers, cookies, cereal, baby food, salad dressings, ketchup, pasta sauce etc.

Bottom line: Look to Micheal Pollan's easy-to-digest truism when in doubt, "If it came from a plant, eat it; if it was made in a plant, don't".

***Shopping Tip:** Shop the periphery of the store where you'll find all the fresh fruits, vegetables and produce and stay away from the middle aisles that house all the processed carbs or processed junk!*



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Simple vs. Complex Carbs



Simple carbs have 1 or 2 sugar molecules linked together and these short chains of sugar enter the blood stream almost immediately after they are ingested and cause a rapid spike in your blood sugar.

Think soda, candy, cereal, fruit and milk that all serve to give you a quick burst of energy as the simple carbs are digested.

But what goes up must come down and these foods inevitably have an equal and opposite low that make you crash in just about an hour or so after a simple carbs meal.

This is why most of my clients complain of feeling hungry in a couple of hours after consuming their morning cereal and skim milk because it's mostly all simple, refined carbs that spiked their blood sugar and caused a crash momentarily (whole grain cereal is actually a complex carb with fiber, but the abundance of sugar and processing still makes you crash shortly after eating the meal).

Complex carbs are composed of long chains of sugar bound within fiber. The body processes the sugar by breaking the chains and this process is relatively slow, so sugars are absorbed into the bloodstream for many hours providing long lasting energy. Think grains (such as brown rice, quinoa, oats, barley) beans, vegetables and legumes.

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Carbohydrate Continuum (3)

ALCOHOL	SIMPLE SUGAR	SIMPLE STARCH	COMPLEX CARBS	COMPLEX STARCH	WOOD
beer	glucose	“white things”	“brown things”	“green things”	not digestible
wine	sucrose	white flour	whole grains	green vegetables	
	fructose	white rice	beans	“yellow things”	
	white sugar	white pasta	potatoes	squash	
	honey		roots	and other	
	corn syrup			yellow vegetables	

The foods on the left are simple carbs that will spike your blood glucose, so you want to aim for the complex carbs and starches that will burn slowly and balance your blood sugar.

Think of it this way: If I offered you a small sum of money immediately or a much larger sum in the near future, which would you choose? Clear thinking dictates you'd go for the larger sum at a later date to enrich your bank account, but researchers have found that unstable blood sugar also leads to murky decision-making, so if you were given this choice on the heels of ingesting a Supersize Big Gulp or candy bar, you may lean towards the smaller sum for instant gratification! But do yourself and your energy bank a big favor by always choosing the complex carbs that burn slowly and give you long lasting energy.

Carbs have become a dirty word associated with obesity. But in nature, the real carbs we were meant to ingest and thrive on are vegetables—lots and lots of veggies. Veggies have an epigenetic effect and can turn OFF the disease genes and turn ON the healthy genes. To truly protect yourself from pre-diabetes and the many risks associated with it, you simply cannot eat enough veggies.

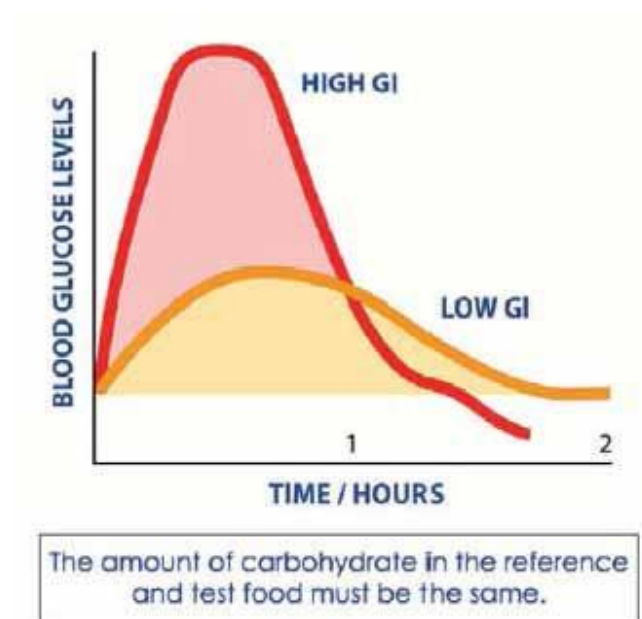
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What's Glycemic Index & Why You Should Care About This Number?

The Glycemic Index (GI) is simply a system of measurement on a scale of 1-100 to indicate how quickly your blood sugar rises after eating a particular food. Since glucose causes an instant rise in your blood sugar, its score is 100. Other foods are scored relative to glucose. For example, brown rice makes your blood sugar rise half as fast. So its GI score is 50. According to this glycemic index model, low glycemic index is 55 and under, medium glycemic index is 56 to 69, and high glycemic index is 70 and above.
(4)



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The below table lists the GIs of some common food items: (5)

Select Foods	GI score
Baked russet potato	111
Pancakes, buckwheat, gluten-free, made from packet mix	102
Clif bar, Cookies & Cream flavor energy bar	101
Baguette, white, plain	95
Cornflakes breakfast cereal	81
Scones, plain, made from packet mix	92
White wheat flour bread (average)	75
White rice, boiled	72
Instant oatmeal	79
Graham crackers	74
Raisins	64
Banana	48
Quinoa	53
Oatmeal, made from steel-cut oats	55
Brown rice, steamed	50
Watermelon	72
Apple	36

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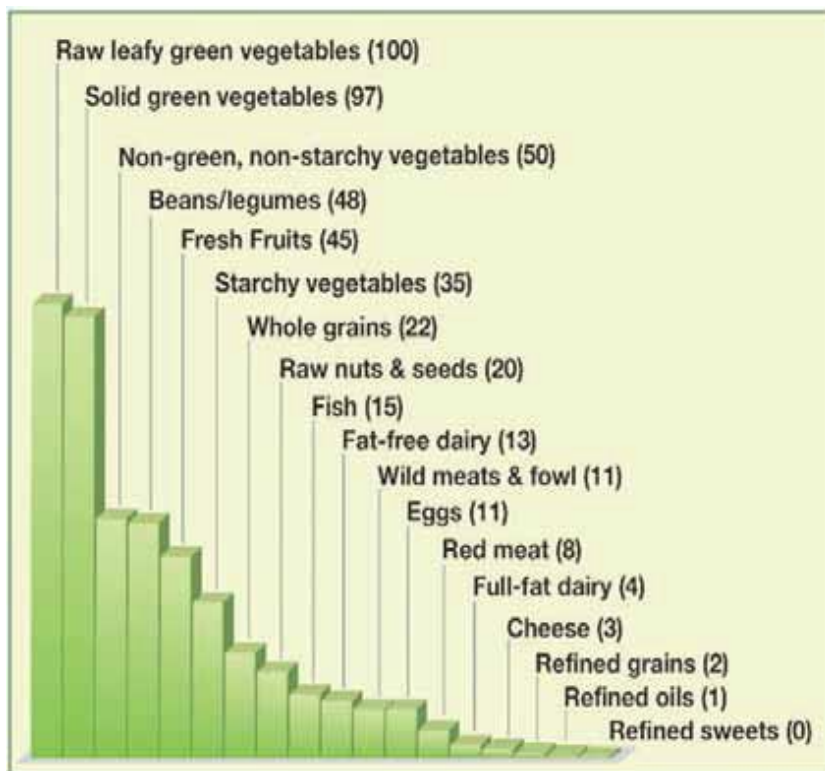


As you can see, when brown rice is refined into white rice, its GI score jumps from 50 to 72. And when steel cut oats are processed into “instant oatmeal”, its GI score jumps from 55 to 79. How can a food score higher than 100? By causing your blood sugar to spike even faster than glucose!

While the GI is a valuable tool in the nutritional management of diabetes, it has its limitations and a more accurate measurement is the glycemic load (GL) which also takes portion size into control. GL is GI multiplied by the amount of carbs being consumed. Foods on the glycemic index are tested individually, which is contrary to the way most of us eat our meals. A good example of this would be the fact that fiber can effectively block certain digestive enzymes and high fat content can delay digestion. Both of these will slow the overall absorption of glucose from a meal, changing the way that the glucose in the food affects your blood sugar levels. For example, the GI of a carrot, potato and coke are the same, but the GL is vastly different due to the fiber content.

Other factors such as hormones, medications, and exercise can also affect your blood sugar levels, meaning that the GI or GL is not a completely foolproof method of predicting how food will affect a particular person. A lower glycemic index value does not necessarily mean that a food is a better choice than one with a higher value. Two foods may have the exact same value, but may have drastically different nutritional profiles. With that in mind, I'd like to introduce you to the nutrient density chart developed by Dr. Joel Fuhrman that ranks foods based on their ratio of nutrients to calories.

Dr. Fuhrman's Micro Nutrient Density Scores



This chart is pretty intuitive, and as you can see, vegetables, fruits, beans and whole grains give you the most value per calorie and hence have the highest nutrient density scores (i.e. the best ratios of nutrients to calories).

Conversely, refined sugars and oils have the lowest nutrient density, and they give your body little value in return. They fatten you up while cheating you of the nutrients in the whole foods they came from. So you wind up fat, tired, deficient, and plagued by chronic health problems. (6)

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Is Sugar Addictive?

Foods like diet sodas and artificially sweetened treats are scientifically engineered to trigger our bliss point. In fact, food manufacturers are in on a dirty secret. They know that high glycemic foods – like flour products and sugary foods – stimulate the same part of your brain that responds to heroin. The nucleus accumbens--part of the brain center widely known for its role in the reward circuit of the brain--literally lights up like a Christmas tree upon consuming sugary foods.

The Science of Addiction

Processed and refined sugary foods trigger the release of natural opiates within your brain, making you slightly high. And drum roll please...tata da, when these foods are made with small amounts of fat, the effect is multiplied! When you eat these hyper palatable foods constantly, you don't taste the subtle sweetness of real foods like berries or almonds and become addicted to the super sweetness of these processed treats. Between "doses", it's common to get depressed, anxious, or bored. Your brain comes to expect this overstimulation and it craves these high glycemic foods to feel normal. So the only way out is to eat more of them! And that is the true definition of an addictive food.

"I Gotta Have It" Hormone

According to a 2002 research study, refined sugar is far more addictive than cocaine. An astonishing 94% of rats who were allowed to choose mutually exclusively between water sweetened with saccharin and intravenous cocaine, chose sugar. Even the rats who were addicted to cocaine, quickly switched their preference to sugar. (7)

Sugary foods activate dopamine receptors in the brain that are responsible for most addictions. Dopamine is the "I gotta have it" hormone because once the brain becomes familiar with the effects of a dopamine trigger, like chocolate, seeing, smelling or even thinking about that substance triggers the brain to send out the message, "I gotta have it now."

So high glycemic foods sabotage you in three ways:

- They trigger opiates in your brain, making them addictive, and you need more and more to stave off negative emotions
- They cause blood sugar spikes and crashes, making you hungry for more
- They starve you for nutrition, tricking your brain into thinking there's a famine

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Sugar Masquerade: Become a Label Detective

Quite honestly our food system is so booby trapped that there's more sugar hidden in pasta sauce in the form of high fructose corn syrup than in hot fudge sauce. Low-fat strawberry yogurt has more sugar than strawberry ice cream. Carrot salad has the same amount of sugar as carrot cake. Sneaky sugars hide in places you'd never suspect, including whole foods, diet foods, packaged fruit, drinks, and dressings.

Dried fruit is a biggie. You wouldn't pour Skittles on your salad, but that's pretty much what you do when you add raisins, dates, dried cranberries, and "candied" fruit. Restaurants love to drown perfectly healthy fish, chicken, and beef in syrupy sauces, sometimes to disguise inferior meats. So if a dish is described as glazed, that's code for sugar.

You probably know that table sugar is also called sucrose, but sugar is a chameleon that masquerades under a bunch of different, innocent sounding aliases.

Anything ending in "ose" is a sugar (a monosaccharide, or single molecule of sugar; or a disaccharide, double sugar molecule, as found in food).



- **Glucose.** Glucose is the simple sugar made by the body through digestion of carbohydrates. It is the body's chief source of energy. Sometimes glucose is called dextrose.
- **Sucrose.** Sucrose is what we commonly refer to as table sugar. It is made from highly processed sugar cane or sugar beets. The composition of sucrose is a combination of glucose and fructose, which separates during digestion. Pure sucrose is devoid of any nutrients.
- **Fructose.** Fructose, commonly called fruit sugar, is a simple sugar found in honey, tree fruits, berries, and melons. But don't be fooled into thinking fructose on a label means you are eating fruit sugar. Pure crystalline fructose comes from two sources: corn or sucrose (table sugar). Corn starch is processed to release fructose. Sucrose (table sugar) is enzymatically hydrolyzed to separate into glucose and fructose.
- **High Fructose Corn Syrup** is made from starches like corn, wheat, and rice. High fructose syrups contain nearly equal amounts of glucose and fructose, a composition nearly identical to sucrose (table sugar). The reason high fructose corn syrup is so abundant in our processed food is simple- it's cheaper than sugar. Because we highly subsidize corn and place tariffs on sugar imports, high fructose corn syrup is much less expensive.
- **Maltose.** Also known as malt sugar, maltose is half as sweet as sucrose (table sugar). It is produced from starch (barley, wheat, rice or other grains). It has been produced in China since 200 B.C. We use it in making beer and as an additive to some processed foods. In our bodies, maltose is formed as the first step in digestion of starchy foods. It is then broken down into glucose.

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- **Lactose.** This is the sugar found naturally in milk.

Anything ending in "ol" is a sugar alcohol:

- **Maltitol, maltitol syrup, sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, lactitol, erythritol, and isomalt** are all examples of sugar alcohols. They occur naturally in plants, but are usually manufactured from sugars and starches. Sugar alcohols have fewer calories than sugars because they are not completely absorbed by the body. But they can ferment in the intestines and cause gas, bloating, and diarrhea. [See Sugar Aliases Deconstructed Handout]

***Bottom line:** Whether the label says brown sugar, maple syrup, sugar in the raw, cane sugar, cane crystals, beet sugar, sorghum, HFCS, corn syrup, etcetera it's all refined sugar and will spike your blood sugar just like table sugar. Don't be duped by "natural" sweeteners--Natural Agave Nectar is highly processed-- and is about 90 percent fructose. Snake venom is also natural but will still kill you!*

Manufacturers realize you know sugary foods are bad, so they've cleverly developed "guilt-free" versions of your favorites. Craving chocolate toffee or butter pecan ice cream? No worries: now you can "legally" enjoy a sugar-free version, but let's look closely at these 2 labels:

- **"No sugar added"** – just because a manufacturer hasn't added sugar doesn't mean the food or drink doesn't contain sugar. For instance, a no-sugar-added ice cream might still contain 10 grams of sugar per serving, depending on what other sugar-containing ingredients they've used. In other words, "no sugar added" does not mean that food is sugar free.
- **"Sugar free"** – again, you're not off the hook here. That food or drink may indeed have no sugar, but it frequently contains artificial sweeteners, such as aspartame which is infinitely worse!

If there's some food you're not sure about, always refer to the nutrition label at the back and read the ingredients. The ingredients are listed in terms of concentration in ascending order, so if you see sugar or any of its aliases within the first 3 listed ingredients, then you know its processed sugary junk masquerading as food and you need to put it back on the shelf. Or if the front of the box touts a health claim saying, "Great source of omega-3 fats but then you see the source—flaxseeds—way down as the 10th item in the label, then you're only getting a smidge and it's not really a great source.

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Also be cognizant of servings per container. 8 ounces of Tazo iced tea contains 19g of sugar. But here's the catch: Who drinks just 8 ounces? The serving size says 8 oz but the bottle itself is 16 oz so you're getting double the amount of sugar. A serving size of a pint of Häagen Daz icecream says 4 servings but who really shares a pint with 4 people? The true serving size is a quarter of a pint with 22g of sugar, so if you're polishing that pint off in 2 servings you're really getting 44g of sugar, so do the math.

Teaspoon Tracker Tool

Now that you've opened your eyes to all the aliases that sugar hides behind, you're probably wondering how the heck you're going to track all this to figure out how much sugar you're really consuming each day? In *The Skinny Gut Diet*, author Brenda Watson has come up with this teaspoon tracker formula that will open your eyes to hidden sugars you won't find listed on nutrition labels. This simple calculation demystifies your hidden sugar intake so you can effectively track the number of teaspoons of sugar you are eating each day: (8)

Total Carbohydrates – Fiber = Teaspoons of Sugar

5

Aim to keep your sugar consumption no more than 8-10 teaspoons per day.

The Fructose Trap

Glucose is the form of energy our bodies are designed to run on. But as a country, glucose is no longer the sugar of choice...it's now fructose. More than 30 years ago, scientists learned how to genetically modify corn to cheaply produce sugar from corn, and now it is loaded into nearly all processed foods—including cane sugar and anything that has high fructose corn syrup (HFCS)—and has become the number one source of calories.

You've probably seen the commercials trying to reduce shopper confusion and anxiety, showing actors who say they now understand that "whether it's corn sugar or cane sugar, your body can't tell the difference". But don't be duped by the claim that all sugars are metabolized by your body in the same way as that has been shattered by a growing body of scientific evidence.

Glucose, Sucrose, Fructose...which is the most evil of them all?

Glucose is metabolized by every cell in your body but fructose is primarily metabolized in the liver. If you consume high amounts of it, fructose ends up taxing and damaging your liver in the same way alcohol and other toxins do, and your liver converts the majority of this fructose into fat. According to Dr. Robert Lustig, professor of pediatrics in the Division of Endocrinology at the University of California San Francisco, fructose is a "chronic, dose-dependent liver toxin." And just like alcohol, fructose is metabolized directly into fat—not cellular energy, like glucose.

You wouldn't think twice about giving your child a Budweiser, but giving him or her soda is almost the same thing. Say that again. Yes, fructose is basically alcohol without the buzz and has a multitude of highly toxic effects, including non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), insulin resistance which is a precursor to type 2 diabetes, heart disease and many cancers. It's also important to note that both sucrose (table sugar) and fructose are problematic. High fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is 55 percent fructose and 45 percent glucose while sucrose is 50 percent glucose and 50 percent fructose, so it only has 5 less grams than HFCS.

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How Fructose Trips Your Fat "Switch"

The biggest problem with fructose is that it has a low glycemic index, meaning it does not raise your blood sugar but fructose fools your body into gaining weight as it turns off your body's appetite-control system. Fructose does not appropriately stimulate insulin, which in turn does not suppress ghrelin (the "hunger hormone") and doesn't stimulate leptin (the "satiety hormone"), which together result in you eating more and developing insulin resistance. Once you understand how fructose-rich foods activate your body's "fat switch," you can finally say good-bye to your nagging weight problems.

Did you know that drinking just one extra can of soda per day can add as much as 15 pounds to your weight over the course of a single year, not to mention increase your risk of diabetes by 85 percent? Ladies and gentlemen, let's get real... drinking Coke or any soda is a recipe for dis-ease.

Why Fructose is Seven Times Deadlier than Sugar

Excess sugar in our blood attaches to proteins to form something called advanced glycation end products (AGEs). This process of proteins and sugars sticking together is called *glycation*, and is the leading cause of free radical damage and accelerated aging in the body. And drum roll please...*Fructose glycates seven times faster than glucose or sucrose*, yikes! (9)

Many of you are seriously confused about fructose and still believe it is a "healthy" type of sugar because it is found naturally in fruits and touted as having a low glycemic index. The truth of the matter is that fructose may very well be the most pernicious influence in the Standard American Diet, and is virtually guaranteed to cause chronic disease if consumed in excess.

Fruit is not a free food and because of its high fructose content, it's one of the sneaky ways you stay stuck with craving sweets. It's also one of the big ways that we raise our triglycerides and that's how we store unused calories as fat.

So stay away from HFCS and Agave. Junk the sodas and juices, yes, even fresh pressed sounds healthy but they're actually one of the worst sugar traps because liquid sugars spike your blood sugar and insulin even faster than solid sweets. Aim for 1-2 pieces of low to moderate GI fruits per day from the table below. Berries are the optimal choice, superfoods loaded with antioxidants. Avoid or eat very sparingly (after a workout) the high GI fruits listed below:

Low GI (Optimal Choice)	Medium GI (2nd Best Choice)	High GI (Avoid)
Anything with berry at the end of its name: Black, Blue, Straw, Rasp, Elder, Goose and Boysen	Apples, Apricots, Cherries, Oranges, Plums, Peaches, Pomegranates, Kiwi, Pears, Lemons and Lime	Bananas, Mango, Pineapple, Grapes, Papaya and Watermelon

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Now of course, exercise is the one thing that detoxifies fructose, improving insulin sensitivity and preventing fructose from turning into fat, so if you're an elite athlete who is glycogen depleted, you may get away with drinking the sodas and energy drinks but the average person can't. Plus who drinks the energy drinks? It's not the athletes but the fat kids who've been duped to believe it's cool and healthy ever since Michael Jordan started touting them.

Our explosive sugar consumption (particularly fructose) is causing an epidemic rise in Type 2 diabetes, obesity and heart disease. Kids are reaping the same metabolic mayhem as their parents. In fact, for every child born in America after 2000, 1 in 3 will be born diabetic. This is the first generation of American kids that will have a shorter life span than their parents!

Axe the Artificial Sweeteners

Far from the free pass most people consider them to be, artificial sweeteners can raise insulin levels and contribute to insulin resistance. One study in the journal *Diabetes Care* found sucralose (Splenda) could raise glucose and insulin levels. (10). So, in addition to giving up all refined sugar, I urge you to axe all the artificial sweeteners like aspartame, alitame, sucralose, splenda, saccharin and nutrasweet unless you want to slow down your metabolism, gain weight, and increase insulin resistance.

Furthermore, many artificial sweeteners are neurotoxins that deplete the brain's feel-good neurotransmitters, like serotonin, that help you sleep well and generally boost mood and wellbeing. They then perpetuate the ultimate vicious cycle, as low levels of serotonin make you crave more sweets!

Also stay away from artificial colorings and preservatives like food dyes and MSG. Red velvet cakes and blue ice cream may be a visual treat but they'll bring on a black mood faster than storm clouds bringing rain.

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The Bitter Truth: Not So Sweet Side Effects of Sugar

You've probably gotten the message by now that sugar wreaks havoc in your body, but here's a quick summary of its bitter effects:

- Weight gain and abdominal obesity (“beer belly”), increased LDL, elevated triglycerides, elevated blood sugar, and high blood pressure—i.e., classic metabolic syndrome that puts you at higher risk for insulin resistance, Type 2 diabetes, cancer and a host of degenerative diseases.
- Suppresses your immune system. Have you ever noticed how your kids tend to fall sick right after the conspicuous consumption of Halloween candy? Or you're stricken with a yeast infection right after indulging in those V-Day truffles? I often see this pattern in my practice and that's because sugar downregulates the immune system, your body's Armed Forces, so it's no longer able to repel viral invaders and opportunistic infections set in.
- Depletes your body of vital minerals. Refined sugar lacks vitamins, minerals, fiber and actually leaches these vital nutrients from your body. So the body ends up depleting its own store of minerals such as Calcium, Magnesium and enzymes to absorb sugar properly, and instead of providing nutrition, it actually creates a deficiency.
- Accelerates skin aging/wrinkles by the process of glycation. Sugar combines with proteins to form Advanced Glycation End products (AGEs) that literally age you attacking the collagen and elastin structure of the skin, so if you want to age gracefully stay far, far away from this insidious sugar.
- Feeds cancer cells; **glucose is the preferred fuel for cancer cells, but the cells use fructose for cell division speeding up the growth and spread of cancer which is why fructose is even more deadly.**
- Causes hormonal imbalances. Sugar increases estrogen in men and women, exacerbates PMS and decreases the production of human growth hormone aka your youth sauce.
- Disrupts gut microbiome (gut bacteria and their DNA), feeds pathogenic bacteria and yeast which contribute to dysbiosis, SIBO (small intestinal bacteria overgrowth), pathogenic yeast overgrowth or other parasitic infections.



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Deconstructing Your Cravings

Why is it so difficult to tame the beast of our cravings? And why do we want to tame them? Many people view cravings as byproducts of a flawed willpower. But in reality they are vital messages that the body sends out in an attempt to start a dialogue with us. *Messages that are too important to ignore.* We have this sophisticated bio-computer called the human body that never makes mistakes. No matter how involved we are in the day-to-day madness of our lives, our hearts never skip a beat and our lungs diligently expand and contract to pump our life force. Once we realize that, it's easy to conclude that cravings are the body's solution to underlying imbalances. It all comes down to building a trusting dialogue with our bodies, instead of labeling cravings as the evil enemy that needs to be vanquished or ignored.

Shh, Listen. Really Listen, To your Cravings

We're typically hurtling through life at 95 mph. Is it any wonder that we don't take the time to slow down and actively listen to what our bodies are trying to tell us? The next time you're overcome with a strange craving, try taking three conscious breaths to get still, and really descend into the heart of your cravings to decode what your body is really asking for. As Geneen Roth said in *The Cupcake Dialogues*: "It's not the cupcakes, it's not the potato chips, it's not the chocolate cake. If you give yourself permission to want without judging or dismissing your desires as crazy, you too have the power to return yourself to what you want most: the center of your own stunning, tender, radiant heart."

Primary Causes of Cravings

You'll find that most cravings fall into one of these categories:

- **Dehydration** -- your body typically doesn't send the message that you're thirsty till you're on the verge of dehydration. In fact, the signals for dehydration often masquerade as hunger.
- **Lifestyle** -- often we eat because we are craving entertainment. If you're bored, try to deal with the issue directly rather than distracting yourself with snacks. We could also be starving in the areas of love, affection or fulfillment. Touch can be so therapeutic, so don't be afraid to ask for a hug when you need it. Dysfunctional relationships, unfulfilling jobs, lack of a spiritual practice, not having regular physical exercise or too much exercise are all triggers for emotional eating and sugar addiction.
- **Yin/Yang Imbalance** -- cravings for sweets could be the result of low blood sugar or cortisol (stress hormone) dysregulation as there's a close relationship between the two. Sugar is the quintessential "yin" food, i.e. expansive food that makes us feel lighter, so after a really stressful day, we turn to a sweet cocktail or chocolate to diffuse the stress and anxiety that has been building up. But too much yin, sparks cravings for heavier, contractive "yang" foods such as salt, meat and cheese. That is why you wake up the next morning with a hankering for eggs or steak.

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- **Conditioned Responses** – your body wants what it is used to. If you recently indulged in a deep dish pizza, your body will likely crave the ooey gooey cheesiness the next day. You'll also often experience cravings from foods routinely consumed in your childhood or by your ancestors. The trick is to reach out for a less extreme or healthier version of that food (think dark chocolate versus M&Ms).
- **Seasonal** – cravings for rich eggnog or sweets can often be associated with the holiday season while the summer time often gives rise to cravings for cooling watermelons and ice cream.
- **Hormonal fluctuations** – menstruation, pregnancy or menopause often cause fluctuating levels of testosterone, progesterone and estrogen levels along with a dip in your magnesium levels that spark cravings for chocolate during that time of the month.
- **Self-sabotage** – often when things are going really well, we experience a self-sabotage syndrome. We all like to fit in and sometimes cave in to peer pressure to go out and get intoxicated or to indulge in nutritionally devoid foods (think buffalo wings) that we normally avoid.

A sugar craving is simply the body asking for energy. So remember, your cravings are always delivering critical pieces of information about your bodies' state of homeostasis and balance. These innate whispers of wisdom from within are always trying to make us feel better by urging us to eat foods that will melt our physical tension, give us more energy and brighten our moods. We only have to stop resisting and decode the message.

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15 Proven Body-Mind Hacks to Cure Cravings Forever

1) Hydrate. Hydrate. Hydrate. You may sometimes think that your body is asking for sugar, when in fact it's dehydrated and really craving water. We're most toxic when we wake up, so make it a habit to hydrate first thing in the morning by having a liter of purified water in the morning. Aim to consume half your body weight in ounces of pure water per day. The more water you drink, the less room you'll have for caffeine/energy drinks (that actually dehydrate you), sodas (aka liquid sugar) and alcohol, all of which raise cortisol whose main job is to raise blood sugar which in turn sparks raging cravings for even more sweets! So this simple yet profound strategy to "crowd out" caffeine/sugary sodas/energy drinks with water is priceless.

Try this simple delicious cravings-buster lemonade: In 8 ounces of water, add the juice of half a lemon and 5 drops of stevia. You could also try a warm cup of green tea, sweetened with stevia and some cinnamon sticks after your meals—you'll find this often does the trick and you won't crave a post-meal dessert.



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2) Eat a Protein Powered Breakfast Within an Hour of Waking.



Resist the urge to skip breakfast as the short term stress of starvation will spike your cortisol (main stress hormone) levels which will trigger cravings for more sweets later in the day. Instead, aim for 20-30 grams of protein for breakfast as this will set up for "normal" blood sugar for the rest of the day. Try one of the low glycemic breakfast smoothies (see Recipes section) or scramble 2-3 pastured, organic eggs in ghee/grass fed butter with your favorite veggies.

Newsflash: Don't fall for advertised "breakfast" foods like pancakes/doughnuts/muffins or sugary boxed cereals/granolas loaded with refined grains, sugar and/or artificial sweeteners that massively spike your blood sugar levels. And that spike is followed by an equal and opposite crash, meaning you'll be hungry in a couple of hours and on the prowl for more sugary snacks. **If you're only going to do one thing, then make sure to eat a protein powered breakfast coupled with good fats (such as ghee, coconut oil, raw butter, raw nuts, avocados and olives) and veggies to help modulate cravings and stabilize blood sugar.**

Protein is key not just for breakfast but for blood sugar balance in general. But quality is key. Find the "cleanest" protein you can afford. Choose organic, grass-fed meat and poultry, go for wild instead of farmed fish or if you're vegetarian stick with organic plant protein (chia/hemp/flax seeds etcetera) whenever possible.

3) **Balance Your Blood Sugar by Grazing.** Are you eating regularly or are you going more than 3 hours between meals or snacks? Having low blood sugar earlier in the day can set you up to compensate by rummaging in the pantry after dinner. Eat 4-5 smaller meals throughout the day instead of three large ones to avoid dips in blood sugar. I definitely encourage you to travel with healthy snacks at all times so you don't get caught in a pinch, with your blood sugar down. You have to plan ahead to stack the conditions for success because, **"if you fail to plan, you're planning to fail."**

This leads to the kind of desperate spontaneity that will make you swing into a McDonalds or other purveyor of bland, industrial crap masquerading as "food". Make your own trail mix to-go with some raw almonds, cashews and goji berries. Or try the Raw Cacao Power Balls (in the Recipes section) for a yummy snack loaded with clean protein, fats, spices and natural sweetness to satisfy the most bad-assed craving.

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4) Get Sweet on Sweet Veggies.



Experiment with sweet vegetables such as carrots, corn, onions, sweet potatoes, beets and winter squash that have a deep sweet flavor when cooked and will quell your sugar cravings. Roast some slices or chunks of sweet potatoes rubbed with coconut oil, salt and cinnamon for a yummy sweet treat, courtesy of Mother Nature.

5) **Go Ga-Ga for Greens.** Dark, leafy greens pack a powerhouse of nutrients to boost your energy and help reduce cravings for sugar and processed foods. The bottom line is that when you add in nutrient dense greens--such as kale, spinach, arugula, bok-choy, swiss chard-- your body will have less room for processed, sugary, nutrient deficient foods that cause wildly fluctuating blood sugar levels. You simply can't eat five vegetables a day and still have room to binge on cookies and ice cream at the end of the day. It's really that simple! Green juices or smoothies are an amazing way to add life giving and detoxifying plant chlorophyll to your bloodstream.

6) **Make Stevia your BFF.** The all-natural sweetener, stevia, has zero calories, does not raise blood sugar levels and is 300 times sweeter than sugar. If you have sugar cravings and want to satisfy your sweet tooth safely, stevia is your best bet. I like the green non-processed stevia powder or Sweetleaf Stevia that comes in luscious flavors like vanilla crème, chocolate raspberry, English toffee and doesn't have the bitter taste that many other brands have. You just need 3-5 drops to sweeten your beverages. It will not impact blood sugar and is great for diabetics or anyone watching their blood sugar level. It's also a powerful antibiotic, antioxidant (5 times stronger than green tea), detoxifier and immune enhancer to boot.

7) **Get Fizzy With It.** If you're constantly craving sweets, you might want to get tested for a systemic yeast infection called candida. This pathogenic fungal overgrowth is caused by overconsumption of processed carbs/sweets as well as the use of antibiotics (even one round is enough), synthetic hormones like the birth control pill and steroids (oral, injectable or inhalants like asthmatics will use). So, have your doctor treat the candida and you'll find that your cravings will begin to soften on their own. But meanwhile you can help eradicate the yeast by nourishing the good bacteria in your inner eco-system by consuming probiotic rich foods and beverages. These include: sauerkraut, kimchi, natto, miso, milk kefir, coconut kefir and kombucha.

Probiotics not only also stop cravings for sugar and refined carbs (sour is the antidote to sweet) thereby helping you lose weight, but also beautify your skin (making it more poreless) and improve your mood. They serve as natural anti-depressants (by secreting feel-good neurotransmitters that make us happy). So take a tour de taste buds with all sorts of tantalizing sour delights. And get fizzy with it.

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- 8) Supplements to Kick Your Cravings.** Do you know why women crave chocolate during that time of the month? It's because most of us are deficient in magnesium and raw chocolate is loaded with magnesium, so make yourself a delicious smoothie by adding in a couple of tablespoons of raw cacao to 8 oz of unsweetened coconut milk, throw in a cup of berries (fresh/frozen) and a sprinkling of cinnamon, and voila, you have this rich elixir that will boost your magnesium and soften your cravings. You can also supplement with magnesium glycinate powder 600 mg in some water and wait to see if your cravings go away. [Note: magnesium citrate powder has a laxative effect but glycinate does not so you can take the therapeutic amount without disaster pants]. You can also take magnesium on a daily basis to reduce your cravings overall.

In addition to magnesium, the other three horse men of blood sugar balance are alpha lipoic acid (600 mg/day), chromium (1000 mcg/day) and vitamin D. Have your doctor run a 25-hydroxy vitamin D test. The optimal range is 60-80 ng/ml so depending on where you are, supplement accordingly.

Some other stellar nutrients in my blood sugar toolkit include glutamine, 500-1000 mg per day depending on severity (helps with both sugar and alcohol cravings) and berberine, 1000-2000 mg per day. Both of these pack a two for one punch as they not only help improve insulin sensitivity but are extraordinary gut healers that repair the intestinal mucosa which gets damaged from overconsumption of carbs. Deficiencies in any of these nutrients can stall your biochemical machinery, kick your blood sugar levels out of balance and set you up for insulin resistance.

- 9) Veg Out with Sea Veggies.** Eating too many processed foods or foods grown in mineral-depleted soil can result in a lack of minerals in the body, leading to cravings for salty or sugary foods. But by eating seaweed or sea vegetables you can alleviate cravings and balance out your energy levels. Also, refined sugar actually depletes minerals from your body that you can replenish by adding in some seaweed. Sea vegetables include hijiki, arame, kombu, wakame, kelp, dulse and nori. Simply sprinkle some dulse flakes on your salad or an avocado, and contrary to what you may think, it doesn't taste seaweed-y at all; in fact you won't even notice it. You can also add seaweed to your soups and stews or sprinkle it on popcorn (in place of table salt) for a rich salty and mineral flavor.

- 10) Spice It Up.** Sweet spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and cardamom naturally reduce your cravings for sweets. Cinnamon is a powerful herb for regulating blood sugar – sprinkle it where you can! Cardamom (the spice found in your chai latte) is another delicious spice with a pungent sweet aroma that is particularly good for digesting fats in sweet desserts.

- 11) Burst It Out.** Exercise might be the most powerful medicine to manage blood sugar levels and make your cells more insulin sensitive. Now remember in the introduction, I promised that you could cure your cravings and balance your blood sugar without sweating your behind off? I still stand by that promise so for those of you rolling your eyes thinking here comes the cardio pitch, you can stop. We now know that 60 minutes of chronic cardio actually spikes your cortisol (main stress hormone) levels and is literally signaling your body to deposit more fat around the belly! So instead of putting in that long hour on the treadmill, go for high intensity interval training (HIIT) or burst training that you can do in as little 15 minutes a day. And you only need one hour per week so the "I don't have time" excuse simply won't fly.

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A study in the *Journal of Obesity* found that HIIT or burst training helped decrease fasting insulin and reduce insulin resistance. Combining burst training with weight resistance provides the most effective, efficient way to normalize blood sugar and insulin which means those cravings will no longer rule your life. (11)

12) Find Your Sacred Pause Button. Many of my clients deliberately engineer their lives running from task to task on that hamster wheel of activity so they don't have to pause to examine what they're running from...sounds familiar? If we say we're too busy, we're setting ourselves up for being unable to slow down, especially women, who are addicted to busy-ness and just can't or won't stop. Can you relate?

A stressful lifestyle in which you are working too hard, worrying too much, and sleeping too little results in high levels of the stress hormones, cortisol and epinephrine. And these stress hormones cause you to crave sugar and pack on the pounds. Ever noticed how you suddenly crave sugar after a stressful meeting or a stressful encounter?

Conversely, have you ever been on a vacation, eaten more than you normally do and yet lost weight? That's because on vacations we do something highly usual: We relax. We put down our mask. Our frame of mind shifts signaling our brain to flip from chronic Fight or Flight aka sympathetic dominance to its counter opposite called Rest and Digest aka parasympathetic system. Think of the sympathetic nervous system as the gas and parasympathetic as the brakes. And all healing and regenerations happens when you press the brakes and find your pause button.



The next time you notice yourself looping in a dramatic narrative about what is wrong with you, about what someone did or didn't do or say, about how you're not being 'seen' by others, or how unworkable your life situation is, just stop. Love yourself enough to... just... stop...

Wash your inner landscape by giving yourself the gift of the sacred pause. Come back into the vastness, the slowness, and the raging intelligence of your body in the here and now, and ask: what feeling-state am I trying to get away from? Through all of the scrambling, the shaming, the blaming, the storytelling, the interpreting, the attribution of cause, the attempts at understanding, what is finally being asked to be met, in this moment? And will I love myself enough to finally turn toward it?

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Just connect with the aliveness of your own body, with the majesty of listening, of seeing, of touching the ground, of witnessing an exquisite sunset mingling your awareness with the sky and the luminous display of the sensory world? Find a way to hit your sacred pause button through yoga, meditation, deep breathing. **Slow way down for one moment to allow this old narrative of 'there is something wrong' to fall away into the ocean of loving awareness.**

Stop and notice how you're breathing right now in this moment by putting your hand on your belly. See if your hand goes out on your inhale and back in on the exhale. If you're like most people, you breathe from your chest cavity alone and your hand doesn't move at all.

When we breathe shallow all day, similar to a rabbit, emergency “sensors” alert the body that we’re under attack and need a constant flow of adrenaline and cortisol. Instead, when you breathe into the lower lobes, calming sensors tell your body to relax. Deep belly breathing is one of the simplest and most powerful ways to hit that pause button. So, the next time you feel your stress ratcheting up, instead of reaching for your secret stash of candy, try this Falling Leaf exercise, and you'll immediately feel more relaxed:

Falling Leaf Exercise

Stand up with legs shoulder width apart and just notice what your body feels like. Are you feeling light or heavy? Can you concentrate or do you feel tired? Now with eyes closed, imagine this magical leaf floating above your head. Breathe in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth (making a wind sound). Keep breathing and now let the leaf fall into your head, past your eyes, throat, heart, stomach, intestines and let it land at the base of your spine. Just notice what it feels like. Keep breathing and you should notice that your posture changes or you feel more grounded/connected in your body.

13) Boost Your Nitric Oxide (NO) Levels. NO is the über neurotransmitter produced by everything from pleasurable thoughts to eating veggies. Think about the last time you rocked your newborn in your arms or went gaga over your new puppy. Were you craving sugar or some other legal way to get high? No. You felt high on life—emotionally full—and probably thought very little about food.

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To recover from sugar addiction, you need alternative activities that raise your NO levels. Think pleasure. You can set the stage for self-pleasuring starting with a luxuriating activity like drawing a bubble bath, reading a steamy novel, creating a sexy playlist or playing with your dog. Dance like no one is watching. Or do something you've always wanted to do—and find a new social group to do it with. What gives you that pleasure factor?

At the Institute for Integrative Nutrition where I received my training, a cornerstone of our acclaimed curriculum is something called primary food. What's that? It doesn't come on a plate but feeds you at a very deep level. We all hunger for play, fun, freedom, touch, intimacy, self-expression, adventure, spirituality. These primary foods feed our souls and our hunger for living. When they're balanced and satiating, life itself feeds us, making the food on our plates secondary. Can you remember a time you were blissfully "in the zone" on a passion project you were birthing, like a new company/venture and you were so nourished by the energy of that project that food never even came to your mind? **That's the essence of primary food because a full and fulfilling life doesn't ever get served up on a plate.**

We eat for exquisitely good reasons but often it's not from physical hunger...going back to my cupcake obsessed client that I mentioned in the introduction, when I asked her how that red velvet cupcake made her feel, she said "I feel calm, I feel loved, and in control." So, here's a radical idea. How about giving yourself permission--just for a minute--to want what you really want? To want love. To want calm.

At the end of a long workday, we sometimes turn to a sweet cocktail or sinfully cold and creamy, chocolate gelato when we're really just looking for a hug or someone to hear us out. So instead of trying to anesthetize yourself with food, trying to find comfort at the bottom of Ben & Jerry's Cherry Garcia, can you perhaps talk to a sweet friend, go for a walk in nature, smell a sweet flower or relax with the sweet aroma of an essential oil? What can you do to nourish your life and add sweetness from non-food sources?

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If you want to let go of some of the metabolic fatigue caused by too much sugar in the diet, then find ways to make your life more sugary. Notice the sweetness that's already there. Notice the love, the people, the smiles, and the support. Add a little more sweetness to everything you give to the world. Be the sweetness that you crave!

Experiment with whatever helps you connect with your body and make a menu of these non-food ways aka primary foods that you can add sweetness and joy to your life and clip it on your fridge. That menu may include activities like calling your BFF; taking your dog for a walk; getting a massage or giving yourself a massage; sending your partner an "I love you text". The choices are endless and unique to whatever turns you on inside out. The next time you're feeling some inexplicable urges, go a little deeper within. Simply bring awareness to what your body, mind and soul are really hungry for. Is it primary or secondary food? And what happens when you substitute one for the other?

Did you know that #1 root cause of emotional eating is holding on to past grievances? Studies show that "unforgiveness" leads to stress, weight gain and insatiable cravings. You can release your past hurt, anger and resentment without condoning what happened and this act of letting go will allow you to permanently end your habitual pattern of emotional eating and binging.

Try it...it's a game changer!

14) Separate Food from Emotion. Remember to differentiate between physical vs. emotional hunger and be aware of our culture's obsession with sugar, reward and holidays. Around the holidays, the word "treat" is something that you feel guilty about, so redefine what the word "treat" means to you. Will gorging on sugary pies and cakes really make you feel good? Approach a treat as something that makes you feel wonderful and is nourishing to your body. Make it a conscious choice vs. a battle of willpower.

Also look for patterns of stressors and rewards. Often we deprive and deny ourselves during the day – both with food choices AND with saying 'Yes' to too many people, or by taking on too much. If you give and give and give all day, you are going to want to receive at the end to restore yourself. After all, life is all about that reciprocal dance of giving and receiving, right? Often the cycle is to emotionally shut down in front of the TV or Facebook and reward oneself with wine or chocolate. Where can you adjust your choices during the day so you are not so depleted at the end of it? What can you do (or not do) to increase your joy? You can start by speaking the language of 'no' which can be a beautiful word, every bit as beautiful as 'yes'. Start saying 'no' to those old habits that rob you of your energy (like sugar).

Did you know that your thoughts are your BIGGEST endocrine disruptors? Do you keep having certain recurring, negative memes playing this tired song in your head, like, "I'll never break my addiction to sugar" or "This weight loss thing is so hard." Your immune system is constantly eavesdropping on your thoughts and then creates the disease chemistry to manifest that into reality. Now, the quickest way to change your physical being is through sound, and by that I mean, the sound of your own words/thoughts.

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As my favorite author Elizabeth Gilbert said, "A life has been entrusted to you. That life is your own. Please treat it with tenderness. We sometimes forget this and say awful things about ourselves— about how pathetic, how lazy, how fat, how ugly, what a failure, what an idiot, what a loser, what a coward, and why can't you get it together?"

We put ourselves into dreadful circumstances, and then refuse to leave. We allow ourselves to be abused, or sometimes we practice ritualistic self-abuse. We force ourselves to work until we almost collapse from exhaustion. We deny ourselves sleep and care and healthy food and sunlight. We sabotage our good opportunities, and keep returning to our most harmful behaviors and addictions.

But here's the million dollar question: Why would you treat any life so terribly, if that life has been entrusted into your care?

Imagine this: Imagine adopting an animal from the rescue shelter, and then treating it as badly as you sometimes treat yourself. Imagine calling that poor animal names. Imagine forcing it to stay in dangerous, toxic, or degrading situations. Imagine not taking it outside for walks in the fresh air and sunshine. Denying it sleep or healthy exercise. Feeding it toxic substances like sugar that damage its health horribly. Blaming it for everything. Yelling at it. Forgiving it for nothing. Denying it grace and love.

You would never do this to another life form. And yet you do it to yourself.

It's time to notice your inner dialogue and make a commitment to love up your self-talk because guilt and shame are a war we wage on ourselves and it's time to drop the knife you've been holding to your own throat. It's time to create a safe home for yourself. It's time to give your poor inner animal some loving care.

"and I said to my
body, softly. ' I want to
be your friend.' it took a
long breath and replied,
' I have been waiting my
whole life for this' "

Nayyirah Waheed

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What does that look like? Well for starters, when you're struggling with making healthy choices: burger/fries or salad; doughnuts/cereal or smoothie, ask yourself the question, "What is the choice I would make if I really loved myself?" Give yourself the same love, attention and tenderness that you would bestow on your beloved child/pet.

Many of my clients often comment that loving themselves seems narcissistic. But actually it's the opposite. Because when you fill yourself up--nourished, fueled and bringing your A-game--you are interacting with the world as your highest and best self. Think of it like a champagne fountain with the glass on top and when you fill that till it overflows, the layer of glasses beneath it fill up and when that layer overflows, the layer underneath fills up and so on. When your tank is full, you have so much more to give to your kids, partner, colleagues and others. So the big question is how exactly do you go about loving yourself and nourishing your needs from the inside out so you don't turn to sugar to fill that gaping hole in your soul? Try this...

Love Yourself Like Your Life Depends On It: The Mirror Exercise

This exercise was made famous by Louise Hay and all you need is a mirror of any size and the willingness to show up honestly every day. While brushing your teeth every morning, gaze at your eyes in the mirror and say, "I love myself." "I love myself." Set a timer on your smart phone and do this EVERYDAY for 5 minutes and watch what happens. At first, it feels really awkward, you won't believe yourself but commit to doing it anyways. It's like when you first start working out at the gym after years of a sedentary lifestyle. It's painful. A lot of stuff comes up and the gunk is loosening up from your muscles, fascia and tissues. Be patient with yourself.



You'll notice after a while, the way you start looking yourself in the eyes . . . It's like looking at someone you love. Like your partner or kids. And you're now looking at yourself the same way. It's the gift you give someone when you love them, you're now gifting yourself with that same look, that same love. As the writer Sahaj Kohli once wrote: **"The fact that someone else loves you doesn't rescue you from the project of loving yourself."**

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Have you noticed that it's uncomfortable to look at yourself or someone in the eyes? Not just a cursory glance but genuinely look them in the eye for a minute. That's because the eyes are the windows to the soul and when you're staring at someone in the eyes, you recognize that there is a soul behind this human form (replete with hair and makeup). And it brings out love. But we've been conditioned to feel uncomfortable with love. And that's why when we look at someone in the eyes, we often glance away.

But if you do this mirror exercise diligently for five minutes every day, you will start to connect with yourself in a very visceral, primal way and you will no longer be able to escape from yourself. That disapproving lens that you used to scrutinize and criticize yourself is washed away and replaced with this loving lens, so you no longer crave that "love" you got from sugar.

And things start to shift. You start connecting with yourself in a more beautiful, soulful way and that's when the magic happens. YOU can do this. Please believe me. You can take on this project. This project of learning how to love your poor, tired addicted to sugar self. But you can only do it if you can see yourself as worthy of love. And slowly — this self-love will teach you how to truly love others, and how to be loved by others because you cannot offer wholehearted love to the world if you do not also practice it on yourself. **Bonus tip: Set a reminder on your smart phone to go off at least 5 times a day with the message, "Don't forget to love yourself, no matter what."**

15) Seek Out Support. In my professional experience, what usually stops people from quitting sugar or pursuing other health goals and dreams is that stepping out and trying something new feels unfamiliar and scary...so even though they may not be totally happy with their health/body they subconsciously do what they can to stay there because they find comfort in the predictability. If you've ever felt this fear (or perhaps you're feeling it now) one of the best ways to overcome it so that you can spring into action is to surround yourself with the right support.

That force in your corner, that voice that helps you see your progress as well as where you are getting off track and reminds you it's normal to feel awkward because you're doing something new.

When you commit to doing it differently and finding a smart, strategic approach that fits you and your life, one of the most powerful tools you can add is ongoing work with a health coach who knows the ropes, is invested in helping you achieve your goals, and who has expertise in breaking out of ruts and doing it differently. Especially when it comes to beliefs: **Beliefs and mindset are a hard thing to tackle alone (when you are stuck inside a set way of thinking). We all have blind spots. And the hard part is when we can't see what it is that we can't see!**

While this eBook is a great tool to get started, I've developed a proven system, including bite-sized diet/lifestyle changes along with targeted herbs, supplements and laser coaching to ensure your sweet success without sugar. Go to www.zen-trition.com/book-now/ to schedule your complimentary breakthrough consultation today.

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Purge Your Pantry/Fridge & Make Simple Swaps

You now have all this knowledge about refined vs. whole grains and simple vs. complex carbs along with all the different names that sugar hides behind, but to integrate this knowledge into your day-to-day life and turn it into action, you have to purge your pantry and fridge. You have to remove all the grains, flours, breads, sugars, boxed food, prepackaged meals, processed junk, pastas, cookies, crackers, chips, and candy that occupy both physical and mental space. But here's the beauty of this detox: I've created fabulous swaps for your favorite foods. Nothing is cut from your diet without being replaced so you never feel deprived. Don't be surprised if you like the swaps better anyway—doesn't a sauce made with fresh tomatoes, basil, and olive oil sound a heck of a lot better than a sugar-filled jar of boring marinara?

This could quite possibly be the most critical action you take, as purging your pantry and fridge and replacing the sugary, processed crap with intelligent swaps, you physically remove the temptation to stray and lapse back into old, unhealthy habits. When a craving hits during the first week (and believe me they will) it will be harder to stick to your guns if chocolate chip cookies and ice cream are there to seduce you. It's easy to think that you will just stop buying these foods once you've used them up, but this soon becomes a vicious cycle. You'll have to buy more tortillas just to use up the taco mix or more bread to use the last bit of jelly.

The old saying “out of sight, out of mind” is very true here, and the transition phase will be much easier if you ditch the following foods from your pantry and refrigerator (get a few Hefty trash bags ready) and replace with the following: [BTW, when I say toss out, I mean toss out of the pantry and fridge and in the general direction of a Hefty bag or box for delivering to a food bank. You may be worried about insulin spikes and tallying glycemic indexes while scores of others are worrying about more important things... like hunger, so turn this purging project into a donation.



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DITCH	REPLACE WITH
Processed cereal, granola boxes/bags	Whole oats or quinoa
Any snacks that come in a package, think chips, crackers, cookies	Kale chips; Raw nuts/seeds; dried seaweed
Processed peanut butter	Raw nut butters, like almond, cashew
Artificial sweeteners, such as Nutrasweet, Equal, Sweet n low	Stevia
White sugar, raw sugar, turbinado, cane sugar, agave nectar, date sugar, maple syrup, brown rice syrup & anything with HFCS	Stevia, raw honey (use sparingly)
White rice	Brown rice, quinoa, buckwheat
White flour	Almond or coconut flour
White pasta	Quinoa pasta, Buckwheat noodles, kelp noodles
White or Wholegrain bread	Paleo Coconut Wraps
Most canned goods other than fish (tuna, sardines) or veggies	Seasonal fresh produce
Skim pasteurized milk	Nut milks, like almond or coconut milk; replace processed
Soy milk or any type of processed soy, such as tofu	Fermented soy, like miso, natto
Low-fat yogurt with fruit	Coconut yogurt
Hard cheeses made with cow's milk	Raw cheese or Nut cheeses (almond, cashew, macadamia)
Commercial eggs	Organic, free-range pastured eggs
Commercial meats	Organic grass-fed beef or organic chicken
Commercial milk chocolate or candy of any kind	Organic raw cacao or dark chocolate with 70% cacao
Ketchup, fat-free dressings, jams/jellies, commercial marinara sauce	Balsamic vinegar/lemon (or any do-it-yourself dressing) & home-made tomato sauce
Any type of oil that comes from a food that doesn't produce an oil when squeezed (corn, canola, sunflower, safflower)	Organic unrefined coconut oil, ghee, grass fed butter
Pasteurized fruit juices (orange)	Coconut water or plain spring water
Any type of soda, especially diet soda	Water, green tea, kombucha, coconut water

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Additional Tips on Purging:

- Anything that comes in a box, bag or packaged meal needs to be replaced with fresh seasonal fruits, vegetables, i.e. anything that comes out of the ground or tree or from an animal (Stick with clean organic grass-fed animal protein or plant protein and stay away from the commercial stuff that's loaded with pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics and GMO hybrids)
- If it contains grains, sugars, chemicals, ingredients you can't pronounce or has artificial colors/dyes, preservatives, such as MSG that doesn't exist in nature, it goes straight into your Hefty bag
- If it has more than five ingredients or ingredients that you don't know what they are or your grandmother wouldn't know what they are (think Go-Gurt & Lunchables, as these are fake food monstrosities engineered by food scientists and don't count as real food)
- If it says "low-fat" or "Heart healthy whole grains"
- Margarine, any type of fake butter spread, non-dairy creamers
- Soy milk, soy spreads or any soy products (except fermented soy, such as miso, natto and tempeh are allowed)
- Anything with trans-fats, hydrogenated fats
- If it boldly proclaims no trans-fats or makes any type of health claim on the front of the box, it's a junk food marketed as healthy! The FDA allows food manufacturers to have up to 0.5 grams of trans fats and still advertise no trans fats on the front of the box, so you have to look for hydrogenated in the ingredients list and don't be duped by the health claim on the front.

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Fuel Your Body With Recipes that Balance Your Blood Sugar

Blood Sugar Balancing Formula that won't spike your blood sugar:

- Use protein and fat at each meal as they stabilize your blood sugar levels and keep you satiated for hours; you can mix and match from the below columns as desired
- Include non-starchy veggies at each meal for the fiber
- Gluten free whole grains are optional*
- Dairy is optional if you can tolerate it (keep in mind that dairy is a mucus-forming inflammatory food that is a top allergen for many, so eat at your own risk)



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ANIMAL PROTEIN Eat at every meal	PLANT PROTEIN (For vegans) Eat at every meal	FAT Eat at every meal	VEGGIES These are the carbs found in nature, so eat as many as you like at each meal (aim for at least 2 handfuls per meal)	FRUIT Eat 1 serving only in morning or as a snack; limit to 1-2 pieces of low or moderate GI fruit fructose chart)	GF (gluten-free) grains* Optional: Eat 1 serving preferably at dinner
Any type of wild fish (salmon, mahi mahi, sardines) 6-8 oz per meal	Any type of beans or legumes—1 cup per meal	Avocado ¼ - ½ per meal	Any type of veggies, but make sure to incorporate dark, leafy greens such as kale, spinach, swiss chard, broccoli, collard greens, bok choy etc. Green Smoothie in the am is the easiest way to get all your greens in a delicious way! Aim for a rainbow of colors. Eat them raw, steamed, roasted, pureed; or in soups:	Berries get a free pass in every culture and are a great option for smoothies as they reduce the GI of the entire shake. Goji berries get bonus points due to their high protein and antioxidant values. Avoid high GI fruits like banana, pineapple, mangos.	Quinoa 1 cup at dinner (high serotonin makes you sleep better!)
Eggs 2 per meal	Chia seeds or hemp seeds—1 cup per meal	Coconut cream 1-2 tbsp per meal			Basmati Rice or Wild Rice 1 cup per meal
Turkey, chicken 5-6 oz per meal	2 scoops raw hemp or pea protein (I like Nutiva Hemp, Garden of Life Raw Protein or Sun Warrior Protein powders)	Olives 1-2 tbsp per meal			Amaranth, Millet or Buckwheat 1 cup per meal
Any type of shellfish (shrimp, lobster, crab) 5-6 oz per meal		Olive oil – 1 tbsp Almond butter – 1 tbsp (use olive oil raw in salads and not for cooking as it oxidizes with heat)			Cooked oatmeal (plain rolled oats or steel cut) 1 cup per meal
Lean red meat grass-fed beef or pork up to 5 oz per meal		Coconut oil – 1 tbsp per meal (Cook all your meals in coconut oil or ghee as it doesn't oxidize at high temps)			
2 scoops Vital Choice Collagen Peptides		Raw almonds or any raw nuts or seeds 1 oz serving per meal or snack			
		Butter 1 ½-2 tbsp			

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***Why Gluten Free?** Many people have unknown food sensitivities to our hybridized GMO wheat that leads to silent inflammation and a host of degenerative diseases. But even if you don't have any allergies/sensitivities to gluten, I highly recommend eschewing gluten in all its forms (think bread, pasta, crackers, many sauces, marinades etc) because whole wheat bread or pasta will spike your blood sugar higher than sucrose (table sugar)! This in turn causes a spike in insulin, a hormone that is extremely efficient at converting carbohydrates into fat (especially abdominal fat) on the body. Gluten containing foods are also the biggest culprit in triggering reactive hypoglycemia (unlike hypoglycemia, reactive hypoglycemia is *not* a direct response to skipping meals or consuming processed carbs).

Wheat is also an appetite stimulant due to its chemical makeup; so if you eat gluten you'll likely consume an average of 400 excess calories per day compared to those who avoid gluten. And like sugar, gluten stimulates the opiate receptors in the brain and is equally addictive; after the high comes the crash, and then the cravings for more!

Solution: Stick with gluten-free grains such as quinoa, amaranth, millet, buckwheat and /wild rice. *These gf grains are great with your evening meal because they boost your serotonin levels, so you'll sleep much better at night and feel calmer.*

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7-Step Summary for Sweet Success

- 1) Eat Low Glycemic REAL Food.** The goof proof test for real food is that if it comes from the ground or moves around, so fish move around and broccoli comes from the ground. Apples come from the ground, but not so much with apple sauce or candied apples. Food has to have life to give us life. Get it. Simple, right? Think of it this way, if someone from an indigenous tribe came to your house and looked in your refrigerator or pantry, they would be familiar with fruits and veggies or nuts/seeds or a piece of steak, but they wouldn't recognize the Cap'n Crunch, Wonder bread, or those 100 Cal snack packs or lunchables or Go-kurt or other food-like processed monstrosities that are so denatured and removed from the earth that your body does not recognize them as food. As Jack Lalane said, "I never eat anything that comes in a wrapper." Prophetic advice from a nutrition icon.

Remember food is not just food. Food is information that controls your gene expression, hormones and metabolism and has the power to turn ON the healthy genes and turn OFF the disease genes that create metabolic mayhem, cancer and other degenerative diseases.

This current 2017 version of your body is basically a printout of all the foods you've eaten, so get rid of all the processed refined sweets and junk the juice, soda, alcohol and other liquid calories that are making you fatigued, cranky and aging before your time. Choose low glycemic real foods as outlined in the blood sugar formula to trade in for a shiner, svelte, vibrant new model. And it's incredibly empowering to know that you can change this printout and not be a victim of your genes.

Believe me, you've lost touch with what constitutes "sweet" but once you start adopting this way of eating, you'll retrain your taste buds to be more sensitive to the subtle sweetness found in vanilla or berries and you'll start to appreciate the natural sweetness courtesy of Mother Nature. You'll see that not having sugar in your life is not depressing. In fact, your crazy mood swings and emotional ups and downs are due to the rise and fall of blood sugar and once sugar loses its grip on you, your moods will stabilize.

- 2) Eat a Protein Powered Breakfast within an Hour of Waking Up.** This will set you up for "normal" blood sugar for the rest of the day. And make sure you eat protein-fat-fiber at each meal to keep your blood sugar even keel. In general, build your meals around non-starchy veggies, protein and fat so you're literally too full for dessert (including fruit). Fruit is not a free food...today's hybridized apples are sugar bombs that can contain 20+ grams of fructose. Remember: Carbs=Sugar=Insulin=Fat Storage. By loading up on non-starchy veggies, you are creating the hormone signaling to increase insulin sensitivity and maintain stable blood sugar.

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3) Hydrate Throughout The Day. Drink half your body weight in ounces. Remember the body's signals for dehydration often masquerade as hunger so check in and ask yourself, "am I really hungry or is my body low on fluids?"

4) Move/Play with NEAT. Are you a victim of the sitting disease? The human body was designed for movement, but we now spend an average of 10 to 15 hours a day sitting in our cars, at our desk, watching TV and browsing the internet. Most experts (including yours truly) encourage the application of body weight exercise several times a week but what I've found in my practice, however, is that it's the little things that make the biggest difference. **It's those small hinges that swing open big doors and it's about working out smart, not hard.**

NEAT stands for Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis. This is the energy we expend each day for everything that is not sleeping, eating, or sports-like activities. Your body literally burns calories for a living, and is designed to be a fat burning machine but extended inactivity is actually a depressant for thermogenesis and for your brain.

Nix the chronic cardio and over exercising which is actually making you pack on more belly fat! Chronic (60+ minutes of constant) cardio causes cortisol poisoning and we actually have 4 times as many cortisol receptors around our belly than anywhere else in the body. And the cortisol spike will in turn spark sugar cravings because cortisol is a glucocorticoid, a fancy term meaning its main job is to raise glucose. This is why I frequently have women in my practice lamenting that they're working out fast furious with their trainers, but that muffin top won't budge or is getting larger.

A better choice is more adaptive exercise such as burst training or HIIT (high intensity interval training) and I love the Tabata style protocol where you work out to your max capacity for 20 seconds (think jump squats) and then recover for 10 seconds so you can get an effective HIIT or Tabata style workout in as little as 4-16 min per day and only need 1 hour per week vs. putting in long hours on that treadmill daily.

You get bonus points for repetitive movements, like rocking, knitting, sweeping, vacuuming etc. that fire up your serotonin production and cut cravings.

5) Catch the Curve—don't lose when you snooze. Every single hormone we produce is synced up to the natural bio-circadian rhythms that exist in nature establishing biochemical peaks and valleys, similar to how a flower opens and closes during a 24-hr cycle. Our cortisol (main stress hormone) level varies throughout the day, being highest upon waking. Usually between 6-8 am we get a burst of cortisol called the CAR (cortisol awakening response) and that's why it's known as the "get up and go" hormone. And then it should be a gentle downhill slope being its lowest at night around 10-11 pm. So you want to aim to catch the curve when cortisol is at its lowest, but if you're banging out emails, socializing on Facebook or binge watching *Game of Thrones* then you catch that 2nd wind which is no good as you get that tired but wired feeling that leads to compromised sleep which in turn sparks cravings. And there's probably nothing that will help your stress induced cravings more than making fabulous and reparative sleep a top priority.

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- 6) **Create Sacred Book Ends, to Start and End Your Day, with Conscious Awareness.** Our lower brain, the amygdala, is still concerned with survival looking out over the Serengeti being on guard and wondering what's going to kill us. You need to switch out of that Fight or Flight survival mechanism because there is no real and present danger to going to work or taking your kids to school etc.

So just set aside 10 minutes in the morning and night to rewire your brain for a different experience. Set an intention to serve but to do it with joy so you don't get sucked into a tidal wave of hyper reactivity and just doing, doing, doing, putting out the fires of the day. Morning options could be 5 minutes of deep belly breathing, meditation or Falling Leaf exercise.

Just like your kids have a bedtime ritual to signal the body for sleep, you need it just as much. Bedtime should be a sacred ritual that calms and soothes your nervous system. My favorite way to end the day is a hot bath with 2 cups of magnesium sulfate (Epsom salts), 1 cup baking soda, 10 drops of lavender essential oil (proven to lower cortisol by 23%) and 5 drops of geranium essential oil (also reduces stress) followed by an inversion. Any time your feet are above the level of your heart, with your legs straight up against the wall at a 90-degree angle, you activate your parasympathetic nervous system, the counterbalance to Fight or Flight, to get your body primed for restful, reparative sleep.

Ritualization is key as then you don't have to think about it and it just becomes second nature. It's key to make it automatic and design your environment and day so you stack up the conditions for success.

- 7) **Keep a Food Diary.** What you measure, improves! So before you start, weigh yourself and get a tape measure and also record your waist measurement at its smallest circumference above your belly button. Anything more than 35 inches (if you're a woman) and more than 40 inches (if you're a man) indicates insulin resistance. And then keep a food diary throughout this program as a way of tuning into your body and learning to listen to its messages, jot down what you eat and record any symptoms you are experiencing and to what degree, such as bloating, gas, moodiness, bowel movements, energy, mood etc.

Sit quietly after you eat and reflect. Note how your energy level, your moods and your physical symptoms are affected by the food in your body. Steer clear of any negative judgments if they arise or if you feel guilty for consuming a "forbidden" food. Remember, recording this info will help you see the connection between what you eat and how you feel emotionally and physically and help you sustain new habits. And don't just record the "good" days...you must write it ALL down. You can download a sample journal page at www.zen-trition.com/journal

Record your wins. When you track your symptoms and look back, you'll realize how much progress you've made—the headaches, mood swings, fatigue, bloating, acne—and that your old normal and new normal are miles apart. Otherwise it's easy to forget all the progress you've already made and just focus on how far you've yet to come. Energy goes where attention flows, so it's critical to acknowledge your body and celebrate all the small and big ways it IS working for you, versus only focusing on the last 10 pounds you still have to shed.

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Remember, you may experience headaches, joint aches or fatigue initially during this detox; but don't give up. This is normal as the toxins are being expelled from your body and this is called the die-off or Herxheimer reaction and is merely an indication that the program is working. But don't be afraid to reach out for additional support. Make sure and schedule your 30-minute complimentary Cravings Cure consultation at <http://www.zen-trition.com/book-now/> so we can address these issues together and develop a personalized strategy to sustain your sweet success without sugar. You don't have to do this alone!

RECIPES

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BREAKFAST OPTIONS

Nanalicious Smoothie

(This emerald green beauty is so satisfying and detoxifying that it will have you coming back for more)

Ingredients:

- 2 fistfuls of organic greens (I like Power to the Greens with baby kale, spinach and chard) or any dark leafy greens of your choice
- 1/2 frozen banana
- ¼ cup frozen pineapple
- 10 oz unsweetened almond or coconut milk or spring water
- 2 scoops clean protein powder (I like Vital Proteins Collagen Peptides)
- A handful of raw cashews to amp up the protein/fat content to keep you satiated



Directions:

Always add water/nut milk first, then veggies, followed by fruit with nuts/seeds last. If you have a powerful blender, like Vitamix or Nutribullet, you can blend it all at once.

Tip: You can make a gazillion combinations/permutations of the basic green smoothie by adding in 2-3 pieces of fruit, 2 cups leafy greens (any variety) and 2 cups water or nut milk. Eating/drinking the same thing over and over stagnates our bodies and minds and sparks cravings, so desist from using your tried and tested greens and same old fruit. Experiment with beet greens, carrot tops or any exotic fruit you find at your farmer's market. Sometimes I pour my green smoothie into a bowl, add a little salt, garlic, lemon and eat the savory "cold soup" with a spoon. So experiment and find the flavor profile that makes you come alive !

Bonus Tip: Pucker Up! Prior to making your green smoothie in the morning, always start your day with 12-16 oz of fresh water with the juice of half a lemon. Remember, hydration is key for keeping cravings at bay. Warm lemon water is used in many ancient remedies to alleviate digestive distress, support liver detoxification, normalize digestive juices, and reduce intestinal bloating.



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BREAKFAST OPTIONS

ChocoBerry Smoothie

(Sweet, chocolatey and creamy... this always hits the spot)

Ingredients:

- 2 fistfuls of your choice of greens (baby spinach or chard works well)
- 1/2 frozen banana
- 1 cup mixed fresh strawberries/raspberries
- 10 oz unsweetened coconut milk or spring water (adjust for desired thickness)
- Splash of coconut cream
- 2 tablespoons raw, organic cacao (chocolate in its raw form)
- 2 scoops clean protein powder of choice (I like Vital Proteins Collagen Peptides as it has no taste and is cold water soluble)
- 1 fistful of raw cashews to amp up the protein/fat content to keep you satiated
- 3-5 drops of stevia or dollop of raw honey (as needed to sweeten & balance out the bitterness of the raw chocolate)
- Optional: 1-2 teaspoons maca root powder (maca root is an adaptogen that is legendary for balancing your hormones)
- Optional: Couple of ice cubes as needed



Directions:

Blend all ingredients. Always pour nut milk or water first and then add veggies, fruits and nuts on top to thoroughly blend into a creamy consistence. You can add water as needed to make it thinner or thicker as you like it. Always taste and adjust for desired thickness, sweetness etc. Make it your own divine elixir!

Bonus Tip: The raw cacao is like rocket fuel, a superfood that's also a natural stimulant that will give you a nice pep without the jitters from caffeine. It's also an appetite suppressant for those of you seeking to shed some pounds! But be warned, the cacao is a stimulant and may disturb your sleep, so it's best to get your raw cacao fix in the morning or by early afternoon.

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BREAKFAST OPTIONS

Berry Merry Quinoa

(This is a great way to use leftover quinoa and power up your morning with this protein-rich grain)

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup of Quinoa
- Raspberries
- 1 table spoon of raw almond butter (or substitute with any raw nut butter like cashew)
- 2 tablespoons raw unsweetened cacao powder
- Dash of cinnamon, nutmeg and cardamom

Directions:

Bring 1 cup of water to boil, then add the quinoa and continue simmering over medium heat for 10 minutes (quinoa should always be soaked overnight or at least 6-8 hrs to eliminate the bitter saponin coating and to eliminate the anti-nutrients). Mix with raw cacao powder, nut butter, berries and spices.



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BREAKFAST OPTIONS

Coco-Apple Pancake

(Green Smoothies for breakfast are the easiest way to crowd out sugary, processed stuff, but on colder winter mornings, you may want some heatier, warming options such as this delicious fragrant pancake)

Ingredients:

- 1 small apple
- 2 eggs
- 1 tbsp butter or ghee (ghee is clarified butter; it's a highly prized and nourishing fat that's considered "liquid gold" by Ayurvedic physicians)
- 2 tbsp shredded coconut (organic, unsweetened, unsulfured)
- Dash of cinnamon & cardamom

Inspired by Galya Denzel



Directions:

Grate the apple, squeeze the excess liquid out (and yes you can drink the juice, its delicious). In a pan over medium heat, melt half the butter/ghee and cook the apple, coconut and cinnamon/cardamom, until soft. In a bowl, mix the eggs with the cooked apple and coconut and stir. Return to the pan and cook on both sides in the remaining butter.

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LUNCH OPTIONS

Spiced Chocolate Chia Pudding

(This creamy, slightly crunchy chia pudding is another hit with kids and adults. Maca & Cacao add in that vroom vroom factor and the berries and nibs floating in the pristine white pool of coconutty goodness makes this a sensual adventure for your taste buds)

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons chia seeds
- 2 cups unsweetened coconut milk (adjust as needed for thickness)
- 1 tablespoon raw cacao powder and/or raw cacao nibs
- ½ cup fresh raspberries
- 1 tablespoon maca powder
- 2 tablespoons Vital Proteins collagen peptides
- Pinch of cinnamon and cardamom
- 5-10 drops of few drops of SweetLeaf stevia drops in Vanilla Creme (vanilla raises your serotonin as soon as you smell it and tames those cravings)
- Optional: 2 tablespoons raw almond or cashew butter to amp up the protein/fat content

Inspired By Ania Ananda Fizyta



Directions:

Soak chia seeds in coconut milk and spices for at least 2 hours to soak up all the flavors. Chia seeds absorb up to 8 times their weight in water. After soaking, put mixture in pan on medium heat and add in cacao nibs, collagen peptides, almond butter and stevia till it's all blended. Serve with a sprinkling of fresh raspberries.

Did you know that these nutritious little seeds are great for fat loss? Chia seeds help stabilize blood sugar and improve your insulin sensitivity plus they're loaded with fiber and omega-3s and absorb eight times their weight in water, so they'll keep you full longer. All this from a tiny little seed, now that's what we call a superfood.

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LUNCH OPTIONS

Arugula & Chickpea Omelet

(Great post-work breakfast or anytime meal that's loaded with protein, fiber and is big on taste)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup chickpeas (canned)
- 1 cup wild arugula leaves
- 2 eggs
- 1 tablespoon ghee
- Pinch of Himalayan crystal salt and pepper
- Optional: Salsa or Plain Greek yogurt (if you tolerate dairy)

Inspired By Galya Denzel



Directions:

In a large bowl, mash the chickpeas, mix with the arugula and the grated cheese, break in the eggs and stir well. In a large pan, melt the ghee over medium heat. Season the omelet mixture. Pour carefully making sure the leaves and chickpeas are distributed evenly. Once it's cooked on the bottom, use a plate to flip back into the pan as it's quite heavy. Cook for an extra 3-4 minutes and serve immediately. You can serve as is, with tomato salsa or Greek yogurt. This omelet is a winner in both protein (packs a whopping 30 gms) and fiber (8 gms) content and will keep you satisfied and full through lunch.

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LUNCH OPTIONS

Super Banana Pancakes

(These nutrient dense pancakes are super easy to make and a hit with kids!)

Ingredients:

- 2 eggs
- ½ or 1 very ripe bananas (depending on how much banana flavor you like)
- 1/2 cup almond milk or any other nut milk alternative
- 3/4 cup blanched almond flour
- 1 cups oat flour (put whole rolled oats in the blender to make oat flour)
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- Pinch of sea salt
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil for frying



Directions:

Combine eggs, banana and milk in blender. Add flours, salt and baking soda and blend. Heat the coconut oil in a skillet, and make palm-size pancakes. Cook both sides until golden.

Healthy Toppings:

Try these alternatives to traditional syrup:

- Applesauce
- Grate apple right on top of pancake for a fresh topping.
- Apple Butter - Mmmm, luscious, sweet and rich but still packed with nutrients

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LUNCH OPTIONS

Quinoa Mint Salad

(A crunchy, minty salad for two that's big on taste and satisfaction and can be prepared in under 20 minutes)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup organic quinoa rinsed
- 2 cups boiling water
- 3 Tablespoons fresh mint leaves, finely cut chiffonade style
- 3/4 cup fresh cilantro, finely minced
- 2 medium organic tomatoes, diced
- 1 small cucumber, quartered
- 1/2 cup green onions, finely chopped
- 3 Tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1/4 cup EVO (extra virgin olive oil)
- 1 teaspoon Himalayan salt crystals
- 5 whole romaine lettuce leaves or any leaf lettuce



Directions:

Cook quinoa per package directions. When done, remove from the pan, place in a mixing bowl and fluff to cool. When cool, add all remaining ingredients and toss to mix thoroughly. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to allow the flavors to blend. Serve over a bed of crispy romaine lettuce leaves.

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LUNCH OPTIONS

Spicy Turkey Wraps

(A luscious, spicy ground turkey wrap makes a quick, savory lunch or dinner for 2 in 20 – 30 minutes)

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin coconut oil
- 1/2 yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 1 medium size carrot, julienned
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger root, minced
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon coriander
- 1/8 teaspoon turmeric
- Few dashes cayenne pepper (adjust to your taste)
- 1/8 teaspoon Himalayan crystal salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon cilantro, minced
- 5 ounces ground turkey
- Optional: 2 tablespoons vegetable broth (aids digestion and adds incredible flavor)
- 2 romaine lettuce leaves, rinsed (if making into wrap)
- 1/4 avocado, mashed with a fork
- 1/2 cup baby spinach, rinsed
- 1/2 cup watercress, rinsed

Inspired by Mona Sollar via drhyman.com



Directions:

- In a medium sauté pan, heat coconut oil over medium heat. Add onions and carrots and sauté until onions are translucent, about 5 minutes.
- Add garlic, ginger, cinnamon, coriander, turmeric, cayenne pepper, salt and pepper. Sauté over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes.
- Add the ground turkey, breaking it up into pieces with a spoon. Cook ground turkey until browned, about 6 to 8 minutes.
- Add 2 tablespoons of chicken or vegetable broth (optional) and cook for 1 minute.
- Reduce heat to medium-low and add fresh minced cilantro. Remove cooked turkey mixture from heat.
- Spread a layer of mashed avocado onto romaine lettuce leaf. Add spinach, watercress, turkey mixture and roll.

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LUNCH OPTIONS

Mint Shrimp with Garlicky Spinach

(Minty-spicy shrimp for two that will have your taste buds begging for more)

Ingredients:

For Shrimp

- 10-12 oz wild shrimp
- 10 oz organic baby spinach
- Fistful of fresh mint Leaves
- 8 cloves garlic
- 2" Ginger piece
- 1-2 Green Chilies (adjust for desired spiciness)

For Spinach

- 1 Tbsp coconut oil
- 2 Tbsp Lemon/Lime Juice (adjust as needed)
- ½ tsp Black Pepper
- ½ tsp Himalayan crystal salt



Directions:

- Defrost, wash, devein and pat dry shrimp.
- Add remaining ingredients into a blender and blend to a smooth paste.
- Coat Shrimp with ground mixture and marinate for minimum 2 hours in the refrigerator (can marinate up to overnight for added flavor).
- Broil in the oven (2 min each side) by arranging shrimp on a baking tray that is foil lined and lightly coated with oil or grill shrimp on an indoor grill like George Foreman
- While shrimp is cooking, sauté 4-5 cloves of garlic in some coconut oil for a couple of minutes till aroma is released. Add in baby spinach, salt, pepper and lemon juice and cook for 3 mins till the leaves just start to wilt
- Serve cooked shrimp on a bed of this garlicky spinach. (Alternatively, if you're in the mood for a big salad, you can simply add the shrimp on top of your favorite tossed salad)

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LUNCH OPTIONS

Stuffed Sun Tomatoes

(This colorful meal is a feast for the eyes as well as the taste buds)

Ingredients:

- 4 large ripe organic tomatoes with stems
- 3 cups sunflower seeds, soaked overnight and drained
- 1/4 cup cucumber, chopped
- 1/4 cup green onions, chopped
- 1/4 cup ripe red, yellow, or orange bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1/2 cup fresh basil, minced
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- 1/4 tsp. paprika

Inspired by Hallelujahacres.com



Directions:

- Cut tops off tomatoes, leaving the stem in place and set aside.
- Scoop out the pulp and seeds leaving 1/4 inch around the outside edge and bottom.
- Blend sunflower seeds with 1/2 of the tomato pulp and paprika until smooth.
- Mix remaining pulp, green onions, bell pepper, basil, and garlic into the blended mixture.
- Stuff tomatoes to the top and decorate with your favorite fresh minced herb.
- Carefully replace tops but be sure they are stuffed enough so that the stuffing shows under the lid
- Options: May add shredded carrots, chopped celery, or chopped nuts if not using sunflower seeds

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LUNCH OPTIONS

Thai Style Spicy Chicken Salad (Laab Gai)

(Exploding with minty, spicy lemony flavor, this is not your average chicken salad!)

Ingredients:

- Ground Chicken – 1 lb
- Lime Juice – from 1 large lime plus ore for garnishing
- Coconut oil – 1 tsp
- Tamari Sauce (or Fish Sauce) – 1 Tbsp plus more (to taste) for garnishing
- Rice – 1 Tbsp, dry roasted until brown and roughly crushed
- Shallot – 1 large, sliced thin
- Green Onions – 2 stalks, chopped
- Green Chilies – to taste, chopped
- Mint Leaves – handful, chopped
- Cilantro – handful, chopped
- Crushed Red Pepper – to taste
- Salt – optional, to taste



Directions:

- Add the juice of 1 lime to ground chicken, mix well allow to marinate for 5 minutes.
- Add Oil to a pan and heat on medium heat.
- Add Chicken and 1 Tbsp of Tamari or Fish Sauce.
- Mix and cook Chicken until no more pink is seen and all moisture has evaporated. Stir constantly.
- In a separate bowl, add Shallots, Green Chilies, Green Onions, Mint Leaves and Cilantro.
- Add cooked chicken and mix well.
- Add fresh lime juice to taste and additional Fish or Soy Sauce as needed.
- Add Crushed Red Pepper Flakes to taste and mix in Crushed Toasted Rice.
- Serve warm with crisp lettuce leaves.

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LUNCH OPTIONS

Kale Avocado Salad

(Don't be fooled by the simplicity of this salad! It's big on taste, texture and nutrients)

Ingredients:

- 1 head organic kale, Lacinto or Dinosaur or baby kale
- 1 ripe avocado
- extra virgin olive oil
- Himalayan sea salt
- Cherry tomatoes
- 2 organic Persian cucumbers (organic cucumbers are loaded with silica for healthy skin so leave skin on)
- 2 Tbsp chopped mint
- juice of one lemon



Directions:

Remove center stalks from kale and slice into ribbons (I like to roll it up and slice across- chiffonade style). Add a little bit of olive oil and Himalayan salt and massage with your hands to coat kale (this will allow the kale to release more moisture and make it more palatable). Add in chopped avocado, tomatoes, cucumbers, mint and juice of one lemon and toss thoroughly. For an added protein/omega-3 fat boost, sprinkle with hemp seeds. Enjoy!

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LUNCH OPTIONS

Tuna-tastic Cucumber Boats

(This crunchy protein-rich treat is my go-to post workout meal or an anytime meal whenever I'm short on time)

Ingredients:

- 2-3 Persian cucumbers (depending on size and hunger level)
- 1 can of Wild Planet tuna in water or wild salmon
- 1 avocado
- Juice of one lemon
- Dash of lemon pepper
- Optional: Dash of tobacco sauce or red pepper flakes for some heat

Inspired By Galya Denzel



Directions:

Drain can of tuna or salmon and empty in bowl. Scoop out and mash half an avocado and mix with the tuna/salmon and sprinkle lemon juice and lemon pepper. Split the Persian cucumber in half and gently core the inside to layer the stuffing. Depending on hunger level, you can pair this with a baked potato for a heartier meal. Alternatively, you can also dice up the cucumbers and place the cucumber stuffing mixture in a gf tortilla or roll it up in nori sheets for a more filling entrée! This uber simple meal packs a nutritional punch with high protein and fat content and is perfect for a quick post work-out recovery lunch.

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DINNER OPTIONS

Honey Salmon with Sautéed Spinach

(Hands-down my favorite salmon recipe and all my clients love it for its simplicity and bold flavors)

Ingredients:

- 2 pieces wild salmon fillet $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick, skin removed
- 2 tablespoons raw honey
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon freshly grated lime peel
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
- 10 oz organic baby spinach
- 2 Tbsp Extra virgin organic coconut oil
- 4 cloves of garlic
- Juice of one lemon



Directions:

In cup, mix honey, cumin, coriander, salt, lime peel, pepper and rub honey mixture all over wild salmon (you can marinate for a few hours or even overnight for added flavor). Place salmon on grill or grill pan over medium heat and cook 10 minutes or just until salmon turns opaque throughout and flakes easily when tested with a fork. While salmon is cooking, crush garlic and heat in coconut oil for a couple of minutes. Add in spinach and stir till wilted. Add in salt, pepper and lemon juice. Serve honey salmon on top of sautéed spinach.

Bonus Tip: I always embrace the concept of cook once, eat twice! So cook some extra lean protein at dinner, so you can use leftover for lunch. Since the salmon has likely dried up overnight, just cut up half a mango or chop up some pineapple, mix with $\frac{1}{2}$ a red onion, lemon and dash of cumin and warm up all the ingredients together over medium heat till the mango or pineapple cubes just start to brown. Serve on top of your favorite greens. And voila, a fresh new meal! Don't be afraid to experiment with more adventurous ingredients: perhaps try this with some asparagus, fennel, lemon basil leaves and soon you'll transition from a timid "scientist" in the kitchen to an intrepid chef.

Extra, Extra Bonus: Did you know that when your taste buds come alive with new tastes or just the pure exhilaration of trying something new will actually decrease your need for and dependence on artificial stimulants like caffeine and sugar? So, go forth and seize the possibilities, but I must warn you that you may experience massive improvements in physical well-being, mental acuity and motivation, plus a full portfolio of fun!

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DINNER OPTIONS

Spiced Quinoa

(Simple yet sumptuous meal that's big on taste and low on prep time)

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup quinoa measured dry, soaked overnight
- 2 cups parsley, chopped coarsely
- 1 cup dill weed, chopped
- 1 large tomato
- 3 small sweet peppers
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- Himalayan crystal salt to taste
- Juice of 1 lemon

Inspired By Galya Denzel



Directions:

Wash and drain the quinoa (previously soaked overnight) and bring it to boil in some salted water. Cook for 10 minutes and then cover to let soak it up some more moisture for 5 minutes and once cool fluff with a fork. In the meantime, chop the parsley and dill weed, cut peppers and tomato in small cubes. Mix quinoa with the vegetables and herbs, season with all the spices and lemon juice, let it sit for 10 minutes and enjoy! For an additional protein/fat boost, you can have it with a side of hard-boiled eggs, sardines or any cooked lean protein of your choice.

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DINNER OPTIONS

Not Your Average Green Beans

(These are toasty with a kick; cook up in 10 min and can be paired with any protein)

Ingredients:

- 2 fistfuls of organic Green beans
- 1 shallot
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper (adjust for desired spiciness)
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 1/2 cup toasted almond slivers
- Himalayan crystal salt + pepper to taste



Directions:

Chop shallot and garlic, and sauté in coconut oil for 2 minutes. While shallot/garlic are cooking, boil a pot of water and immerse put green beans for about 3-4 minutes or until beans are bright green and a little tender. Remove from boiling water to stop the cooking. Add beans and all spices and lemon and sauté for an additional 5 minutes until everything is well combined. Turn off heat and sprinkle toasted almonds on top. Optional: Serve with cooked salmon or the below yummy anytime eggs recipe for added protein/fat boost.

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DINNER OPTIONS

Anytime Egg-tastic Hash

(This is my go-to recipe for when I don't feel like cooking, but want a hearty, warm meal that's big on taste, texture, nutrients and satiety! All of this in under 5 minutes, wow!)

Ingredients:

- 2 organic eggs
- 1 large tomato
- 1 avocado
- ½ bunch organic cilantro
- fistful of Pine nuts
- Greens of choice (spinach, chard, kale...anything you have in the fridge)
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Himalayan crystal salt & pepper to taste
- Juice of one lime
- Optional: Shredded cheese of your choice



Directions:

Brush 2 thick tomato slices with olive oil, sprinkle salt & pepper, broil until sizzly. Slice half an avocado and place on top of each broiled tomato along with a squeeze of lime juice. Place all on top of generous amount of plated greens of choice sprinkled with a handful of pine nuts. Top each tomato with a poached egg. Sprinkle with chopped cilantro, crystal salt and freshly grated pepper. Enjoy!

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DINNER OPTIONS

The New Hamburger Helper (Serves 4 -6)

(This is an amazing recipe rehab of an old favorite that's big on taste and nutrients)

Ingredients:

- 1 pound grass-fed organic ground beef or other ground meat
- 2 Tablespoons coconut oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tablespoon coconut flour
- 2 cups organic Swiss chard leaves chopped (or any dark leafy green of choice)

Inspired by Kim from the Nourishingcook.com



Directions:

Chop onions, sweet potato and mince garlic. Sauté the onions in the coconut oil until lightly browned. Add sweet potatoes and garlic and sauté for about 5 minutes. Make room in the center of the pan and plop in the hamburger and cook till the meat is brown. Meanwhile, chop up the swiss chard (chiffonade style). Once ground beef is (mostly) browned, add the coconut flour. Mix and sauté until the sweet potatoes are soft enough for your taste. Add the chard to the hash and only cook 5 minutes or less (you want to maintain the vibrant green color and not overcook it).

Bonus Tip: Grass-fed beef is loaded with conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) that helps you burn fat. The vitamin and fiber packed sweet potatoes balance your blood sugar and also balance out the slight bitterness of the greens.

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DINNER OPTIONS

For the Love of Daal

(This fragrant and yummy daal serves 4 and can be whipped up in 20 min)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup split pigeon pea (toor dal can be found at your local Indian store)
- 1 medium onion
- 1 large tomato
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1" grated ginger
- ¾ teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 teaspoon asafetida
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- ½ teaspoon red chili powder
- 4 tablespoons ghee
- Himalayan crystal salt to taste
- Curry leaves (found at Indian store) and cilantro for garnish

Inspired by Chefinyou.com



Directions:

Soak the lentils in cold water for at least a couple of hours. Rinse and drain. Add 3-4 cups of water, add turmeric and cook until daal is mushy. While the daal is cooking, heat the ghee in a pan. Add cumin, cloves, chilies, ginger, onion and then salt. When the onion starts sweating (becomes soft), add the tomatoes, asafetida and garnish with curry leaves and cilantro. Once daal is cooked, you can run an immersion blender to make it thinner if you like. Add the fried onion-tomato mixture to the daal, stir well and add lemon juice to taste (the vitamin C in the lemon aids in iron absorption from the lentils). Serve as soup or over fragrant basmati rice or pair with a nice big salad depending on hunger level.

Bonus Tip: This fiber-rich legume keeps you regular, lowers your cholesterol, balances your blood sugar and gives you an energy boost. Beans also create the fatty acid butyrate, which improves mitochondrial function in your cells, leading to fat loss. You can make a big batch and freeze some daal to have on hand whenever you're in the mood for this creamy, comforting, fragrant dish. It's like a warm hug from your BFF!

Extra Bonus Tip: Cook lentils with a small piece of kombu (sea vegetable) that not only tenderizes the bean but also reduces flatulence. If you have trouble digesting beans, always pop a couple of digestive enzymes or Beano to ensure you absorb all the nutrients.

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DINNER OPTIONS

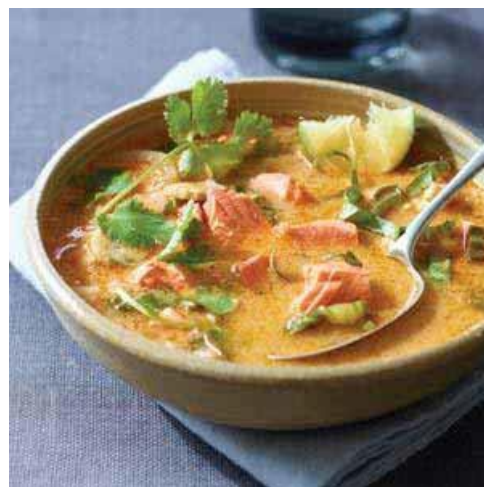
Red Curry Salmon Chowder

(This award-winning chowder is loaded with omega-3 fats, lean protein and vibrant greens...who could ask for more?)

Ingredients:

- 1 Tablespoon coconut oil
- 1 small red onion (thinly sliced)
- 2 cups crimini mushrooms(sliced)
- 1 tablespoon Thai red curry paste
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger (grated)
- 4 cloves garlic(minced)
- 1 red pepper(sliced)
- 14 ounces (1 can) light coconut milk
- 1-2 cups low-sodium vegetable or fish stock
- 2 teaspoons low-sodium fish sauce
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1 pound skinless salmon fillet (cut into large chunks)
- 2 small heads bok choy (thinly sliced crosswise)
- 1/2 cup loosely packed basil leaves (thinly sliced crosswise)
- 1/2 cup cilantro leaves and thin, tender stems
- 2 large limes (cut into wedges)

Inspired by Deliciousliving.com



Directions:

Heat coconut oil in a medium-large saucepan; cook onion and mushrooms for 3–5 minutes, until just softened. Stir in curry paste, ginger, garlic, and Fresno pepper; cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Stir in coconut milk, stock, fish sauce, and honey; bring to a boil and add salmon and bok choy. Reduce heat to low and simmer, covered, for 3–6 minutes (depending on salmon thickness), until bok choy is tender. Sprinkle with basil and cilantro, and serve with lime wedges on the side. For an added touch, sprinkle with chopped, toasted peanuts and serve over soba noodles (gf buckwheat noodles) kelp noodles (a crunchy gf noodle rich in iodine) or over some wild rice or brown rice for a heartier option

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SNACK/DESSERT OPTIONS

Healthy Chocolate Pudding

(This dessert for 1 is loaded with superfoods and can be whipped up in 5 minutes)

Ingredients:

- 1 Avocado
- 1/4 cup raw cacao powder
- 1/2 teaspoon SweetLeaf stevia
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 tbsp pure vanilla extract
- Dash of Himalayan crystal salt
- Garnish with some raspberries and a sprig of mint



Directions:

Add all ingredients to your blender and blend until cream. Decorate with some fresh raspberries and a sprig of mint (optional).

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SNACK/DESSERT OPTIONS

Raw Cacao Power Balls

(This is hands-down my most popular anytime snack/dessert recipe loaded with good fats/protein for kids/adults that yields 16 – 18 balls; prep time is under 20 min.)

Ingredients:

- ½ cup cacao
- ½ cup unsweetened coconut flakes (save 2 tbsp for garnish)
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- 4 tablespoons raw almond butter
- ½ cup crushed raw almonds/cashews
- 2 tablespoons raw honey
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- Dash of cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon each of cinnamon and cardamom
- Sprinkling of Himalayan crystal salt to taste



Directions:

Mix all wet ingredients in a bowl. Add the dry ingredients and spices. You can use a bit of water or splash of coconut milk to smoothen the mixture if it's too thick. Form into small balls. Roll in coconut flakes and store in refrigerator. That's it!

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SNACK/DESSERT OPTIONS

Raw Banana Nice Cream

(This homemade ice cream is not only sugar free and dairy free but is also big on flavor and creaminess; best of all, you can whip it up in under 5 min as long as you have a frozen banana on hand)

Ingredients:

- 1 frozen banana (Tip: always unpeel and keep some bananas in freezer for smoothies/desserts)
- Splash of coconut milk/cream or simply use spring water
- 1 Tablespoon raw cacao powder
- 1 Tablespoon collagen peptides (to slow down sugar absorption)
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- Sprinkling of toasted walnuts/almonds
- Dash of cinnamon and cardamom
- Optional: Dusting of raw cacao nibs (for added chocolate flavor and texture)



Directions:

Place chunks of frozen banana in blender and put enough coconut milk/cream/water just to give it some spin and blend till creamy. Add in cacao and spices and blend. Sprinkle on top with toasted walnuts or almonds and cacao nibs. It's delicious even without the cacao (especially if you're craving a sweet treat at night; remember, cacao is a stimulant that may disturb your sleep). Enjoy your guilt-free nice cream anytime you feel you need some sweetness.

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SNACK/DESSERT OPTIONS

Raw Chocolate Torte Recipe

(This is a great recipe for a special celebration like Thanksgiving/X-mas that you can indulge in occasionally, but the dates still pack a strong sugar punch)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup raw cacao powder
- 4 ripe avocados
- 1 teaspoon liquid stevia
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened shredded coconut for garnish



Slice each avocado open and scoop out the insides.

Place the inside in a food processor or blender. Add sweetener, vanilla and cacao powder. Blend. Mixture should be smooth and color of chocolate. Can eat as a mousse or use in the crust as a torte.

Crust Ingredients:

- 1 c shredded coconut
- 1 c ground raw almonds or macadamia nuts or combination
- ½ tsp Himalayan crystal salt
- ½ c pitted dates
- 1 teaspoon coconut oil

Finely grind coconut. Add nuts, salt, dates and oil. Blend until formed into dough. Press into small pie dish and add the chocolate mixture. Garnish with unsweetened coconut shreds and place in fridge or freezer to set.

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SNACK/DESSERT OPTIONS

Easy Panna Cotta

(This luscious creamy dairy free Panna Cotta made with the secret ingredient, gut healing gelatin, is super easy to whip up with just four ingredients)

Ingredients:

- 1 (15 oz) can full-fat coconut milk
- 1 teaspoon raw honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons gelatin (grass fed)
- Optional: Fresh berries for garnish

Directions:

In a small saucepan, whisk together 1 cup of the coconut milk with the powdered gelatin. Allow to sit for 5 minutes, to allow the gelatin to “bloom.” Add in vanilla, then gently heat the mixture over medium-low heat, whisking well to help the gelatin dissolve. Be careful NOT to boil this mixture! Once the gelatin has completely dissolved, remove from the heat and stir in the honey and remaining coconut milk.

Pour the mixture into 4 small dishes, and place in the fridge to set for at least 4 hours before serving.

For easy removal, place the chilled dishes in a shallow bowl of hot water for 1-2 minutes, then flip the dessert onto a plate. The panna cotta should slide right out. Serve immediately, with fresh berries.

Inspired by Deliciously Organic



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SNACK/DESSERT OPTIONS

Spicy Power Bars

(Loaded with good fats and proteins, these energy bars balance your blood sugar and reduce adrenal stress; they're a great to-go option for breakfast or anytime you need a pick-me-up)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup almonds
- 1 cup macadamia nuts
- 1 cup dates
- 1 cup tart dried cherries
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons ground cardamom
- ½ teaspoon Himalayan crystal salt or Celtic sea salt

Inspired by elanaspantry.com



Directions:

- Place nuts, dates and cherries in a food processor, pulse until well ground
- Pulse in vanilla, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom and salt
- Remove mixture from food processor and press into an 8x8 inch Pyrex baking dish
- Refrigerate overnight (6-8 hours)
- Cut into squares and serve

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SNACK/DESSERT OPTIONS

Coconut Lime Bars

(Fresh tartness of lime coupled with coconut shreds hits the spot for a quick energy snack; the coconut oil and protein from almond meal keeps you going and going like an Energizer bunny)

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups shredded, unsweetened coconut flakes (save 1 tablespoon for garnish)
- 1 cup almond meal
- 1/8 cup coconut oil
- 1/2 teaspoon liquid stevia
- Zest of 3 limes (save 1 teaspoon for garnish)
- Juice of 2 limes



Directions:

Combine all ingredients together in a large mixing bowl.

Use your hands to mix ingredients together. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and spread mixture onto the baking sheet, forming a square that is approximately half an inch thick. Garnish with leftover lime zest and coconut flakes. Refrigerate for 1 hour to set before serving.

HANDOUTS

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Sugar Self-Assessment

Most Americans consume up to three pounds of sugar every week! And it's not just the obvious sweets/treats but sugar is hidden in a variety of processed foods. Please take a moment to answer the below questions as they're intended as a self-assessment tool to evaluate your relationship with sugar and to better understand the co-relation between sugar and your health, energy, moods and, of course, your weight. These questions are not intended as a diagnosis but simply to draw awareness to your consumption of sugar and how it impacts your body:

1. What do you typically eat for breakfast? Do you find yourself hungry and on the prowl for another snack before lunch?
2. Do you experience an energy roller coaster or energy spikes/dips throughout the day?
3. Do you experience fatigue after eating a meal or food "coma"?
4. Do you get lightheaded if you skip meals?
5. Do you find yourself going from mild to intense hunger very quickly?
6. Do you regularly seek out sweets, treats or bread (sure sign that your blood sugar is out of balance) If so, does this follow a set patterns (such as before bed, at 3 pm, after you get off work or other set times)?
7. Do you experience brain fog/cloudy thinking/trouble concentrating?
8. Would you describe yourself as impulsive, argumentative, or having a short fuse? Explain. Do you experience anxiety, panic attacks or have trouble sleeping?
9. Do you struggle with weight?
10. Do you feel overwhelmed or unable to cope with stress?

If you have 3-5 'Yes' responses, you likely have a sticky relationship with sugar and it's time to evaluate how it's wreaking havoc on your health!



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The Mask Unveiled: Sugar Aliases Deconstructed

Sugar masquerades under a bunch of different aliases, so please keep this handout ready when you're going grocery shopping so you can effectively become a label detective and make educated choices about your sugar consumption.

White Sugar

Made from sugarcane, beets or corn, although most unlabeled sugar is from corn, and now, increasingly, beets. Highly refined and processed, usually from genetically modified (GMO) crops, and contains no nutrients or minerals. It is frequently bleached through bone char (and therefore not a vegetarian substance).



Brown Sugar

White sugar with molasses added back in.

Molasses

Barbados molasses – made from the first press of sugarcane. Lighter in color, sweeter and less minerals than blackstrap.

Unsulphered/Blackstrap molasses – made from the last pressing of sugarcane. It is dark and intensely flavored with high mineral content (especially high in iron).

Sucanat

Sucanat is a brand name for an organic evaporated cane-juice product that has been blended with organic molasses. Wholesome Foods, the makers of Sucanat, say that Sucanat is 88% sucrose, with the remaining sugars being fructose and dextrose. Sucanat looks like coarse brown beach sand and has a very mild, brown sugar-like taste. It can be used like white sugar. Sucanat retains more of the vitamins and minerals of the sugar cane.

Unrefined Evaporated Cane Juice (Rapadura)

Evaporated and granulated juice of sugarcane, which still contains all of sugarcane's minerals, vitamins, and micronutrients (high in chromium). Juice is pressed from sugarcane, cooked to reduce water content and then granulated at low temperature. This can be very confusing since many "natural" sugars are actually more refined. Key word: "unrefined".

Fruit Juice Concentrate

Most commonly use white grape juice concentrate or pineapple juice concentrate. Contains few nutrients and if not organic, can contain contaminants.

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Date Sugar

Made from 100% pitted and dehydrated dates, that are then coarsely ground. Contains all the nutrients of dates period. Important to get organic, since dates often contain pesticides and sulfites. Works best for things like cinnamon toast and crumb toppings as it does not dissolve easily.

Honey

Produced by bees who gather nectar from plants and begin to change it in their stomachs with enzymes, place it into the hive, and dehydrate it to form honey. 60-70 times sweeter than sugar. Raw (non-pasteurized) honey contains more nutrients (enzymes, minerals, vitamins) and fiber to slow the delivery of the sugars.

Maple Syrup

Comes from the sap of sugar maple trees. The sap is boiled down to produce syrup. The timing of when sap is harvested determines the color and the flavor (early winter [A] is lighter and milder; late winter [B] is darker and stronger). Important to get organic, as formaldehyde pellets can be used in processing of non-organic maple syrup.

Coconut Sugar

Coconut sugar is produced from the juices of the coconut palm blossoms. The nectar is collected and heated until it is dried and caramelized. Then it is pulverized into a powder that looks much like brown sugar. Coconut sugar is a great low-glycemic sweetener with a nice amount of fiber, vitamins and minerals. It can replace regular sugar in recipes one-to-one.

Brown Rice Syrup

This product consists of brown rice that has been ground, cooked, and mixed with enzymes that change the starch into maltose. Brown rice syrup tastes like moderately sweet butterscotch and can be quite delicious. In recipes, you may have to use up to 50 percent more brown rice syrup than sugar, while reducing the amount of other liquids. The sweetener is also sold as a dried powder. It has one of the lowest glycemic responses.

Barley Malt

Barley malt is created when fermenting bacteria in the grain turns its starch into sugars, mostly maltose. The final product is more of a "whole food" than some other sweeteners. Barley malt powder tastes like a mildly sweet malted milk ball. Because it's not as sweet as sugar, you may need to add up to 50% more in recipes. It has one of the lowest glycemic responses. However, barley malt contains gluten, so avoid if you are aiming for a gluten-free diet.



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Dates

Dates are a natural fruit from a date palm tree. They are fat-free and packed with fiber, antioxidants and minerals such as iron and potassium. Dates can be soaked and blended to use as a natural sweetener in baked goods and desserts.

Agave

Agave Nectar is a natural sweetener made from the juice of the agave cactus, but most commercial varieties are highly processed and is usually 80 percent fructose. Your blood sugar will spike just as it would if you were consuming regular sugar or HFCS. It is sweeter than refined sugar (approximately 1.4 times sweeter). Fructose must be digested by the liver and consumption of high fructose substances can result in adverse health conditions.

Xylitol

Xylitol is a sugar alcohol made from tree fiber or corncobs. It occurs naturally in many forms, though they are components that do not break/down in the small intestine. For this reason, xylitol can cause bowel disturbances. It is low on the glycemic index and helps to prevent tooth decay. Keep it to a minimum, using only in small quantities or in chewing gum.

Stevia

From a plant (*Stevia rebaudiana*), found mostly in South America, which is significantly sweeter than sugar, but cannot be metabolized by our digestive tract, so it is essentially noncaloric. Stevia is available in several forms, including powdered leaves and liquid concentrates. Refined white powder stevia concentrates can be up to 300 times sweeter than sugar. Powdered leaf and liquid concentrates have a licorice-like taste. The leaf will not dissolve in beverages, so it's best used in cooking. All forms of stevia mix exceptionally well with other sweeteners. But it can impart a bitter taste. If you're not familiar with using stevia, start with a little and taste as you go.



Lakanto

Lakanto is the closest natural sweetener to sugar; in fact, it has a 1:1 ratio to sugar and is easy to use and tastes great in baked goods (Stevia tastes great in drinks but not so great in baked goods). Lakanto has been safely enjoyed in Japan for over 10 years. The Japanese Ministry of Health doesn't just approve Lakanto for use in Japan, they actually recommend it for weight loss, obesity and diabetes. It's a zero calorie, zero glycemic index sweetener that is perfectly safe for diabetics, hypoglycemics and will not feed candida or other pathogens. It is made from non-GMO erythritol and the supersweet extract of the Luo han guo fruit. Erythritol is a sugar alcohol (just like xylitol) but because it's fermented, it doesn't cause nearly the same complaints as the other sugar alcohols of diarrhea, gas and bloating. Donna Gates from Body Ecology introduced Lakanto to the US and you can learn more at bodyecology.com

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Natural Sweetener Showdown

A little bit of crack is still crack! When you're kicking the sugar habit rely on healthy alternatives, not modified amounts of the same old stuff. The body will quickly remember old habits, and even miniscule amounts will trigger return cravings and binging.

Continuum of Best to Worst Sweeteners & their Glycemic Index

The below table summarizes my recommended choices from best to worst in terms of sweeteners, so please print this out and keep it handy:

Stevia	0	Made from the leaves or stem of the Stevia plant, it is 200-300 times sweeter than table sugar. Unlike other popular sweeteners, it has a glycemic index rating of less than 1 and therefore does not feed candida (yeast) or cause any of the numerous other problems associated with sugar consumption. Stevia is a hypoglycemic, meaning it takes blood sugar to an almost perfect level, and is safe for diabetics, hypoglycemic, and anyone suffering from candidiasis and other pathogens that feed on sugar. Stevia is also an antibiotic, powerful antioxidant (5 times more powerful than green tea), great detoxifier and immune enhancer.
Xylitol or Erythritol	7	Xylitol is a natural sugar alcohol sweetener found in the fibers of fruits and vegetables which can cause bloating, diarrhea, and flatulence with initial consumption. It's said to be safe for pregnant women, and is said to possibly treat ear infections, osteoporosis, respiratory infections, candida, and is it even helps fight cavities. In fact, in Finland, virtually all chewing gum is sweetened with xylitol.

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Raw Honey or Manuka honey	30	A healthy sugar alternative in moderation, honey is loaded with antioxidants, minerals, vitamins, amino acids, enzymes, carbohydrates, and phytonutrients. Raw, unprocessed honey is considered a superfood by many health care practitioners and a remedy for many health ailments. If you do consume honey, aim for unprocessed Manuka honey, which has such potent antibacterial properties it is now being used in medical products such as wound dressings. However, remember that all honey is very high in fructose, so it would be best to limit your use of even Manuka honey to less than one TEASPOON per day. Raw honey is another option but doesn't have the same potent antibacterial properties. There is nothing beneficial about processed honey.
Coconut Sugar or Coconut Nectar	35	Originally made from the sugary sap of the Palmyra palm, the date palm or sugar date palm (<i>Phoenix sylvestris</i>). It's also made from the sap of coconut palms. With a relatively low glycemic index, Coconut palm sugar is the new rage among health nuts. It's often called "coconut nectar sugar" or "coconut sugar".
Agave Nectar	87	High Fructose Corn Syrup is the most pernicious toxin in the Standard American Diet (SAD) and is the leading cause of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and a host of degenerative conditions.
High Fructose Corn Syrup	15 - 30	A sweet syrup made from the Blue Agave plant, Agave Nectar is obtained by the extraction and purification of "sap" from the agave plant. It's touted as a "natural" sweetener but is typically HIGHLY processed and is usually <i>80 percent fructose</i> . Your blood sugar will spike just as it would if you were consuming regular sugar or HFCS. Agave's meteoric rise in popularity is due to a clever marketing campaign, but any health benefits present in the original agave plant are processed out.
Artificial Sweeteners (Aspartame, Splenda, Equal, Sweet'N Low)	N/A	All artificial chemical sweeteners widely used in diet soda and diet foods are toxic and can indirectly lead to weight gain, the very reason many people consume them. They should be avoided like the plague as in addition to making you fat, they cause a host of neurological disorders such as tumors, MS, skin disorders and symptoms of cerebral palsy. In fact, given a choice between high fructose corn syrup and artificial sweeteners, HFCS may be the lesser of the two evils (though it's essentially asking if you should consume poison or worse poison).

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Tips For Eating Out At Your Favorite Restaurants Or At Parties

You've now developed a healthy appreciation for going off the refined sugar beaten path, but sometimes, though, you're forced to stay on the sugary trail. From time to time social obligations require you to eat at less than appetizing locales. Maybe it's fraternizing with your co-workers at happy hour on a Friday night, the obligatory Holiday parties that you can't escape without being labeled a social pariah or going out to eat at a chain restaurant with family or you're on the road traveling...

Whatever the occasion, when you're stuck in an unfamiliar and unpalatable culinary situation, there are ways to mitigate the potential damage and still remain relatively sugar free. Almost any restaurant will have something for you to eat, you just have to find those "gems" in the menu that won't derail your progress, so below are my top ten tips for eating out:

1. **Stick to grilled, steamed, sautéed or stir-fried menu items.** Grilled usually refers to open flame and little else and steamed tends to mean just heated water vapor, while the other terms generally involve the use of copious amounts of the undesirable vegetable oils.
2. **Build your meals around protein and vegetables.** Pick any type of protein you're in the mood for and ask the waiter for a plate of seasonal fresh veggies to go with that. For example, if you're indulging in Mexican food, get the fajitas and lose the rice, beans, and tortillas while upping the veggies, protein, and guacamole. Sometimes it's best to not even look at the menu as you may be tempted by the specials that always have some undesirable elements.
3. **Make substitutions.** All restaurants have vegetables. Most of them will be happy to swap out the starchy foods like rice, bread, or potatoes for steamed or grilled veggies. You want to sidestep the refined carbs, beans, bread, tortillas and anything made with white flour, white pasta and white bread. You can also substitute regular fries for sweet potato fries to boost the nutrient density, plus sweet vegetables will cut your cravings for sweets. Or substitute fries for a baked potato (of course all commercial fries are drowned in cheap omega-6 oils so if you go the fries route, you will just have to suck it up!).
4. **Request real oils.** Ask that your food be cooked in "real butter" or olive oil and that way you're steering clear of the cheap corn, canola and sunflower oils that most restaurants use. You have to say "real butter," because oftentimes what passes for butter is a butter-flavored abomination.
5. **Nix the bun/croutons at fast-food joints.** Get your burger or fish wrapped in lettuce, or atop a garden salad at McDonalds, Carls Jr. or similar fast food places. You can nix most of the carbs simply by removing the bun. For us West Coasters, In-n-Out makes a great "protein style" bun-less burger. Or if you're going for a salad, pass on the croutons. Even fast food places and chain restaurants are catching on, so this likely won't be an outlandish request. Optional: While you're at it, you can go one step further and also nix the processed cheese and mayo (loaded with trans fats or soybean oil)

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6. **Get stuff on the side.** There's a lot of refined sugar in most salad dressings, marinades, sauces and ketchup, so always ask for them on the side. That way you can control their distribution rather than letting the cook slather your food with it. **Bonus tip:** Most American restaurants serve such massive portions, so by getting sauces/dressings on the side, you can take it to go and enjoy a crisp salad or veggies the next day as opposed to tossing unpalatable wilted salads and veggies.
7. **Say no to diet sodas/sodas/iced teas.** Skip the HFCS laden sodas and teas and go with sparkling water, green tea or any type of herbal tea. If you're going to indulge in cocktails/wine at parties, aim to drink 2 glasses of water for each glass of alcohol; you won't feel as dehydrated and you'll drink less as you fill up on water. Of course, ideally, you want to avoid drinking too much alcohol because it's not just about liquid calories but you likely won't have as much control over what you eat. If you feel out of place without a drink, try sipping sparkling water or unsweetened cranberry juice, so you have something to carry like everyone else.
8. **Carry Stevia in your purse.** Keep a small bottle of stevia as a staple in your purse and you can use that to sweeten your green tea or any beverages during a restaurant meal or at parties. You may find that this gives you enough sweetness to skip the post-meal dessert! I recommend the SweetLeaf brand of stevia that is head and shoulders above the other brands with no bitter taste.
9. **Customize your order.** I was at McCormick & Schmidt's the other day and all their wild salmon specials came with wheat flour or white flour accouterments, such as wrapped in phyllo dough or with pasta or couscous, so I merely selected their arugula and beet salad and asked the waitress to add a grilled wild salmon on top and hold the dressing on the side. Now of course, this will likely be accompanied by some eye-rolling and audible sighs from your dinner companions, but don't feel weird. It's a simple customization and after all you're paying for your food, so don't feel bad.
10. **Embrace the 80/20 rule.** With eating, as in life, it's all about balance. So, if you're cooking at home 80% of the time, give yourself carte blanche to indulge in whatever you want the remaining 20% of the time. It's what you eat and drink ALL the time that makes a big impact on your health, so don't beat yourself up for occasional indulgences. Remember, the guilt and stress from agonizing over a small lapse in judgment will be more harmful than what you actually ate, so lighten up! Conversely if you're eating out at a chain restaurant 2-3 times per week, it's definitely going to impact your progress.



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Cravings Cure Grocery Shopping List

Now that you've purged your pantry and fridge of the sugary, processed stuff, it's time to hit your local farmer's market or grocery store to stock up on whole, clean (aka unprocessed) foods courtesy of Mother Nature. Remember the old mantra, "shop the periphery of the store for fresh produce and stay away from the middle aisles that house all the junk." Let this list serve as your guide to rethink the way you shop—simply print before you hit the store and you're ready to roll:

PRODUCE (choose in-season options)

VEGETABLES



- ☐ Arugula
- ☐ Kale
- ☐ Artichoke
- ☐ Cucumber
- ☐ Any type of lettuce
- ☐ Mushrooms
- ☐ Green beans
- ☐ Peppers (any kind)
- ☐ Asparagus
- ☐ Broccoli
- ☐ Brussels sprout
- ☐ Carrot
- ☐ Squash
- ☐ Turnip
- ☐ Spinach
- ☐ Swiss Chard
- ☐ Onions
- ☐ Garlic
- ☐ Celery
- ☐ Eggplant
- ☐ Okra
- ☐ Zucchini (baby squash)
- ☐ Tomato
- ☐ Sea Vegetables, such as Arame, Kombu, Nori, Wakame (Nori rolls are a fab substitution for traditional wraps)
- ☐ Sweet Potatoes/Yams
- ☐ Red Potatoes (in moderation)

FRUIT



- ☐ Fresh berries (blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries)
- ☐ Green Apples
- ☐ Bananas
- ☐ Pears
- ☐ Avocados

GLUTEN FREE GRAINS



- ☐ Quinoa (rich source of protein)
- ☐ Brown or Wild rice
- ☐ Amaranth
- ☐ Buckwheat
- ☐ Millet

Bread/Wraps

- ☐ Paleo Coconut wraps

ANIMAL PROTEIN



(Whenever possible, go for organic/grass-fed meat and wild fish/shellfish)

- ☐ Chicken breast
- ☐ Pork tenderloin
- ☐ Wild Salmon, sardines or any type of wild fish
- ☐ Mahi Mahi
- ☐ Wild shrimp
- ☐ Beef tenderloin
- ☐ Bison
- ☐ Lean ground turkey
- ☐ Lean ground chicken
- ☐ Eggs (pastured, free-range)

PLANT PROTEIN/NUTS & SEEDS



- ☐ Raw unsalted almonds, cashews, walnuts, macadamias, pistachios (ideally soaked overnight)
- ☐ Raw sunflower seeds
- ☐ Hemp seeds
- ☐ Chia seeds
- ☐ All-natural nut & seed butters (almond, cashew, tahini)
- ☐ Flax seeds

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HEALTHY FATS/OILS



- ☐ Organic extra-virgin coconut oil
- ☐ Organic Grass-fed Butter/ghee
- ☐ Organic Extra-virgin olive oil

CANNED GOODS



(Aim for BPA-free cans such as Eden Foods)

- ☐ Chickpeas
- ☐ Beans (navy, white, kidney, etc.)
- ☐ Lentils
- ☐ Water-packed tuna
- ☐ Sardines
- ☐ Water-packed salmon
- ☐ Organic chicken or vegetable stock

SPICES/HERBS/CONDIMENTS



- ☐ Anise
- ☐ Basil
- ☐ Black Pepper Cayenne Pepper
- ☐ Chili Pepper
- ☐ Cilantro
- ☐ Coriander Seeds
- ☐ Cinnamon Cumin Dill
- ☐ Fennel
- ☐ Ginger
- ☐ Mint
- ☐ Mustard Seeds
- ☐ Nutmeg
- ☐ Oregano
- ☐ Paprika
- ☐ Peppermint
- ☐ Rosemary
- ☐ Sage
- ☐ Tarragon Thyme
- ☐ Turmeric

NATURAL SWEETS/SWEETENERS



- ☐ Stevia
- ☐ Lakanto
- ☐ Raw Honey/Manuka honey
- ☐ Raw cacao

BREVERAGE



- ☐ Unsweetened Almond Milk (in carton)
- ☐ Unsweetened Coconut Milk
- ☐ Green tea
- ☐ Ginger tea (or any herbal tea)
- ☐ Kombucha
- ☐ Coconut water
- ☐ Coffee (in moderation)
- ☐ Bottled water

MISCELLANEOUS



- ☐ Balsamic vinegar
- ☐ Rice vinegar
- ☐ Coconut aminos (soy-free seasoning)
- ☐ Raw Apple cider vinegar
- ☐ Vanilla Bean extract
- ☐ Fermented foods (such as sauerkraut in refrigerated section)
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____



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