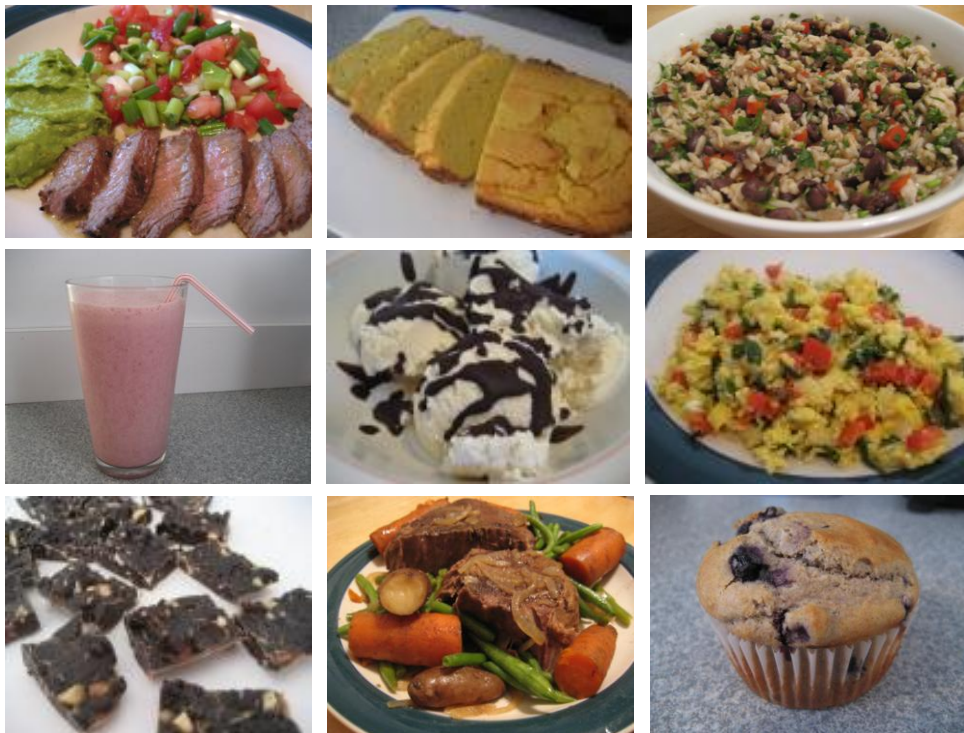


Eating Additive-Free!



Natural Cookbook & Grocery Shopping Guide

Includes 160 simple, delicious recipes!

Why I Created this Book...

In 2007, I made the startling discovery that food additives were destroying my health.

I had almost given up hope after suffering for years with extreme fatigue, widespread pain, muscle weakness, digestive distress, sleep disturbances, and numerous other symptoms. Daily tasks were unbearable. I was frequently bedridden, and I could no longer fulfill my duties at work. On good days, I felt 90 years old. On bad days, I felt like I should be in the hospital.

After countless doctors' appointments, I was diagnosed with **Fibromyalgia** and told I would suffer with pain and fatigue for the rest of my life...



Christy Pooschke (author)

Luckily, I found *other* answers on my own! I started reading the ingredient labels on *every* food I purchased, and I **stopped eating things that I couldn't clearly identify as having come from a plant or animal in nature**. Within just a few months of eliminating dangerous food additives from my diet (e.g., MSG, artificial sweeteners, and preservatives), all of my symptoms *completely* resolved! (You can read my entire return-to-health journey at CompletelyNourished.com.)

After experiencing such drastic improvements in my *own* health, I developed a **passion for helping others eat more naturally**. I created this book to share what I have learned through years of studying the food industry and experimenting in my kitchen. **I compiled all of this information for you** because I know how overwhelming it can feel to get started. My book equips you with the recipes and shopping tips you need to reduce the amount of food additives in your diet and begin enjoying natural foods!

It breaks my heart to think of how many others out there may be **suffering needlessly** just as I was. I've experienced, firsthand, the misery that can result from eating processed foods. And countless others have reported physiological reactions (e.g., headaches, digestive distress, seizures, heart attacks, etc.) to food additives such as [MSG](#) (p. 76), as well. When I started reading about food additives, **I was shocked to discover that MSG was in nearly everything I was eating and drinking** - not *just* in Chinese food! Like many other consumers, I had *no* clue that it was contributing to my poor health.

Along with information about various *other* food additives, I have included very detailed information about **MSG** in this book to alert you to why it's **dangerous**, where it's hiding (**in foods you'd never suspect**), and how **it can affect your health without you even realizing it!** It is my sincerest wish that your transition to an additive-free diet will be as rewarding as mine! Obviously, not everyone will experience the *same* results as I did. But when you start learning about all of the health problems associated with various food additives, avoiding them in your diet certainly seems worth a try!

Oh...and be sure to stay tuned to my website and blog at CompletelyNourished.com for even *more* resources and information, too! You can register to receive **FREE email updates from me**, so you don't miss any of my valuable tips and information in the future! Blessings to you on your journey!

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PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

The purpose of this book is to equip you with the recipes and information you need to reduce your reliance on processed food. The 40-page shopping guide included here is intended to help you find the most additive-free versions of the ingredients and products required for the 160 recipes in this book. There are many recommendations for additional self-study included here, as well, for those who would like to research certain topics in more depth. With the exception of fruits and vegetables, shopping tips are included in this guide for *every* ingredient used in my recipes. My advice for selecting *fresh* fruits and vegetables is to give preference to *certified organic* (see below) or *local* varieties; and avoid “[genetically-modified organisms](#)” ([GMOs](#)) (p. 69) whenever possible. When selecting store-bought *canned* or *frozen* produce, also check the ingredients label and select brands that contain only vegetables or fruit and, possibly, sea salt.

This guide is not an *exhaustive* list of *every* food additive. If you see an ingredient on a food label that is not discussed in my guide *and* you don’t *fully* understand what the word means, I recommend leaving that product on your grocer’s shelf! As a general rule, if you cannot easily identify every ingredient on a label as having come directly from a plant or an animal in nature, then I do not recommend you purchase the product.

I adhere *strictly* to an additive-free diet 100% of the time because I experience acute physiological reactions to many food additives. The degree to which *you* implement this advice is up to you. I’m including all of the information you need to eat as “strictly” as I do. However, depending upon your lifestyle and the foods to which you have access, your choices may be more limited. Do the best you can, and implement this guidance to the degree that suits you best! Many families find it useful to adopt an “80/20 Rule.” They adhere to an additive-free diet 80% of the time, and they allow themselves flexibility with the other 20% of their diet for social events, special occasions, travelling, etc.

The guidelines here are not intended to represent the absolute healthiest diet possible. Rather, they will help you *reduce* the amount of health-depleting chemical additives in your diet. For example, some recipes in this book use white flour, and there are tips in the shopping guide to help you select the *most* additive-free white flour available at the grocery store. Is additive-free white flour a *health food*? Absolutely not. But if you are going to eat white flour products on occasion, you’re much better off making homemade versions of those items (e.g., Alfredo sauce, sugar cookies) than ingesting the commercial, additive-filled packaged varieties you’d find at the store!

“CERTIFIED ORGANIC” & “FARM-FRESH” FOODS

According to the USDA, **certified organic** food is “produced by farmers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations. Organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones. Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides; fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; bioengineering; or ionizing radiation.” I am convinced that foods that are *truly* organically-raised in this fashion are the healthiest foods we can consume, but I suggest you do your *own* research and come to your *own* conclusion. Be sure to review the “genetically-modified organisms” ([GMOs](#)) information on page 69 of this book, as well, because purchasing “certified organic” food is one great way to avoid the potentially health-depleting side effects of [GMOs](#).

Do I buy *exclusively* organic foods? No, I do the best I can. Even if you buy absolutely *no* organically-raised food, you are still much better off preparing your own *non-organic* recipes from whole, real food ingredients than you would be purchasing processed foods. Also, just because an item is labeled “organic,” does not mean it is a *health food* - organic ice cream is *still* ice cream! And just because something is *organic* doesn’t mean it is *additive-free*. Read ingredient labels on “organic” *processed* foods. You may be surprised by what you find. Unless a “certified organic” food is also labeled as “**100% organic**,” it’s allowed to contain up to 5% *non-organic* ingredients. *Unprocessed* foods are always best, organic or not.

Even better than organic food is food that you grow yourself or purchase from a local farmer whom you’ve gotten to know personally and/or whose farm you’ve been able to visit. Many of these farms will likely *not* be “certified organic” (even though they use organic growing practices) because it is costly for

(Continued on next page...)

“CERTIFIED ORGANIC” & “FARM-FRESH” FOODS (*cont.*)

farmers to receive that designation for their food. So if you’re looking for “organic” food, be sure to ask the growers whether or not they use chemicals on their farm and use organic feed for the animals, etc. before you totally dismiss them as “*not organic.*”

What? You don’t know *any* farmers? Well, you need to locate farmers markets in your area and go meet a few! Many consumers are so incredibly detached from where their food comes from and how it is produced. I would bet that if most people took a look inside “factory farms” (where many animal products are produced), they would never eat those animal products again. If you want to eat animal products that come from places with green pastures, red barns and families who truly love their animals, spare them suffering and guarantee them a swift and humane death, then you absolutely must purchase from your local farmers! I realize it sounds complicated and overwhelming at first, but just take the first step and start chatting with producers at your local farmers market. If you aren’t familiar with how most commercial meats are farmed, I encourage you to research “factory farms” on the Internet - but make sure you’re prepared to see some very disturbing graphics and footage.

Ideally, we would all eat foods exclusively from our own backyards and local farmers. However, this shopping guide is designed to help you navigate the *grocery store* to make the best possible choices from the products available *there* because that is where you most likely purchase the *majority* of your food. Right? Again, this book is a *first* step. You can decide for yourself where you’ll go from here. I grow a huge garden and can/freeze some of it for the winter months. I also purchase most animal products (eggs, meat, etc.) directly from local farmers. But I do shop at the grocery store for plenty of items, as well, so I am fully aware of how overwhelming it becomes to navigate those aisles when you’re searching for additive-free foods. I created this cookbook and grocery guide to help make shopping a bit easier for you!

HOW TO USE THE SHOPPING GUIDE

Step 1: Read the entire shopping guide section (p. 53) from beginning to end at least once, so you become familiar with the guidelines. As you read, make notes of any items that you already use regularly but would like to replace with an “additive-free” version (e.g., “We need to replace our ketchup.”).

Step 2: Browse through the cookbook, and make a note of which recipes you’d like to try first.

Step 3: Compare the ingredients of those recipes to the information in the shopping guide to see which items you may already have on hand that meet the criteria listed here.

Step 4: Make a grocery list of any new items you’ll need for those recipes, and place a special mark by any items for which you’ll be purchasing a new additive-free brand for the *first* time – that way you’ll remember to refer to this guide before making your selection at the store.

Step 5: Take the shopping guide (and your shopping list) to the store with you. For your *first* grocery trip, shop at the store where you most often grocery shop; so you’ll learn which items you’ll be able to regularly purchase at the place that’s most convenient for you.

Step 6: Make notes of any items that your store doesn’t carry. You’ll need to ask if they can order the items for you. If not, then you’ll need to select from the following options: 1) check other stores 2) purchase the products online 3) adjust the recipes if possible 4) skip those recipes altogether 5) decide that you’re willing to live with a few additive-filled items in your diet for now, and simply purchase the most additive-free version of those items that you can find.

NOTE: The first few times you tackle the grocery store with this guide, it’s going to take quite a bit of extra time to read labels and determine which items are available at the stores in your area. I promise it gets easier and quicker as you become familiar with which items are okay at your particular stores. Eventually your shopping will take no longer than it did in the past. I recommend keeping a list of brand names of the additive-free items you purchase to use as a reference so you can save time on future trips. Be aware, however, that companies do sometimes change their formulas and ingredients. Memorizing brand names is a great short-cut, but it’s a good idea to *double-check* ingredients labels from time to time, as well.

NATURAL FOOD STORES & SPECIALTY ITEMS

The majority of the ingredients in this book can be purchased at a *regular* grocery store. This is especially true for the *whole* food ingredients (fruits, vegetables, eggs, etc.). However, there are many condiments and pre-packaged ingredients (e.g., Dijon mustard, balsamic vinegar) in my recipes for which you may not have local access to an additive-free version unless you live near a *natural* food store. Just do the best you can.

Many of these products are available for purchase online if you desire. Alternatively, you may decide it's not worth the trouble and elect one of the following options: skip that recipe altogether, omit that ingredient or make a substitution, or decide that you've cleaned up your diet enough to have a few exceptions in your life as a matter of convenience and/or cost effectiveness. The choice is totally up to you. I'm just providing the information so you're equipped to make an *informed* decision.

For some items, I will suggest that you will likely need to shop at a natural foods store or a grocery store that has a designated "health food" section (like Baker's or Hy-Vee if you're in Omaha, NE). However, please don't assume that *everything* in a health food store/section is automatically permitted. Just because it's sold in a natural or organic health food store or a "health food" section at the regular grocery store does NOT mean it is free of additives. I wouldn't eat a large percentage of the items sold at many health food stores, especially the *processed* food items!

Regardless of *where* you shop for your food, you must read the *entire* ingredients list on *every* item and compare it to the guidelines provided here before making your purchase. The same holds true for individual products labeled as "natural" or "organic." Read the ingredients list because many of those items contain numerous additives! Conversely, don't assume that you *won't* find what you need at the *regular* grocery store. Additive-free items are slowly becoming more widely available. Many regular grocery stores will special order items for you or begin keeping them in stock if you submit a request, so be sure to inquire about that possibility if you don't find what you're looking for on the shelf.

NAVIGATION TIPS

There are many links within the text of this e-book that will navigate you to other locations within this book. To return to the original page where you clicked the link, click the left arrow key in the toolbar at the top of your screen. If no left arrow key is visible, click on "tools" in your toolbar and select "customize toolbars." Under the "page navigation toolbar" section, mark the boxes next to "previous view" and "next view." (Actually, marking the boxes for *every* option in the "page navigation toolbar" section will help you navigate your way more efficiently through this book.) The left arrow will then appear in your toolbar whenever you use Adobe Reader. Click it anytime you wish to return to the previous page you were viewing.

DISCLAIMERS

My shopping guide is intended to help you find the most additive-free versions of the ingredients and products required for my recipes. This guide is not an *exhaustive* list of *every* food additive used by the food industry. If you see an ingredient listed on a food label that is not discussed in my guide *and* you don't *fully* understand what the word means, then my recommendation is to leave that item on the shelf! Again, do whatever works best for you!

All product recommendations (especially specific brand names and stores) in this guide are subject to change. Always double-check the ingredient labels at the store. Don't just memorize the brand names mentioned in this guide and mindlessly purchase them because companies do change their formulas/ingredients from time to time. It is far more useful for you to learn the *general rules* mentioned here about what to look for in the *ingredients* lists rather than to memorize *particular* brand names.

All store names mentioned in this guide refer to locations in Omaha, NE. Stores in other localities may carry different products. Stores that operate multiple locations within Omaha, NE may not carry the mentioned products at *every* location.

I do not receive any compensation from any companies or retail outlets for any products or businesses that I recommend in this book. My suggestions are well-intended and without bias.

Additive-Free



Natural Foods Cookbook



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MAIN DISHES

Roasted Chicken (crock pot)

1 whole chicken
1 onion, sliced
6 large cloves of garlic (minimum), peeled and smashed
Several TBSP of butter
Sea salt and pepper (to taste)

Remove chicken innards and rinse the chicken inside and out. (Also remove neck if there is one, and save it for making broth.) Pat dry, and rub butter all over the skin. Place a few pats of butter and a few cloves of garlic under the skin (between the skin and the meat), too. Place a few of the onion slices, a few cloves of garlic and a few pats of butter *inside* the chicken cavity. Arrange remaining onion slices in bottom of the crock pot. Place the chicken (breast side up) in the crock pot on top of the onions. Sprinkle with salt/pepper.

If you prefer to add liquid, fill the bottom of the crock pot with about 2 inches of water. Cover and cook on low until internal temperature reaches 165°F (about 6-9 hours, depending on the size of chicken). Serves 4 to 6 people when served with a potato or rice dish and some veggies or salad.

TIP – Try additional seasonings. You really can't mess this one up! If you like thyme, rosemary, etc., just toss in some fresh sprigs (or dried flakes)...or try placing some fresh herbs under the skin for additional flavor.

Chicken Caesar Salad

This recipe makes 2 large (main course) portions.
(Note - Dressing must be made in *advance!*)

2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
Sea salt, black pepper and garlic granules – to taste
2 small heads of Romaine lettuce, torn or chopped
Homemade Caesar dressing (p. 35)
Homemade Croutons, optional (p. 36)
Freshly shredded Parmesan cheese, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper (optional)

Season breasts with salt/pepper/garlic granules. Grill over medium-high heat until internal temperature reaches 165°F, flipping once (about 6 minutes per side). Slice or dice meat and toss with lettuce and dressing. Add croutons (optional). Sprinkle with cheese and (optional) freshly ground black pepper, and enjoy!

Balsamic Grilled Chicken

Serves 2

2 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
¼ cup balsamic vinegar
1 ½ TBSP olive oil
½ tsp sea salt, plus more to taste
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
Herbes de Provence, to taste (p. 71)

Cut each breast in half. Place the pieces on a cutting board and cover with plastic wrap. Pound gently with the smooth side of a meat mallet to thin/flatten each piece.

Mix together vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper in a medium bowl or plastic storage bag. Add chicken, and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate. Marinate 2 to 24 hours until ready to use. Heat grill to medium-high heat. Transfer chicken from marinade to a plate. Sprinkle chicken on both sides with salt, pepper and Herbes de Provence, to taste. Grill chicken until cooked through and internal temperature reaches 165°F, flipping once (about 6 minutes per side). We enjoy this dish served with brown rice and grilled asparagus (p. 30).

Baked (Cheesy) Chicken Breasts or Strips

Boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 1 per person)
Seasonings (we use garlic & onion granules, sea salt and freshly ground black pepper)
Cheese of your choice (optional) – 1 slice per breast

Preheat oven to 425°F and grease a baking dish or cookie sheet. For strips, cut chicken breasts into strips or nugget-sized pieces. Place chicken in dish and sprinkle with seasonings, to taste. Bake uncovered for 25-30 minutes for *whole* breasts or 15 minutes for *strips*, until internal temperature reaches 165°F and juices run clear.

If making *cheesy* chicken, turn off the oven at this point, and cover all chicken pieces with cheese. Return pan to oven for a couple minutes until cheese is melted. Enjoy!

SIDES & VEGGIES

Garlic Parmesan Noodles

Serves 4-6

8 oz. dried angel hair pasta (whole-wheat or brown rice)
½ stick (¼ cup) butter
½ tsp garlic granules
¼ cup freshly shredded (or grated) Parmesan cheese
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Cook pasta according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a saucepan, melt butter over low heat. Stir in garlic granules. Add drained pasta, cheese and salt/pepper. Toss with tongs until cheese melts. Serve with additional Parmesan cheese and salt/pepper.

Mashed Potatoes

Serves 4-6

4 lbs potatoes, peeled and chopped (the smaller you chop them, the more quickly they will cook)
½ cup butter
¼ cup sour cream or plain yogurt (optional)
1 tsp sea salt
¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper
Milk (amount varies; may need up to ¼ cup - - or none at all)

Place potatoes in a large pot with enough water to cover them. Cover with a lid and bring to a boil.

Reduce heat and simmer for 15-25 minutes (depending on potato size) until potatoes are tender when pierced with a fork. Drain and return potatoes to the pot.

Mash with a potato masher or beat with an electric mixer on low speed. Add butter, sour cream or yogurt (optional), salt and pepper. If needed, gradually beat in enough milk to make the potatoes light and fluffy.

Sautéed Veggies with Fresh Garlic

Serves 4

1 TBSP oil, plus more as needed (we like coconut oil)
2 cups fresh broccoli florets, cut into bite-sized pieces
1 bell pepper (red, orange or yellow), thinly sliced
1 medium onion, thinly sliced
2 tsp freshly pressed or minced garlic
Sea salt or lemon juice, to taste

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add broccoli and peppers. Sauté about 4 minutes, stirring frequently. Add onions and a bit more oil if needed. Sauté about 4 more minutes until all veggies reach desired tenderness, stirring frequently. Add garlic and sauté 1 more minute, stirring frequently. Salt to taste (or add a squeeze of lemon juice, instead). Enjoy!

Brussels Sprouts with Butter and Garlic

Serves 4

24 brussels sprouts
6 TBSP butter
4 cloves fresh garlic, minced or pressed

Prepare sprouts for cooking:

1. Trim off about ½ the length of each stem.
2. Remove outer layers of each sprout.
3. Cut each sprout in half length-wise.
4. Cut a slit in each stem, so it will become tender more easily when cooked.

Heat butter in a large skillet (one that has a lid) over medium heat.

Add garlic and cook until brown (about 1 minute), stirring constantly to avoid burning.

Place brussels sprouts in the pan, cut side down in the butter. Cover and cook on low heat for 20 minutes, until tender.

Salads & Dressings

Italian Dressing

- 2 cups extra virgin olive oil**
- 1 cup red wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar**
- 3 tsp garlic granules**
- 3 tsp dried oregano**
- 4-5 TBSP raw honey, to taste**
- 2 tsp sea salt**
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper**

Whisk (or shake) together and enjoy. Tastes even better as it sits, so make it a day ahead if you prefer. No need to refrigerate. Makes about 1 quart.

Cucumber & Red Onion Salad

Makes approximately 6 servings

- 3 TBSP extra virgin olive oil**
- 1 ½ TBSP apple cider vinegar**
- 1 TBSP raw honey**
- Sea salt and ground black pepper, to taste**
- 3 cucumbers, thinly sliced (peeled or unpeeled)**
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced**

In a large bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, honey, salt and pepper until well blended. Add cucumber and onion; toss well to combine. Enjoy!

French/Catalina Dressing

Makes about 1 cup. If you try it and like it, save time by making a double or triple batch each time. Whisk together:

- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil**
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar**
- 2 TBSP raw honey**
- 2 TBSP tomato paste**
- 1 tsp onion granules**
- ½ tsp garlic granules**
- ½ tsp paprika**
- ¼ tsp dry mustard**
- ¼ tsp chili powder (p. 51)**
- ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper**

Raspberry Vinaigrette

- 1 cup fresh raspberries (or frozen raspberries, thawed)**
- 2 TBSP apple cider vinegar**
- 1 TBSP raw honey**

Mix together in blender until smooth. Add additional vinegar if the dressing is thicker than you prefer. This is tasty over a salad of mixed greens, red onion, chopped walnuts, sliced strawberries and mandarin oranges!! It is a very tart and concentrated dressing, so you don't need to use *much*! Makes ½ cup of dressing.

Smoothies & Drinks

Raspberry-Pineapple-Spinach Smoothie

Serves 1

Don't let the spinach fool you...this smoothie is *delicious*, as well as nutritious!

Mix the following ingredients together in a blender (all measurements are approximate):

½ cup fresh baby spinach, tightly packed
½ cup frozen raspberries
½ cup fresh pineapple chunks
1 TBSP raw honey
Water (about 1 cup), to desired consistency

For a richer texture, try using milk instead of the water. Smoothies are one of the most flexible recipes you can make. You can also use juice for your liquid. Smoothies are a great place to hide veggies from your kids (or other "uncooperative" family members). Throw in whatever you have around. The sky is the limit!

"Blueberry Muffin" Smoothie

Serves 1

1 frozen banana, sliced
⅓ cup frozen blueberries
12 unsalted almonds
2 dashes ground cinnamon
2 dashes ground cardamom
1 cup milk

Mix ingredients together in a blender until smooth. This smoothie is thick and spoon-able. For a thinner consistency, add more milk.

Raspberry-Yogurt Smoothie

Makes 1 large serving

1 cup frozen raspberries
2 eggs* (or use just 1 egg for a *thicker* drink)
½ cup plain yogurt (unflavored and unsweetened)
1 TBSP raw honey, to taste

Place all ingredients into a blender and mix until smooth. This recipe is *very* flexible, so if you have more or less of an ingredient, it really doesn't matter...you can even choose different fruit altogether! If you don't use the eggs, you may need to add some milk, water or extra yogurt to make up for the missing liquid. If you don't have yogurt, you can substitute milk; but the smoothie won't be as thick.

This smoothie is great for breakfast or as a nice filling snack or in place of lunch or dinner if you're in a hurry!

*Farm-fresh, pastured eggs are recommended when consuming raw eggs (p. 67).

"Better-than-Candy" Smoothie

Serves 1

6 medium frozen strawberries (approx.)
12 chunks fresh pineapple (approx.)
½ banana
¼ cup orange juice (preferably freshly-squeezed)
¼ cup water, to desired consistency

Mix all ingredients together in a blender until smooth. This is a *very* flexible recipe, so if you have more or less of an ingredient, it really doesn't matter. You can even choose different fruits altogether!

Additive-Free



Grocery Shopping Guide

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INGREDIENTS (alphabetical)

Allspice

This is a dry spice (seasoning) located in the spice/baking section of any grocery store. I have never personally seen any additives in this product. Despite the impression that you may get from its name, allspice is a *single* spice (just like “cinnamon” is a *single* spice). It is made from the dried berries of a plant known as *Pimenta dioica* – a member of the pimento family. It is not a spice *blend*, so it should not have a list of ingredients for you to search through. It should just contain “allspice,” but it never hurts to double-check the label before purchasing.

Almond Butter

This is available at most regular grocery stores in the “peanut butter” section and can be used in place of peanut butter...it’s just made from almonds instead of peanuts. In Omaha, NE, the best price I’ve seen is at Costco. If you want a “certified organic” variety, though, you may need to shop at a natural food store or in the health section of a regular grocery store. Always select brands that contain just “almonds” or “almonds and salt.”

Almonds

Select brands that contain “almonds” as the *only* ingredient. You may be surprised to learn that this can be a difficult task in some stores because so many brands contain oils and all sorts of seasonings. Salted varieties are tasty for snacking (and should contain only “almonds and salt”), but they are not always appropriate for recipes that call for *unsalted* almonds.

The *baking* aisle (rather than your grocer’s section of *snacking* nuts) is a good place to find unsalted nuts with no added ingredients at most stores. Bulk bins (often near the produce section or located within the “health section” at your regular grocery store) are also another promising place to find plain nuts, but always check the ingredients list to be certain.

In Omaha, NE, [Blue Diamond](#) brand carries a “whole natural” variety that contains *just* nuts. This brand/variety is often sold in the regular (non-baking) snack nuts section, as well – and even at many gas stations!

Aluminum-Free Baking Powder

The baking powder varieties that are most widely available usually contain aluminum (listed on the label as “sodium aluminum sulfate”). I prefer not to ingest aluminum due to suspected links between excessive aluminum exposure and a variety of ailments including kidney problems, headaches, gastrointestinal distress and Alzheimer’s disease. Again, feel free to do your own research and decide whether or not it’s of concern to *you*. You will likely need to shop at a natural food store or in a health food section or [online](#) to find an aluminum-free brand. Such brands will likely say “aluminum-free” on the front of the package, but always check the ingredients list, as well. [Bob’s Red Mill](#) is one aluminum-free brand.

Aluminum-Free Baking Soda

Most baking soda is actually aluminum-free, even if that’s not stated on the front of the package. Just read the ingredients list to be sure. “Bicarbonate of soda” should be the *only* ingredient listed.

Anchovy Paste

Look for a brand that contains only “anchovies, oil, and salt.” Avoid words like “spices” or chemical-sounding names in the ingredients list. In Omaha, NE, I’ve only found additive-free varieties (like [Crown Prince](#)) at natural food stores. You could also order it [online](#), if necessary. This paste comes in a tube and is usually located in the store near the canned fish.

Garlic Granules (“Granulated Garlic”)

This is a dry spice (seasoning) located in the spice/baking section of any grocery store. I have never personally seen any additives in this product. Garlic granules are often labeled as “garlic powder.” True garlic *powder* is the consistency of flour, and garlic *granules* are closer to the consistency of salt. If you cannot find garlic *granules* at your grocery store, peek through the sides of the garlic *powder* containers, and look for one that appears to be coarser than flour. That will work just fine.

If all you can find is true garlic *powder* (with a flour consistency), then substitute half the amount called for in my recipes. Avoid most store-bought “garlic *salt*,” however, as these *blends* often contain additives and/or artificial flavor enhancers. They are often *not* comprised *solely* of “garlic” and “salt” as you may presume.

GMOs (Genetically-Modified Organisms; Genetically-Engineered Foods)

GMO stands for “**Genetically-Modified Organisms**” (also referred to as “**Genetically-Engineered**” Foods). Currently, there are products in our food supply that contain organisms whose genetic structures have been manipulated by scientists to express certain traits that increase the food industry’s profits. For example, scientists have created plants that are able to withstand an otherwise deadly dose of weed killer. Once you start researching this GMO issue, you quickly become aware of the insufficient safety testing and the undeniable conflict of interest that surrounded the initial approval (and the ongoing presence) of GMOs in our food supply. I recommend the Institute for Responsible Technology (www.ResponsibleTechnology.org) as a great place for everyone to start doing their own research on this topic.

Many researchers are concerned about the possible negative health consequences of altering our food supply in this fashion. There is increasing evidence from animal studies of a connection between GMOs and health problems such as allergies, reproductive problems and faulty insulin regulation. Unfortunately, the FDA does not require safety testing of these products, so the biotech companies are responsible for deciding whether or not their *own* products are safe enough to unleash on the human population. Because the FDA also does not require these GMOs to be *labeled* on food packages, all of us are essentially participating in a long-term safety test of these organisms *without* our consent.

As of November 2012, the most commonly genetically-modified foods on the market are: **corn, soy, dairy, Hawaiian papayas, sugar (from sugar beets), canola oil, cottonseed oil, aspartame (artificial sweetener), zucchini, and some yellow squash.** [Aspartame](#) (p. 77) is a neurotoxin that I don’t recommend ingesting. When you purchase the *other* foods on this list, be sure to select items labeled as “*non-GMO verified*” or “*certified organic*” because GMOs are not allowed in products with these certifications. If you don’t have access to non-GMO versions of the foods listed here, then you may choose to eliminate them from your diet altogether.

Because I don’t feel comfortable with GMOs in my diet, I do my best to avoid them. I have included here in my shopping guide the information you will need if you choose to avoid them, as well. In addition to the foods listed above, you must be careful to check ingredient lists for products that are *derived from* these foods. For example, cornstarch and white vinegar are both *derived from* corn. If a food product contains ingredients derived from corn, these ingredients may be genetically-modified unless they are labeled as “certified organic” or “non-GMO verified.” Genetically-modified soy and dairy are also tricky to avoid because they are used to create so many other ingredients in food products, as well. For example, casein and whey are both food ingredients that are derived from milk, and soy lecithin is derived from soy. Again, unless *each* of these individual derivatives is specifically labeled as “certified organic” or “non-GMO verified” in the ingredients list of a product, then it may contain GMOs.

(Continued on next page...)

Ketchup

The most additive-free variety I've found on the market is [Annie's Naturals](#) brand (available at *Super Target* and *Whole Foods Market* in Omaha, NE). It contains only "organic tomato paste, organic distilled white vinegar, water, cane sugar, sea salt, organic onion, organic allspice, and organic clove." Many other brands contain additives like "[spices](#)" (p. 81), "[natural flavor](#)" (p. 80), and/or "[high fructose corn syrup](#)" (p. 79). *White* vinegar is a common ingredient in ketchup. Because it is distilled from glutamate-rich *corn*, [free glutamic acid](#) (p. 76) may be present in *any* brand of ketchup that contains *white* vinegar. I have never *personally* experienced a reaction from eating commercial condiments, however. Because white vinegar is made from *corn*, it is also a possible source of [genetically-modified organisms \(GMOs\)](#) (p. 69) unless it is "certified organic" or "non-GMO verified."

Lemon/Lime Juice

Store-bought varieties are *pasteurized* (i.e., "cooked") and many are filled with additives. Additionally, the flavor of these products pales in comparison to freshly-squeezed juice! Some health stores carry pure, additive-free juice in glass jars in the juice aisle, but these varieties are still cooked (i.e., not fresh). If you do purchase these store-bought juices, be sure the *only* ingredient is lemon juice or lime juice! However, this is one short-cut you don't want to take unless you have to. I strongly recommend buying *whole* lemons and limes and juicing them *yourself*! Hand juicers work great for this purpose, and they are readily available at most department stores or in the kitchen utensils section of most grocery stores.

Lentils, dry

Lentils are a high-protein member of the legume family, but they are quite different in appearance compared to beans like kidney beans or black beans. They are smaller, flatter disks that are available naturally in a variety of colors. At most grocery stores, they can be purchased in dry form in the section where dry beans and rice are sold.

Long-Grain Brown Rice – (see "[Rice](#)" – p. 86)

Mayonnaise

Common additives in commercial mayo that you'll want to avoid include: "[spice\(s\)](#)" (p. 81), "[natural flavor](#)" (p. 80), and "[modified food starch](#)" (p. 79). Many commercial varieties also include unhealthy oils. I'm not aware of any store-bought brands that I would recommend, so I have included a homemade recipe on page 51.

Meat

Ideally, we would all purchase animal products exclusively from local, grass-based farms where we could verify how the animals are treated and raised by visiting the farms *ourselves*. This is what I have chosen to do as much as possible for *my* family. However, I realize that won't be everyone's choice, so I am providing information here to help you make the most informed decisions possible at your grocery store.

Meat products from animals that are raised on grass pasture (i.e., their natural diet and environment) taste better and are better for our health than animal products from factory-farmed animals that may be subjected to unnatural practices (e.g., antibiotics, growth hormones, inhumane confinement, limited or no access to the outdoors, etc.). Pasture-raised animal products are lower in calories and fat, and they contain higher levels of healthy Omega 3 fatty acids and antioxidants.

If you aren't familiar with how most commercial meats are farmed, I encourage you to research "factory farms" on the Internet - but make sure you're prepared to see some very disturbing graphics and footage. You can also visit www.EatWild.com for more great information about the health benefits of pasture-raised versus factory-farmed animal products. If you wish to avoid [genetically-modified organisms \(GMOs\)](#) (p. 69), purchase meat products that are *certified organic* or raised by a farmer you trust and who does not feed a genetically-modified diet to the animals. (*Continued on next page...*)

MSG (“Monosodium Glutamate”): Hidden Sources & Health Effects

Despite common perception, the toxic food additive MSG is everywhere - not just in Chinese food! This **unnecessary flavor enhancer** is actually *hidden under dozens of ingredient names* in *all sorts* of processed foods, restaurant foods, beverages, chewing gums, vitamins and supplements. It is added to foods in higher dosages than ever before, and more and more people are experiencing symptoms from ingesting it.

Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) is a **health concern** because it contains glutamate. Glutamate is the salt form of "**Free Glutamic Acid**." Glutamate is an **excitotoxin** that has been associated with many health problems (e.g., headaches, migraines, digestive distress, seizures, heart attacks, vision problems), and you'll find *many* more common symptoms if you do an Internet search for "symptoms of MSG toxicity." Due to insufficient labeling laws, food companies use *many* ingredient names (like those listed in the following pages) to disguise Free Glutamic Acid in their products, so consumers must look for more than just "MSG" on food labels if they wish to avoid this toxin and its associated health effects.

To understand why processed **Free Glutamic Acid has been associated with so many health problems**, it is helpful to learn about *natural* Glutamic Acid. Glutamic Acid is an amino acid (a building block of protein) that occurs *naturally* in the body as one of many excitatory neurotransmitters (chemicals that "excite" cells into action). Glutamic Acid occurs *naturally* in certain *unprocessed*, whole foods (e.g., tomatoes). In this *natural* form, it is bound (i.e., linked) together with other amino acids to form a protein. Once ingested, the protein is broken down *slowly* by the digestive system. The Glutamic Acid is released *gradually* into the blood stream and is non-toxic. If one ingests more glutamate than the body needs, the cells clear away the excess just as they were designed to do. The digestion of these *natural*, whole food sources releases into the bloodstream such a small amount of Glutamic Acid that even people who react to *processed* MSG (i.e., "free glutamic acid") can usually tolerate them.

When food manufacturers break down a protein during processing (usually from corn, soy, wheat, tapioca starch, molasses or beet sugar), Glutamic Acid is "freed" from the links that bind it to other amino acids in nature. **MSG (i.e., "monosodium glutamate")** and dozens of other ingredients used by the food industry contain this *free* form of glutamate. When one ingests this already-broken-down, *free* form of glutamate, blood levels of glutamate can spike to more than 20 times the usual amount because the digestive system does not have to work to break down the links. The human nervous system is not equipped to handle such quickly-absorbed doses. The excess glutamate cannot be efficiently cleared away, so it accumulates around the cells throughout the body, over-exciting them to the point of damage or death.

This disruption at the cellular level causes and exacerbates a wide range of physiological reactions from runny noses to heart palpitations. According to experts like Dr. Russell Blaylock, M.D., **Free Glutamic Acid is an excitotoxin, not an allergen**. Some people are more sensitive to lower dosages than others, but it affects everyone to *some* degree. There is often a delay between ingestion and the onset of symptoms, preventing many people from realizing the connection between their symptoms and their diet. Most acute symptoms will display within 48 hours (many within 30 minutes) of ingestion, but some health effects (e.g., obesity, infertility) have been demonstrated in lab mice *long* after exposure.

Processed free glutamate over-stimulates our taste buds, tricking us into thinking that these foods are extremely flavorful. Because glutamate receptors line various organs and tissues (brain, heart, lungs, digestive tract, etc.) throughout the body, ingesting free glutamate can over-stimulate *any* of these systems and cause a **variety of symptoms**. Luckily, much of this damage is reversible, and many sufferers resolve their symptoms (often within 7-10 days) by *completely* eliminating Free Glutamic Acid from their diets.

To prevent these effects and to avoid this hidden additive, one must carefully scrutinize the ingredients list on every item one consumes and avoid any mysterious or vague ingredients on product labels. It is best to prepare meals at home from basic, whole food ingredients and to minimize reliance on processed foods. Many hidden sources of MSG in our food supply are listed on the following pages. These ingredients contain free glutamate in varying amounts. This is not intended to be an *exhaustive* list because the list is continually expanding as food companies realize that consumers are catching on to their tactics.

(Continued on next page...)

MSG (“Monosodium Glutamate”) & Its Hidden Sources (cont.)

Please don't become overwhelmed by reading this list. There are still *plenty* of healthy food options for you to eat; you'll just need to prepare most of them at home. And, with the aid of my recipes and this shopping guide, your transition will surely be a lot smoother than *mine* was! ☺

- **“All Natural” Products** – The label “All Natural” is not a regulated term, so MSG-filled products are allowed to make this claim on the front of their packages. Don't be fooled by claims on the front label of *anything* you consume; *always* check the ingredients list on the *back* of the package!
- **Annatto** – This ingredient is extracted from the seeds of the achiote tree. Therefore, it is a “*natural* color,” and products containing it may be labeled as “natural” (which, again, isn't a regulated term, anyway). Annatto is commonly used to give cheddar cheese and butter a yellow/orange color, and it is also added to ice cream and other products, as well. But just because something is “natural,” that does not mean it is *safe*. In fact, annatto has been linked to allergic reactions and irritable bowel symptoms in sensitive individuals. Some folks also report MSG-like reactions to annatto and suspect that [free glutamic acid](#) (p. 76) may be released during the processing of this ingredient.
- **Aspartame** – Aspartame is an artificial sweetener that exhibits similar neurotoxic effects in the body as MSG. Artificial sweeteners are commonly found in diet drinks, chewing gum, vitamins, mints, diet bars, sugar-free items, etc. I recommend everyone avoid *all* artificial sweeteners.
- **Autolyzed Yeast (or Extract)** – This is not the same thing as yeast! This ingredient is a flavor enhancer that contains [free glutamic acid](#) (p. 76). Autolyzed yeast is added to a variety of products including chips, soups, processed vegetarian foods, etc.
- **Baby Formula** – Read the label on many commercially-prepared baby formulas, and you'll find plenty of these hidden sources of MSG listed!
- **Barley Malt** – This ingredient contains [free glutamic acid](#) (p. 76). It is very commonly added to baking flours to enhance the color and flavor of cereals and baked goods (even “*bakery-fresh*” breads). It is also added to most of the “All Purpose” flours you'll find at the grocery store. Look for plain, [unbleached white flour](#) (p. 91), instead, when purchasing flour for your own baking. It's more expensive and not all stores carry it. It is generally available at natural food stores or in the health food section at regular grocery stores; and it does *not* contain barley malt.
- **Beverages** – Many juices, flavored drinks and sodas contain hidden MSG in the form of color and/or flavor enhancers or preservatives like “[caramel color](#)” (*see below*), “[natural flavor](#)” (p. 80), and “[citric acid](#)” (p. 78). Save yourself the trouble, and just drink water! If you'd like to drink tea, please read the “[Tea](#)” section (p. 90) of this guide for more information.
- **Bouillon** – I have never found a commercially-prepared [bouillon](#) (p. 59) that doesn't contain *at least* one potential source of hidden MSG.
- **Broth** – Many brands available at grocery stores contain vague words like “[spices](#)” (p. 81) or “[flavor](#)” (p. 78) or MSG-containing ingredients like “[autolyzed yeast](#)” (*see above*) in their ingredients list, so be sure to check the label. It's cheap and easy to make your own broth at home; and it tastes *much* better, too! We often freeze or can our homemade broth (p. 33) to preserve it for future convenient use. Some folks who are *extremely* sensitive to [free glutamic acid](#) (p. 76) may experience reactions even to *homemade* broths because, when exposed to lengthy cooking times, protein-rich foods (like meat) are broken down and more free glutamate is released than these folks can handle. Such individuals are advised not to allow meats, beans or glutamate-rich vegetables (e.g., tomatoes) to simmer any longer than necessary.
- **Calcium Caseinate** – This ingredient may contain [free glutamic acid](#) (p. 76) as a by-product of the breakdown of the milk protein during processing. It's often found in unlikely places like canned tuna!
- **Caramel Coloring or Flavoring** – This ingredient sometimes contains [free glutamic acid](#) (p. 76) as a by-product of processing. It's often added to beverages, cheap soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, etc.

(Continued on next page...)