



SURVIVAL GUIDE

FOR
**BUSY
MOMS**



by Lindsey Gremont

HOMEMADE *mommy*TM.net
Keeping it REAL in a FAKE food world





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If you find an error or have a suggestion for improvement, or if you have a question about a recipe, please contact Lindsey at lindsey@homemademommy.net.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I'm Lindsey, the Homemade Mommy. I work a full time corporate job on top of being a wife to an amazingly supportive husband and mother to a 4-year old daughter. Oh, and I blog about food!

Real Food.
Healthy Food.
Great food.

I find the time and make a commitment to homemade cooking because eating this way has truly changed mine and my family's life. Ditching processed food has helped us heal from a number of ailments including asthma, allergies, recurrent sinus infections and ADHD. I buy organic, from family farms, local and grass-fed. I am passionate about achieving vibrant health and am happy to share my tips, techniques and recipes with you in the hopes that it will help you create your own path.



INTRODUCTION

Think it is impossible to be a working mom and cook real food? Think again! If you are a regular reader of my blog then you know I am not a ‘stay at home mom’ – I work a full-time corporate job. However, I do work from home which has allowed me the flexibility to develop a real food cooking strategy that is efficient, simple and will work for others. So how do I find the time to cook real food from scratch without collapsing at the end of the day? In this eBook, I am going to share all my secrets for how I survive a full-time job while cooking real food for my family. This includes:

- How not to feel overwhelmed by cooking
- The secret to making food your family will eat
- Making life more convenient (and tastier) without a microwave
- How to leave meal planning to someone else
- How to save time and money on real food and reduce shopping trips
- Helping you understand the basics of restocking your pantry with real food alternatives
- Saving time on prep: understand which recipes to make on a regular basis
- How to travel with real food
- How to pack smart with homemade beauty products
- Lunch ideas for kids in school
- Some staple recipes to get you started
- What to do when you go out to eat



ISN'T COOKING ALL THE TIME OVERWHELMING?

Eating and cooking solely real food at home the past couple of years has opened my eyes to what my taste buds already recognized – that the food we were eating out was all the same because it all came from the same few suppliers. Ever notice how that mixed green salad you eat at 10 different places all seems the same? It probably is – all from the same bagged lettuce mix and grape tomatoes and balsamic dressing. Nothing was new and exciting anymore unless you went to a really upscale restaurant. It all just tasted like a salty processed mess to me – including some of my old favorite Mexican restaurants. Couple this with the real challenge of having a toddler with her own food preferences, and the leisurely dinner out at a restaurant enjoying tasty food just didn't seem to exist anymore within our budget. After years of basically eating out every day for lunch and most nights for dinner this came as a shock to my system. This really made me sad and actually quite annoyed. It wasn't worth the experience of going out anymore. But was it worth doing the chore of cooking all the time?

I thought back and couldn't remember a time living on my own that I really did a whole lot of cooking on a **regular basis**. Sure – I did love to cook and I did cook for myself often, but on the whole the majority of my food came from restaurants. I actually owe a lot of getting into the cooking habit to my husband. He wanted to eat at home more – he craved home-cooked meals. And so I obliged. As long as I didn't ask him what he wanted and just presented him with food – he would eat it all happily – no matter what I made. My daughter also was a good eater and I slowly started to realize that we didn't need to eat out all the time and it was actually somewhat easier to eat at home – even with the prep time. No more arguing about where to meet and eat or what to order. No more dealing

with those buzzers and waiting for a table with a squirmy toddler and waiting for our order to come. No more wasting money on entrees that my toddler didn't eat. No more nights dying of thirst and a tummy ache from the salty, processed and lackluster food that just didn't taste interesting or good to me anymore.

So now I just had to get into a rhythm of cooking all the time at home. This took some getting used to and I took some hard knocks on meal planning. It also took simplifying. Sure, making things with crazy ingredients was fun when I wanted to make Thai red curry paste from scratch – but was it worth it? Wasn't there an easier way to make curry? Couldn't I just make a very large batch and freeze it so I didn't have to make it so often? The answers were yes and yes. Cooking for a major event like Thanksgiving is fun. Cooking can transport you to another country without having to travel there and it brings family together. Cooking for your family every night – that isn't so fun most of the time. But it doesn't need to be fun most of the time. It isn't about being fun, really. It is about eating and we all have to eat. It is just one of the things we have to do every day – just like work or getting ready in the morning or cleaning up the house. So why are food/cooking treated any differently than those chores?

So then how do we find reward in doing something that isn't that fun? We have to change our perspective. Mine changed dramatically when I started focusing on providing nutrient-dense foods for my family that would not only fill our bellies, but also start to heal our various ailments. Cooking was no longer just to put something on the table. It served a purpose – to heal, to nourish and to delight our taste buds, as well as be a shared experience. In using real ingredients and homemade components like chicken broth, and others, the food is much better than what we could ever get outside the house at a restaurant. But it takes mistakes and practice to get better. Some meals turn out disgusting – to the point that I just toss them. Some turn out amazing and I find I can't ever seem to replicate them to everyone's dismay. Some meals take longer than anticipated, and some just don't ever get done because of unforeseen circumstances (like a cranky toddler with no nap).

But that is the thing with real food isn't it? Real food isn't consistent because it is real! Each of these mistakes is a learning experience for the entire family. They teach everyone real food and kitchen skills like how to eat foods that are nourishing, how to distinguish tastes (salty, sweet, sour, umami), and also how to be patient, how to eat leftovers and not waste; how to help with food prep, recipes, and how to set the table and clean up after ourselves, and more.

Just wait for it. Someday you will have the opportunity to go out, but when you ask your kids or husband where they want to go they might just reply, 'can't we just eat at home mommy?' This will melt your heart. Instead of dreading the chore of making yet another meal, you will pull one more meal together and watch as your family savor their meal together (and thankfully shared their compliments!) You will marvel at how calm and easy it is instead of sitting at a restaurant.

My tips for keeping cooking fresh and somewhat fun

1. First of all, you do not have to cook every night. Focus on cooking a full dinner only 2-3 nights a week. In our family that includes a protein, a vegetable and potentially a starch like rice or potatoes.
2. Have a regular 'breakfast for dinner' night.
3. Head out to your local farmers' market one night or just do a simple picnic dinner featuring cubed cheese, sliced raw vegetables, pickles and popcorn or the like.

4. On other nights, repurpose some leftovers, have a family night out or even do a date night

When overwhelmed, get help!

1. **Take a cooking class.** It will be the best money you ever spent. The two most important classes to take are knife skills and cooking techniques (roasting, sautéing, steaming, braising, etc.). Learn more about those cooking techniques in my other eBook, [The Homemade Mommy Handbook](#). Avoid classes that focus on one type of cuisine as these will not be general enough to help you on a regular basis.
2. **Get a sous chef.** Mama's little helpers can probably do a lot more than watch your kid. Your kids, for that matter, should be helping you too! Have them prep vegetables or set the table. This might, in fact, take you longer but generally it is a lot more rewarding to work in the kitchen as a family team than it is to work alone. If you have the financial wherewithal, hire someone a few hours a week to help you prep and clean up. The money you spend will not even come close to the time you save when you have help in the kitchen.
3. **Clean as you go.** I cannot stress the importance of this enough. I wash all of my prep items as I go and ensure my dishwasher is loaded, run and unloaded promptly. Otherwise I would have the leaning tower of Pisa in my sink before noon. A clean sink free of obstruction is the only thing that keeps me sane in my kitchen.
4. **Have a kitchen play date with a friend and her kids.** This is a fun idea that has real benefit. Have a friend come over with her kids and let the kids play while the moms cook. If the kids help, even better. If the kids need 'help' (or a stern talking to) one of the moms can do it while the other one continues to cook.

Nothing is perfect. Be flexible. Real food isn't consistent like the stuff you buy from the grocery store. You will burn a pot of beans. You will cook a steak too well-done. You will forget to heat up dinner. You will make mushy pickles (ew!). You will get too busy. Keep calm and carry on to *plan B*, whatever that may be.



Despite what the Food Network would have you believe, home-cooked meals need not sit up on a pedestal like those cooking channel shows we all watch. They don't need to be fancy every night, include tons of ingredients or complicated techniques. Some nights it is fun to focus on 'presentation and technique,' but ultimately when you are cooking all the time at home it is more about flavor. Think about making family favorite meals that your kids will remember and crave when they come home from college or camp because they were just so good and comforting.

"You don't have to cook fancy or complicated masterpieces – just good food from fresh ingredients"
– Julia Child.

It seems we lost our way when we started cooking low-fat recipes. Healthy food became associated with being plain and boring. I now think the apt word is 'unsatisfying.' Your body can tell the difference. Fat adds flavor and without it your meals will leave something to be desired. I think many moms feel their kids will not eat this new 'healthy real food,' or that processed food is the only thing they will like. I am here to share that this just isn't true. Real food full of the great fats that are truly satiating and nourishing to your family's bodies will do amazing things you never thought possible for your home life. I might be so bold as to say that it will strengthen your marriage and your relationship with your kids. It seems the old sayings are true:

"Families that eat together stay together."

"The best way to a man's heart is through his stomach."

All I can share is my own experience. My husband is a realtor and often works odd hours when the

rest of us are 'off.' Despite his hectic schedule, he never misses a meal at home. That speaks volumes to me as his wife. He enjoys my cooking and our family time together at dinner so much; he makes the extra effort to be home for it nightly. He also has started coming home for lunch most days.

As far as my daughter is concerned, I remember before we started eating a real food diet full of saturated fats and no refined sugars, we were trying to eat 'healthy.' I was put off by children's books that contained ice cream and cupcakes as the central thread of the story. Those were 'junk' foods and were 'bad' – why should they be the 'cool' part of the story?! However, I didn't want to lead my daughter to a negative perception of certain foods (like ice cream and cupcakes) and this did not jive with how I wanted to raise my daughter. I didn't want food categories to be labeled 'good' or 'bad' or 'healthy' or 'junk,' and I certainly didn't want my daughter to grow up thinking she was 'bad' if she ate ice cream or cupcakes.

I had to challenge my thinking and come up with a new way to talk about real food to my daughter. She is and will be surrounded by processed or 'fake' food (as we call it) we just don't and won't eat. But I did want her to be able to distinguish a 'real' cookie from a 'fake' one. I had to come up with new words to describe these foods. And I had to put this in a positive and empowering light for her. I could get overwhelmed by how the cards are so stacked against real food for kids today. I could view it as stressful and just give up. Instead I viewed this as an opportunity.

So what has been working? Surprisingly enough, I think what works the best is our taste buds! The food we make now just tastes so flavorful and real. The food we eat out just tastes so boring and flavorless, so it makes my job easy talking to my daughter about these differences. It is amazing how much she does understand. She knows what tastes good and what doesn't. I am teaching her what nourishment tastes like. Because we don't eat processed food often, we all feel it in our bodies in a negative way when we do eat it. I devised a way that works for us on how to talk about what real food is and to balance that with a respect and appreciation of food and for those who provide us with food. I wanted to teach my daughter to enjoy food, not to be fussy about it and also to be thankful for it no matter the situation she finds herself in.

Real Food Talking Points for Kids (and reluctant spouses)

- Real food is homemade, takes time to prepare and doesn't come in colorful packaging with characters.
- Real food has colors from nature, not bright colors like your markers.
- Fake foods are full of chemicals that can make us sick.
- Eat foods that will fill up your tummy like eggs, meat and cheeses so you can make it to the next meal without being too hungry.
- Respect animals and only eat them if they are raised on farms like in your favorite books (like The Big Red Barn).
- Real food treats are made with honey or maple syrup instead of sugar.
- Sugar is toxic and eating it will give you crooked teeth and cavities and can make you very sick when you are older.
- Bread makes our tummies hurt if we eat too much of it.
- Eat 'sour' foods (our word for fermented) with every meal to get the 'good bugs' in our tummies so we can help our bodies fight 'bad bugs'
- You don't have to love all foods you are served, but you do have to try them with a smile and

say thank you to the person who made it for you.

- What you decide to eat is your choice – it is your body – not mine!

I know that last one is shocking but I have found when I tell her that she really does end up making the right choice because it takes the power struggle out of the equation – she is in charge!

How to keep food simple and delicious

1. Source local ingredients. Your food will sing without a lot of fuss – I promise you.
2. Keep recipes simple. Today's recipes may be complicated. Stick to the simple ones!
3. Cook [rice](#) or potatoes in [chicken broth](#) and coconut milk, not in water. This will make it tasty and rich and it will play a nice recurrent role in your dinner rotation without protests from your family.
4. Fat makes food delicious and filling. Add as much butter as your veggies can hold after steaming or roasting.
5. Make real [homemade ice cream](#). Most store-bought ice cream is full of chemicals and thickeners. This is the easiest make-ahead dessert in history that your family will love every time.



IS USING A MICROWAVE REALLY MORE CONVENIENT?

I haven't used our microwave in over a year. Contrary to where you think I am heading, I actually stopped using our microwave for reasons unrelated to health. I really hadn't given that much thought to methods of reheating my food until I started cooking and eating more real food. I don't cook every night so I do have leftovers to reheat for lunches and dinners. About a year ago, I decided to challenge myself to find other ways to heat up those leftovers and make other quick meals so I ditched the microwave to see what would happen. Now I am contemplating moving our microwave into the garage because it is taking up valuable space in my kitchen and is unused!

Ditching the microwave actually wasn't that hard. Not only do we now avoid any potential [health issues](#), we also learned that microwaving is not as convenient as we are led to believe and can actually cause more stress in the kitchen!

Microwaves and Processed Food Go Hand in Hand

Surprisingly, microwave ovens were not created with the purpose of cooking food. They were actually created to help spot war planes through radar in WWII. By accident, someone discovered that microwaves could cook food when they found a melted candy bar in their pocket! The first microwave oven was marketed and sold to the public in 1954. As the cost of production went down so did prices, and now pretty much every American has a microwave in their kitchen. I would bet that for many women, their only means of cooking know-how is with a microwave.

Sadly, as microwaves gained popularity, so did a dizzying array of 'nifty' processed food products from pizza with crispy crusts to lean steamer type 'bowls' and single serving ooey gooey brownie cups. These processed food products are quick and easy to heat up to satisfy our ever growing hunger for 'fast' food. What is faster than pulling something frozen out of your freezer and popping it in

the microwave for a minute? The only waiting time after that satisfying ‘DING!’ is for the food to cool down enough for you to actually put it in your mouth without burning yourself. At that point it just becomes a race to eat the item before it becomes cold and rock hard. While the foods may be convenient, most are full of GMOs, toxic chemicals and highly processed garbage.

Do Microwaves and Real Food Mix?

Clearly this blog is about real homemade food, not quick and easy processed minute meals you cook in the microwave. So is there any room for microwaves in a real food kitchen? Here is what I learned when I started to think about what my microwave was really for:

- **Designed for single servings, not for family meals.** It is basically impossible to heat up dinner for a family of four at the same time. Dinner time becomes waves of heating and waves of eating. Someone always ends up stuck in the kitchen doing the microwaving and invariably that person ends up watching everyone else wolf down their food while they wait for successive ‘DINGS!’
- **Overcooked, ‘Nuked’ Food.** Food heated in a microwave actually tastes different to me than food heated and cooked using other methods. It just tastes too hot and ‘nuked!’ That is because a microwave heats differently from other conventional methods – it cooks from the inside out very rapidly.
- **Convenience?** The minutes before a meal can be pretty stressful for a mother. People aren’t so pleasant when they are HUNGRY – especially young kids and tired husbands (and mothers!) I felt that the microwave was actually stressing me out and getting in my way of creating a sit-down family experience. That annoying ‘DING!’ sound would elicit impatient behavior from my daughter and husband. I was forced to move a lot faster. I never had enough time to really think through the meal and get all the right condiments and cold accompaniments on the plates or the table. I was constantly running back to the kitchen for something I had forgotten (‘Mom – can you please get the ketchup! Mom, can you please pour me a glass of milk!’) I never got to sit down and actually eat with my family.

How to Ditch Your Microwave

So how do I reheat our leftovers and make other quick meals?

- Reheat your food on the stove top or in the oven. Food reheated this way tastes like it was freshly made, not nuked. Your family will not know it is repurposed leftovers!
- Focus on the goal of sitting down to eat together, not in two minutes intervals. When food is reheated properly it will all be hot and ready at the same time and will also remain warm for second helpings.
- Slow down. Take the time to think about the entire meal and get it all ready beforehand. This way you can all sit down together and enjoy your meal and each other without stress.



MEAL PLANNING: IS IT WORTH YOUR TIME?

Confession: I am terrible at planning ahead! I have never created a meal plan in my life and I still survive! I know I could be much more organized and much less stressed if I did create meal plans. But who has time? I know I do not have the time to sit down weekly and go through a meal plan. I do not like to plan, I just like to cook (and share recipes with you!) Can you relate?

Some of you may love sitting down and planning your week, and I commend you! For those who are not adept at planning it might be worth outsourcing meal planning to a meal planning service.

For the Planners

If you are great at planning then I recommend reserving some time on a Sunday and planning out your week. Ask yourself these questions and fill in your plan:

- Which 2-3 nights are you cooking?
- Which night is breakfast for dinner night?
- Which nights can you make leftovers?
- What recipes do you want to make? Do something tried and true and try something new.
- What ingredients do you have on hand that can serve as inspiration? Which ingredients do you need to purchase?

Build your shopping list based on the recipes you select. To save valuable time, I highly recommend signing up for a meal planning service. They are truly invaluable in the time they save. I think if you are a working mom you should never feel guilty about getting help where you need it. If it helps you to make better meals, then by all means, buy some meal plans. I like the meal planning service from [Emily at Holistic Squid](#) the best. She has a real food meal planning service and a Paleo style meal

planning service too.

For the Procrastinators

It is important to limit how much you have to physically go to a store to shop. It is much easier today to buy items online. I love Amazon because not only can I buy things in bulk and save a ton of money, I can also automate my purchases via their 'Subscribe and Save' option so I never have to think about buying salt, dish soap or parchment paper again. It simply shows up on my doorstep every few months. I also buy my meat, poultry and fish in bulk via local buying clubs and farms. Doing this allows me to make what inspires me on a whim.

How to keep produce, dairy and meats 'on hand'

Part of the experience of being a real foodie is to get more connected with where your food comes from and it certainly doesn't come from a supermarket aisle or a truck. Any food you buy originated from a farmer. The longer you are into real food, the more you will gravitate to this model.

I am a firm believer that buying your food close to home supports your community. The advantage of buying locally and right from the source is that you needn't be confused about labels – if you have a question about how the food is grown or produced, you just have to ask. I also think the experience of shopping at a farmers' market is a much more valuable one for my daughter in the long run than shopping at the grocery store. Time outdoors is always a plus and besides, it is our little ritual—a ritual I am sure she will remember long into her adulthood.

5 tips for sourcing locally

1. Find your local farmers' market (<http://search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/>). There are over 7800 farmers' markets in the USDA directory – roughly doubling since 2004. My whole family finds it way more enjoyable to shop for our food outside in the open air. You cannot get more direct from the source than this, so ask questions of the farmers you meet about how they grow their produce. If you aren't satisfied then shop around.
2. Find a local CSA program (<http://www.localharvest.org/csa/>). It is very nice not to worry about what produce to buy at the market – the decision is made for me! All I have to do is figure out what to do with it all.
3. Look for and visit local farms in your area if you don't have a farmers' market.
4. Start a garden in your own backyard. There are plenty of non-profit organizations helping locals to create their own backyard vegetable gardens. This is how I originally got my backyard garden and I am very thankful for it even though I don't spend as much time as I would like out there!
5. When all else fails, find a local food co-op – they usually carry more locally sourced items as well. Even Whole Foods is starting to carry more local items in certain regions.

Why is buying locally beneficial?

Local food has better flavor

Local producers focus on growing heirloom varieties for their flavor and diversity whereas supermarket mass producers focus on traits that enable the produce to withstand traveling long distances and to look uniform in color (or in the case of GMOs, resist pests). Have you ever noticed how tomatoes don't really taste as great as you remembered from your childhood? It is not in your imagination.

Mass-produced produce is grown to resist spoilage and bruising, not for flavor. No wonder it is so hard to love and eat our fruits and vegetables these days – they just don't taste as good as they used to!

Local produce is fresher

Local produce is often picked the same day you buy it – you can't get much fresher than that. From a [report by the Harvard Medical School Center for Health and the Global Environment](#): “In direct and local markets, produce is usually sold within 24 hours after harvest at its peak freshness and ripeness, making consuming them a more attractive prospect. During this short time and distance, produce is likely handled by fewer people, decreasing potential for damage. Minimizing transportation and processing can ensure maximum freshness and flavor, and nutrient retention.”

Local food is diverse

Stop now and think about what produce you buy most often at your supermarket...lettuce, tomatoes, onions, carrots, cucumber, bananas, apples? Maybe you have purchased a bunch of kale or two recently because kale chips are becoming quite popular. Try and think about the last time you bought an eggplant, Armenian cucumber, rutabaga or kohlrabi. Maybe you purchased something like that for a special recipe, but those items probably don't make it to your regular grocery shopping list. I remember before I signed up for our weekly CSA box of produce I bought the same things week after week at the supermarket (the things I listed above) and they always tasted and looked pretty much the same. I guess there was some degree of comfort in that routine. The varieties of vegetables we buy at the supermarket are pretty much all the same in flavor and appearance. When you branch out to buying local heirloom varieties your taste buds will thank you.

I didn't even know what most of the items in my CSA box were and I was ecstatic when the local farm where I'm a member started to post a picture of their box contents each week with the name of each item! I have fallen madly in love with variety and I enjoy experimenting with new items and recipes and flavor combinations. A bonus is that my daughter knows and can identify more vegetables and cheeses than I ever could at her age (or even five years ago). I think that will go a long way to ensuring she grows up to appreciate local food and food diversity. The flavors are bolder and sweeter than anything I bought before in the supermarket. If you or your kids don't like vegetables, I can understand why! I don't like vegetables from the supermarket either! It doesn't really matter where you go in the country – you are buying the same produce – and the same goes for what you eat at restaurants. The only way to branch out and avoid this is to buy local produce from a local farmer who cares about seed diversity and flavor. Once you do it you will never go back.

Local produce is seasonal

Going to a farmers' market to buy produce or getting that produce weekly through a CSA is an entirely different experience than shopping for produce at your supermarket. Your local farmers follow a seasonal schedule based on what can grow in your area. You cannot buy tomatoes all of the time. I think there is something very exciting about seeing peaches at the farmers' market for the first time each year when they come into season. We stuff ourselves with peaches for a few months and then they are done and we genuinely miss them when they are gone. Supermarket peaches from some far away country cannot hold a candle to local Texas peaches when they are in season. My daughter loves kale and last spring we were eating kale chips multiple times a week. But once the summer temperatures got too hot to grow kale, the kale disappeared from our CSA box. My daughter questioned why? I could have just purchased some at the grocery store to fill the gap. Instead, I showed her that no

one had kale in their stands for sale because it was too hot for kale to grow. I told her we would have to wait a month or so for it to grow again. As the season changed and temperatures grew cooler, we started to get kale again and my daughter was thrilled. Absence truly does make the heart grow fonder.

The added bonus is when produce is in season there is usually a glut of it, meaning lower prices. When strawberries are abundant here I buy them by the flat and freeze them for later use. The deals you can get on produce in season are amazing.

Buy meat locally and in bulk to save money

I buy my meat in bulk to save money and to save time. About 80% of the time, I wander into my garage, open the chest freezer, look inside, and decide what to make a few hours before dinner. We buy a half cow every year in the spring from our local dairy farm. I have come to realize that the majority of meat my family will consume in a year comes from half of one cow. I am not sure how many people can say that. I have great respect for the cow that is providing us with our nourishment this year. I also get to use all parts of the cow.

When you purchase meat in bulk like this, you not only get the ground, stew and lean muscle meat, but also the oxtail, bones, heart, liver, tongue and fat. I wasn't sure what to do with many of these items. There was one thing I did know...I couldn't very well give them away! So I did what any real foodie would do, I challenged myself to figure out the best way to prepare them. Again, I drew inspiration from what I had in my house. This limited my choices and also helped me to branch out in trying new things.

Buy dried goods and oils online and in bulk to save time and money

It never ceases to amaze me how much money I wasted on buying small cans of pre-cooked beans and small bags of specialty rice, dried fruits and the like. I also wasted a lot of time going to the grocery store. We are so lucky to live in a time when we can go online and order a 20 pound bag of rice. Seriously – who would have ever thought when we were young that this would be possible? I take full advantage of online stores like Amazon for many of my real food needs. I store large amounts of rice, corn, beans, nuts, and dried fruits in large bins in my garage and pantry. I also store various types of flour in my freezer. This way whenever I need any of them I know that I have them. I also save tons of money buying them in bulk online or via buying clubs.

I also buy large quantities of various oils (coconut oil, ghee, olive oil) and apple cider vinegar in bulk to save money. I even buy all of my sundries online including parchment paper, wax paper, dish soap and sponges. I rarely visit the grocery store now because it just takes too much time and frankly it's very expensive comparatively. I would rather spend my precious time in the kitchen making something yummy or with my family doing something fun, or sometimes working, unfortunately! My grocery list is so tiny now; my husband is the one who usually makes the run to the store. He doesn't mind picking up a few items every other week!



WHAT ARE YOUR NEW CONVENIENCE FOODS?

I have found that there are a number of items that we always need. I ensure I always have a batch of these made. These aren't things you have to make all the time, but they do need to be on a regular rotation in your household. I have found if I have these items on hand, my meals are most of the way prepared. Identify these items and add them to your planning schedule. My list may be very different than yours.

1. **Chicken, veal or beef stock:** I make these on a regular basis and store in pint-sized containers in the freezer. I store mine in plastic deli-containers. I know some of you might be hesitant to use plastic, however, the reason I use them is that I can quickly run them under a hot tap to easily release the contents into a pot for reheating. You cannot do that with a glass jar unless you want cracked glass with your stock. There are tradeoffs and this is one of the ones I make to be more efficient in my kitchen. The benefits outweigh the risks for me at least in this case. You will have to decide for yourselves what makes sense for your family.
2. **Beans:** I cook large batches of beans in chicken broth. I also store them in the freezer in small containers and take one out each week for school lunches, salads, soups, stews, etc.
3. **Fermented condiments and dressings:** Sure you can make your own mayonnaise and ketchup, but without fermenting (or preserving them) you will make these items more often than you would like. Unfermented mayo only lasts about 3 days! I ferment mine so that I can get a month out of it.
4. **Fermented vegetables:** Sauerkraut and pickles are staples in my fridge. We eat these items with every meal for a good dose of nutrients and probiotics. This is my secret to always having prepared raw vegetables at home too! I can make a very flavorful salad full of veggies very quickly with fermented vegetables on hand. Before I learned about fermenting, I had such a problem mowing through all of the vegetables that came weekly in our CSA box. I had no idea how to physically eat them all in a week. Especially so many of the same item during bumper crop season. I would get peppers and eggplants by the bushel it seemed. This is what food

preservation is for – learn the art of canning and fermenting. You can learn more about fermenting and fermented foods in my other eBook, [The Homemade Mommy Handbook](#).

5. **Granola:** I make a big batch of granola once a month. I add various nuts and dried fruits. Granola can be eaten as a snack on the go or as a cereal with milk or yogurt in the morning for breakfast.
6. **Shredded Raw cheese:** This is reminiscent of the days when I used to buy bags of pre-shredded cheese.
7. **Cottage cheese:** I always make sure I have cottage cheese in the house. This is a surprisingly simple recipe made with only one ingredient: raw milk.
8. **Crème fraîche or sour cream:** I don't know about you but I use sour cream a lot! Thankfully sour cream is a by-product of making cottage cheese. I just skim it off the top of the soured milk right before I make the cottage cheese.
9. **Crispy nuts:** I have a huge batch of almonds I keep around for making almond butter on a regular basis or just for snacking.
10. **Homemade chocolate:** Yes, I make chocolate in a regular rotation. I store it in the freezer and I either snack on it or use it in recipes.

In general, I also cook double what I may need on a given night to save time in the future. I usually roast two chickens and freeze one of them. Your list may have different items on it than mine. If you like to have crackers on hand, then you will need to make crackers a part of your regular rotation. I find that while I love crackers, they are too labor intensive to make myself very often so this is one food I don't have on my regular rotation. The key is to figure out your list and make these items regularly. Most of these kinds of items require time but not ACTIVE time.

Tips for stretching your money further

I have already listed quite a few tips for saving time, but these are worth calling out for saving money. Besides the typical tips of buying bulk and via buying clubs, I do think there are some things you can do to stretch your money even further:

1. Save all the roasted chicken or beef bones of any meats you eat throughout the week in a plastic bag in the freezer. When you get a pretty full bag, add them to a pot with an onion, carrot and celery and simmer on low for 24 hours for a very inexpensive bone broth to cook rice or beans in in the future.
2. I also save the ends of onions and carrot ends and peels for use in making stock. I store these in small containers in the freezer too.
3. When you do use a whole chicken or meaty soup bones to make stock, use the leftover meat/chicken to make stir fry, curries, enchiladas, tacos, chicken salad, etc. It is amazing how long you can stretch meat and bones.
4. Render your own lard or tallow from pork or beef fat. You can use this fat not only for cooking but also, in the case of tallow, for making DIY beauty products and household items like candles.



I travel a lot on business trips but these tips can apply to family trips as well. Traveling poses two challenges. Not only do I need to have real food I can eat while I am on my business trips, but I also need to ensure my family has real food while I am away. Traveling and real food don't mix. Over the years I have tried many strategies to bring food with me. I remember a few years ago when I was traveling to Taiwan, I tried to bring some almond butter with me in a sealed jar in my carry-on luggage. Of course it got confiscated. Airline security rules are constantly changing but all of my carry-on items ideas below are allowed.

I have been traveling quite a bit internationally. Last summer, I traveled to Spain, London, Germany, the Netherlands, China, Korea and Brazil! No matter the length of the trip, it pays to bring a lot of food with you that can withstand long time periods without refrigeration. This is where fermented foods come in handy. If you can get a refrigerator at your hotel – do it. More often than not this is not possible so it is always good to be prepared with items that do not need to be refrigerated just in case.

Real Food Carry On Ideas

- **Raw cheese** – cut up into bite-sized pieces and store in wax paper in a Ziploc bag. Include a small container to take some of the cheese with you in your purse or briefcase while out and about.
- **Cured, fermented and dried meats** – cut up into bite-sized pieces. You can find this type of meat at specialty stores or online.
- **Chocolate macaroons** – it is always smart to carry something sweet to help avoid the sugar bomb at business dinners with clients.
- **Traveling bone broth** – I make this powdered 'traveling' bone broth with a dehydrator and it

is absolutely genius. It is really easy to find hot water pretty much anywhere so you can drink your broth in the morning and during 'coffee breaks' and know you are getting some nutrients while away.

- **Coconut flour muffins** – bring enough to have 1-2 per day. These are life savers as they are very filling and nourishing!
- **Homemade sauerkraut in a small jar** – make sure it doesn't leak. Eat a small amount with breakfast and leave it in the room the rest of the day. Taking sauerkraut out of your purse during your business lunch will illicit some inquisitive looks.

Surprised not to see nuts and dried fruit on my list? I have found they aren't filling and I can usually find a banana in an airport if I want fruit. I try to focus on bringing foods that contain satiating fat when I travel because that is hard to find in our low-fat world.

Buy Local Foods When You Arrive

Depending on where you have to go, you can find some real food gems while away. I got lucky once in Chicago when I happened upon a farmers' market on my way into the office. I bought a bunch of berries and cherries and was in heaven all day during my meeting. In Spain, I bought jamon (their famous cured pork) and carried it around with me the whole trip in the sealed container. I finally opened and ate it on the plane ride home when I had run out of provisions. I had to eat it all because it is not allowed back into the US, but that wasn't a problem – it was delicious! When I am in the US, I try to find a natural foods store or a Whole Foods near where I will be working. I can then go and stock up on provisions if I run out of anything.

How to Cope With Planned Business Meals

- **Breakfast** – Stick with room service for breakfast consisting of eggs and bacon to ensure you can make it until lunch. This may push you over the top for your per diem for meal expense reimbursements, but it is worth it to avoid the processed pastries and fat-free yogurt and fruit that are usually served at breakfast meetings.
- **Lunch** – On all of my international trips lunch was the best meal – we always went out for a multi-course meal and the food was real and delicious. Unfortunately in the U.S., the situation is not as rosy. Almost always in the U.S. lunch is a 'working lunch' that consists of catered sandwiches with mystery luncheon meats and a 'lettuce' salad with processed dressing and then usually chips and cookies. I recommend bringing meats and cheeses in your briefcase and casually adding them on top of the plain lettuce from the salad. This should satisfy you until dinner, although it probably wouldn't hurt to bring a coconut flour muffin as well for an afternoon snack.
- **Dinner** – No matter what restaurant you go to – focus on plain meats and vegetables, avoid anything fried and dessert and you should be alright.
- Avoid any meals at the airport if at all possible! I have found that any food I eat from an airport is a processed nightmare and my body goes haywire. The last thing I want is an episode of the tummy aches, headaches and grogginess during a meeting!

Supplements

- Take herbs to help ward off illness. I use Gan Mao Ling Chinese herbs to avoid catching a cold from airplane travel. It truly does work.
- Take vitamin B12. This helps to keep you alert when dealing with jetlag and also with early mornings, long days and late nights.

- Take probiotics! I can't stress this one enough. Probiotics keep things in order and also ward off any stomach bugs or food poisoning that may be lurking around.



HOW TO PACK SMART USING DIY BEAUTY PRODUCTS

It wasn't a huge leap from making real food meals to making some DIY beauty products as well. Once I realized what chemicals were in my food and once I became an avid label reader, I started to look at my beauty products as well. I realized what I was using wasn't so natural after all. Have you noticed the laundry list of chemicals on the back of your shampoo bottle? It is a mile long!

And so I entered into the DIY fray and have since made my own toothpaste, deodorant, lip balm and lotion bars. I have even made sunscreen and bug repellent. I also carry around a homemade disinfectant spray that is great for when I am on the plane and in not-so-nice hotel rooms.

A nice bonus I hadn't thought of when I started making my own beauty products is that they are very portable. The ones I gravitated toward are not liquid so I do not have to present them at airport security. Anything to help expedite airport security is a win-win in my book. I also like that they don't leak. I store these items in small containers perfect for traveling which keeps my toiletry bag very small leaving room for the food I need to pack!



As I mentioned before, I am not normally a meal planner. I never know how much time I will have during the day to prep or cook due to my busy schedule with my actual day job, my blog and my family. For obvious reasons, this approach doesn't really work when I am out of town. The other issue is that because I do all the cooking in the house, my husband is caught flat-footed when I leave town. I need to make sure he knows exactly what he needs to do so things run smoothly and he can just focus on our daughter as Mr. Mom while I am gone.

1. **Prepare large batches, label and freeze** - It is important to have options in the freezer for these last minute trips. Add a label with not only what the item is but also directions on how to heat it up. For example – whole roasted chicken: heat in oven covered for 1 hour at 350 degrees F.
2. **The day before the trip, make the main component of each school lunch** - Freeze bean tacos, grilled meats, and even sandwiches. Your significant other can take them out of the freezer each morning and by the time your child eats lunch they will be defrosted.
3. **Provide detailed menus on your family calendar** - List what your family will be eating for meals and snacks for each day you will be away. Mix in some meals out at a restaurant for a little variety depending on how long you will be gone.
4. **Stock the house with real food snacks** - Give your family options to eat quickly without you around. Make muffins, chocolate, popcorn. Your family will be less prone to snack on other fake food if you leave real food for them.
5. **Avoid any 'extras'** - Don't leave any real food 'pets' like kefir or kombucha for your significant other to tend to while you are away unless they like that sort of thing. It will already be stressful enough with mommy away. I have found out through experience that there is nothing worse for your significant other's self-esteem than killing your favorite pet ferment. I just recommend putting it in the fridge to rest for the week!



The other challenge to being a working mom is that usually your kid is at school or day care. This means you have to pack a lunch each day. I have found that when I am super busy, I always worry about lunches for my daughter. How will I find time in the morning in the midst of early morning conference calls with colleagues from India? But it is very important to me that my daughter not get lost in the shuffle. It has taken time, but we have a regular rotation going of real food lunch items for my daughter that are nourishing and that she loves.

How to Amp up the Nutrient Density

I may be called the Homemade Mommy but just making something 'homemade' doesn't automatically make it nutrient-dense. We have been raised on a lot of diet dogma around what healthy eating is. It takes time and effort to change our mindset. [Traditional diets are different from 'whole foods' diets](#) in that they focus on traditional preparation for optimal nutrient density. There is a lot of wisdom out there – we just need to start paying more attention to it. Think of these ideas as ways to enhance your current school lunch and snacks to make it more nutrient-dense and to help you change your mindset on what is healthy. The good news is that I personally do not experiment much with lunches and often repeat the same lunch multiple times a week based on what my daughter likes best. I can focus on variety at dinner!

The Three Questions

For EVERY lunch and snack I pack I ask myself:

1. Did I include plenty of FATS?

I personally think it is pretty clear what the low-fat diet fads have done for our kids. One-third of them are obese. Unfortunately when products are made to be low-fat they aren't based on what nature has provided for us. The fact is, when you remove fat you remove

the flavor and it then has to be replaced with artificial, chemical based ingredients that are toxic for everyone. I think most of you already agree that eating processed foods is bad for you and your family or you wouldn't be reading this book. So then where does this leave us? I think saturated fat has been demonized enough. Nature made it with fat for a reason. Fats are [vitally important](#) to growing kids' brains and for sustained energy throughout the day.

2. Did I include a FERMENTED condiment?

Healthy, probiotic bacteria in fermented foods ([what are fermented foods?](#)) are essential to everyone and extremely underrated. Healthy probiotic foods are critical not only for digestive health but also for keeping our immune systems healthy and strong. Illness is rampant in day cares and preschools, why not build up your kiddo's natural defenses?

3. Did I incorporate bone broth for vital minerals and gelatin?

Bone broth is one of those amazing foods that is both economical and easy to make while also packing a [nutrient-dense punch](#). Although I am working on it, my daughter still doesn't drink bone broth straight so I have to come up with creative ideas including cooking [beans](#) and [rice](#) in broth.

It is that simple, if I cover those three bases then I am a very happy camper and I know I have done my duty for the day.

Now for some ideas!

Lunch Ideas

Please note – in our family we do eat some corn and rice so we are not always grain-free, but we are soy-free and organic. We do avoid wheat unless it is sourdough and even that rarely makes it into my daughter's lunchbox. Here are some lunches that are a hit with her:

1. What we call a 'bean-a-dilla' – a corn tortilla heated up with butter in my cast iron skillet with [homemade soaked black beans](#) cooked in [bone broth](#) and raw cheese. I make a few of these at the beginning of the week and freeze them. She doesn't mind eating them cold. I serve with sauerkraut and a mixture of crème fraîche and salsa for dipping.
2. Soups and stews. I make large batches of black beans and vegetable soups and store them in my freezer. It takes me 5-10 min to heat one serving up on the stove and pour it into her thermos.
3. Ground beef [tacos](#) – this is one of my favorites because it includes everything I want for her to eat in one pretty package. My daughter eats her tacos with all the fixings including: guacamole, crème fraîche, sauerkraut and diced fresh onion and cilantro and raw cheese. I usually serve this with [kale chips](#).
4. [Egg salad](#) and all salads made with [homemade mayo](#) are great served with organic corn chips fried in coconut oil.
5. Fried [rice](#) (cooked in bone broth) with vegetables, eggs and meats of your choice. This comes together quickly and can be kept warm in a thermos.
6. Breakfast for lunch. This involves leftover [banana pancakes](#) and either bacon or [sausage](#) served with maple cinnamon butter or [ketchup](#) for dipping.
7. [Mezze](#) – This one is basically where I throw together whatever I have in the fridge and usually

involves [hummus](#) or [babaganoush](#) (when in season), raw cheese, a hard-boiled egg and some kraut.

8. Leftovers – I often give my daughter what we ate the night before. Leftover roast chicken or hamburgers makes a great lunch!

For more lunch ideas check out my [preschool lunch series](#) on my blog. You can follow along each day and see a photo of what I packed for lunch.



I am human being just like all of you. I work hard and I certainly would go out of my mind if I felt the pressure to cook each and every night. We do often go out to eat as a family and I certainly have to eat out as well when I am traveling for business. So how do I manage to eat out and not get sick?

The answer depends on how healthy you are at the time. When I was just getting started with real food, I had some healing to do. If I ate out at a restaurant early on in the process, I would definitely feel the ill effects of eating something processed. Now, I am doing much better and can handle a flub every now and then.

This all being said, most restaurants out there are not organic, do not use pastured meats and poultry and do not use real, healthy saturated fats. So we practice a 90/10 rule. We eat 90% real food at home and reserve the 10% for when we eat out. When we eat out we do not sweat it. We do the best we can. With this in mind there are two levels of scrutiny you can put on any restaurant menu.

Level 1: Things you can most easily avoid with some probing questions:

1. **Wheat** – I avoid gluten unless it is properly prepared (soaked, soured or sprouted). I generally claim I am gluten-free at restaurants and ask to be sure there is no flour in what I am eating. Flour tends to hang out in sauces and other random places you would not think about, so it is best to just ask what your gluten-free options are.
2. **Soy** – I avoid soy and will ask to ensure it is not a part of my meal. Soy affects hormones and also much of it is GMO in the United States.
3. **Dairy** – I personally can't handle too much pasteurized dairy. I tend to avoid dairy when I am out at restaurants because it generally is not organic either. It is easy enough to avoid.

4. **MSG** – I avoid any sauces at low to mid-tier restaurants. I have read books about how most chain restaurants use powdered sauce packets and just add water and heat in a microwave. These sauces are completely fake and full of MSG and preservatives, not to mention other harmful chemicals. This is not worth eating to me. It is fairly easy to get meats without sauces on them.

Level 2: Things that are virtually impossible to avoid but worth being cognizant of:

1. **Rancid vegetable oils:** Pretty much all restaurants, including fairly pricey ones, use canola, soy, corn, cottonseed and other blended oils. You can be sure the 'olive oil' you are eating is not really 100% olive oil either because most of them are tainted and adulterated. You will be hard pressed to find a restaurant that does not fry items in vegetable oil. For this reason, I tend to avoid fried items (unless I find a special place that does use something real...for example there is a restaurant where I live that fries their French fries in duck fat!) Even the so-called 'butter' most restaurants use for frying eggs and sautéing vegetables is most likely a margarine blend. I have often thought of bringing in my own ghee for them to use but have since given up that enterprise!
2. **Genetically Modified Organisms or GMOs:** It is pretty much impossible to avoid GMOs when eating out. The recent news of Chipotle labeling GMOs on their menu demonstrates this challenge. If rancid vegetable oils are on pretty much every menu item you have GMOs in pretty much everything on the menu. All condiments are usually processed as well and contain corn syrup, GMO sugar beets or other GMO-laden preservatives. This is just the way things are. Even if you get raw vegetables they are most likely not organic which leads me to my next point.
3. **Pesticides:** Unless otherwise specified, most restaurant food is not organic. Even if they list that they source vegetables from local farms, this does not mean everything is organic. If you read the fine print at most of these establishments they will caveat their sourcing promises by saying that if an item is out of season, they will source the item through more conventional methods.

So what do I order?

I tend to stick to raw or steamed vegetables and proteins when I am out. I also usually order some rice to fill me up. These items tend to have the least effect on my digestion. As I said, I avoid the sauces as much as I can and I avoid desserts.

This is why it is worth doing some research to find any restaurant in your area that does follow a farm to table type of philosophy. While they will not be as good as you might be at home, it is fantastic to support their efforts. No restaurant is perfect, though, so do not expect perfection. Do support the small steps restaurants are trying to make. The cards are certainly stacked against them. Wide-scale distribution of local foods is extremely nascent and challenging. These restaurant owners are certainly risking their own profits to support local, real food and I, for one, believe in supporting them, however expensive they may be. Their prices reflect an economic reality. Once you find a good local restaurant you like that does not cause you major ill effects, go there often. Become a regular and, for goodness sake, spread the word to your friends and family about how good it is!



I am including a few basic recipes in this eBook that will help you get started. These recipes are for pantry and freezer staples like condiments, bone broth and crispy nuts. I have also included my favorite fermented food recipes, simple breakfasts, side dishes, snacks and main dishes. I threw in a couple of desserts we keep on regular rotation as well. I just know that armed with these simple, basic recipes in your regular rotation, you will have on hand what you need to keep your kitchen real and keep your family nourished.





Kale Chips

One bunch kale
Dash turmeric and paprika
2 tbsp coconut oil

Preheat oven to 350°F.

TIP: Put the coconut oil in a glass bowl or jar and place it in the oven while the oven is preheating to melt.

Remove kale leaves from the stems, wash and thoroughly dry them (this helps them crisp up better). Spread the kale as evenly as possible on a roasting pan or cookie sheet (you can line it with a Silpat or foil to make clean up easier).

Sprinkle with paprika and turmeric. Pour the oil over the kale.

Cook for about 10-15 minutes. Cooking times may vary. The kale chips are ready when pieces are crisp and crunchy!

Upon removal from the oven, grind a little sea salt on top. Let the chips cool and then transfer to a bowl to eat or store.

Appetizers and Snacks



Popcorn

1/2 cup non-GMO organic corn kernels
1/4 cup coconut oil
2 tbsp butter, melted
1/2 tsp salt

In a small butter warmer, melt butter on low.

I use a Whirley Pop to make popcorn. Heat up the Whirley Pop on medium high heat.

Once it is hot, add the coconut oil, corn kernels and salt. Stir and turn per the device directions until you hear lots of popping and can't turn the crank anymore.

Remove the popcorn to a bowl and toss with the melted butter.

Appetizers and Snacks



Crispy Almonds

4 cups almonds, preferably skinless
1 tbsp salt
Filtered water (enough to cover the nuts)

Place nuts in a bowl and fill with filtered water to cover. Add the salt and stir it up.

Leave the soaking almonds in a warm place for at least 7 hours or overnight.

Drain in a colander and rinse with cool water.

Spread on a sheet pan and place in a warm oven (my oven only goes as low as 170 degrees F but 150 degrees is preferred) for 12 to 24 hours, turning occasionally, until completely dry and crisp.

Store in a mason jar in your pantry.





Milk Kefir

1 tbsp kefir grains

2 cups raw whole milk or low temperature pasteurized organic milk

Add healthy, live kefir grains to whole raw milk in a fermentation jar.

Set in pantry or on your countertop for 18-24 hours.

TIP: Do not use ultra-high temperature pasteurized milk to make kefir as your grains will slowly die over time.

The finished kefir should have an effervescent quality and taste sour. The kefir will smell yeasty like beer.

Strain out the grains and put the finished kefir in the fridge.

Reuse the grains in new batches of milk indefinitely. When taken care of properly, milk kefir grains will outlast you and can be handed down to future generations.

Do not rinse the grains between batches. The chlorine in tap water will kill the grains.

TIP: When you need to slow down the process (i.e., if you are leaving town for a week), simply put the grains in a jar of fresh milk and store them in your fridge while you are gone.

With each subsequent batch your kefir grains will grow and you can share them with friends and family.



Raw Milk Cottage Cheese

This recipe will make about 2 cups of cottage cheese

1/2 gallon raw milk

Salt to taste (optional)

Skim the cream off of the top of the milk as best you can with a turkey baster and store in a mason jar in the fridge for later.

Pour the skimmed milk into a glass bowl and cover with a cheesecloth. Leave on the counter for 1-2 days until it reaches a firm Jell-O-like consistency just prior to showing signs of separation into curds and whey. This means you will not see any watery whey sitting on top – just white Jell-O-like milk. Waiting times will vary depending on how fresh your raw milk is.

Skim off any leftover cream (you probably will not be able to get it all with the turkey baster) and use as you would sour cream. (Bonus!)

Dump the thickened milk into a large pot and turn the heat on to low. Heat on low for 5-10 minutes until you see the milk separate into curds and whey.

Line a strainer with butter muslin or a dish cloth and set over a large bowl.

Pour the curds and whey into the strainer. Allow the curds to drain for about 1-3 hours. You can save the whey for other uses.

Remove the curds from the butter muslin and add to a bowl. Crumble up the curds into small chunks. Add salt to taste. Pour on about 1/4 cup of the reserved fresh cream. Stir to combine. Voila – home-made cottage cheese!

If you can't get raw milk in your state, you might try this [recipe](#) using pasteurized milk.



Banana Pancakes

- 2 eggs
- 1 very ripe banana
- 1/4 cup almond butter
- 2 tbsp raw milk or coconut milk
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- Pinch salt
- Coconut oil or butter for cooking

Mash banana and almond butter together thoroughly until you get a smooth consistency.

Incorporate the eggs.

Add milk and the rest of the ingredients.

Heat your griddle or cast iron skillet over medium heat.

Melt a generous bit of coconut oil or butter and pour on the batter.

When the pancake begins to have surface bubbles near the center, flip and cook other side (each side 2-3 minutes).

Add more coconut oil or butter to cooking surface as needed between batches.

Let your pancakes rest in the oven on “warm” on a paper towel-lined plate until all batches are complete.



Coconut Flour Muffins

- 6 eggs
 - 6 tbsp melted coconut oil or butter
 - 6 tbsp raw honey
 - 1/4 tsp almond extract
 - 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
 - 1/4 tsp sea salt
 - 1 tsp baking powder
 - 1/2 cup coconut flour
 - 1/2 cup frozen blueberries or 3/4 cup fresh blueberries
-

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Put coconut oil or butter into a glass measuring cup and place it in the oven while it preheats – keep checking it and once it is melted use most for the recipe and use a little to grease your muffin tin or inserts.

Blend all ingredients except the blueberries with a whisk or in a high speed blender until well blended.

Fold blueberries into the batter.

Pour the batter into 12 lined muffins cups and bake for 16-20 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean.





Fermented Sauerkraut

2-3 heads cabbage - green or purple, chopped

10g sea salt per 450g of veggies (the best way to do this is with a kitchen scale)

Sprinkle the cabbage with salt in a large bowl.

Pound down with a wooden pounder for about 10 minutes or until the cabbage releases its juices.

Pack mixture into a fermentation jar until the veggies start to submerge in their own juices (they won't be totally submerged but you will notice the air gets squeezed out quite a bit).

Store in your pantry for one month – tasting every few days to ensure the vegetables aren't turning brown and are souring nicely

TIP: If the top starts to brown, just stir up the kraut and pack down the veggies again below the juices.

You can eat throughout the month. It is interesting to taste the kraut throughout the fermentation process to see how the flavor develops over time.



Fermented Ketchup

3 7-ounce jars tomato paste

1/3 cup raw honey

3 tbsp raw apple cider vinegar

3 small garlic cloves, minced

6 tbsp sauerkraut juice or liquid whey (drained from yogurt)

2 1/4 tsp salt

Pinch cayenne pepper

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Stir well to combine and then pour into a fermentation jar

Ensure that the top of the ketchup is at least one inch below the top of the jar.

Close the jar and leave it at room temperature for 3 days to ferment; then transfer to the refrigerator.



Fermented Mayonnaise

- 3 egg yolks from pastured hens
- 1 tbsp raw apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp raw honey
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp sauerkraut juice (preferred) or liquid whey (drained from yogurt)

Place egg yolks in food processor and blend for 1 minute.

Add salt, honey, Dijon mustard and apple cider vinegar and blend for 30 more seconds. While the food processor is running, slowly pour the oil into the food processor.

Add the sauerkraut juice as your last step and process quickly to incorporate.

Allow the mayo to ferment at room temperature for 7 hours before storing in the fridge. The mayo will stay good for a few weeks in the fridge.



Dijon Honey Mustard

- 1 cup ground mustard powder
- 1 cup raw apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup yellow mustard seeds
- 2 pastured eggs, beaten
- 3/4 cup raw honey
- 1 tsp turmeric

In a pint-sized glass jar, mix together the ground mustard powder and vinegar. Cover and let stand overnight at room temperature.

The next day, soak the mustard seeds in enough filtered water to cover for about 10 minutes, then strain the seeds.

Bring a saucepan of water to a simmer.

Combine the mustard seeds, beaten eggs, and honey into a glass bowl that you can set over the simmering water on the stove. (note: if you have a double boiler, use that)

Add in the mustard and vinegar mixture and the turmeric and cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened or about 15 minutes.

Store in a sealed jar in the refrigerator.



Maple Cider Barbecue Sauce

This recipe makes about 1 cup of barbecue sauce.

- 1 tbsp ghee or coconut oil**
- 1/4 onion, diced**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1/2 tsp ground New Mexico chile powder**
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper**
- 1/2 tsp salt**
- 1/2 cup homemade ketchup**
- 2 tbsp strongly brewed coffee**
- 2 tbsp molasses**
- 1/3 cup raw apple cider vinegar**
- 1/4 cup maple syrup**
- 1 cup beef broth**

Heat a small saucepan on medium high heat.

Add ghee and the onions and sauté until translucent, about 3-5 minutes.

Add the garlic and the spices and stir until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the ketchup and cook another minute.

Add the rest of the ingredients and bring to a simmer. Lower heat and simmer slowly until thickened, about 15-20 minutes.

This sauce is perfect on grilled chicken or ribs with the right amount of sweetness, tanginess and spiciness.



Real Ranch Dressing

- 1/3 cup homemade mayo
- 1/2 cup kefir
- 1/3 cup sour cream
- 2 tsp fresh or dried dill
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp paprika
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- Dash of cayenne pepper
- 1/2 tsp organic onion powder

Mix together well and store in a glass jar/bottle.



Pickles

- 1 lb cucumbers
- 2 1/2 cups chlorine-free water (boil tap water and then let it come to room temperature)
- 1/4 cup salt
- 1/4 cup sauerkraut juice (from a previous batch) or liquid whey (drained from yogurt)
- 1 1/2 cups raw apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp black peppercorns
- 1 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- Bunch fresh dill
- 2 bay leaves
- 6 whole garlic cloves

Make the brine: Mix salt, water, apple cider vinegar and sauerkraut juice in a bowl.

Put seasonings (peppercorns, dill, red pepper, bay leaves and garlic) in the bottom of a half-gallon sized glass fermentation jar.

Add in sliced cucumbers and pack them all in tightly.

Pour in the brine until it is just over the top of the cucumbers. Use a smaller mason jar or a plastic bag full of water to keep the vegetables down below the brine.

Close the lid and let it sit in your pantry at room temperature for 2 days. After 2 days, open and taste the pickles. If they are crisp then they are ready. Move the pickles to your fridge.

Dilly Carrots and Kohlrabi

- 7-10 medium carrots, cut into sticks
- 4 small kohlrabi, peeled and cut into sticks
- 1 bunch fresh dill
- 12 whole black peppercorns
- 6 whole garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 bay leaves

The Brine:

- 1/2 cup salt
- Up to 1 cup sauerkraut juice (from a previous batch) or liquid whey (drained from yogurt)
- 1 quart filtered (chlorine-free) water



Combine the ingredients for the brine in a bowl or pitcher and stir to dissolve the salt.

Put the garlic, black peppercorns, and a third of the fresh dill in the bottom of your fermentation jar. Place one bay leaf on top. Pack in a third of your carrot and kohlrabi sticks. Continue to layer in more dill and more vegetables until you get to about 2 inches from the top of your jar.

Pour in the brine, leaving about an inch from the top. Close the jar and leave to ferment on the counter or in your pantry for about a week or more, using your taste buds as your guide to when it is ready. You are looking for a 'sour' taste. If it still tastes salty then it isn't done yet and you can leave it longer.

The longer you leave it to ferment the better the flavor. You might see some white stuff on top. This is called 'bloom' and is nothing to worry about. Just scrape it off and place the jar in your fridge and enjoy your dilly sticks! If you see black or pink/red mold on top then toss it! Using a good fermentation jar will mitigate the risk of too much mold forming.





Chicken Stock

- 1-2 whole free-range chicken(s) and/or 2-3 lbs chicken backs
- 1 lb chicken feet
- 1 gallon cold, filtered water or enough to fill the stock pot 3/4 of the way up to the top of the ingredients
- 2 tbsp vinegar
- 1 large onion, roughly chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and roughly chopped
- 3 celery stalks, roughly chopped
- 2 whole garlic cloves
- 1 bouquet garni (wrap the following herbs in a cheesecloth and tie with kitchen twine: 1 bay leaf, 1 large bunch fresh thyme, 1 bunch fresh parsley, 1 handful tarragon stems)

Place the onion, carrots, celery, garlic, and the bouquet garni in the bottom of a large stock pot. Add in all of the chicken and fill 2/3 of the way up the chicken with water. Pour in the vinegar and let the mixture stand for 30-60 minutes. This releases the minerals from the bones.

TIP: Store onion ends, carrot ends and peels, and celery ends in the freezer to use for making stock.

Slowly bring to a gentle simmer (this should take about 45 minutes) and skim off any foam that rises to the top. Cover and reduce the heat to low and cook for 12-24 hours, skimming every hour or so for the first few hours. The longer the cooking time the richer the stock.

Strain the stock through a colander lined with a cheesecloth. Place the stock in the fridge until the broth congeals and the fat rises to the top. Skim off the fat and reserve it for future projects. Store the stock in the freezer for long term storage (more than three days).

Remove the chicken meat from the bones and use in casseroles, salads or soup.

Veal Stock

- 2 lbs veal shanks
- 3 lbs veal knuckle bones
- 2 medium onions, peeled and halved
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and halved
- 1 celery stalk
- 1 bouquet garni (wrap the following herbs in a cheesecloth and tie with kitchen twine: 1 bay leaf, 1 large bunch fresh thyme, 1 bunch fresh parsley, 1 handful tarragon stems)
- Approx 5 quarts cold filtered water
- 1/4 cup raw apple cider vinegar



Place all the ingredients except the water and apple cider vinegar in a 15-quart stock pot.

TIP: Place the vegetables and bouquet garni in the bottom of the pot to secure them beneath the bones and meat so they won't float to the top and interfere with skimming.

Cover the ingredients with the cold water. Add enough water to come about 4 inches above the top of the meat and bones. Add the apple cider vinegar and let the bones rest for 45 minutes (this releases the minerals).

Bring the stock slowly to a simmer (about 45 minutes). Skim off any froth, fat and scum that floats to the top with a small ladle. Cover and cook the stock at a very low simmer for 24 hours, skimming every 30 minutes for the first couple of hours.

Carefully strain the stock, using a strainer lined with a clean dish towel or cheesecloth. Store in the fridge overnight and skim the fat off the top the next day. Store the stock in the freezer for long term storage (more than three days).





Brown Rice

- 2 cups brown rice, rinsed
- 1 can coconut milk
- 2 cups bone broth
- 3 cardamom pods
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp gelatin
- Pinch salt

Combine all ingredients in a stainless steel rice cooker and push start. The rice will be ready in about 30-40 minutes.



Black Beans

2 lbs whole dried black beans
Warm filtered water (to cover)
4 tbsp lime juice
1 quart chicken stock
1 onion, peeled and cut in half
6 cloves garlic, smashed
1/2 cup salsa
Salt to taste

Soak beans overnight (12-24 hours) in enough warm water to cover and lime juice.

Drain and wash the beans and add to your stock pot.

Add in chicken stock and enough water to cover, along with the garlic and the onion halves.

Bring to a boil and skim the foamy scum off the top.

Cover and turn down to a simmer and cook for 4-6 hours. Add the salt to taste and the salsa. Adding the salt after most of the cooking is done allows the beans to keep their shape.

Cook another 1-2 hours. Taste and season a bit more to taste. Allow to cool and store in small containers in the freezer for long term storage.



Pommes Persillade

- 2 large (9 ounces each) potatoes, peeled**
- 2 tbsp coconut oil**
- 2 tbsp butter**
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped very small**
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley leaves, minced**
- Salt and pepper to taste**

Cut the potatoes into 1/4-inch cubes. Place in a pot of cold, salted water and bring to a rolling boil. Turn off heat and drain potatoes in a colander.

Spread potatoes on a baking sheet in one layer and pat dry with a paper towel. Leave out or put in fridge until you are ready to sauté (about 10 min before you want to serve dinner). How dry they are is key to the recipe.

Meanwhile, chop the garlic and parsley together until finely minced, and set the mixture aside. (This is a persillade.)

Heat a large skillet (you might need two skillets – you don't want to crowd the pan), and then add the oil when the pan is hot.

Sauté over high heat for 6-8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are just starting to brown on all sides. Add the butter and sauté for another minute or so.

Add the salt, pepper, and persillade to the potatoes in the skillet, tossing to combine. Serve immediately.



Grilled Portabello Pizzas

The Crust:

- 4 large portabello mushrooms
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2-3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

The Pizza Sauce:

- 1 cup [homemade tomato paste](#) or a jar of tomato paste
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed and minced
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp dried rosemary
- 6-8 fresh basil leaves, chopped
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 tsp crushed red pepper

The Rest:

- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 4 fresh basil leaves, chiffonade for garnish



Sprinkle the portabello mushrooms with salt and pepper and drizzle with the olive oil.

In a small saucepan over medium low heat, add all of the pizza sauce ingredients and stir together. Cook over low heat for about 10 minutes.

In the meantime, heat a grill to medium high heat. Place the mushrooms on the grill gill side down and cook for 5 minutes. Turn the mushrooms over and grill another 5 minutes. When you next check on the mushrooms they should have released quite a bit of liquid. Turn the mushrooms over again to drain the liquid and cook for another 5 minutes. Remove the mushrooms and place gill side up.

Spread the mushrooms with the pizza sauce and sprinkle with the cheese (use liberally).

Place the mushrooms back on the grill for another 3-5 minutes until the cheese is melted.

Garnish with the chiffonade of basil and serve with homemade ranch dressing for a real show-stopper.



Lemon Rosemary Roasted Chicken with Pan Jus

- 1 (2 1/2 - 3 lbs) roasting chicken
- 1 lemon, cut in half
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 head garlic, split down the middle
- 1 bunch fresh rosemary sprigs
- 2 tbsp minced rosemary
- 4 tbsp unsalted butter, at room temperature,
plus 2 tbsp melted butter
- 1 onion, sliced into rings
- 1 cup homemade chicken stock

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Place the onion in the bottom of a roasting pan (I use the onion as my 'rack').

Rinse the chicken inside and out and pat dry.

In a small bowl, combine the minced rosemary and the 4 tbsp softened butter and blend well.

Loosen the chicken skin above the breast by inserting your fingers between it and the flesh of the breast. Place 1 1/2 tsp of the herb butter under the skin on each side of the breast.

Rub the skin all over with 1 tbsp of the herb butter. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Stuff the garlic, rosemary sprigs and both lemon halves into the rear of the chicken.

Place the chicken in the oven in the roasting pan legs first. For a nice crisp skin, roast the chicken for 2 hours, basting occasionally with the melted

butter. To test if the chicken is done, remove the chicken from the oven and let stand for 10 minutes so the juices can retreat into the chicken. Then check the thickest part of the thigh with a thermometer - you want it to read 165°F. You can also pierce between the leg and thigh with a fork and if the juices run clear yellow the chicken is done. If necessary, roast another 5 minutes and test again.

The chicken can be held 20-30 minutes in a turned off oven until it is ready to serve for dinner.

Cooking times may vary, so leave time to test what works in your kitchen

To make the pan sauce, add the chicken stock to the pan and bring to a boil for about 5 minutes, until reduced, scraping the bottom of the pan to release the pan drippings. Strain the sauce into a small saucepan and season to taste. Keep it warm on very low heat until you are ready to serve the chicken. Carve the chicken and serve with the pan sauce.

Easy Meatballs

- 1-2 tbsp beef tallow or ghee
- 2 lbs ground beef
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed and minced
- 1 bunch spinach, chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/2 cup homemade ketchup
(see recipe in Condiments section)
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsp coconut flour



Preheat oven to 400°F.

Heat a pan over medium high heat.

When hot, add the tallow or ghee and the onions. Sauté the onions until tender, about 2-3 minutes. Add the carrots and sauté another 3-5 minutes. Add the spinach and garlic and incorporate until wilted. Remove from heat and allow to cool to room temperature.

In a large bowl mix together the ground beef, spices, cooked vegetables, ketchup, eggs and coconut flour.

Form into meatballs.

TIP: at this point, you can place the meatballs in the fridge on a tray to bake later in the day.

Bake the meatballs for about 20-30 minutes or until golden and cooked through.

Maple Cider Brisket

- 1 beef brisket (3-4 lbs)
- 2 cloves garlic, smashed
- 2-3 carrots, cut into chunks
- 3 tbsp beef tallow
- 2 onions, halved and thinly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp high mineral salt
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 3/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp ground cayenne
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 2 tbsp homemade ketchup
- 1 cup strongly brewed coffee
- 3/4 cup raw apple cider vinegar
- 3/4 cup maple syrup, Grade B
- 1/2 cup beef broth



Preheat oven to 350°F.

Season the brisket with salt and add to a large roasting pan with a lid. Add the two smashed garlic cloves and the carrots - set aside.

Heat the beef tallow in a sauté pan over medium high heat. Add the onions and cook until soft, about 10 minutes.

Add the minced garlic, salt, and the rest of the spices and cook for 1 minute.

Add the homemade ketchup and cook for another minute.

Add the coffee, apple cider vinegar, maple syrup and broth and bring to a boil.

Pour over the brisket and carrots and cover the roasting pan and bake for 30 minutes. Turn the oven down to 300°F and cook for about 3-4 more hours or until the brisket is easily shredded with a fork.

Once the brisket is done, slice the meat across the grain using a sharp knife. Place the sliced meat back into the dish you cooked it in and cover and put in the refrigerator overnight.

The next day, about 1 hour before you want to have dinner, remove the fat from the surface of the sauce. Cover the pan, place in the oven and bake for 30 minutes at 350°F. Remove the cover about 10 minutes before serving to reduce the sauce.



Beef Taco Meat with Homemade Taco Seasoning

Homemade Taco Seasoning Recipe

- 4 tsp ancho chile powder**
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper**
- 2 tsp dried oregano**
- 1 tsp ground turmeric**
- 2 tsp ground cumin**
- 2 tsp sea salt**

Mix all ingredients together and store in an air tight container or glass jar. Use 2 Tbsp of this seasoning mix per 1 lb of ground meat.

Homemade Taco Meat Recipe

- 1 lb ground beef, veal or chicken**
- 2 tbsp beef tallow or ghee**
- 1/2 onion, chopped**
- 1 carrot, diced**
- 2 tbsp homemade taco seasoning**
- 1/4 cup homemade ketchup**

Heat a pan to medium high heat. Add the fat and then the onion and spices. Sauté the onion with the spices for a few minutes.

Add the meat and the carrots and sauté another few minutes.

Add the ketchup and stir to combine.

Lower the heat to medium low and cook for another 5-10 minutes until the meat is dry and crumbly.

Serve with warmed tortillas or on a salad with whatever garnishes you enjoy: guacamole, salsa, crème fraîche, sauerkraut, chopped onions and cilantro, shredded cheese.



Real Milk Vanilla Ice Cream

- 1 cup raw whole milk
- 2/3 cup raw honey
- 2 tbsp gelatin
- Pinch sea salt
- 4 pastured egg yolks
- 3 cups raw cream
- 3 tbsp vanilla extract



Heat whole milk on low with honey, gelatin and salt in a sauce pan.

In the meantime, beat the egg yolks with a whisk.

When milk is warm to the touch and the gelatin and honey are incorporated, add a ladle-full of the milk mixture to the egg yolks while continually beating them (this tempers them so they won't scramble). Add a couple more ladles of the milk to the egg yolks and then add the entire egg mixture back to the milk over a low flame, continuously beating.

Continue to stir the custard base until it thickens, about 5 minutes more.

Turn off heat and add the vanilla extract.

Pour milk mixture into the 3 cups of raw cream and stir to incorporate. Store covered in the fridge overnight.

After chilling, pour mixture into ice cream maker and freeze per your manufacturer's instructions.



Easy Homemade Chocolate

- 1 cup coconut oil
- 1/2 cup raw honey or maple syrup
- 1 cup raw cacao powder
- Dash salt
- 1 tsp vanilla

In a heat-resistant glass bowl or measuring cup, add the coconut oil.

Fill a small saucepan with a few inches of water and place the glass measuring cup in it. Heat on stove top until coconut oil is mostly melted and heated to room temperature.

While the coconut oil is coming to room temperature, add all the other ingredients to a food processor. Add the coconut oil and blend until combined.

Place some parchment paper on a sheet pan to cover the bottom. Pour the chocolate mixture onto the pan. Spread out to about 1/2 inch thick.

Put the sheet pan into the fridge or freezer and let it set for about 20-30 minutes. Remove and slice into bite-sized pieces. I put these in a jar and store in the fridge or freezer.



Raw Brownie Bites (Chocolate Macaroons)

Makes about 36 macaroons

3 cups dried organic unsweetened coconut flakes
1 1/4 cups raw cacao powder
1 cup maple syrup or raw honey
1/3 cup virgin unrefined coconut oil
2 tsp pure vanilla extract
Pinch sea salt

Put all ingredients in the food processor and process to combine until you have 'dough.'

Roll into balls and put on wax paper on a sheet pan. To make this process easier and faster, use a 1 tsp sized cookie scoop.

Put in the freezer to set for 20 minutes. Store in the freezer or the fridge.

These are best eaten cold.



(Perfect for Travel)

DIY Natural Beauty Products

Toothpaste

- 3 tbsp bentonite clay
- 2 tbsp coconut oil, at room temperature/liquid state
- 1 tsp whole ground stevia
- 3/4 tsp unrefined high mineral salt
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 3 tbsp distilled water to thin (might need more)
- 1/4 tsp Thieves oil or any essential oil you like for toothpaste (peppermint oil would be great as would fennel oil)

Mix the coconut oil, salt, baking soda, stevia and thieves oil together in a small bowl until well incorporated.

Add in the bentonite clay and mix until you form a paste.

Slowly add in the distilled water 1 tablespoon at a time until thinned a bit. The idea in thinning this toothpaste is to make it squeezable from a tube. If you do not add the water then you can still use the toothpaste, but it will be hard when colder than room temperature because the coconut oil will firm up.



DIY Natural Beauty Products



Lotion Bars

- 1/4 cup coconut oil or rendered beef tallow**
- 1/4 cup grated cocoa butter or shea butter**
- 1/4 cup grated beeswax, firmly packed**
- 1/4 tsp Vitamin E oil (optional)**
- 1/2 tsp Thieves oil blend (or you can use your favorite essential oil like lavender)**

Using a glass bowl set over a simmering pot of water, gently melt beeswax, coconut oil/tallow, and cocoa or shea butter.

Stir ingredients until melted.

Remove from heat. Add essential oil and optional Vitamin E. Stir until blended, then pour into a mold. I like to use silicone molds.

Allow to cool before removing from molds. You can place them in the fridge to speed things up a bit.

These bars will stay good for up to 6 months. Store in an airtight container. I use small tins to carry them around with me in my purse.

DIY Natural Beauty Products



Sunscreen Lotion Bars

1/2 cup shea butter

5 tbsp beeswax

1/2 cup coconut oil

2 tbsp zinc oxide (I found a source via Mommypotamus for a [non-nano version](#) here)

1/2 tsp vitamin E oil

3/4 tsp essential oil (citrus oils increase photosensitivity so do not use those – I used lavender)

Combine the shea butter, coconut oil and beeswax in a glass bowl placed over a hot pot of water or use a double boiler. Heat on low until the ingredients are melted and fully incorporated. Remove from heat and stir in the zinc oxide, the essential oil, and the vitamin E oil.

Pour into silicon molds and place in the fridge to cool for about 30 minutes.

Pop out and store in tins or an airtight container.

Store at room temperature.

Notes:

- These will melt a bit in the hot sun but this is normal. I plan to cut off a small piece to take with me to the pool or the beach and carry it in an airtight container. Once back indoors it will solidify again.
- To apply, simply rub all over your body while holding in your hand. The texture is firm but emollient and it will feel like a lotion – not soap. You can rub it in further with your hands.

DIY Natural Beauty Products



Chocolate Mint Lip Balm

- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- 1 tbsp (0.5 oz if you have a kitchen scale) cocoa butter
- 1 tbsp sweet almond oil
- 2 tbsp beeswax
- 1/4 tsp peppermint essential oil

Equipment You'll Need

12 lip balm tubes

Gently melt the cocoa butter, coconut oil, sweet almond oil and beeswax in a double boiler (or in a glass bowl set on top of a sauce pot of simmering water).

Remove from heat and then stir in the peppermint essential oil.

Quickly pour the melted oil into the tubes. You have to move very quickly before the oils start to set. I used a small funnel which promptly got clogged! I do not recommend using a medicine dropper because it will quickly clog up as well!

Allow the lip balm to set and then cap the containers.

DIY Natural Beauty Products



Deodorant

(this recipe is from Kelly Liston who blogs at www.ohlardy.com)

5 tbsp coconut oil

1 tbsp baking soda

6 tbsp arrowroot powder

2 tbsp bentonite clay

5 to 10 drops of the essential oil of your choice (I like lavender)

Mix all of your ingredients together and store in a small jar in your medicine cabinet. Your deodorant will be like a paste, so just scoop some out with your finger to apply.

DIY Natural Beauty Products



Disinfectant Spray

(this recipe is from April Pointer who blogs at www.oilywisdom.com)

20 drops of Thieves Essential Oil Blend

[\(where to buy Thieves Oil Blend\)](#)

4 oz spray bottle

Distilled water

1/2 tsp sea salt

Place salt in spray bottle

Drop oil into bottle, aiming towards the salt. Allow salt to absorb oil.

Slowly add water.

Put the lid on, shake and spray!

Disinfectant Spray Uses:

- Sore Throats
- Germy shopping carts
- Grimy hands
- Public toilets & water fountains
- Black mold
- Counter & table spray
- Fungal Infections
- Stinky shoes
- Bug repellent
- Diaper pail & garbage cans
- Pet accidents
- Herbicide in your garden
- Clean stuffed animals
- Lunchboxes
- Linen spray for dust mites

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