

Raw Food Starter Guide



10 Healthy Recipes to Get You Started on Raw Foods!

by Cecilia Benjumea

Intro



Congratulations on deciding to try raw foods! Whether you go all the way or just add more fresh fruits and vegetables to your diet you will notice a difference. I decided to take the plunge to eating mainly fresh, whole, raw foods about 7 years ago and it has been a wonderful journey. Soon after I noticed I had more energy, my skin was clearer, pounds just melted off me, and I saw a huge improvement in my emotional well being. It is one of the best decisions I have made and although I occasionally eat cooked food I notice that I feel so much better if I stick to fresh raw foods. Here are just some of the reasons it's healthy to eat raw food:

*When you eat foods in their whole natural state all the vitamins, minerals, enzymes, amino acids, essential fats, phytonutrients, bioflavonoids, and plant hormones remain intact and ready for assimilation by the body.

*Doctors recommend at least 9 servings a day of fruits and vegetables for optimum health; the raw food diet takes it a step further by increasing the intake of the amazing health promoting substances found in fresh produce.

Here are just a few of the healing substances found in fresh produce and researchers are discovering new ones all the time.

***Bioflavonoids**— naturally occurring plant compounds that are: antioxidant, anti-mutagenic, anti-carcinogenic, anti-aging, and promote structure and function in the circulatory system.

***Phytonutrients**—concentrated in the skin of many fruits and vegetables. Potent antioxidants that can neutralize free radical damage. Free radicals are highly reactive chemical substances that can lead to premature aging and disease.

This was taken from the article, *What is the Raw Food Diet?* for the full article please go to <http://www.rawglow.com/whyrawfoods.htm>

Once you have decided to try raw foods you are probably wondering where to start and what to eat. This guide is meant to give you a quick jump start to incorporating more fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet and is created out of my sincere desire to help people benefit from the power of raw foods.

This my definition of the raw food's diet:

The Raw Food Diet is a pure vegetarian diet consisting of mostly raw organic fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds. Food is consumed in its natural whole state and not heated above 118° F.

Here are some examples of what people eat on the raw food diet everyday:

Unlimited	Good in Limited Quantities
(Fresh and Organic) All Fruits All Vegetables	Avocados Coconuts All Seeds All Nuts Sea Vegetables* Sprouts Fresh Herbs Raw Sauerkraut*
Good in Small Quantities	Best to Minimize
Low- Temp Dehydrated Foods* (Crackers/Dried Fruit/Raw Energy Bars) Organic Spices Vanilla Beans Raw Honey Stevia Leaf or Powder* Soaked and Sprouted Buckwheat* Raw Nut and Seed Butters	Oil Sea Salt Agave Nectar Nama Shoyu Tamari Braggs Liquid Aminos Miso Raw Apple Cider Vinegar Soaked and Sprouted Grains

The items with a star are mentioned in the small glossary at the end of the document. If you are curious about some of the foods mentioned above the best place to start is your local health food store. If your local health food store doesn't carry the items that you want I'm sure they would be happy to order them for you.

As you can see the foundation of a healthy raw food diet is fruits and vegetables. Most of the items that are in the best to minimize category are condiments that many people use to make their food taste salty, oily, or super sweet. Most of these foods are not whole foods and if used in excess can be health destroying substances instead of health promoting substances. I personally feel so much better when I don't include a lot of them in my diet. If you are concerned about what items are really raw (not heated above 118 degrees) read the article *Is It Raw or Not* by John Kohler <http://www.rawglow.com/isitraw.htm>

If you are just starting out, this list may look restrictive but I'll let you in on a little secret. Someone who eats mostly raw food does so because it makes she/he feel good. The more they veer off the raw food diet the worse they feel. So their motivation is to feel healthy, vibrant, and energetic! When you are first starting out your body may not be in tune with what makes it feel good. As you add more and more raw food into your diet, the more sensitive your body will become to what foods are in alignment with your well-being. Please don't worry about being perfect or "100%" raw at the beginning. Just make little changes here and there and let your body be your guide.

In the next section I'll be sharing with you some simple recipes to get you started. Most of the recipes require a blender. I believe that the most important purchase you can make to start to eat healthier would be to buy a powerful blender. I personally use the Vitamix Bender for more information: <http://www.rawglow.com/rawfoodappliances.htm> You will also need a good cutting board, (I like the bamboo cutting boards), and a good knife set. I am partial to ceramic knives <http://www.rawglow.com/ceramicchefknife.htm> because they are super sharp and they don't oxidize your food as much as stainless steel. With those three items you could successfully start the raw foods diet. Some other great tools to have would be sprout bags and the spiral slicer which can both be found on <http://www.rawglow.com/shop.htm> Eventually down the line it could be fun to get a juicer, food processor, and dehydrator; but before you invest your money, it might be good to wait and see how committed you are first.

Breakfast



When starting out, eating a typical raw food breakfast of a large meal of seasonal fresh fruit or a smoothie may not fill you up completely until your body adjusts to eating lighter. What I like to suggest, to people starting out, is to prepare a raw pre-breakfast such as a green juice, which is what you would eat right when you get out of bed. If you are hungry again in a few hours you could eat something raw such as a smoothie or large fruit salad or you could just prepare what you would typically eat for breakfast. Or you could try just drinking water when you get out of bed and then wait to eat until your body is hungry.

I like to start out my day with a cleansing green drink because of all the alkaline minerals found in leafy greens. When you wake up you literally have been fasting for 8-10 hours so I like to flush out my system with high water content fruits, a green smoothie, or a green juice. Here are some typical morning recipes.

My Favorite Green Juice

- 5 ribs celery
- 1 large English cucumber
- 1/2 lime
- 2 large handfuls of spinach or Swiss chard (wash thoroughly)

Put all the ingredients through a juicer. If you don't have a juicer an alternative would be to chop the cucumber and celery and place it in a blender (cucumber first) with spinach and peeled lime. Blend on high for about thirty seconds and then pour and squeeze the mixture through a sprout bag over a big bowl. The sprout bag will strain out all the pulp and leave you with a smooth and silky juice. Pour the juice back into the blender carafe and then pour into a glass. Sprout bags are relatively inexpensive and have a variety of uses. For more information about sprout bags please go to <http://www.rawglow.com/sproutbag.htm>

My Favorite Green Smoothie

1 young coconut water or 1 cup water
3 ripe fresh or frozen bananas
1 rib celery
2-3 leaves kale or collards stems removed

Blend all ingredients in a blender until smooth and creamy. Variation #1: Substitute 1 of the bananas for 1 large mango. Variation #2: Substitute 1 of the bananas for 1 large mango and substitute the celery for 1 Fuji apple.

The trick to green smoothies is not to add too many greens at first. The smoothie should be sweet and pleasurable to drink. For more information on green smoothies go to <http://www.rawglow.com/greensmoothie.htm> To learn more about young coconuts please visit <http://www.rawglow.com/youngcoconuts.htm>

If you don't have any fresh green to put in your smoothies you can substitute fresh greens for your favorite green powder such as wheatgrass, Spirulina or my personal favorite blue green algae. To learn more about blue green algae please go to: <http://www.rawglow.com/bluegreen.htm>

Your second breakfast could be a bowl of seasonal fresh fruit. In summer you could munch on melons and in wintertime perhaps you could enjoy a bowl of persimmons. You could even make a fruit salad out of a combination of any of the following: chopped apples, berries, peaches, pomegranates, grapefruit . . . the possibilities are endless.

These two recipes above are a wonderful and healthy way to start your day. Even if adding one of these recipes to your daily routine is the only change you make, you will have added valuable nutrients and fiber to your diet!!

Lunch



Some raw foodists will continue eating whole fruit for lunch or another smoothie. I myself like to eat blended vegetable soups. They are easier to digest and quicker to eat than salads and easy to take to work in a carafe. The trick to making them really filling is to add a lot of garnishes. Try the recipes first before you add salt, you might find that they are flavorful just as they are. I prefer not to use a lot of salt, but I am aware that if you are starting out you may feel the need to use a little salt, so make sure it is a good quality sea salt. I

also recommend using flaked seaweed (<http://www.rawglow.com/flakedseaweed.htm>) as a substitute for salt. You may also add a small teaspoon of chickpea miso to the soups instead of salt. Here are a few simple recipes that you can experiment with so that the flavors suit your tastes.

Tomato Lime Ginger Soup

4 large tomatoes
1/2 large red bell pepper
2 ribs celery
1/2 avocado
small handful cilantro
10 leaves fresh basil
2 cloves garlic
1 inch knob ginger
1 lime juiced

Suggested Garnishes:

torn dulse pieces or flaked seaweed
diced avocado
chopped red bell pepper
parsley
chopped tomatoes
sprouts
chopped cucumbers
thinly sliced celery

Add all soup ingredients in the blender and blend until smooth. Garnish with however many topping you would like.

Creamy Cucumber Cilantro

1 large english cucumber
1/2 cup water
1/2 large avocado
1-2 cloves garlic
1/4 teaspoon cumin
1/2 lime juiced
small handful cilantro
pinch of cayenne or chili powder (optional)

Suggested Garnishes:

3 inch piece English cucumber or Daikon radish spiralized into noodles
1 tablespoon chopped chives or green onion
diced avocado
1/4 cupped chopped cilantro
flaked seaweed or pieces of torn dulse.

Blend all ingredients in a blender until smooth. Garnish with however many topping you would like.

If you are not ready to have a completely raw lunch you could have a bowl of raw soup with a veggie sandwich with avocado, dulse, and sprouts on sprouted grain bread or sprouted grain tortillas. Another good idea for a semi raw lunch would be to make a raw pate such as a raw hummus and then use it as a spread for a sandwich or wrap. For an 100% raw lunch you could use a large collard leaf as your wrap or dip cut up vegetables into the pate. Below is a recipe for raw hummus:

Cecilia's Raw Hummus

Dip

3/4 cup almonds (soaked in water overnight)
1/4 cup raw tahini
2-3 cloves garlic
juice from 1/2-1 lemon
1/2 teaspoon cumin
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1/8 teaspoon cayenne
2 small zucchini (diced)

Garnish

paprika
chopped parsley

Peel zucchini and blend in a blender with all ingredients except almonds. Add almonds a little at a time to get a smooth consistency, use tamper if necessary. Garnish with a sprinkle of paprika and chopped parsley. Use as a dip for vegetables and as a spread for veggie wraps.

Dinner



I prefer to finish the day with a big filling salad. I put so many toppings on my salad that it fills me up completely. Some of the toppings I use are nuts and seeds, olives, chopped avocado, tomatoes, sprouts, chopped cucumber, chopped bell pepper, and micro greens. I also tend to veer away from just using lettuce for the base of my salad. I use mixed baby greens, Asian greens such as bok choy, thinly sliced cucumber or celery, shredded cabbage, chard, kale, collards and edible weeds. Another trick to making my salads really filling is that I don't usually use an oil and vinegar based salad dressing. By making my salad dressings with avocado or nuts and seeds it adds fiber to my salad dressing that also helps fill me up. Here are two simple yet really delicious salad dressings that would taste good over any type of salad greens.

Citrus Ginger Dressing

1 cup orange or tangerine juice
3/4 cups macadamia nuts (<http://www.rawglow.com/macnuts.htm>)
1/4 cup sesame seeds
1/2 inch piece ginger

Add orange juice, macadamia nuts, sesame seeds, and ginger into the blender and blend until smooth.

Creamy Italian

1 cup water
1 cup pine nuts or macadamia nuts (<http://www.rawglow.com/macnuts.htm>)
1 very small pinch white stevia powder (or can use another sweetener such as honey)
juice from 1 ripe lemon
1 teaspoon dried Italian herbs
1 large clove garlic

Blend all ingredients in blender until smooth. Taste and adjust seasonings. Variation: reduce the water and add 1/2 red bell pepper.

For more dressing recipes please check out my Salad Dressing Recipe Booklet at <http://www.rawglow.com/booklets.htm>

Raw Pasta



You might've heard about what raw foodists call raw pasta. It is actually made from vegetables such as zucchini that is cut into really thin long strands that resemble noodles using a special vegetable garnisher called the spiral slicer or saladacco. It is a fairly inexpensive tool that can be used to add variety and creativity to the raw food diet. To learn more about the spiral slicer go to: <http://www.rawglow.com/spiralslicer.htm> Here is a simple recipe using the spiral slicer.

Zucchini Angel Hair Pasta with Puttanesca Sauce

3 cups chopped tomatoes or cherry tomatoes
1 1/2 cups sun dried tomatoes
*1 sprig basil (about 10 large leaves)
7-10 sun dried black cured olives
3 medium zucchinis cut using the spiral slicer on the thin setting

Pulse tomatoes, sun dried tomatoes, basil, and olives in the blender until blended but still chunky. Pour over angel hair zucchini.

*If you don't have basil you can use 1 teaspoon dried Italian herbs or 2 teaspoons fresh Italian herbs such as oregano and thyme.

If you are not ready to have a completely raw dinner a good idea would be to eat a raw salad or a raw pasta dish along with some steamed vegetables or cooked squash. Remember that you can also use raw dressings on top of steamed vegetables. The Creamy Italian Dressing and the Raw Puttanesca Sauce would probably taste good on top of steamed vegetables or a baked potato. The goal is not to be perfect but rather to try and add as much raw food into your diet as possible.

Desserts

Desserts don't have to be something that you eat after dinner but rather they can be something that you eat for breakfast or as a sweet snack. The secret to my desserts is that I use sun dried vanilla beans. They add a unique flavor to the desserts without the added alcohol from vanilla extract. To learn more about sun dried vanilla beans go <http://www.rawglow.com/vanillabeans.htm>

Here are a few recipes:

Banana Carob Pudding

- 6 over ripe bananas
- 1 cup raw carob powder
- 1 vanilla bean, seeds scooped out
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Process the bananas, carob powder, and vanilla in the blender or food processor with the S-blade. If you don't have a food processor you can do it in the blender by chopping the bananas and blending them before you add the carob. It's best when chilled in the refrigerator for at least an hour. It's also good frozen. Variation: Top with sliced bananas.

Banana Almond Milk Smoothie

- 2 cups almond milk
- 4 ripe frozen bananas
- 1 vanilla bean chopped or seeds scraped out
- 3-4 large dates (pitted)

Blend ingredients in a blender until smooth and creamy. Add more dates if not sweet enough. Variation: Add two tablespoons of raw carob powder before blending. To learn how to make vanilla almond milk go to: <http://www.rawglow.com/almondmilkhowto.htm> for more vanilla bean recipes: <http://www.rawglow.com/booklets.htm>

I hope that this simple e-book has inspired you too eat more raw food. Please remember that changing your diet should be about adding as many different new and delicious fruits and vegetables to your routine as possible. It shouldn't feel like you are depriving yourself. When was the last time you tried fresh pineapple, papaya, blueberries, grapefruit, and pomegranates? Munched on cashews, macadamia nuts, or Brazil nuts? Tried a fresh date? There are so many varieties of fruits and vegetables available to us. See the raw food diet like a taste adventure. The only rules are the ones that make you feel good!

For more recipes please visit <http://www.rawglow.com/recipes.htm> and please e-mail me with you questions and comments. I am also available for phone consultations if you need further guidance.

In light and health,

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Glossary

Sea Vegetables - Sea vegetables is another term for seaweed. They are a popular food in coastal populations and especially in Japan. Sea vegetables are chock full of minerals and can usually be found in health food stores and purchased in bulk online. The most popular seaweeds in the raw food diet are raw nori sheets which are the dark purple untoasted pressed nori seaweed sheets that can be used to make wraps in the rawfood diet. Another popular seaweed is a reddish purple seaweed called dulse. It is salty and can be used torn or as flakes as a salt substitute. An easy way to eat sea vegetables is to sprinkle gourmet flaked seaweed (<http://www.rawglow.com/flakedseaweed.htm>) on your food instead of salt.

Raw Sauerkraut - Raw sauerkraut is usually made from raw cabbage that has been fermented to produce healthy enzymes and probiotic or beneficial bacteria. It has not been pasteurized and has no vinegar added. You can make your own at home or buy it in the refrigerated section of the health food store.

Low Temperature Dehydrated Foods - Are foods that have not been heated above 118 degrees in the dehydrating process such as *some* dried fruit and packaged raw food products. If the fruit is labeled sun dried, it is also considered raw. Some health food stores now have a raw food section where you can buy prepared raw food snacks such as crackers and cookies. Raw food energy bars are available at most grocery stores; the most popular brands are Lara, The Organic Bar, and Smart Monkey. If you have a dehydrator you can also make your own dehydrated foods.

Stevia Leaf or Powder - Stevia is an extremely sweet green herb that does not raise blood sugar levels. It is easy to grow in an herb garden or can be purchased in dried herb or white powder form at the health food store. Because of its intense sweetness, a little goes along way.

About the Author



Cecilia Benjumea B.A. C.M.T., a former sufferer with asthma, overcame the disease and gained improved energy through the living and raw foods diet and lifestyle that she embarked upon 7 years ago. Cecilia is a Certified Massage Therapist, Hands on Healer, and Raw Food Teacher. Cecilia's recipes have been featured in Living Nutrition Magazine and she teaches raw food classes in Sonoma County California. She believes that by

using fresh, organic, and whole ingredients; that simple, healthy, and delicious recipes can be made with few ingredients and with minimal use of salt, oil, and refined sweeteners. Her ultimate passion is to teach and help people to feel good in their bodies! Cecilia can be reached for raw food consultations and support at her website <http://www.rawglow.com>

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