



Organic Pet Food & Home Cooking Info

Nothing says loving like some good home cooking! I have extended that to my pets as well, both dogs and cats alike, and as a side benefit, I also get a hot home-cooked meal twice a day! This also makes it much more affordable and healthy to feed an organic diet, for humans and critters alike. Having some home cooking options is also a good fall back also when prepackaged pet food is not available or if you run out, or if your pet is not feeling well. Plus then you know exactly what they are eating, if it tastes good :) and can adjust if any allergy, digestive, etc issues with minimal effort.

Be sure to Google check any new ingredients not listed to make sure they are not toxic to dogs or cats first. A surprising number of people foods are good for your critters too actually, in small quantities as a treat or a supplement. I have seen a tremendous difference in their behavior and health, coat condition (very little shedding), energy and optimal weight management. Many people have asked me what I feed my animals to be so healthy and shiny, here is my secret recipe :)

For the home cooking, I use a variety of ingredients depending on how much time and energy I have to cook, the weather (I cook lighter foods in hot weather to run the stove less time), and what I have on hand. This mixes it up from day to day so it's not boring and we get different nutrients. Some of the ingredients I use are whole organic potatoes / sweet potatoes / carrots / winter squash (wash and cook whole, mash after cooling, much faster!), rice / quinoa / rice noodles. You can also use oatmeal / other whole grains like barley or farro, but I would avoid wheat and corn products as these are hard for animals to digest and can make them overly hyper from the high energy in them. For protein, I use small dried beans/split peas/lentils, no presoaking needed and they cook much faster. You want them to break down slightly in the pot during cooking so they digest more fully.

You can get these dried items from the bulk bins at Whole Foods / Health Nut in Lynchburg or prepackaged from Kroger or Harris Teeeter. If I am in a real hurry or don't have any dried beans, I sometimes use organic canned drained beans from Food Lion mixed with eggs/yogurt/canned food. Or I use Nasoya Super Firm Organic Tofu from Food Lion / Kroger / Walmart, in the produce section cooler. The estrogen in the soybeans is very calming for critters and humans, and it makes for a good training treat too! I eat / feed it as is, since it is already cooked.

To keep the home cooking super simple and fast, I cook everything together in one big pot (or crockpot). I literally put the dried ingredients and other items in the pot, add plenty of water, cover and bring to a boil, then simmer for about 20 minutes until it's mostly soft. If I'm using bigger beans or whole potatoes etc, I give them a 10 minute cooking head start



before adding the rice / quinoa so they can cook fully. Once done cooking, let sit covered to cool off so it's not steaming hot; it will continue to cook more and soak up extra liquid. I often cook at night when it's cooler for the next day in the summer, or I cook a few hours in advance of meal time in the winter to warm up the kitchen.

After cooking and cooling off some, I take out the critters' portions onto their plates, mash a little if needed, and add in the eggs/yogurt/canned food (see below for details). (I season my portion in a separate bowl with sesame/olive/coconut oil, sea salt, and sometimes spices / black pepper and some veggies or greens) Feed the home cooking in a separate clean bowl (or paper plate) from their kibble, to avoid waste, spoilage and bacteria issues. Wash the bowl out thoroughly with soap and hot water. I use the Chinet brand paper plates, no chemicals, made from recycled paper, and is compostable; less dishes!. Any leftovers not eaten after an hour or so should be discarded or given to another dog or cat.

- **Organic Raw Eggs** - You can add in an egg to the home cooking; I would not give more than one egg in their food a few times a week while still a puppy / kitten, so they don't get diarrhea. Make sure you use fresh organic eggs (free range is best, Pete & Gerry's Organic brand from Food Lion or Kroger or Whole Foods is especially good, has dark big yolks), have clean hands and a clean bowl (or paper plate). Raw eggs give them a shiny coat, are rich in antioxidants and taurine, and especially good after vaccines or if they have any colds or respiratory issues. There is of course a salmonella and a bacteria risk with raw eggs, but organic eggs are especially carefully handled in processing and I haven't had any issues in the several years I have been doing this. Further, animals eat them raw in the wild and can handle bacteria much better than humans. Just be sure they are fresh, cold, organic and handled with clean hands and bowls and eaten up right away. They sometimes like to eat the shell as it is high in calcium; however, it can be messy, so you can skip giving them it if you want to.
- **Organic Unsweetened Plain Yogurt** - You can add a few spoonfuls of yogurt into the home cooking. I like the Greek Nature's Promise or Simple Truth whole milk plain yogurt from Food Lion / Kroger / Whole Foods or the Seven Stars or Nancy's brand organic plain yogurt from Kroger as it has no additives like pectin or thickeners. You can also do plain cooked rice with yogurt to help treat diarrhea or an upset tummy. Yogurt is also very good to restore good bacteria to their digestive tracts (just like for people) after deworming and antibiotics.
- **Organic canned dog / cat food** - You can add in some canned food. The Organix brand (big cans) Turkey / Chicken, Carrot and Potato or Turkey / Chicken & Vegetable varieties are both good – look for the USDA Organic symbol. Add 1/4 to 1/3 can to the home cooking per meal. Increase to one can per meal at adulthood.



- Organic dry kibble - I know not everyone has time to cook for their pets (or themselves, myself included!) so I keep a bag of Organix brand dog / cat kibble on hand as well. You can order from Chewy.com, Petco.com or in store at PetSmart or Whole Foods (they also sell the canned organic dog food). The quantity is on the bag for their weight but adjust as needed.
- If short on time you can just give an egg or some yogurt or some canned food plus their kibble and they will still benefit greatly! (Like bananas in your cereal and ice cream with your pie :))
- You can also add a spoonful of organic olive / coconut / sesame oil to their home cooking for flavor and to make their coats shiny and help with weight gain while they are younger.
- If using diatomaceous earth for parasite prevention, you can mix it into their food now too. See their website or the container for dosage information. I use the Lumino Wellness brand; you can get online at www.luminowellness.com or at Health Nut Nutrition in Lynchburg.

You might try giving a puppy / cat a cup or more of home cooking per meal mixed with the egg / yogurt / canned food and adjust the quantity to their size and appetite. For puppies and kittens, 3 meals / day is best as they have small tummies and require a lot of calories to stay so energetic and grow up well! Adult dogs and cats can eat 2 meals / day. They will usually not overeat this as it is quite filling and the warm temperature very satisfying compared to kibble. Think of trail mix vs homemade mac and cheese for your kids :) helps them settle down and go to sleep! Be sure to use whatever you cook within a few hours or refrigerate it for another 12 hours max, so you don't have any issues with anyone getting sick. I hope this helps you enjoy some fun home cooking adventures for your family and critters! Let me know of any questions or discover any favorite combinations! Enjoy and happy cooking!

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