



# EVERYDAY RAW FOOD

by Lauren Gifford

Family legend has it that as a kid I would whisper in everyone's ear, "Wanna know a secret? Eat a carrot!"

Who knew that 40 years later I'd not be whispering, but shouting, "Wanna know a secret? Eat a CARROT! ...And an apple and celery and a peach and jicama and spinach and kale and walnuts and almonds! Eat raw!"

But what exactly is a raw food diet? It's a vegan (no animal products) diet where nothing is cooked above 115-125 degrees. Food is eaten raw, soaked, sprouted or dehydrated. Raw food gives the body the much-needed enzymes, fiber, vitamins, oils and minerals that are destroyed when cooked. It also eliminates many of the additives, preservatives and unnecessary "hidden" ingredients that so many pre-packaged foods contain.

For most people becoming raw is a gradual change. It can be for ethical or health reasons. Simple changes like having a smoothie for breakfast, a salad for lunch and almond butter with an apple for a snack are great ways to start. By using a kitchen tool called the veggie "spiraler," you can make veggies into long strands to be used like pasta. A favorite Rasta-inspired dish is cilantro pesto with yellow and green zucchini "pasta," with slices of red peppers (see Rasta Pasta recipe below).

Be forewarned that raw food won't always turn out the same. We've all bought bags of apples, only to find that one is mushy, one is crisp and another sweet. It's the same when making raw recipes. Celebrate the different tastes and styles of the foods. Appreciate their uniqueness in taste, texture and flavor.

## Getting Started

The equipment needed to "go raw" can be as simple as a knife or as complex as a good blender (Vitamix), dehydrator (Excalibur), juicer and a food processor.

I bought my first Excalibur 4-tray dehydrator on EBay for \$50. I soon outgrew it and splurged on a 9-tray. I'm thinking that another 9-tray dehydrator will be in my kitchen in the next six months.

Vitamix offers rebuilt models of blenders. I got mine at the local home products show. It was a demo model and I got a great deal on it. A friend picked hers up on [www.Craigslist.com](http://www.Craigslist.com).

My food processor is a Braun Professional Turbo 400 handheld wand. It comes with different attachments including a small "big enough for 1 batch of pesto" container and a "big enough for 12 people to have pesto" sized container. Last I checked, it was \$70 at Bed, Bath & Beyond.

As for a juicer, you can spend big bucks on a Champion but I find that my "hand me down" juicer works fine.

## Recipe Building

To make a dish complete, you'll want to have five components – a.k.a. **The Rule of 5**: Salt, Sweet, Acid/Sour, Heat/Spice and Savory.

**Salt** might be Celtic sea salt, Himalayan sea crystals, seaweed, amino acids, namu shoyu, dulse or celery.

**Sweet** can be agave nectar (loved by diabetics since it doesn't raise the blood glucose level), fruit, dates, raisins, carrots, beets, stevia.

**Acid or sour** is obtained by adding vinegar, lemon or lime juice.

**Heat or spice** is found in chilies, garlic, ginger, Thai basil and pepper.

Finally, **savory** means spices and produce that give a dish its regional taste.

What spices and produce come to mind when thinking of **Mexican**? Cilantro, corn, onions, chilies, olives, avocado and jicama are some good choices.

Thinking **Italian**? How about basil, oregano, roma tomatoes, rosemary, thyme, pinenuts and capers.

Ginger, garlic, sesame, miso, basil, bok choy, mushrooms and wasabi are used in **Japanese** cooking.

Lemon grass, sour tamarind, curry, ginger, galangal root, kefir lime and coconut help to make up the tastes in **Thai** foods.



Once you get the hang of the "Rule of 5," your raw food adventure will be easy!

Enjoy your exploration into the world of raw food! Visit your local farmer's market. Take a trip to all the ethnic markets in your area. Ask questions when you stumble across a fruit or veggie that you've never tasted. You might discover a new favorite.

## Great Resources

[www.rawfoods.com](http://www.rawfoods.com)

[www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com) Join the Raw food group/great message board.

[www.happycow.org](http://www.happycow.org) Look up raw and vegetarian restaurants in your area.

[www.livingnutrition.com/potlucks.html](http://www.livingnutrition.com/potlucks.html) Find a potluck in your area.

## Rasta Pasta with Cilantro Pesto

Pesto:

1/4 bunch cilantro

1 cup Brazil nuts

Juice of 1 lime

1 tsp. Celtic or Himalayan salt

1/2 cup olive oil

2-3 garlic cloves

"Pasta:"

3 fresh zucchini

3 fresh summer squash

1/2 cup thin slices red bell pepper

Mix all pesto ingredients in a food processor or blender until smooth. To make the "pasta," use a vegetable spiraler or a mandolin with its julienne blade to cut the squashes. Mix in a large bowl with your cilantro pesto and top with thin slices of red bell pepper.



Richard Brackett

*A raw meal can be a feast!*

## Ginger Limeade

1-2" fresh ginger, peeled and sliced thin  
4 limes with peel removed

2 Tbs. agave nectar or honey (use more for sweetness factor)

1/4 tsp. salt

2 cups water

1/2 bunch fresh mint

1/2 gallon water

Put all ingredients in blender, except fresh mint, along with 2 cups water. Mix until everything is smooth and frothy.

Take mint and scrunch it up to release oils. Put in a pitcher and pour lime mixture over. Add water. Chill and serve for a refreshing treat on a hot summer day.

## Chocolate Truffles

In a food processor put:

1/4 cup raw cacao nibs

1 Tbs. agave nectar

1 cup shredded coconut

1 cup soaked pecans

1/4 tsp. salt

1-2 tsp. orange zest

1 dash cayenne pepper

2 Tbs. raw almond butter

Blend until well mixed together. Roll into small 1" balls. Enjoy! ♡

*Lauren Gifford is a raw food instructor and allergy food coach in Reno, Nevada. She is not a nutritionist or a dietician. She specializes in working with people adapting food choices once they have been diagnosed with food allergies. Contact her: [info@livingharvest.net](mailto:info@livingharvest.net)*