



Whether you are just getting started on the raw food path, or have been a raw food revolutionary for years, reorganizing your kitchen can help make raw food preparation more enjoyable and less time consuming, thereby making it easier to “stay raw”. At Living Light Culinary Institute, one of the many skills we teach our students is how set up and manage their raw food kitchen. Here are some of the helpful suggestions we share with them that can make your life easier; organizing your kitchen; basic equipment and foods to keep on hand; information about storing and ripening fruits and vegetables; and time saving ideas to make food preparation simpler and faster.

ORGANIZING AND MANAGING YOUR RAW FOOD KITCHEN

by *Cherie Soria*

GETTING A FRESH START

Having what you need on hand will greatly increase your chances of succeeding on the raw food diet. When everything is organized and easy to find, it will also motivate you to try new recipes and have more fun in the kitchen.



- » Remove everything you have stored in your pantry and put it in another area of the kitchen while you give it a good deep cleaning. Do the same thing with the refrigerator.
- » Designate a small area of the pantry to keep foods you intend to eliminate from your diet once you have transitioned beyond them. This may include popcorn, tofu, soy milk, whole grain pasta, cereals, beans, and rice. Throw away or donate the foods you don't want to have around to tempt you—things like conventional crackers and chips, canned or instant foods, oils that are not cold-pressed, and other devitalized foods like white flour and white sugar.
- » To create more space in your kitchen, store all equipment that isn't used, like pots and pans, in another location or give them away.
- » Make a complete list of staples and ingredients to purchase so you can have everything you need to enjoy a wide variety of raw cuisine.



BASIC EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES FOR A RAW FOOD KITCHEN

A stove and pots and pans for cooking are among the things you will not need in your raw food kitchen! In fact, you really need very little other than a refrigerator, a blender, and some good knives. If you can include a juicer and food processor, you will be able to make a wide variety of raw cuisine. Here is a list of the most important items in order of necessity.

- A good chef's knife and a paring knife with non-serrated blades.



- A knife-sharpening tool.
- A cutting board.
- A blender for making smoothies, soups, juices, dressings and sauces.
- A good water filter to remove chemicals from tap water.
- A colander/strainer for washing and draining produce.
- A large salad bowl for tossing salad greens with dressing.
- A hand shredder and spiral cutter for carrots, gingerroot and shredding vegetables for pasta.
- A salad spinner for removing the water from lettuce and other greens
- Plastic screening (the kind used for window screen) for draining soaked nuts and seeds.
- Biodegradable soap for washing commercially grown produce.
- Various sizes of mason jars and other glass storage containers for storing foods. Glass keeps foods fresher than plastic.



FOODS TO KEEP IN YOUR KITCHEN CUPBOARD

Store dry goods like seeds for sprouting, dried fruit, etc. in clear glass jars with

tight-fitting lids in a dark cupboard (not exposed to heat and light). Identify them clearly to eliminate guesswork, save time, and extend shelf life.

- Assorted sea vegetables, including nori sheets for sushi rolls.
- Assorted dried fruit including, raisins, dates, pineapple, mango, and papaya.
- Sun-dried tomatoes.
- Fresh onions and garlic are best stored in a cool, dark place. They store better in a dry area.
- Good quality salt, as opposed to regular table salt (sodium chloride)
- Assorted dried spices/herbs. Store them in a cool, dark cupboard and replace them at least twice yearly.
- Nama Shoyu or unpasteurized, wheat-free tamari
- Dehydrated sugar cane juice: a whole food alternative to brown sugar that can be used in raw desserts and sweet sauces. It is not raw.
- Coconut oil is a naturally saturated vegetable product. Choose organically grown, raw virgin oil.
- Seeds for sprouting, like alfalfa, chia, flax, radish, lentils, etc.
- Acidophilus powder and capsules: useful for people who drink chlorinated water or have taken antibiotics. It's also used to make fermented nut or seed cheeses.

FOODS TO KEEP IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR

- Extra-virgin oils should be stored in the refrigerator to avoid rancidity.
- (Keep a small amount of olive oil (1 pint) in the pantry for daily use.)
- Raw (not roasted) sesame tahini is delicious in dressings, sauces, and pâtés.
- Raw (not roasted) nuts for milk, cheese, pâté, sauces, soups, and desserts.
- Brown sesame seeds for making sushi rolls, dressings, sauces, milk, and pâtés.



- Dried, shredded, unsweetened coconut for fruit salads, coconut milk, and desserts.
- Miso for seasoning cheeses, pâtés, soups, sauces, and dressings.
- Ripe avocados, which last up to a week in the refrigerator once ripe.



- Ripe fruits, with the exception of bananas, which you can freeze, when ripe, for smoothies and ice cream.
- Assorted fresh greens (lettuce, parsley, cilantro, etc.) stored in sealed plastic containers or plastic bags.
- Assorted fresh vegetables and non-sweet fruits, such as cucumbers, sweet red peppers, and zucchini.

FOODS TO KEEP ON THE KITCHEN COUNTER (NOT IN DIRECT SUNLIGHT)

- Bananas can be stored in different areas of the house for ripening.
- Avocados at various stages of ripening.
- Tomatoes at various stages of ripening (do not refrigerate).
- Seasonal fruits at various stages of ripening.
- Sprouting/growing greens at various stages of maturation
- Soaking nuts and seeds (after soaking, store in the refrigerator).

RIPENING AND STORING PRODUCE

- » Check your produce often—especially fruit—to make sure nothing is becoming overripe or not ripening quickly enough and so that you have the foods you need for meals.

- » Rotate bananas from cooler areas of the house to warmer areas, depending upon how many you have. Don't store them in refrigerator, or they will turn brown and make everything in your refrigerator taste like bananas! If they begin to over-ripen, peel and freeze them.
- » Avocados need special care to ensure you'll have ripe ones everyday. Choose them while they are still green and allow them to ripen at home. Once ripe, they may be stored in the refrigerator for several days.

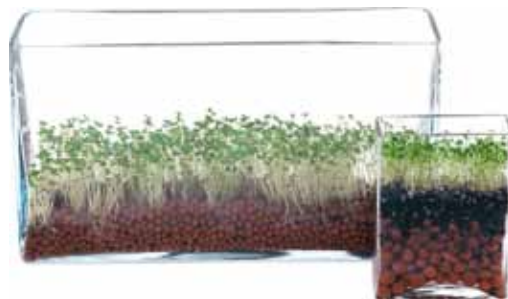
IDEAS TO SAVE YOU TIME IN THE KITCHEN

With a little bit of planning you can have plenty of delicious, easy-to-prepare foods on hand. Doing a little prep work ahead of time can actually reduce time spent in the kitchen, and will ensure that you will have food ready to eat when you need it. Food preparation may seem like a lot of work at first, but once you become accustomed to thinking ahead and setting some time aside each week to do a few things in advance, it becomes easier.



DO DAILY

- » Rinse sprouts and soak nuts and seeds in the morning and evening.



- » Rotate your fruit to ensure even ripening, and check your greens (kale, lettuce, spinach, etc.) to see if they need to be refreshed and to make certain you have enough for meals.
- » To save time in the morning, make orange juice for smoothies in advance and refrigerate or even freeze it for a few days.

DO ONCE A WEEK, PERHAPS ON THE WEEKEND

- » Shop for fresh fruits, vegetables, and staples for the coming week.
- » Wash your produce and place in sealed containers in the refrigerator to ensure longer life and make them more convenient to use when you need them.
- » Wash, dry, and prepare all greens and vegetables for salads and store in sealed containers.
- » Chop vegetables for juices, salads, and soups twice a week and store them in sealed containers in the refrigerator for quick meals. (Do not pre-cut avocados, cucumbers, leafy greens, peppers, or tomatoes, as they need to be added fresh the day they're eaten.)
- » Make one or two salad dressings that can be altered using different herbs.
- » Make a few raw entrées, dehydrated snacks, or desserts. Good choices to

make in advance are burgers, dehydrated crackers, cookies, and seasoned seeds, hummus, and marinara or pesto sauce for vegetable noodles.

- » Make one batch of cheese or pâté for wraps, rolls, spreads, and dips.

REMEMBER THE RAW SCOUT MOTTO, "BE PREPARED!"

When your kitchen is organized and you have a well stocked pantry and refrigerator, food preparation can be fun as well as health enhancing. Who knows, you may "get the bug" and decide to attend Living Light, so you can join the thousands of people from around the world who are learning to make healthy living delicious! 🌿

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For information about Living Light Culinary Institute classes for individuals, chefs, and instructors, or to shop online for products and equipment for your raw food kitchen, visit RawFoodChef.com, or phone (707) 964-2420

