Kombucha for Beginners

Simple Kombucha Instructions – makes about ½ gallon

1. Bring about 6 ½ cups pure water to boil

2. Pour into glass vessel and add ½ cup sugar (or you can do this in the pot). Stir to dissolve.

3. Put in 4 tea bags and let steep (if fruit flies are around, cover with a clean towel)

4. When *completely* cool, add **scoby** (SYMBIOTIC COLONY OF BACTERIA & YEAST) and 1 cup starter tea

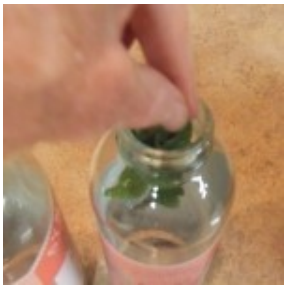
5. Cover with cloth and rubber band and set out of the way (70-75 degrees is nice) for 7-10 days. Label with date. I like to put "Love and Gratitude" on the label to, with lots of positive intentions.

Vessel size	*Water Amount*	*Sugar Amount*	*Tea Amount*	*Starter Tea*
Quart	2.5 cups	.25 cup	2 tea bags	.5 cup
Gallon	13 cups	1 cup	8 tea bags	2 cups

Tips –

- Use only organic tea bags, with no staples in them. NO METAL – SCOBYS NO LIKE. Green tea has less caffeine and scobys really like black tea. Buying boxes of 100 is very economical. YES, you can use loose tea…in a dye free muslin bag is great.
- Sugar – must be organic from sugar cane (may say dehydrated sugar cane juice). Costco is the best price I've seen ($8.99 for 10 pounds).
- Non-chlorinated water is a MUST; filtered water is best. Big grocery stores like Meijer have reverse osmosis machines where you can fill your non-BPA plastic jugs for less than 50 cents.
- Kombucha scobys multiply with every batch – it's a good idea to separate them each time and put the extras in a jar with some starter tea…a scoby "motel" if you will. Then you can share!
- Your brewing kombucha likes temps around 70 and 80 degrees. Cooler…won't grow as fast, and warmer….well, don't do warmer if you can help it.
- While brewing, your scoby may float or sink or grow weird stringy things. It's all good.

Flavoring Your Booch (p.s. ~ you don't HAVE to flavor it)



Chocolate mint sprigs – my favorite!

- Once your kombucha is brewed the way you like it (usually 7-10 days) (you can stick a straw in it while it's brewing, put your finger over it, pull it out and taste it), pour it into a glass measuring cup or pitcher (this makes it easier to pour into bottles). You can store it in any size GLASS vessel.
- Place flavoring (i.e. mint, ginger, blueberries, grapes, other pieces of fruit) in the bottom of the bottles.
- Pour in the kombucha and put lids on your vessels.
- Place the vessels in the cupboard for another 2-10 days – the longer the bubblier. Then put in frig.
- OR YOU CAN JUST ADD SOME ORGANIC JUICE AT THE TIME YOU CONSUME PLAIN KOMBUCHA

Great websites for "booch"ers ~

kombuchakamp.com
culturesforhealth.com oregonkombucha.com

This post is dedicated to all the new "boochers" from my WLACE classes, Nourishing the Lakeshore, Fermenting the Lakeshore, Moondrop Herbals and my most recent detox group.

As always, wishing you REAL food, for REAL health, so you can be REAL happy.

Why are we fat?

This post is dedicated to that amazing group from Unity of Muskegon who meet for Let's Talk Wellness and are making positive changes toward better health every day. I am SO proud of you all!

Last year as I ended our second year of monthly meetings at Unity on wellness, I asked what people wanted to discuss in the 2014. The topic of interest most requested was the title of this article. Yes, we already understand that being as active as possible reduces our fat reserves, so I didn't focus on exercise. Everyone knows…get up and move! But if we don't address the misinformation out there, we don't stand a chance at weight loss and management.

Since I do not teach about short term fixes at the expense of the body's health, we must address lifestyle changes, dispelling the myths we've been told the last 3 decades, to build vital cells, tissues and bodies. The focus must be on sharing the truth about the need for healthy fats and nutrient dense foods and how the low-fat/high whole grain/"sugarfree" additive recommendations have led us to the obesity fiasco we are in now.

Below is my evidence based summary of why we are larger (and much less healthy) than we should be:

• Eating BAD fats (polyunsaturated, liquid vegetable oils, margarine, oils from GMO crops {soy, cottonseed, canola, corn}, fatty meat/poultry from conventionally raised animals {complete with antibiotics, growth hormones, GMO fed, pesticide residue, no to very little sunlight}).

My family's favorite fat

• Not eating enough good fats (coconut, extra virgin olive oil, grass-fed meat and poultry, wild caught fish, avocado, cod liver oil). Low-fat foods lead to obesity because we substitute with….

• Sugar and empty carb consumption (anything made with a fine powder like flour, like baked goods, candy, chips, pastas). These carbs are digested quickly and stimulate the hormone insulin, which, among other things stores fat in fat cells. High fructose corn syrup. Diet sodas.

• Eating processed and non-organic foods (and using chemicals on our bodies, in our homes and on our yards). These foods often have pesticide residues which keep our body from taking in the minerals we need to make our metabolism work correctly. Our bodies need nutrients to function and be the "right" weight for our structure. These empty foods lead to…

• Overeating – which we do WHEN WE ARE NOT EATING NUTRIENT DENSE FOODS! Our body keeps saying, "where are the nutrients?" and then "eat more and you might find some." We can also get into the habit of over eating because of emotional issues, but again, it is often, if not always, nutrient deprived foods. We seldom eat too much when the food is REAL and nutrient rich.

• An unhealthy microbiome. Our balance of good micro-organisms in our body plays a significant role in our health and weight.

• When we have an underactive thyroid, we have a very difficult time trying to shed pounds. Be aware that water with

chlorine and fluoride is thyroid disruptive. Drinking the cleanest water possible is a must. Also, good quality coconut oil supports the thyroid and is energy boosting.

What to do? The same thing I teach for other physical/emotional issues…

• Eat good fats at every meal
• Eat protein from clean (organic, grass fed, preferably local) sources at every meal – we need protein to make the happy chemicals in our brain
• Eat plenty of colorful, local (for more vitamin content), organic (for more mineral content) vegetables WITH LOTSA BUTTER (or ghee)!
• Take good quality coconut oil – even at every meal.
• Take a high quality probiotic and/or fermented foods and drink.
• Eat organic fruits as desserts ("cave people" ate them in the fall to fatten up for the winter)
• If you feel the need for baked goods, make them out of nut flour (organic preferably).
• Don't starve yourself. This will mess up your hormones. EAT! Just eat the real foods described above.

Until next time…wishing you **real food** for **real health** so you can be **real happy**.

Tips for Fabulous Ferments

This post is dedicated to my local fermenting buds – ***Fermenting the Lakeshore***

With the recent evidence from the Human Micobiome Project proving we are more bacterial than human, fermenting is coming

back with a bang. When we home ferment, we add flavorful drinks and condiments to our meals and improve our digestion and subsequently our health (both mental and physical). A proper balance of good bacteria is imperative to weight loss and management. We can do it all for a mere fraction of what probiotics and enzymes cost in the store.

For those of you just joining the wave as well as more conditioned ferment peeps, here are a few helpful pointers for the best fermented creations…

Produce–
Raw, fresh picked, local and organic are the best bet for superb fermentation. Organic from the grocery store is my second choice. Remember that pesticide residues can inhibit the bacterial growth that is necessary for successful preservation.

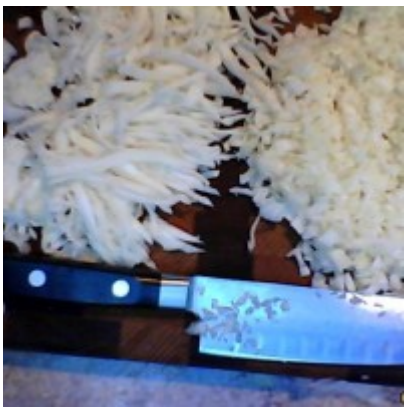
Salt–
Please always use high-quality salts. The cheap white salt at the store has gone through processing using unhealthy means and is drained of its life giving minerals.

I recommend that newbies follow a recipe the first time as far as the amount of salt to use. After that, adjust down or up a slight amount to taste. The amount you use will affect not only taste but texture.

Sugar–
Recipes (i.e. kombucha) generally call for just "sugar". Because of our compromised food supply with regard to GMO's and pesticide use, I prefer to stay vigilant and use organic cane sugar. Regular white sugar is from genetically modified sugar beets – bad news.

H20 –
Non-chlorinated water MUST be used; filtered water is a good choice. Remember that chlorine kills micro-organisms and thus can keep your food from fermenting. Try to wash in non-

chlorinated water even if you have to run a sink full and let it sit for half an hour before rinsing your produce. I encourage people to get the water out of the reverse osmosis machines at the local co-op or grocery store. Or invest in an under the sink RO of your own.



Cutting/Chopping –
The "cook" can choose to chop, slice, grate, use a food processor or mandolin for taking the original produce and making into the size for fermenting. One exception is beet kvass, where you don't want the chunks too small.

Exposure to Air –
Keep fermenting fruits and veggies submerged under the liquid in the jar to prevent mold. If growth appears, scrape it off. When I have a fermenting creation with floaties (like cardamom pods in kvass), I gently shake or stir them to discourage mold from growing.

Time –
At room temperature (70-75), ferments without whey need about one week to develop the acidity required for preservation. When whey is used, preservation takes about 2-4 days. Even after being put in the refrigerator, your creation can improve with time.

Temperature –
During the first phase of fermenting, it's best to keep your ferments at room temperature. This phase may be a couple days if you're using whey or another starter or a week or longer for wild ferments. I check the creation to see if it tastes good, then when it does,I put it in on the top (ferments only) shelf in my refrigerator. If I had a cold cellar, I would use that. Vegetables can be stored for many months this way.

Tagging –

I strongly encourage people to place a tag on each creation when it's made stating what it is (for the family member that finds it in a couple months and thinks its gone bad) and the date of creation. This just takes the guess work out of the process. Also, because of the profound impact our intentions have on water, I like to place a note that says "Love and Gratitude" on all my creations.

Placement

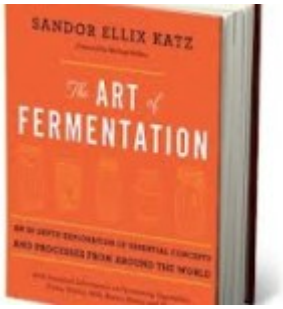
If you are making more than one type of ferment (i.e. like kombucha and kefir, or kefir and sauerkraut), place them in different parts of the kitchen/house so as to prevent cross contamination. I usually keep mine 10+ feet apart.

How much should I eat –

If you are new to fermenting and haven't been taking probiotics, please start out small. This means a single tablespoon of kraut or maybe a few ounces of kombucha* once or twice a day for a couple days. Let your body adjust. Ultimately you can work up to a couple tablespoons at each meal and/or 4 ounces of a fermented drink like kvass or kefir. Remember, fermented foods are meant to be condiments, not side dishes. Pay attention to how your body is responding.

And finally, a word about pH

Fermented creations have an acidic pH. Nature does that. Unless you are 1. going to go commercial or 2. just curious, you can trust Nature to be the pH it's supposed to be. There is no need to test your creation. The great thing about ferments is that they ultimately have an alkalizing effect on the body because they make minerals more accessible to our tissues. However, they go through the mouth in their acidic form, so after you consume them, rinse out your mouth with clean water or brush your teeth (sea salt and baking soda are effective, safe and inexpensive).



Looking for a book about this return to culture? My very favorite one on the subject is *The Art of Fermentation*, by Sandor (Kraut) Katz.

Happy Fermenting! Wishing you **real food** for **real health** so you can be **real happy**!

Does it bug you that you're eating Roundup? It should.

I watched this video last week and felt so sad knowing many of my loved ones are seeking help for illness from the medical field while they're eating foods that not only can't sustain them, but are literally harming them. In this interview, the actual mechanisms of harm are identified. I just had to share.

Many thanks to Jeffrey Smith and Dr. Stephanie Seneff for describing in detail what happens to the body as a result of exposure to Round-up. These destructive actions are contributing to most, if not all, of the diseases of our time. **If you or anyone you know has one of the concerns listed directly below the video, I urge you to take an hour and watch.** For those who can't, I've summarized key points below, along with the time reading from the interview so you can go directly to that topic if you like. This **IS** effecting you. It **IS** harming you.

Jeffrey Smith interviews Dr. Stephanie Seneff about Glyphosate from Kristin Canty on Vimeo.

Problems influenced by glyphosate – the active ingredient in Roundup: anxiety, aggression, autism, ADHD, Alzheimers, cancer, depression, diabetes, fibromyalgia, gastrointestinal problems, heart disease, infertility, multiple sclerosis, and Parkinsons. If you have any of these issues and your health care professional has not advised you to stop eating conventionally raised food, you have not been given the whole truth. That professional has likely not been made aware of the **danger**, but it is **real**.

The interview begins by explaining that crops are now "Roundup Ready", meaning the plants actually drink up the pesticide which leaves more in the food end product. Smith points out that the allowable residues have gone up since the plants were made Roundup Ready. Initially we were told Roundup would make it so less pesticides would have to be used, but the pests became resistant, and now its use has more than doubled. In the first 16 years, 527 million pounds of Roundup has been used. Current studies show, in the Midwest {7:20}, 60% to 100% of ALL samples of air, water and rain contain glyphosate. This is call for alarm. It is even found in the blood of newborn babies.

In a recent post on my site, I talk about how disease is caused by exposure to toxins and not having enough nutrients to protect ourselves. These are exactly the concerns Dr. Seneff cites {2:45} that Roundup is responsible for. She relates that glyphosate depletes calcium, magnesium, iron, zinc, cobalt and other minerals causing nutritional deficiencies AND leaves toxins in the body.

Dr. Seneff points out that Monsanto was able to say that the active ingredient in Roundup didn't effect human cells because it works on a metabolic pathway called the shikimate pathway, which humans don't have. However, as I pointed out in last

week's post on the Microbiome, we have 10 times more bacterial cells than human cells, and those bacteria ARE negatively effected by glyphosate, causing inflammation and other harmful responses.

What does glyphosate do in the body?

1. Harms our good bacteria and then bad (pathogenic) bacteria can take over (autism {5:oo}) and produce toxins (i.e. ammonia and formaldehyde) that can lead to encephalopathy (Alzheimers {20:00}) and DNA damage {13:00} (cancer {34:30}). Dr. Seneff stressed the #1 action to take for Alzheimers is to remove all sources of glyphosate (it is in processed food and used often in lawn/yard care).

2. Blocks the CYP 450 enzyme pathway {17:00} which harms the liver, ezymes that help us detoxify, hormones and our ability to make vitamin D.

3. Destroys amino acids in food as well as interrupting the body's ability to make aromatic essential amino acids {25:03} like tryptophan and tyrosine. We need these aminos to make serotonin (lack = depression, aggression, obesity) and dopamine (Parkinson's {32:00} and fibromyalgia).

4. Contributes to multiple sclerosis {41:00} both by destoying the myelin sheath and by causing leaky gut which leads to the body attacking itself (autoimmune disorders – of which we are seeing a dramatic increase). Leaky gut, or intestinal permeability, also leads to bowel inflammatory disorders {45:30} like Crohn's disease, colitis and IBS.

5. Since minerals like zinc, cobalt and manganese are no longer available in our foods and our body requires these to function, we keep eating more and more in our body's desperate attempt to get what it needs (Obesity {59:00}.

6. Disrupts our cells' ability to store sugar (Diabetes {59:00}).

What about safety studies? {36:20} Monsanto did do short term (90 day) studies for safety. However, when independent studies were done, in the fourth month of research, the female test animals (80%) developed mammary tumors (breast cancer) and the males developed tumors in their kidneys and liver problems. Much more on Monsanto's pseudo-science is available from the Institute for Responsible Technology.

GMO crops in this country include alfalfa, canola, corn, cotton, papaya, soy, sugar beets and squash (zucchini and yellow summer squash). And it's not just GMOs anymore, Folks. Smith points out {60:00} that glyphosate is now being sprayed on non GMO crops such as barley, rice, wheat and rye immediately before harvest.

Bottom line…the mechanisms showing glyphosate/Roundup cause disease are now known and while you and I may not understand them in the detail Dr. Seneff does, we can take action to minimize their damaging effects on us. Eat NO GMOs. Eat organic. Do NOT spray your lawn and yard with Roundup or other toxic chemicals (that get on your shoes, your pets' feet, young children playing outside).

If you haven't already, I urge you to watch the film Genetic Roulette – The Gamble of Our Lives.

As always, wishing you **REAL** food, for **REAL** health so you can be **REAL** happy.

My hometown is waking up...to

the microbiome

This post is dedicated to the new fermenters along the lakeshore of beautiful West Michigan. Great job to the students from my White Lake Area Community Education classes, Nourishing the Lakeshore, Fermenting the Lakeshore held at Unity of Muskegon and health conscious shoppers at Sweetwater Local Organic Foods Market.

What is the microbiome? Very simply, it refers to the fact that 99% of the DNA in our bodies is not our own; it belongs to micro-organisms. And if you're eating nutrient dense foods, little to no sugar and fermented foods everyday, you'll have "good" microbes that will treat you, their host, to health and wellness. Fast foods, lots of sugar and processed carbs feed pathogenic "bad" microbes and WILL lead to illness as well as extra pounds.

A little history…In the 1990's, the Human Genome Project, the biggest project ever undertaken in biology, focused on decoding human genetic information (Holt, 2008). There was hope to find the genetic cause and cure for every disease that affects humanity. What was discovered by 2003 was that every animal species shares the majority of genes, but that the expression of the genes can come in a multitude of ways depending on something called the epigenome. The epigenome in influenced by what we are exposed to in our lifestyle. While the genome can be likened to the hardware in a computer, the epigenome is similar to the software, which tells the hardware what to do. But there turned out to be another missing link.

Ultimately, by 2008, the Human Microbiome Project began where we realized that part of the reason a stalk of corn has more genes (32,000) than a human (25-30,000) is the fact that we are hosts to an estimated 100 trillion bacteria. These bacteria work in concert with our genes to run our bodies.

NPR has an animated yet thorough introduction to this new knowledge. It is about 5 minutes long and I strongly encourage you watch it:

This research is in its very early stages. Yet if we look at the research of civilizations that did not live like we do, traditional peoples (like those found by Dr. Weston A Price), we see EVERY one of these healthy groups ate fermented foods. And they ate no processed foods whatsoever. When we learn to ferment and return to traditional eating, we, too, can experience the radiant health that is our birthright.

Today, our microbiomes are compromised all sorts of ways. Besides the losses during infancy addressed in the video above, our balance of good to "pathogenic" bacteria shifts with antibiotic use, toxins in our air, water and food, long term use of prescriptions and birth control pills as well as radiation. Without these beneficial "little critters" as I like to call them, we can't digest and absorb nutrients to build healthy cells and this leads to nutritional deficiencies.

When we have an abundance of bad bacteria from eating processed food and drinking sodas, the "food" we eat gets broken down into toxic compounds which get absorbed into the bloodstream. From there they go to wherever we have a vulnerable area like our joints (i.e. arthritis), brain (i.e. fog, ADHD), skin (i.e. eczema, rash, acne) and our vital organs like our heart. These same bad little guys can damage the lining of our intestine and cause it to become inflamed and permeable (leaky gut), which leads to food intolerances and allergies. When this happens, we no longer are getting

nutrients to build us up but instead get toxins that make us sick. And because 85% of our immune system is in our gut microbiome, if we don't have good gut flora, our immune system goes haywire. No wonder so many people are unwell and overweight.

When people return to traditional ways, including fermenting, eating organic produce, consuming grass fed and wild animals and cutting out processed "foods", their microbiomes can heal and do the work necessary to help return to wellness. For many, supplementing with probiotics is a sensible choice while they transition to more traditional ways. If this is something you choose to do, please make sure the product you use has integrity.

Lexi Larabee Photography

Wishing you ***real*** food for ***real*** health so you can be ***real*** happy.

[Chemical Calories for Your Skin??]

What's in your face cream?

Did I get your attention? Good – because what you put on your body deserves as much attention as what you put in your mouth. The Food and Drug Administration monitors what we ingest through our mouth, but they haven't yet accepted the fact that our skin soaks in chemicals and toxins, too.
While we don't know for sure, many have suggested that through our skin, the body's largest organ, we soak in calories from the products we use on our face and body. A recent study by researchers from the Children's Environmental Health Center at New York's Mount Sinai Medical Center identified an association between exposure to phthalates (found in personal care products, among other things) and obesity in young children – including increased body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference.

It is impossible to totally avoid the synthetic chemicals we breathe and those we come in contact with in public. But we can minimize our toxic load by paying close attention when selecting products for our faces, hair and bodies, as well as our homes and yards.

Most people want to trust that if a product is on the market it must be safe. Along the same line of thinking is the idea that our skin is a barrier that can protect us from harmful substances. Neither of these assumptions is correct. Unsafe compounds are being used and they are soaking in. And the efficacy of a product does not have to be proven so advertising can claim just about anything with regard to how

it will make your skin and hair feel and look.

The regulatory authority's stance in this country is that chemicals are safe until proven harmful. Eighty-nine percent of all ingredients in cosmetics have not been evaluated for safety by any publicly accountable institution. Sounds like we've been relegated to guinea pig status to me. By themselves, many of the compounds in personal care products have been identified as irritants, toxins, mutagens (damage DNA), terratogens (birth defects) and potential carcinogens (I think you know what that means) . We may be told the amounts are so small there's no way they can harm us, but how many products are we using? What is the effect of mixtures of different compounds in the same products – or mixed with ingredients from other products? No one knows.

We have all the environmental toxins we're dealing with, then we use small amounts of several personal care products, with unknown long-term effects and unknown synergistic effects. Scary.

What can we do? Read labels on everything that touches your skin and hair. Buy only products that are natural (vs. synthetic) and organic. Every dollar is a vote in a sense. Can you pronounce every ingredient? Is it a chemical name (dimethicone, sodium laureth sulfate, PEG-50 Almond Glyceride) or is it something you understand (like organic aloe vera and organic shea butter)? Is the word "fragrance" on the label? What exactly is in that?

Does the product have colorings? Are you aware of how many food colorings were once listed as safe but then removed from that list after they were found to cause cancer, behavior problems and other issues? At least 18. This is after we were eating them for years.

Parabens have for decades been used as an acceptable and safe preservative. Why then are many products coming out touting

the fact they are “paraben-free”? Did you know methyl paraben is a xenoestrogen and has been found in 90% of breast cancer tumors tested?

There are products with integrity out there. The coconut oil I encourage people to consume everyday is a wonderful, pure, low cost moisturizer for skin and hair. Yes, it’s a bit greasy and can get on your clothes. During the summer, though, it’s great for bare legs and arms. I don’t recommend it for your face at all if you’re prone to oily skin. I choose to use Brittanie’s Thyme for my face, which is made in lovely Cedar Springs, Michigan. Their products are certified to food standards, so they can be eaten (and are safe).

Other organic brands are coming onto the market all the time (some wonderful, some deceptive). You can find recipes online to make your own. Do your homework, get used to reading labels, maybe switch one product a month. Please be aware. We’ve got to watch out for ourselves – and each other.

Until next time…wishing you Real Food (even for your skin) for Real Health so you can be Real Happy.

Rethinking the Food Pyramid...

Did you know that after the USDA released the Food Pyramid in 1992 the rate of obesity skyrocketed? That's what happens when you encourage people to consume 6-11 servings a day of grain products without mention of product quality. And yes, there was a major link to the grain lobby. At the same time, the tip of the pyramid made the recommendation to use fats sparingly…no regard for the difference between good and bad fats. No mention of the fact that all our hormones are made from cholesterol.

The pyramid evolved and we were encouraged to eat less grains, make them whole, consume more fruits and veggies, but still eat "lowfat" milk and protein sources. We now have a "plate" as a guide – it's better but does not address the need for high quality fat consumption (so necessary DAILY for cell and brain health) or the processing of grains/nuts/seeds in a manner so our body can better use their nutrients. The issues of pesticide residues, dangers of genetically modified organisms, concern about antibiotics and hormones in our animal products are not mentioned. These issues are real and are negatively effecting our health with every bite.

With so much **mis**-information out there, are you feeling overwhelmed? Feeling misled? Please don't despair. The movement to get back to REAL nutrient dense food is growing exponentially. We will get there one step at a time. Pick a place to start this month. How about finding a local market in your area where you can meet the REAL farmer who grows your food. Or pick one vegetable or fruit in your diet and promise yourself you will only buy it if it's grown organically.

One positive effort by the USDA is the program Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food. This is a step in the right direction to deal with the issues mentioned above. Here in Muskegon County, we are fortunate to have a source for local and organic food called Sweetwater Local Foods Market.

Take that first step.

Just start…

Until next time, wishing you **real food** for **real health** so you can be **real happy**.

Update January 2014 – Denise Minger has now published an amazing book I highly recommend Death By Food Pyramid.
