

What to do with all those summer veggies – STIR FRY



Do you have a CSA share (community supported agriculture)? Are you growing your own veggies and want to use as much as you can while they're fresh? I'm doing both so it's the season to get creative.

For those of us with CSAs, you probably know what it's like to get a vegetable you've never seen before. And since you've never seen it before, what do you do with it? STIR FRY. No matter what veggie it is, you can make it tasty in a stir fry. Here's one I just created. It took me 20 minutes total (besides marinating and having the rice already cooked from the day before).

To make it you'll need:

3/4 pound chicken thighs (preferred) or 1-2 large boneless/skinless chicken breasts (much less nutritious) (marinated all day in the frig with coconut aminos)

2 small or 1 large onion sliced thinly (unless you'd prefer more crunchy)

1 large carrot sliced 1/4" thick

2 small summer squash sliced 1/4" thick

2 bok choy, chopped

4-6 leaves kale, chopped

1/4 cup bacon grease (free-range only)

1 T sesame oil

1 T coconut oil
1 tsp organic garlic powder
1 tsp sea salt
2 T sunflower seeds ([soaked and dehydrated preferred](#))
Optional – 3-4 cups of cooked rice (best if it's been soaked before cooking)

Melt bacon grease in medium heat large skillet and once melted, put in the chicken breast to sear on both sides (about 3-5 minutes each side). It's a good idea to have a screen handy to keep the splatter to a minimum. While it's cooking, that's when I do the chopping, but you can have it all chopped in advance if you like.

Remove breast from pan to a plate or cutting board and throw the onions and carrots in the skillet – cover with screen. Slice up the chicken breast in about 1/2" slices and throw in with the onions and carrots. Turn the heat down to low/medium. Stir every few minutes.

Once the chicken is back in the pan, in another skillet melt the coconut oil over medium heat then add the squash. Cook about 5 minutes then add the greens and garlic powder. Cover with a lid and let simmer over low/medium heat for about 5 minutes.

You'll know the chicken/onion/carrot mixture is done (about 10 minutes) when you take a piece of the chicken out and cut it on a plate and it's nice and tender. Now, put the rice and sesame oil in the big skillet and mix together. The other skillet should be about done so mix those veggies in, too. Add salt to taste and top with sunflower seeds on individual servings.

If you wonder about the rice preparation, see my [Yummy Good for You Casserole](#).

Don't have the veggies listed? Substitute WHATEVER veggies you have.

Don't have the bacon grease? Substitute grass fed lard or ghee or butter. Remember, you NEED THE FAT! All [healthy traditional diets](#) had an abundance of fats.

Don't have the sunflower seeds? Substitute almonds, sesame seeds, cashews...anything with a crunch. Watch the preparation methods, though, for maximum nutrition.

Don't have the aminos on hand? Add a little extra salt at the end and you'll be fine.

Want it to have a little more kick? Sprinkle in a bit of organic cayenne.

Just STIR FRY!

Wishing you a summer full of **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 is 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.

Yummy Good for You Casserole

Over time I created this recipe as a teaching tool because each of the ingredients is chosen very deliberately for it's health benefits (ok, the seasoned salt is just for simplicity).



1 pound [grass-fed](#) ground beef or breakfast sausage (sausage will make it have more “wow”)

1 organic medium size [onion](#) – chopped to your liking

1 – 2 cloves organic [garlic](#) (crush and let sit 10 minutes before cooking to maximize the nutrient content)

1+ tsp sea [salt](#)

2+ dashes of [turmeric](#) (helps prevent cancer)

1+ tsp seasoned salt (I use Simply Organic All-seasons salt) or any herbs and spices that you like

1 big bunch [kale](#) or $\frac{1}{2}$ small head of cabbage (or any mixture there-of and the more the better for you) – to clean kale, let soak in tepid water and 1T vinegar for 15-30 minutes then rinse each leaf

1+ T – Bacon grease (from grass fed bacon) or organic butter

2 cups organic rice (soak at room temperature 7 hours or overnight in enough water to cover it with 2 T apple cidar vinegar or whey – drain before cooking)

Start cooking the rice according to the instructions minus about 1/3 of the water requirement (since the rice is soaked). [Bone broth](#) is a flavorful healthy liquid to cook your rice in. You could add a tablespoon of coconut oil to the water to keep it from sticking and add some luscious medium chain fatty acids.

Brown meat with onions in a stainless or cast iron skillet for which you have a lid. Don't drain the fat. Add garlic. Finely chop (or use kitchen scissors) the greens and put on top of the meat mixture. Sprinkle salt, turmeric and seasoned salt on greens. Put bacon grease or butter on top. Cover and simmer while the rice continues to cook. The greens need a good $\frac{1}{2}$ hour or more.

If you have room, stir the rice together with the meat/green mixture and let simmer another 15 minutes. If you don't have room in the skillet pan, put all the ingredients in a casserole and bake covered for another 15-30 minutes at about 300.

Sample taste...you might want more salt or seasoning, or bacon grease. Be daring!

Would you like it to be even more of a superfood casserole?...add grass fed liver pieces. (I haven't been ready to do this just yet.)

Don't want to use rice? Finely chop potatoes (you can do this in the blender) and put them in the same time you add the greens. Want color? Add a finely chopped carrot when the meat is about halfway cooked. Mix and match! When you cook with bacon grease, butter and seasoneing, it always comes out tasty!

To get the full benefits of all the nutrients, consume a couple tablespoons of raw, fermented sauerkraut with the casserole.

Special thanks to Nicole and Sarah – 2 of the world's most awesome Moms.

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

The First Step to Better Health – Bacon Fat*

*from grass fed pigs...and organic evco

This post is dedicated to the incredible activist film maker Chris Bedford who introduced me to the sad and insidious world of food politics. He guided me – and thousands of others – to

the possibilities for making our world sustainable. Today's blog is controversial...Chris always loved controversy.

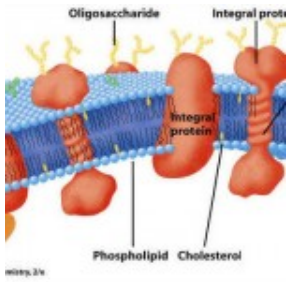


My family's favorite fat

Fats? Seriously? We're supposed to avoid them, right? They clog our arteries and make us unhealthy. Especially animal fats. NOT!

Many people ask me what the first step toward better health is – I say switch out your fat. In my studies and travels I've met a growing number of very healthy people who understand the dire importance of good fats in the diet. But I've found the majority of people who live in my beautiful corner of the world, the Lakeshore of West Michigan, don't have a clue. So I write this for them. The rest of you, nod your head and say "yup".

Our bodies need fats. And saturated fats, those dreaded rascals that the American Heart Association and American Cancer Society have been warning us against for decades, are in EVERY cell in your body. Our heart, nerves, hormones and brain need them everyday. Has the advice we've been getting all these years shown a dramatic decline in cancer and heart disease? Let's be honest...No.



Lipids and
cholesterol =
healthy cell
membranes

That's because our cells are starving. Look at any anatomy book and you'll find that saturated fats and cholesterol form a key part of the outer edge (membrane) of all the cells that make up YOU.

So we have been encouraged to swap out animal fat with [vegetable oils](#) that aren't healthy at the cellular level. Our poor cell membranes don't get what they need to stay pliable and do their jobs in relation to the cells around them (cell signalling). After years of consumption of these liquid vegetable oils we end up with problems all over the body – immune system disruption, heart disease, memory issues, cancer and more. Yes, other lifestyle factors contribute to these concerns also, but why increase your risk? Dr. Mary Enig, the world renowned expert on the biochemical structure and effect of fats in the body discusses the issue at length in this interview, if you want to know more (and you REALLY should). No, you won't see this on television or in the mass media because there's no money in it. At least not for big business. But the truth is coming out, thanks to organizations like the [Price Pottenger Foundation](#) and the [Weston A Price Foundation](#) and the Internet (as long as we remain uncensored).

Well done Dr. Enig!! How sad that so many young people's eyes were damaged because the advice we were given was flat out wrong. How long is it going to take to get this truth into the

mainstream?

We must be aware of the QUALITY of the fats we eat. The fats from a grassfed cow are going to be healthy and the fats from a feed-lot cow eating GMO grains grown with pesticides and then filled with antibiotics and hormones are going to be VERY different. The [organic extra virgin coconut oil](#) that our cells thrive on and that can be safely heated to high temperatures is miles ahead of the rancid refined vegetable oil on the grocery store shelves that gets further damaged when we cook with it.

We've been sick long enough. It's time for a change. The very first step I recommend is get rid of those truly dangerous fats and start adding in the coconut oil and fats that come from critters raised outside naturally. By the way, grass fed bacon grease is one of THE most tasty ways to add flavor to your casseroles and stir-frys.

We'll talk about the superfood cod liver oil some other day.

Until next time, wishing you Real Food for Real Health so you can be Real Happy