

THE REAL DEAL ON Whole Food Ingredients



The Real Food "Good-Better-Best" Principle

We all have to do the best we can with what we have – sometimes less processed foods or organic options are harder to come by, or are more expensive. Use this handy chart below to help you make the best choices for your circumstances!

	GOOD	BETTER	BEST
Fruits & Veggies	Buy only conventional fruit & veggies	Use the Dirty Dozen/Clean 15 Rule & buy organic when available	Buy all organic, local & seasonal or grow your own
Grains, Beans, Nuts & Seeds	Homemade cooking with some refined flours & some whole grain flour, beans, nuts & seeds	Homemade cooking with 100% whole grain flours & grains	Homemade cooking with 100% whole grains & preparing them by soaking, sprouting or sour leavening
Eggs	Eat conventional store-bought eggs	Eating store-bought organic, free-range eggs	Eating organic, local, pasture-raised eggs
Dairy	Whole Dairy, primarily grass-fed & low-temp pasteurized	Whole Dairy, primarily raw & grass-fed	Whole Dairy, primarily raw, grass-fed, pasture-raised, & organic
Meat	Whole Meat, antibiotic-free & hormone-free	Whole Meat grass-fed and/or organic	Whole Meat, grass-fed and/or organic & pasture-raised
Seafood	Farm-raised seafood	BPA-Free canned or frozen wild-caught seafood	Fresh & local wild-caught seafood
Fats	Pasteurized store-bought, grain-fed butter	Pasteurized organic grass-fed butter, or regular coconut or olive oil	Grass-fed lard & tallow, raw butter or organic, extra-virgin coconut or olive oil
Sweeteners	100% pure white unrefined cane sugar	Unrefined cane sugar, store-bought honey or real maple syrup	Local honey, organic refined cane sugar or real maple syrup, pure stevia or coconut sugar

WHAT ABOUT

FREEZE-DRYING?

We've spent a good amount of time talking about how whole foods are minimally processed, so what about the process of freeze-drying? Simply put, freeze-drying is the removal of water from a frozen item using cold vacuum technology. In this process, freeze-dried food maintains its original size and shape with almost no cells bursting. The removal of moisture prevents a product from deteriorating at room temperature.

All processing, including freeze-drying, involves some loss of nutrients. However, fruit & veggies are typically freeze-dried at peak ripeness so that maximum nutrient-density (over 95%), flavor, color and texture are maintained. At times, they can even be more nutritious than fresh!

There are several benefits to freeze-dried foods over typical dehydration or fresh. Freeze-Dried food:

- Retains original characteristics of the product, including:
 - color
 - size
 - texture
 - form
 - taste
 - nutrients
- Is shelf stable at room temperature with no cold storage required
- Helps eliminate waste associated with spoiling
- can be done with virtually any type of food or ingredient, solid or liquid

In a fitness facility, freeze-dried foods are ideal, particularly for use in a post-exercise recovery shake. They add nutrient-density to a finite space (your cup) and are easily digested by your body when it needs nutrition most. They're also fun to snack on!



Fruits & Vegetables – The way that fruits and veggies are grown, they are all whole foods. When they are frozen, canned or dried with nothing added, they are still considered whole foods and retain almost all of their nutritional value. Once additives or heavy processing are involved, they are no longer whole foods.

Nuts, Seeds & Beans – These are all thought of as whole foods in their original state. Purists don't fancy canned beans and prefer to soak the dry versions and prepare them at home.

Milk & Dairy – Technically, only raw, unpasteurized milk is a whole food, but for other health reasons, it is better to accept pasteurized dairy. Regular cheese and yogurt are minimally processed, with the "processing" caused mainly by bacteria, molds, etc. Heavily processed cheese (like Kraft Singles) is not a whole food.

Grains – As with fruits and veggies, as they are grown, grains like brown rice, quinoa and barley are whole foods. Once they are processed and used as ingredients in items or meals, like puffed rice, brown rice syrup, or anything made with white flour, they are not. Grinding grains into flour changes their resistant starch and the way that they are absorbed by your body.

Meat, Poultry & Seafood – Meat and poultry that contains antibiotics and hormones aren't truly a whole food, but you can't always know the origins unless you've hunted or raised the animals yourself. For a whole foods diet, it is best to avoid the additives when you can.

Eating clean starts with whole foods, but not the national food market chain.

When we talk about whole foods, we mean the foods you immediately recognize because they look like they did when they were harvested. We're talking about foods that are naturally grown, minimally processed, and free from any artificial or synthetic additives. These are the foods our bodies love most.

Eating a whole foods diet is more of a goal than an actual diet – a commitment to yourself and to your loved ones. There are numerous benefits to your health and wellness by keeping as close to that goal as possible. For example, it is generally recognized as healthier to eat potatoes instead of french fries, or bananas instead of banana splits.

An easy way to work towards this goal – short of raising and growing your own food – is to ask yourself a few simple questions while grocery shopping:

- Is this fresh or vine/tree-ripened?
- Does this have additives or preservatives?
- Are sugars or synthetic sweeteners added?
- Is this harvested locally?
- Is it organic or non-GMO?

Purchase your food in the produce section, the fish counter or the meat counter. For items and ingredients sold outside those spaces, you'll want to read ingredient declarations and Nutrition Facts Panels to search for avoidable artificial and highly-processed ingredients. A great rule of thumb is **"if it doesn't rot or sprout, throw it out."**

6 Reasons to Eat a Whole Foods Diet

(there are definitely more than 6!)

- **Basic Nutrients** – Get vitamins & minerals in a state that your body recognizes, directly from the source
- **Healthy Fats** – Many whole foods contain monounsaturated fats & omega-3s
- **Phytonutrients/Phytochemicals** – Healthy stuff from unprocessed plants, the building blocks for your cells
- **Fiber** – Benefit your heart & digestion with naturally occurring soluble & insoluble fiber
- **Avoiding Additives** – It is the added sugar & sodium in processed foods that will get you!
- **Fighting Fat** – Eating more whole foods may lead to less adipose body fat

What Are Whole Foods?

Whole Foods can include certain minimally processed foods like salad greens, sliced fruit, canned or frozen items, but even then it can get a little tricky if they contain additives. Some additives, like calcium in orange juice, are actually good for you, but added sugar or preservatives are not.

Once additional processing is done in a commercial kitchen or factory to change taste and make products more shelf-stable, you've definitely left the realm of whole foods. For instance, turning tomatoes and other ingredients into jarred pasta sauce. Heavily processed foods like candy and soda, or anything with added sugar is **definitely not** a whole food.

Here's a breakdown of some of the foods typically found in our diets and how they fit in a whole foods diet:

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