



FL!P YOUR K!TCHEN

**How to cook 21 meals a week from scratch
(without spending your life in the kitchen)**

LIZA BAKER
WITH INGELA OGINSKY

FL!P YOUR K!TCHEN | How to cook 21 meals a week from scratch (without spending your life in the kitchen)

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*In memory of my father, Robert L. Baker, who would have loved this project,
and for my children, Katerina + Nikolai, for being all the reasons why.*

LIZA



*To my mom and dad, who inspired local ingredient sourcing and from scratch cooking,
and to my husband and kids, who have become appreciative and informed eaters.*

INGELA

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME
(BACK)
TO
YOUR
KITCHEN

Cookbook author Edward Espe Brown says that there are essentially two styles of cooking (and of living your life). You can select a recipe or plan and then search out all of the ingredients you'll need in order to produce the desired results. Or, you can gather what you have on hand and creatively construct something wonderful by using sincerity, spontaneity, surprise, and invention. You can, in other words, proceed with your own activity by "listening" to the ingredients and following accordingly.

GARY THORP

WELCOME (BACK) TO YOUR KITCHEN

Have you fallen out of the habit of cooking from scratch—really from scratch, using only whole ingredients pretty much straight from nature? Or maybe you were never in that habit? You are not alone. Browse through websites where people post recipes, and you're bound to find a huge number of cooks who consider "a can of this soup, a box of that mix" valid ingredients for cooking from scratch. It's no surprise when many "make it in minutes" cookbooks do the same.

The act of cooking from scratch seems to have become intimidating. But the fact is, if you have some basic knowledge of ingredients, cooking techniques, and formulas, you *can* cook meals completely from scratch using whole, close-to-the-source ingredients, and with a bit of planning, you *can* do it in minutes, even on a weeknight.

I was fortunate to grow up in a home where every meal was made completely from scratch. Having almost-grown children of my own now and being in contact with a lot of other parents, I am increasingly aware of how many children *don't* grow up that way. My family has gradually moved away from almost all processed food and toward whole and minimally processed ingredients. No, three out of four of us didn't do it very willingly, and it's still a work in progress, but I have discovered our health and nutritional status concurrently improving. And I figure that my kids can make the decisions about what to buy, cook, and eat when they do the shopping and the cooking in their own homes.

Over the past ten years, I have increasingly become interested in the SOLE food movement—**S**easonal, **O**rganic, **L**ocal, and **E**thical—which aims to redesign the food system to be healthful for humans, not damage the environment, support the local economy, and make healthful food affordable for all.

SOLE food makes sense to me as a parent because it falls in line with the values I want to instill in my children: treat your body (and your mind and your spirit) as well as possible so that you can do the most good with this one precious life you're given, treat the earth with respect, live in mutually supportive community with others, and do what you can for those less fortunate than yourself—not by keeping them dependent but by empowering them to be self-sufficient.

In my work as a health coach, kitchen coach, and chief operations officer of a family of four in addition to working as a part-time contractor at a nonprofit, I keep a lot of plates spinning in the air and still manage to put 20-21 made-from-scratch meals a week on the table. I believe that cooking for someone constitutes one of the highest compliments you can pay: it is an act of love. I derive a huge amount of satisfaction from providing wholesome home-cooked meals for family and friends and teaching others how to do it, too.

Flip Your Kitchen is an invitation for you to take back your kitchen—to demystify cooking from scratch, simplify and organize your cooking space to be safe and efficient, and learn how to plan and prepare a week full of simple, healthful, homemade food without spending your life at the stove. Whether you are an inveterate carnivore, an omnivore, a flexitarian, any sort of vegetarian, or vegan, there is something for everyone here: all are welcome at this table.

Consider this book a culinary school for the home cook: you'll learn a lot of tips and tricks from my studies in culinary school, and you'll know the "why" as well as the "how" of many techniques, almost as if you'd been to Le Cordon Bleu!

Welcome (back) to your kitchen: Let's get cooking!





INTRODUCTION

THE FL!P
YOUR
K!TCHEN™
SYSTEM

*[Cooking's] not about going out shopping for a new recipe every time you cook.
It's about opening your cupboards and opening your fridge and going from there.*

NIGELLA LAWSON

THE FLIP YOUR K!TCHEN™ SYSTEM

There are at least two types of cookbook readers. Some of you are dying to get started, and if you really can't wait to dive into the recipes, so be it; however, you should know that making 21 meals a week from scratch does not happen simply by following recipes. I promise that if you learn the theory behind the system, "flipping your kitchen" to produce homemade meals on a regular (if not even daily!) basis will become a lot more efficient and rewarding. Let's compromise: go ahead and try a recipe or two or three this week, but take the time to read this chapter as well?

If, on the other hand, you love to read the theory before getting your hands dirty, this chapter is for you! For the serious students among you, this section also provides a number of reading recommendations to deepen your knowledge of the issues that have led to the creation of this book.

THE BASICS

Cooking from scratch every night of the week can seem overwhelming, even more so if you make a hot breakfast and pack a homemade lunch (or four) every day: much simpler to eat cold cereal or grab a coffee and a doughnut for breakfast and takeout for lunch. And it's ever so convenient to mix together a box of this, a can of that and call it a "homemade dinner."

In *Cooked*, author/activist Michael Pollan writes that the average American spends 27 minutes cooking dinner, far less time than it takes to watch an episode of *Iron Chef!* America has become a nation of people who love to watch cooking but don't cook. The shows we follow—sometimes obsessively—have created a strange disconnect: we love to watch celebrity chefs make incredible dishes, but we are afraid to cook in our own kitchens because we measure ourselves against these professionals. But seriously, how many times have you been asked to carve up half a pig and use every part in a different dish for a seven-course meal, including dessert? (This has to be the origin of maple bacon ice cream, not that I'm complaining!)

Thinking about dinner or scanning a food magazine, we tend to latch

onto a recipe and then run to the store to buy the exact ingredients it lists. If we're lucky enough to find all the ingredients, we follow the recipe to the letter. Sometimes it ends in success, sometimes in massive disappointment—what my teenagers would call "an epic fail"—and almost always a lot of leftover ingredients get pushed to the back of the pantry or fridge in time for the next installment of provisions for the next day's recipe.

Flipping your kitchen to create 21 meals from scratch a week involves a little forethought and effort, but what you'll find with this approach is that planning ahead becomes simple, and you save time, money, and trips to the store. It's likely that your health will improve, your footprint on the environment will become fainter, and you will become connected to your local food economy and your community in rewarding ways.

The steps involved in flipping your kitchen are:

- 1. Create a whole foods kitchen.**
- 2. Learn a few basic recipes.**
- 3. Plan your weekly menu based on your pantry and what's in season.**
- 4. Always cook for more than one meal.**
(And I mean ALWAYS.)

CREATE A WHOLE FOODS KITCHEN

The very first step to flipping your kitchen involves stocking it with whole foods, those that are as close to how they're found in nature as possible.

Let's take a look in your pantry/fridge/freezer. What goes, what stays? What's a whole food? What does minimally processed mean? How about highly processed? Jamie Oliver, the British celebrity chef who has tried valiantly to overhaul America's thinking on what constitutes real food and what should be served in our school cafeterias, is credited with saying, "Whole food doesn't have ingredients—it IS ingredients!"



Some examples of whole vs. processed foods

whole	minimally processed	highly processed
oat groats	rolled or steel cut oats	instant sweetened oatmeal
apple	unsweetened applesauce: apples + water	apple-flavored lollipop
tomato	canned tomatoes: tomatoes + salt	canned/jarred pasta sauce

The best way to tell whether a food is whole or processed? If it has no nutrition label (think: fresh produce), has a single ingredient on the label (think: rice, dried beans), or the ingredient list contains less than five items, it's probably fairly whole. More than five ingredients, ingredients you don't recognize or can't pronounce, ingredients vaguely lumped together ("spices," "natural flavorings")? Out it goes.

What to do if your pantry/fridge/freezer are full of processed foods? There are several options: donate unwanted foods to a food pantry, finish them yourself and don't buy more, or simply throw them out. Ultimately, it's a matter for your own conscience. I personally hate to waste food, but I also dislike the attitude that inferior food should go to food pantries—*everyone* should have access to wholesome, healthful food, which is the subject of another book entirely!

Once you've eaten, donated, or otherwise gotten rid of the highly processed convenience foods in your kitchen, the next step in flipping your kitchen is to develop a system for purchasing, storing, and preparing your ingredients. Just as important is a system for keeping cooked foods safe and organized so that they don't go to waste.

Buy the best ingredients

If you're just getting started, focus on buying whole foods as discussed above. Ready to take a bigger step? I think about "the best" ingredients as those that have a triple value, sort of like an economist's triple bottom line: these are ingredients that nourish your body, are grown in a way that is good for or not damaging to the environment, benefit the local

economy, and pay those who grew it a living wage. Some people call this SOLE food—that which is **S**easonal, **O**rganic, **L**ocal, and **E**thical.

Whole foods are generally found around the perimeter of the grocery store and at the farmers' market. They often don't carry ingredient/nutrition labels, and they don't contain harmful ingredients, such as hydrogenated oils, added sugars, or artificial dyes and sweeteners. Michael Pollan's simple rule of five is a great one to follow at the grocery store: don't buy anything with more than five ingredients. His other advice is just as easy to remember: don't buy anything with unpronounceable ingredients, and don't buy anything your grandmother (or maybe that should be "great-grandmother" by now) wouldn't recognize as food. Fitness guru Jillian Michaels's simple rule in *Master Your Metabolism* is: if it grew on a plant or had a mother (I know, I know—more on that later), it's edible; if it was made in a plant, don't eat it.

If you shop at the farmers' market on a regular basis, you will come to know what grows in which season in your area and will learn to appreciate seasonal eating. Many farmers' markets have rules about what farmer/vendors sell there—meaning that the food has to be grown by them and within a certain radius of the market. A locally-grown fruit or vegetable not only lasts longer than one that's traveled thousands of miles and used up gallons of fossil fuel in the process—it will taste infinitely better, and some studies show its nutritional content is higher when eaten closer in time and space to where it was grown.

Yes, "local" is a vague concept, particularly in a country as large as the United States. I live in Michigan, and I would estimate that 75-80 percent of what my family eats is local to our state. Do we buy avocados from California? Yes. Do we buy asparagus from South America in the middle of the winter? No. So I leave it to you to define "local." If you just start reading the country of origin labels in the grocery store, I'll consider my job in that department done.

Those big strawberries from Mexico at the grocery store may look pretty, but their taste can't compare to the smaller (my kids would add "uglier" here) wild ones you find at the farmers' market. There's nothing like waiting for strawberry season then gorging on strawberries at every meal. By the time you start thinking, "I'm so sick of strawberries..." it's peach season! If it's important to you to have berries year round, consider buying

flats of them when they are in season and freezing them. The concept of eating locally and in season can be extended to include local produce that you buy at the peak of freshness and preserve for eating later in the year.

That said, I also like author/activist Barbara Kingsolver's approach to eating locally in *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*: when her family agreed to live for a year only on food that they could grow themselves or obtain from very close by, each family member chose a "luxury" item—chocolate, coffee, bananas, etc.—that was allowed. My own family's banana habit is probably serious enough to support the entire economy of a small country (a banana republic, of course). While I don't eat them myself, I do choose to buy organic bananas, which is probably just my way of trying to offset the environmental damage caused by the amount of fossil fuel it takes to feed their addiction. There are inevitably some compromises, particularly when you need to satisfy more than one family member.

My advice: don't get too hung up on it. As long as you are aware of the issues and consistently make your best effort to make informed choices most of the time, we're all making progress.

Organic? Conventional? Grass fed? Pastured? Cage free?

Whether or not to buy organic is a thorny issue: there are studies that support the claim that organic is better for you and studies that will deny that claim. There are studies that show that genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are harmful to your health and that of the environment, and there are just as many that claim the opposite. Jillian Michaels's *Master Your Metabolism* discusses at length how she reached the conclusion that conventionally grown produce and highly processed foods are harmful, not only to our bodies but to the environment as well. It's worth a read if you're investigating this issue, particularly if you are looking for ways to improve your hormonal health through diet.

I encourage you to do your own research and reach your own conclusions, but be very, very careful about which studies you consider in the process: try to find out who paid for a given study because very often the company that benefits from showing that a product is extremely beneficial or at least totally harmless is the one backing the scientists performing the test. A case in point is a UCLA study that found a positive influence on brain chemistry in subjects who ate probiotics in fermented milk products. Sounds great, and

let me emphasize *I don't discount the findings*, but since Groupe Danone funded the study, I'd look for a little third-party confirmation of the results. Does the name sound strangely familiar, but not quite? That would be the company that makes Dannon yogurt, a fermented milk product.

Personally, I choose to buy organic when I can, but in certain instances—usually when I know and trust the farmer selling the produce—I will choose local over organic. There are many small farmers who cannot afford or have no faith in the expensive organic certification process, yet they produce "ecological" food in a sustainable, pesticide- and herbicide-free manner. If you buy directly from a farmer, ask some questions about their growing methods. If a direct explanation is not forthcoming or is not to your liking, move on. If you get an invitation to visit the farm, particularly without making an appointment ahead of time, you'll know this grower is all about transparency.

There are a few food items on which I simply will not compromise in the sustainable/organic versus conventional debate, and those are animal products. If you are vegetarian or vegan, particularly if you live that lifestyle because of animal rights issues, please feel free to skip the next paragraph; however, I do ask you to consider that opting out is still a commitment to work toward bettering the lives of animals and does not grant you permission to treat poorly those who choose to eat meat. I firmly support your right to adhere to your diet; however, I also believe that there are plenty of reasons not to shun animal products provided you know exactly where they come from, how they are raised, and how they are harvested. I choose that word intentionally and not because it's prettier than "slaughtered" but because it implies an intentionality and mindfulness that "slaughtered" does not. Many people feel better on a diet that includes some animal protein, and I believe that if you choose to nourish your own body in this way, you should make a commitment to honor the animals who give their lives to feed you: I encourage you to learn how to cook and eat all parts of the animal, wasting not even the bones, which can be made into soup.

These days, the amount of antibiotics and growth hormones used in animal husbandry and the inhumane conditions in confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs, also known as factory farms) are two reasons that I insist on "happy meat" in my home: we purchase our meat, poultry, dairy,



and eggs from local farms that raise their animals on unsprayed pastures, don't use prophylactic antibiotics or any type of growth hormones, and harvest their animals as humanely as possible. The difference in taste and wholesomeness is clearly evident in the meat, poultry, and dairy products we have committed to buying, and the fear of food poisoning is greatly reduced if not practically non-existent in my kitchen.

Buying eggs has become quite a complicated endeavor these days. How to wade through the terminology on the carton is truly a puzzle! If you are at a loss, remember this: "pastured" is the gold standard, particularly if the carton indicates that the hens roam "unsprayed pastures:" these chickens run around outside and scratch around for their food. "Cage free" means that the hens are not confined to cages. That doesn't necessarily mean they are running around outside since a huge, cement-floored warehouse is also considered "cage free." "Organic" means that the hens are fed organic feed—it makes no claims as to whether they are caged or not.



Still confused? My advice is to buy eggs from a local small farmer: if you visit the farm and see how the chickens live, you'll have no doubt as to what sort of eggs you're getting! Live in the city? Visit a natural foods co-op or farmers' market, where there are often eggs produced by local farmers' chickens. Or visit <http://localharvest.org> and look up some other options for buying directly from a local farmer. Urban agriculture is a growing field these days, and you may be surprised by how close you live to some "urban chickens."

If you consume dairy products, I do encourage you to be firm on one point: the herds from which the milk comes should not receive bovine growth hormones, which are suspected in the early onset of puberty among other conditions. Beyond that, your own research and budget will determine whether to buy organic or conventional, pastured or not, homogenized or not, raw or pasteurized. It is possible to find raw milk these days: while most farmers cannot legally sell raw milk directly to consumers, many will sell you a share in their herd, and as part owner in the herd, you are entitled to the milk it produces. Other farmers sell the raw milk "for your pets" (wink wink nudge nudge).

My family has switched to raw milk: I think that our health has improved

because of that change, and I love supporting my local small farmers rather than larger organic companies. The enforcement of "organic" and "pastured" is only as good as the ethics of the corporation and the (not always reliable, always overscheduled) food inspectors. Be aware, however, that drinking raw milk, especially by the very young and the very old, will be frowned upon by a lot of people, especially conventional healthcare providers. Educate yourself about the potential benefits and dangers of consuming raw dairy, and don't hesitate to seek medical advice if you suspect food poisoning—that means of *any* kind, not just dairy related.

What about fish? In terms of your health and that of the environment, the best fish you can buy are wild-caught, cold-water species. These fish (namely salmon, herring, anchovies, black cod, halibut) contain the largest supply of beneficial fats. Farm-raised fish tend to have less ideal fat ratios and can wreak havoc on the natural environment. If you're concerned about mercury or other toxins, try to eat lower on the oceanic food chain. There is also a lot in the news about radiation from Fukushima being found in Pacific Ocean life. Again, this is an area you will have to make decisions about after doing your own research. Don't just read what you find online—talk to a fisherman or two, and read some refereed research.

Surprisingly, I can get Michigan-farmed shrimp! Most shrimp comes from the Gulf of Mexico—which has suffered several ecological disasters recently and is the dumping ground for tons of fertilizer from the Mississippi River—or from Asia, where the farming practices can be highly questionable, so Michigan-farmed shrimp comes out scoring pretty high on the SOLE food meter! Do some research—you might be surprised what you learn.

For more reading on the subject of the environmental impact of eating fish, see Paul Greenberg's *Four Fish*. To learn about the most sustainable types of seafood available, visit the Monterey Bay Aquarium's *Seafood Watch* website (<http://montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch.aspx>). They even have a wallet card and a smartphone app for that.

But what about eating out? Of course, when we are invited to someone's home, we gratefully eat what we're served; however, when we eat at restaurants, we either patronize establishments that source from local small farms with proven standards of animal husbandry, or we choose options that don't involve animal products.

But it's all so expensive!

There's a quote going around Facebook that says something like this: "If you think organic food is expensive, you should try paying for cancer!" Somewhere along the line, Americans became convinced that food should be cheap. It's interesting that as a culture, we want the best house, the flashiest car, the highest fashion, the newest technology—and we're willing to go deeply into debt for these things—but we cringe at spending money on something as important as food. We are delighted when we can coupon ourselves into (perceived) savings only to discover that the highly processed and fast foods these coupons afford us wreak havoc on our health. Perhaps it's time to reconsider the true cost of cheap food: what has it cost our health, our environment, and our economy? I think about spending money on quality food as an investment in the future—the planet's and ours.

There are numerous books on the market that deal with this subject in much greater depth than I am equipped to: Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Oran Hesterman's *Fair Food*, Nina Planck's *Real Food*, Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*, and Samuel Fromartz's *Organic, Inc.* immediately come to mind if you're looking for recommendations. My strong advice on the subject is this: do your research, read both sides of the issues, and draw your own conclusions. I personally choose to buy organic, sustainably-raised food whenever I can, and the advice that follows is based on that choice, but the rest of this *Flip Your Kitchen* project is applicable no matter what your conclusion is. Although I strongly believe the greatest benefit comes from a SOLE food lifestyle, you can still flip your kitchen and see measurable results whether you buy organic/sustainable or not.

Pledging to buy only whole, unprocessed foods can be a huge commitment, even more so if you're taking the next step and demanding organic and pastured foods. And it's not just the financial aspect: whole foods do require a certain amount of processing—by you!—and that involves time and a certain amount of skill. I hope that the recipes in this book will help you see how easy that part is, so for now, back to the question of cost.

The (perceived) high cost of organic food can be off-putting to many; however, there are studies that show that at least at farmers' markets, organic produce can be comparable in price to that of conventionally grown fruits and vegetables at the grocery store. If you are on a very tight budget, visit the Environmental Working Group's website (<http://ewg.org/foodnews/>

[summary.php](#)), where they keep a list of "The Dirty Dozen" (produce most contaminated by pesticides) and "The Clean Fifteen" (produce on which you can probably compromise and buy the conventional variety).

Shopping at the farmers' market has the advantage of what Michael Pollan calls "shaking the hand that feeds you." Become a regular at the market, chat with farmers, and ask them questions. If they aren't too busy, they love to share their wisdom and recipes with you. Most of them will answer you honestly when you ask about their farming methods, and you will often find that many of them are basically organic farmers, but they just can't afford the incredibly steep fees involved in being certified as such or they have lost faith in what organic certification actually stands for. These farmers tend to practice a form of agriculture they call "ecological," which tends to be even more sustainable and environmentally sound than "organic" and takes into consideration an entire food ecosystem, from inputs such as soil, seeds, and water to workers and consumers and everything/everyone in between.

A final consideration: have you ever thought about the people who bring you "cheap" food? Behind most of the cheap food in America is a host of woefully underpaid workers with no benefits whatsoever—growers, pickers (many of them migrants), drivers, processors, cooks, and servers. If you want to learn more about this human rights issue, I recommend the documentary *The Harvest/La Cosecha* as well as the books *The American Way of Eating* by Tracie McMillan and *Behind the Kitchen Door* by Saru Jayaraman. Many of the workers they describe cannot afford to purchase healthful, fresh food for themselves and their families, and the resulting cost to our society continues to increase in the areas of health care, food assistance, and many others.

How not to be silently complicit? Again, buying your meat and produce directly from a local grower you know and trust is a start. Money spent in a locally owned small business tends to stay in the local economy in the form of wages for local workers, who in turn shop locally as well, not just for food but for other necessities. For what used to be considered luxury goods such as sugar, coffee, and chocolate, which tend to come from developing countries where the labor force often lives under horrible conditions, seek out items labeled "certified fair trade." As with organics, fair trade can be "spendy"...which may actually make you reduce the number and amount of imported items you purchase.



A word here about “superfoods” such as açai berries and quinoa. Forget for a moment that it’s a bit crazy to think that if a little of something is good for us, we should overdose on it. I have an immediate distrust of these foods, and here is why: most of them come from third-world countries, where growers produce the latest “it” food for those of us privileged enough to live in first world countries, and the outcome is that many native species are removed from the crop rotation. What results is the same monoculture problem that is overwhelming our own country (another topic way beyond the scope of this book). Additionally, these growers often end up not being paid a living wage for their crops—do you really want to be responsible for that? Most of the benefits of these superfoods can be met by a well-informed SOLE food diet. Do I eat quinoa? Yes, but not daily, and I try to find fair-trade-labeled brands. And I hear it’s now being raised in Colorado!

Strategies for making high-quality food purchases more affordable

Produce is often less expensive at farmers’ markets, and these are some of the few places in America where you can occasionally still haggle! To make your dollar stretch even further, shop at the end of the market day: most farmers are willing to let things go at a reduced price then since it may be a bit wilted and they won’t have to haul it back home. If you have freezer space, think about buying a flat or case of a particularly favorite fruit or vegetable. Some farmers will give discounts for buying in bulk during the peak of the season since you’re taking highly perishable produce off their hands. That said, *please be fair*: small and mid-sized farmers need to feed their families, too. Visit their farms, see the amount of time, labor, and love they put into your food, and you’ll come to appreciate their prices as fair.

Community-supported agriculture (CSA) is growing all over the country. The basic principle is that you buy a share in a farm, paying an agreed-upon amount up front. The farmer then has money to invest in seeds and plants and has an idea of how much s/he will need to produce and how many people s/he’s feeding. When the harvesting starts, you are entitled to a share of the produce, divided among all the members. There are some farmers starting to run meat CSAs and fishermen who run fish CSAs as well. The techniques for flipping your kitchen are perfectly suited for this type of shopping since you now have to cook based on what you got in the box that week!

A word of caution: buying a share in a CSA does not come risk-free. You’ve just purchased a share in a farm. If a crop fails that year due to drought, flood, disease, or pests, your share of it will be greatly reduced, but take heart: since most CSAs grow a large variety of crops, you’ll probably still get a fair amount of food. Of course, the reverse is also true: a huge harvest means you get more than you thought you paid for, so get ready to freeze some produce for use during the winter months.

Another stretch-your-dollar-even-further tip: if you are not a CSA member but you know farmers who operate CSA pickups at farmers’ markets, check in with them at the end of the day. Very often, unclaimed shares are forfeit, so the farmer will either sell them at a greatly reduced price or even give them away since they are already paid for. Again, try to be fair: if you don’t need a discount, don’t ask for one.

If you have significant freezer space, try buying your meat in bulk from a local producer. At first glance, it seems costly because as with a CSA, you often pay a deposit, then a large amount when you pick up the meat, but then you’re done with shopping for meat for the year: when you need something, you go to the freezer instead of the grocery store. The meat processors your local farmer works with are usually small local businesses, too, and they are more than happy to explain the cutting order (what cuts you can get from your animal) in easily understandable terms. While certain familiar cuts will be available, you’ll also learn about some you may never have heard of. This is another great way to flip your kitchen: you’ll learn to cook *all* the parts of the animal and expand your repertoire beyond ground meat and steaks and chops. Hey—maybe you should consider going on *Iron Chef* after all?

Buying clubs are popping up all over the country as well. The idea behind a buying club is that a group of buyers comes together to place a single order large enough to qualify for a reduced price (sometimes as low as wholesale) and to justify the shipping logistics. This sort of purchasing is great for buying something that is not locally produced while still supporting smaller producers. For example, I purchase olive oil from California and ocean fish from Washington State through buying clubs. The drawback to a buying club is that someone has to deal with the logistics of placing the order, arranging for its delivery, and distributing it to the buyers according to what they ordered. Some producers are willing to take on the payment logistics through a website; other clubs have someone designated to collect



the payments from all the members and submit them to the producer. Some operate on a volunteer basis; others pay the manager for the work.

If you are looking for ways in which to support your local farmers and producers and possibly lower your food cost while getting superior-quality food, check out Local Harvest (<http://localharvest.org>), where you can find listings of a wide variety of direct-from-the-farm possibilities by searching your ZIP code.

Want to know what's in my pantry? Check out Appendix A.

LEARN A FEW BASIC RECIPES

Recipes are somewhat like formulas: once you learn the underlying principle of a particular recipe, you can apply it over and over using similar ingredients.

Perhaps the best example of this is the first recipe I teach my clients: a classic vinaigrette = 1 part acid + 3 parts oil. Once you know this formula, substitute any acid (vinegar, citrus juice, *etc.*) and any oil (olive, walnut, sesame, *etc.*) in the same proportion (1T:3T or 1c:3c) and with a few adjustments and seasonings to suit your personal taste, you have a vinaigrette.

Formulas such as this one appear over and over once you start looking for them in recipes! Once you've learned a few basics, you will suddenly be freed from recipes for certain items, and you'll be well on your way to flipping your kitchen. The *Flip Your Kitchen* recipes serve two purposes: first, taken all together, they form a cooking curriculum—in them, you'll learn the basic skills and techniques necessary to begin cooking from scratch on a regular basis; second, many serve as a basic formula from which myriad variations flow—once you have a knowledge of how and why the recipe works, you can make substitutions based on what diet you follow (if any), and what you have in your pantry and/or what's in season. Below is a brief explanation of the sections you'll find in most recipes.

Notes

A brief comment or story about the recipe, often includes some tips about making it.

Makes/Serves

Most of the recipes serve four but can easily be scaled up or down—if one is particularly easy or difficult to adjust, I'll note that here.

Ingredients

Here I will list the ingredients in the order they are used. Some ingredients require pre-preparation (for example, 1 small onion, chopped): in this case, you should go ahead and do the pre-preparation and keep the ingredient handy in a separate bowl. Some ingredients will be processed in the *Method* section and don't include any pre-preparation: at a minimum, I do assume that you have cleaned them properly.

Method

Here is where the ingredients are combined and cooked. I try to keep things simple and use as few pots as possible since nothing makes me crazier than a recipe that uses more pots, utensils, energy, and other natural resources than necessary. That said, if the directions call for using separate pots for separate steps, there is a reason that they do so, and until you have made a recipe the way it is written and know how and why it is so, I encourage you not to combine or skip steps.

Variations + Flips

In this section, I will give a few ideas for variations based on what might be available in a given season or to make recipes acceptable to those with dietary restrictions. Once you have mastered the basic recipe, try out your own variations—that is the essence of flipping your kitchen!

At my house, we are mostly omnivores, but I do try to give variations that suit vegetarians, vegans, those eliminating gluten, *etc.* Please note: because I am a firm believer in eating whole, unprocessed foods, I don't think that using meat analogs ("fake meat" products) is a good idea. It's fine to combine whole grains, legumes, *etc.* in your own kitchen and call it a "burger," but fake bacon, chicken nuggets, sausage, meat crumbles, *etc.* can be some of the worst offenders on the highly processed food scale. There are plenty of delicious vegetarian dishes that can satisfy both vegetarians and omnivores—if you have tried to retrain your palate to eat vegetarian but still feel compelled to eat "fake meat," it may be that your body is telling you to shift your food choices to include more protein, whether of the animal or vegetable variety.

We are lucky to be allergy-free in our house, but if you suffer from food allergies or sensitivities, please don't give up on me: if you don't already know the many adjustments that can be made to recipes without changing their basic integrity, you will find many of them here. And of course, I invite your experimentation!



Do ahead

Remember the last two principles of flipping your kitchen that I introduced—those of batch cooking when you know you have time and always cooking for more than one meal? This is where you'll learn a lot of these tips and tricks, and this will make you shine at cooking from scratch on a regular basis. Many of the recipes in this book use ingredients and make dishes that can be prepared in advance. And don't forget to always prepare a few extra ingredients for use later in the week....

Learning more

In this section, I'll offer "small bites" of the curriculum I studied in culinary school, such as when a recipe can be reduced to a simple formula. Learning the how and the why of cooking is not something that most recipes encourage, but when you learn how and why a recipe works, you then acquire useful information for coming up with your own successful variations—another important principle in flipping your kitchen. Additionally, when you know the how and the why, you are much more likely to know how to fix a recipe that has not worked properly for you in the past.

Substitutions

I encourage you to try substitutions after you've made a recipe at least once as written. Be bold and experiment, and keep track of your successes and failures. Try to figure out why a recipe turned out the way it did when you made a particular substitution. And feel free to email me at liza@simply-healthcoaching.com with any questions.

There is one substitution that comes up so frequently in cooking that I don't list all your options every time: in most recipes where butter is used, you can substitute ghee, which is clarified butter and acts like butter in that it is solid at room temperature but liquid when melted. You may want to experiment with ghee if you have problems with dairy because as pure butterfat, it no longer includes milk solids, which contain the lactose and casein that cause some people to have issues. Another advantage of ghee is that, unlike butter, it has a very high smoke point, so it's safe to use at high temperatures. Ghee is available in a lot of grocery stores now, and you can easily make your own by melting a pound of (preferably pastured or organic) butter in a heavy saucepan over the lowest temperature setting on your stove. At this point, the milk solids will float to the top and the water will sink to the bottom. As you let the butter "percolate" on the

stove, the water will gradually evaporate, and the solids on top will get a little drier. In about 1½-2 hours, the solids will just start to turn brown, which is your clue that the ghee is done. Strain it through cheesecloth or a paper towel into a clean jar. It will keep at room temperature (up to about 80°F) for up to 2 weeks and in the refrigerator for much longer.

If you are vegan, coconut oil is a good (but not perfect) substitute for butter. You may have to adjust the amount you use in baking, which will require some experimentation on your part. If you dislike the taste of coconut, you can find some brands that don't have the flavor or scent of it. One I have found is BHWC (<http://be-healthy-with-coconuts.com>). Like ghee, coconut oil works well at high temperatures—we use it for stir-frying.

Olive oil can be used in place of butter for cooking, but it should not be used at high temperatures—it's okay up to about 375°F. I don't recommend vegetable or canola oil at all.

Abbreviations used in the recipes

pinch = less than ¼ tsp	c = cup (= 8 oz of liquid)
tsp = teaspoon	qt = quart (= 32 oz)
T = tablespoon (= 3 tsp)	pt = pint (=16 oz)
oz = ounce	gal = gallon
lb = pound (= 16 oz)	doz = dozen

Other notes on the text of recipes

Boldface type indicates a recipe found in this book.

Words found in Appendix C | Glossary are in ***bold italic type*** the first time they appear in the recipe.

PLAN YOUR WEEKLY MENU

Once you have a pantry, fridge, and freezer that are stocked with whole foods and you know a few basic recipes, planning out a week's worth of meals becomes much simpler. If you want to make it even easier, do what my friends Peggy and Megan from Curry Girls Kitchen do, and designate



a theme for each night of the week: you could decide that Monday is Mexican night, Tuesday is Italian night, Wednesday is soup and salad night, etc. You don't have to make the same Mexican dish every Monday, the same pasta every Tuesday, but having this system in mind helps you get organized and is often particularly helpful for families with children, where the perpetual question—always asked when the parent is most frantic—is, “What’s for dinner?”

Don't forget to put in one night a week for cleaning out leftovers—good to do on the night before you go shopping! Don't like leftovers? You'd be amazed how many leftovers can be repurposed for another meal—for example, used as pizza toppings or tossed with pasta.... I think this might well be where BBQ Chicken Pizza came from, and in the years BC (before children), my husband and I put some pretty odd things on pizza crusts.

As you start to plan ahead, keep a few simple tips and tricks in mind. For each category below, make more than you need, serve half the first night and store half for later—these become what I call “intentional leftovers” and are a real superpower in your cook-from-scratch toolkit.

- **Leftover vegetables**

Cauliflower and broccoli: toss with pitted Kalamata olives, diced tomatoes, feta, and vinaigrette.

Green beans: toss with diced roasted bell peppers, vinaigrette.

Use for filling omelets and mixing into frittatas.

Mix into chopped salads, pasta or grain salads, pilafs or fritters.

Make into a gratin.

Add to soups.

Add to hash.

- **Leftover starches**

Add to soups.

Grains: combine with diced vegetables (cooked or raw) and vinaigrette or make into croquettes or fritters.

Potatoes: make into potato salad by combining with vinaigrette while still warm; when ready to serve, add diced vegetables (cooked or raw).

Potatoes: Chop boiled, roasted or baked potatoes coarsely, make into hash browns.

Pasta: make into pasta salad by rinsing the remaining half in cold water, then tossing with a bit of olive oil; when ready to serve, add diced vegetables (cooked or raw) and vinaigrette.

- **Leftover proteins**

Slice for sandwiches or use on a green salad.

Make into protein salad: tuna, salmon, chicken, turkey, ham, eggs.

Slice thinly and add to noodle dishes.

Mix into pasta salads, grain salads, chopped salads.

- **Breakfast/baked goods:** If you like to bake and/or make hot breakfast on the weekends, many of these items freeze beautifully and can be thawed overnight in the refrigerator, then reheated quickly in the morning: banana and zucchini and pumpkin breads, muffins, scones, waffles, pancakes.

A quick note on baking: in the two years since I started writing this book, we have become, in part, a gluten and dairy free household. While I have found a lot of work-arounds for *cooking* without gluten, I am not a fan of most gluten free *baked* products because they most often involve a large amount of highly processed ingredients that I don't consider whole foods: starches, gums, etc. Personally, I have not found it hard to live without these items, and that allows me to stick to my principle of cooking and eating whole, unprocessed foods.

If you suffer from celiac disease or gluten sensitivity and simply must have pancakes, waffles, muffins, breads, etc., I urge you to seek out a book on gluten free baking that you like. Two websites I highly recommend are <http://greenkitchenstories.com> and <http://elanaspantry.com>.



ALWAYS COOK FOR MORE THAN 1 MEAL

The first step to planning a week's worth of meals is to use a grid, which might look like this when filled in:

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
SATURDAY	Scrambled egg or tofu with vegetables, muffin	English muffin/flatbread “pizzas” with Marinara , cheese, (any leftovers?)	Roast chicken with sautéed greens and roasted potatoes
SUNDAY	Waffles with sliced berries and chopped almonds, maple syrup, cinnamon	Chicken salad wrap with lettuce, shredded carrots	Grilled salmon and vegetable kebabs on brown rice , spinach salad
MONDAY	Brown rice cereal with fruit, chopped walnuts, maple syrup, cinnamon + cardamom	Salad in a Jar with roast chicken	Pasta with Marinara Sauce , steamed broccoli
TUESDAY	Breakfast burrito with scrambled egg or mashed beans , sautéed greens , onions, broccoli , peppers, potatoes, salsa	Pasta salad with leftover salmon and grilled vegetables from kebabs	Fried rice with vegetables and tofu, stir-fried spinach
WEDNESDAY	Muffin with nut butter, fruit salad	Leftover fried rice lettuce wraps	Chicken + pasta soup with vegetables , green salad, bread
THURSDAY	Egg braised in Marinara Sauce with spinach or greens , toast	Salad in a Jar	Vegetable frittata with sautéed green beans , fruit salad
FRIDAY	Breakfast in a Jar	Frittata (great in a sandwich!), green bean salad	Bean burritos or tacos with lettuce, tomato, olives, avocado or guacamole, onions, salsa , sour cream



Why are some of the items bolded? These are the elements that are used more than once during the week. In the above menu plan, the following “intentional leftovers” are upcycled:

- roast chicken
- grilled salmon
- beans
- frittata
- Marinara Sauce
- grilled vegetables
- broccoli
- greens
- brown rice
- pasta
- green beans
- salsa

Note that the following items can be cooked ahead of time and refrigerated or, if made in large batches, frozen:

- waffles
- muffins
- beans
- chicken stock
- Marinara Sauce

You can create intentional leftovers by making extra of the following items on the nights you make the first dish that uses them:

- Saturday**
 - roast chicken (cook 2-3 if you have a large family)
 - sautéed greens
 - roasted potatoes
- Sunday**
 - salmon and vegetable kebabs
 - brown rice
- Monday**
 - pasta
 - steamed broccoli
- Thursday**
 - frittata
 - green beans

Prepare these ingredients ahead of time (even on the weekend):

- dice/chop vegetables that will be used in more than one dish: diced onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, broccoli, peppers, and store in tightly covered containers in fridge
- wash and dry lettuce, mixed greens, spinach, and greens, and store each in a plastic bag with a paper towel in it
- blanch and shock vegetables for sautéing later: greens, broccoli, green beans, and store in fridge

FLIP IT

Planning a weekly menu: Templates

On my website <http://is.gd/menuplanning>, you will find templates you can print out to create your weekly meal plan, a worksheet that can help you strategize its execution, and a grocery list to fill in. After a few weeks, you’ll probably be able to complete the menu grid without doing the worksheet, and eventually, even the grid will become superfluous.

You’re less likely to buy on impulse if you shop from a list. I’ve never given up keeping one, but I’ve recently discovered the beauty of keeping a grocery list with a smartphone app—I’m currently using one called AnyList (<http://anylist.com>). Items you buy regularly can be added if you need to buy them that week and crossed off as you put them in your cart. Best of all, you can make your list according to the layout of the store where you normally shop; that way, all produce is in one part of the list, all dairy items in another, etc. I guarantee your shopping will become super efficient. That is, of course, once you set up the list in the app!

“But I’m not that organized!”

I completely understand that even beginning to think this way does not come easily to some people. It seems like a Herculean task, this flipping your kitchen business, particularly if you don’t really know how to cook. Take heart—you don’t have to do it all at once. Think in terms of baby steps.

If it seems totally overwhelming, start with one small step this week—maybe organize your Tupperware drawer? Commit to getting rid of the highly processed convenience foods in the pantry? Chop a bunch of vegetables to use during the week? Make one large batch of something you can use all week, such as Marinara Sauce? Make one simple recipe from this book?

Whatever you commit to, do it again next week and add one more action item, and the following week add another, and then another. Pretty soon, you’ll have flipped your kitchen entirely, and you will be on your way to cooking 21 (yes, 21!) meals completely from scratch using ingredients that are good for your health, good for the environment, and good for the economy—both your domestic one and the larger one outside your door—and your community.

Had enough? Ready to start cooking?

You now know the basics of the Flip Your Kitchen™ system, and it’s time to get into the kitchen!

What? You’re still here?

If you really feel overwhelmed or want even more detail (I’ll admit it, I’m an education junkie—why do you think it’s taken so long for me to write this book?), check out the Flip Your Kitchen™ online course at <http://simply-healthcoaching.com/shop>: this will take you through a weekly baby step plan, covers much of the cookbook, and goes into even more detail on topics such as food and kitchen safety, knife skills and safety, a grocery store tour, a farmers’ market tour, and label reading. Now go!

