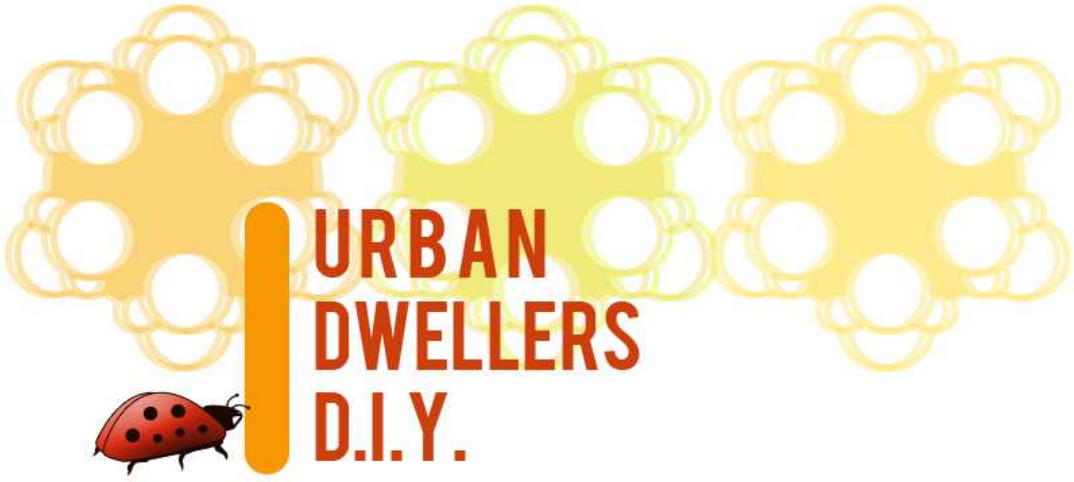

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR RITUALS

First Draft:

More great tips are on their way...

Contributors: hellaD, Kombucha Mamma and Butterpoweredbike

Please let us know if you would like to contribute.

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Mission:

I like to think of the simple, practical things we can do to get chemicals out of our lives as gateways. They are just our first little steps to Heaven, Shamballa, the Green World* or whatever you prefer to call it. Creating rituals of respect around basic daily activities such as cleaning and eating are vital to more complete connection and to see through disinformation. If you would like to contribute to this manual please contact hellad@helladelicious.com, we need some crafting tutorials, solar or other energy saving techniques (small-scale algae biodiesel anyone?), garden and composting etc....

*See Harvest McCampbell's great book Food Security and Sustainability for the Times Ahead.

Cradle to Cradle Dishwashing

This method of dish-washing saves energy by minimizing the amount of hot water running right down the sink and away, which can be a fair amount. It also saves water via the same simple action of plugging the sink -- two birds with one stone, always good.

The added use of soap-nut detergent makes it even more efficient by being biodegradable and can be used to water your plants with. Washing dishes this way makes the daily ritual of cleaning your plate sacred by actively respecting Water and Earth.

Soapnut Detergent:

- 100g (20) soapnuts
- 3 quarts (litres) water

Method:

Bring the water to a boil. Turn down the heat to a low simmer for at least 30 minutes. Allow the liquid to cool, then strain out the soapnuts.

Funnel the liquid into an old detergent bottle. This product is all natural so keep it in the fridge when the temperature is warm -- it doesn't have as long a shelf life as commercial products and is completely biodegradable.

This liquid can also be used as a vegetable and fruit wash, all-purpose cleanser (great on floors), laundry detergent, shampoo or to get aphids off a favorite plant.

Soapnuts are anti-bacterial and anti-fungal, efficient cleaners but they don't suds up to the degree we are accustomed to these days, but have no fear. Your dishes are as clean as can be.

Quickly rinse dishes with a minimum amount of cold water. Clean out your sink and put in the plug.

Start to fill the sink with hot water. Add about 1-2 Tablespoons of soapnut detergent.

The water will suds up, but the suds quickly subside. Don't worry the soapnut detergent is still doing it's job.

Wash dishes and place in dish drainer to dry.

It would be easier to use a plastic tub at this point, but I don't have one the right size for the job, so I just ladle out as much of the used dishwater as I can into a bowl.

Water your most needy houseplant.

Homemade Shampoo and Conditioner

When my gut flora got damaged and depleted one of the things I developed was a chemical sensitivity. I also hate how much money I have to spend for shampoo and conditioner that doesn't have a zillion names I can't pronounce in the list of ingredients. As it turns out you can use baking soda and vinegar very successfully as a shampoo and conditioner.

It takes about two weeks to a month for your scalp and hair to build up their natural oils and you may have a few days of dull annoying hair at first, but on the whole this method works surprisingly well.

Baking Soda Shampoo: There are various ways to do this. I use about 2-3 Tablespoons of baking soda mixed with just enough water to make a thin paste and and massage this into my roots and scalp. Don't get too crazy when massaging it into your hair, just do it lightly into the scalp, then rinse and use vinegar in the same manner as a conditioner. If you start tangling your hair up too much while massaging it you will have more trouble combing it later. Leave this in for a couple minutes as you wash and then rinse out as well as you can.

When I first started using this method I used an egg, a couple teaspoons of apple cider vinegar and about a teaspoon of baking soda. This worked quite well, but as it turns out, the egg isn't really necessary. My hair is quite long and easily tangles but this combination works surprisingly well. It doesn't suds up and the vinegar smells quite strongly when it is on your head. I have come up with a concoction that I quite like. I have read in various places that chamomile is quite good for blonde hair and rosemary for dark hair. Rosemary is also good to massage into the scalp as it encourages the circulation, is good for hair folicles and will stimulate hair growth.

Chamomile Vinegar Conditioner: I like to infuse my apple cider vinegar with chamomile for about two weeks before using it. Then when I strain it, I add a drop of rosemary oil and rosewater. I add a bit of water to the mixture. About ¼ c of water for every cup of vinegar. I put about 1/8 c of this into a small shallow jar and add a bit of water when in the shower. Pour this mixture into your scalp around the back of your neck and around the temples. Pour slowly onto hair around forehead. If you have long hair pile the hair up as much as possible and pour any remaining vinegar over it and let it sit for about 30 seconds or more. Rinse it out as well as possible and proceed as usual. You can also leave it in--I find it works just as well either way. Experiment and see what works best for you.

Before:

After:

Homemade Tooth Powder

I recently discovered it is possible to remineralise your teeth. In reading about it I came across some information that indicated glycerin might actually *damage* tooth enamel. Most of the herbal toothpastes we have been using over the past couple years have glycerin in them. Although the jury is still out about the glycerin, I have started making my own tooth powder. I have been using it for a few months and things are going pretty well. I have also gotten in the habit of carrying a little case of fennel seeds with me wherever I go in case of emergencies.

Sage and Soda Tooth Powder

- 4 T sage (dry or fresh, if you use fresh you can use less)
- 1 t ground cloves
- 1/2 c sea salt (I actually use Himalayan crystal salt)
- 4 T baking soda

Method:
Grind all the ingredients together in a spice grinder. Put into a container and use a pinch or two on your wet toothbrush when brushing your teeth. Sage and cloves are both very good for your teeth, the salt gives a little texture to the mix, and the baking soda is a great cleaner.

This mixture is great for healing gum disease problems as well. Please feel free to experiment with this recipe and add in mint or other flavors if that is what you like. It takes a little getting used to as it doesn't foam up like conventional toothpaste, but at least you don't have to worry about fluoride and those other chemicals they like to put in there and it is much cheaper!

Oil Pulling (Mouthwash)

It seems that Oil Pulling is also used in Ayurvedic healing which goes back at least 5,000 years. In the Ayurvedic tradition they use cold pressed sesame oil. It is supposed to be helpful for removing heavy metals from the body. People have used it for bad breath, nasal congestion, eczema and various other issues. The following is from the book Moon Time by Johanna Paungger.

An old and effective method for the detoxification and strengthening of the whole body and at the same time decontaminating the teeth. Each step of the method is important and should be adhered to closely in order to achieve the desired effect. This is how it works:

- In the morning on an empty stomach and before you brush your teeth, take a soup-spoon of pure cold-pressed sunflower oil. We know that in the temperate latitudes of the northern hemisphere, from Russia (the land of origin of the method) to North America only sunflower oil achieves this beneficial effect. It is only in this plant that those powers are stored that can help this method to work successfully. Whether in other regions of the world there are other local oils that are more suitable, we do not know; but it is certainly worth a try.
- *Slurp* the oil, loud and vulgarly, like an old knight in the middle ages. This slurping fulfils an important function: it helps the entire body and all its internal organs to receive exact information, via the nerves of the taste buds and the brain, concerning what has just entered the body. The better tongue, nose and gums are informed, the better the body is able to tune itself. When the body receives the information 'sunflower oil' it knows that a substance has entered it on to which it can 'load' everything that is undesirable, particularly everything that has negative radiations.
- The important thing now is to keep the oil in the mouth *without swallowing any*! Suck the oil through the teeth and cavities of the mouth, let it roll and slide, push it through the gaps between your teeth, slowly, casually almost, so as not to arouse too strong a flow of saliva. Do that for about 15 minutes. (If you feel an irresistible urge to swallow before the time is up, make very sure you spit the oil out first.)
- After a quarter of an hour spit the oil into a wash basin and rinse both your mouth and the basin thoroughly. The oil has been transformed into a poison-laden substance: where it falls no grass will grow. Do not be surprised at the color of the oil: it has now turned white.
- The most favorable time for such a cure: when the moon is waning and for a period of at least 8, preferably 14 days. p148-9

It is a very strange method of detoxification but it also is said to clean your teeth better than commercial teeth whitening. Many traditions agree that methods of detoxification work much more powerfully when the moon is waning, and that building up the body is best done when the moon is waxing, it is also quite nice to be in a routine that follows the waxing and waning of the moon.

Transmogrify Your Water

Recently we watched the documentary Blue Gold: World Water Wars, which everyone must see. Water must remain a basic right. Affordable clean water is a common property of all humanity, animals and plants. Recently the information about bisphenol A and how it is leaching into water from the plastic bottles that have become all the rage has put the focus back on public water and the cleanliness of that supply. Around the world countries are taking fluoride out of their public water and it has also been found that high levels of pharmaceuticals — statins, birth control, antibiotics, prozac — you name it are in our drinking water.

I have yet to hear of a filtration unit that is guaranteed to remove drugs and hormones from drinking water. This is a pretty depressing situation all in all.

Years ago I heard of Masaru Emoto the Japanese researcher, who wrote the book Love Yourself: The Message from Water.. Mr. Emoto takes water from various sources, freezes it, and then magnifies and photographs the crystals. He has found that thoughts will change the structure of the crystals and by taping words such as 'love' and 'thank you' to a bottle of water and leaving it overnight will bring more cohesion to the crystal that forms in the morning. Water is the most malleable substance and will take on any physical shape that it is placed in, it is also receptive to thoughts and vibrations. The movie What the Bleep Do We Know is a very interesting look into how our thoughts and energies effect each other as well as ourselves and is a good example of how we can use this to our advantage.

I have taken this information to heart and keep water overnight in bottles I have labelled with "THANK YOU" and "LOVE" before drinking it. Putting fresh mint or other herbs into water overnight before drinking it will also help to remove chlorine and some of the other chemicals that might be in the water. I use coriander because I think a lot of metal from my pipes is leaching into the water. If you have copper or lead pipes it would be a good idea to get a water filter, but if you can't afford one, there is no harm but great benefit in performing these other rituals to bless and heal your water before drinking or watering your plants with it.

Another simple but effective treatment for small amounts of water is to put it in a clear bottle in the sunlight for about 6 hours, this will kill many pathogens and is used in remote areas around the world. It is called Solar Water Disinfection (SODIS). The radiation from the UV-A waves and heat are what remove the unwanted micro-organisms from the water.

KombuchaKamp
TRUST YOUR GUT

presents

DIY Kombucha!

Kombucha has been made for thousands of years by people all over the world because it is easy to prepare and offers immediate and long term benefits to the regular drinker. The ingredients are inexpensive and the process is simple and sustainable, however care should be taken anytime food is prepared at home. Follow these directions to brewing success.

This is the standard recipe for 1 gallon.
Scale up or down depending on the size of your vessel.

Supplies:

- ☐ 1 Cup Organic Sugar – white sugar is fine but use only "cane sugar" to avoid GMOs
- ☐ 4-6 Bags Tea – loose leaf, 1 bag of tea = 1 tsp
- ☐ Starter Culture – SCOBY
- ☐ 1 Cup Starter Liquid – retain from top of previous batch or substitute distilled vinegar
- ☐ Purified Water – if not available, evaporate the chlorine out of water by leaving it out for 24 hours
- ☐ Tea Kettle – or pot to boil the water
- ☐ Brewing Vessel – glass, stainless steel or oak – food grade plastic is an option but not recommended
- ☐ Cloth Cover – no cheesecloth! The weave is too loose and will allow fruit flies in your brew
- ☐ Rubber Band
- ☐ Thermometer (optional)
- ☐ Funnel (not needed until bottling stage)

First Task: Make the Sweet Tea Solution

This feeds the Kombucha culture and transforms into delicious Kombucha.

1. Boil 4 cups of water.
2. Add hot water & tea bags to brewing vessel.
3. Steep 5-10 minutes.
4. Remove tea bags. Squeeze out remaining tea juice.
5. Add sugar and stir to dissolve.

6. Fill vessel ¾ full with purified cold water – this will bring down the temperature of the tea.
7. If the mixture is now below body temperature, proceed. Use a finger if no thermometer is available. If it's still too warm, wait until it cools before moving to the next step. This protects the health of the bacteria and yeast.

Second Task: Add the Kombucha Culture

Cure hands with filtered water or distilled vinegar before touching SCOBY.

1. Add SCOBY. Then add starter liquid right after the SCOBY to protect the brew.
2. Cover with cotton cloth, secure with rubber band. Paper towels or coffee filters may also be used.
3. Say a prayer, send good vibes, commune with your culture (optional but recommended).
4. Set in a warm, airy location out of direct sunlight & away from aromatic or greasy food preparation.

Third Task: Kombucha Brew Begins - Do Nothing

1. Do not disturb for 7 days.
2. Don't do it.
3. Just wait.
4. It will be hard.

Fourth Task: Taste & Perfect the Kombucha Brew

1. After 7 days, gently insert a straw beneath the SCOBY and take a sip. Too tart? Reduce your brewing cycle next time. Too sweet? Taste each day until it reaches optimum flavor.
2. Properly brewed Kombucha has a slightly sharp (acidic) apple cider, not sweet taste.
3. Brewing cycles normally range between 7 days & 2 weeks, varying greatly by temperature.
4. A couple of cycles may be required to discover the exact taste and timing of the brew. Be patient.

Fifth Task: Bottling & Flavoring Time

1. With clean hands, remove both cultures (the new baby culture that formed and the original mother Kombucha culture) and place in a clean bowl.
2. Ladle or pour 2 cups of liquid from the top of the brew over the cultures. This will serve as starter liquid for the next batch.
3. Cover cultures with the cotton cloth and set aside for the next brew, preferably after bottling.

4. Find clean, suitable bottles with tight fitting lids. Recycled bottles are fine, but avoid metal lids that may corrode. Flip tops are nice.
5. If flavoring the Kombucha, place fruit/juice /flowers/whatever(!) directly into the bottles. A little goes a long way. Experiment for fun.
6. Place bottles in the sink.

7. Insert a funnel and ladle or pour the Kombucha.
8. Fill to the top for increased carbonation. Repeat for the other bottles, but don't drink the brown yeast dregs at the bottom. Dump last bit down the drain.
9. You may choose to strain the brew of culture or yeast bits, though it is not necessary.

10. Screw the lids on and set aside 1-3 days, burping the bottles to release carbonation and prevent explosions.
11. Move bottles to the fridge as they reach the desired carbonation/flavor. This stops the secondary fermentation occurring due to sugar in flavorings.

* ginger, strawberry & blueberry provide great flavor & fizz but also fast CO_2 build up. Use caution! Bottles can overflow when opened or even explode during secondary fermentation if not tended. Store in a box, empty cupboard or cooler to minimize mess & danger.

Safety Tips

DO's	DON'T's
DO – Sanitize the brewing location & supplies prior to use.	**DON'T – Use chlorine. It kills bacteria & we ♥ the bacteria in our SCOBYs!**
DO – Rinse hands with filtered water or vinegar before handling the SCOBY.	**DON'T – Use soap. See above.**
DO – Select glass, stainless steel or oak as a brewing vessel.	**DON'T – Select plastic, crystal or leaded ceramic as a brewing vessel.**
DO – Brew with filtered water.	**DON'T – Brew with tap water.**
DO – Brew with organic, fair trade sugar & tea whenever possible.	**DON'T – Brew with stevia, raw honey or herbal teas.**
DO – Cover with a cotton cloth cover or coffee filter w/rubber band.	**DON'T – Cover w/cheesecloth. The weave is too loose and will allow fruit flies to get in.**
DO – Select a shaded, warm location w/good airflow.	**DON'T – Store in direct sunlight, in a closed cupboard or in a cool location.**
DO – Give the culture 7 days to ferment and develop.	**DON'T – Disturb the vessel. Too much movement causes the culture to not form properly.**
DO – Pull new starter liquid from the top of the previous batch.	**DON'T – Pull new starter liquid from the bottom of the batch. Yeast will overpower your brew.**
DO – Make a SCOBY Hotel.	**DON'T – Store more than 1 or 2 extra SCOBYs in your brewing vessel. The brew will be vinegary.**
DO – Throw away any batch that gets mold.	**DON'T – Try to salvage a moldy batch.**

Quick FAQ

How much Kombucha should I drink?

It is recommended to start off with 4oz in the morning and evening. Monitor the body's response and drink lots of water to help flush toxins. Increase intake as desired.

Does Kombucha contain caffeine and/or sugar?

Both caffeine and sugar are consumed by the Kombucha culture during fermentation. Final content depends on the ingredients and brewing cycle, but on average Kombucha contains only a few grams of sugar and a few milligrams of caffeine per 4oz serving.

What kind of tea is best with Kombucha?

Nearly any kind of tea or herbal infusion can brew a successful Kombucha batch, but for long term health of the culture, a mix of green and black tea is best.

More Kombucha FAQ, Health Benefits, History & How-To's
+ the Free E-Book

Secrets of Kombucha Mushroom Tea

at KombuchaKamp.com

Favorite Kitchen Tools

My number one help in the kitchen are my hands, my nose, my ears and my tongue! I like doing things as manually as possible. I am an old-fashioned girl, but it's also a good way to save on electricity, avoid EMFs, and get a good workout. I think most of the cooking shows these days are just geared to sell you some new useless gadget. All you really need are a few simple tools.

1. Water Filter: It is vital for urban dwellers to have a water filter. Britta isn't good enough. Invest in one that hooks up to your tap. It is important to get the chlorine out of your water, especially if you have digestive issues as the chlorine kills friendly micro-organisms. The type of water filter you will need will depend on what is in the water in the city that you live in. Vancouver has fairly good water, so I just use a basic water filter. The pipes in the building that I live in are pretty old--in such cases it is good to have a water filter that will take out heavy metals.

2***. Trundle Cart:*** We live in an apartment and don't have a car. I was giving myself all kinds of backaches hauling our groceries, cat litter and whatnot home on my back. With this trundle cart (I am sure there is another name but I quite like this one) I can manage to do all my shopping twice a week. I also use it for laundry and for hauling plants and shovels about when I go guerilla gardening. It cost me less than $30. It fits easily on a bus as well. A very good friend.

3. Mortar and Pestle: This beautiful stone mortar and pestle from Myanmar is my baby.. A nice big mortar and pestle like this are essential if you don't have an electric food processor. Spending time pounding ginger and garlic, or crushing seeds and nuts with this baby is a very satisfying activity. I love the sound of the tapping and crushing, it reminds me of when I lived in Asia. Sometimes you can find these in Chinese supermarkets.

4. Knife: Of course, you can't cook without a knife. I am not writing this post to promote any brands, but this is a good knife. It is German (Goldhamster). The weight and balance are perfect. The blade holds an edge very well. It is important to keep your knife sharp as it is much easier to cut yourself with a blunt knife. I have chopped the tip of my left pointer finger off several times.

A good knife will last you a lifetime. You don't need a whole variety of sizes, this size is quite sufficient for most purposes. (A good paring knife and a good bread knife are two other helpful types, but not strictly necessary) The small chopping board pictured below the knife is also very handy. I find that having a small bartender cutting board is very useful when you just need to do a quick cutting task, like cutting a lemon and whatnot. Preferable to having to wash a whole huge cutting board after doing a small, simple task.

5. Grinder: I like Braun for household electric equipment, they are sturdy and durable. I put this grinder to the test constantly as I use it to grind all of my nuts into flour, my spices – even cheese curds. For a long time I didn't even have a blender so this grinder and my mortar and pestle have kept me cooking. On the GAPS diet we use a lot of nut flour and I bought this second hand three years ago, so I am not surprised it has given out. It is also easy to clean.

One of my main requirements when buying kitchen gadgets is how easy is it to clean. I hate fiddling around cleaning tons of finicky parts that can easily get rancid food stuck in hard to reach places. With this I just wash the top and wipe out the inside. It doesn't take up a lot of room when stored either. The main drawback is that it can only grind about 1/2 c worth of nuts at a time and makes a loud racket while doing so. This is practical for a household of just two people. I am sure if I had a couple of kids and was on the GAPS diet I would want something else to help grind nuts.

6. Stock Pot: Of course a large stainless steel stockpot (with lid). I pull mine out at least twice a week to make stock as this is the most affordable way to get good grass-fed protein into you. A good stock will save your life and keep your joints limber to boot. It is especially important to use stocks when pregnant or nursing. Good marrow bones or a good chicken stock can keep you from getting flu much better than a vaccination can. I also use it for making saurkraut as it can hold large amounts of chopped cabbage while mixing in salt and caraway seeds.

7. Blanket: Airline blankets are rare and hard to find these days. I used to collect them when I was travelling in the good ole days when airlines used to hand them out like candy. Many of you may think I am a pure traditionalist, but this is not always the case. Airline blankets are amazing incubators, they hold in the hot or cold really well. I use this blanket to incubate my yogurt. To this day it has never gone wrong. I highly recommend stealing a blanket from the next flight you are on that still has them, but be very careful as the airlines seem to be pretty fascist these days and might just disappear you for doing so

8. Slow cooker: I got my crockpot from a second hand shop and am very pleased with it. I was given a new fancier model for Christmas one year which I got rid of as it cooked too hot and kept burning my food. I say stick with the old fashioned, they knew how to do it years ago. I love it for making ox-tail stews, lamb shanks and other long cooking hearty dishes.

9. Iron Skillet: This is my most used pan. The 8 inch pan is just right for two people using an electric stove top. If I had a gas stove, I would prefer the next size up (10), but that size is too big for the electric burners and can cook unevenly. I make all kinds of stuff in here, from our b-fast scramble to carmelizing onions to searing and roasting meat as it easily goes in the oven as well. Also a great pan to make delicious frittatas in.

10. Steamer: This bamboo steamer is a brilliant creation. Not only does it fit easily on top of my pot, but you can stack as many as you like on top of each other, cooking several types of veggies, pot-stickers or anything else at once. A real energy and space saver. Plus it doesn't break as easily as the Western type metal steamers. In fact it doesn't break at all. I make sure I wash it right away when I finish using it to make sure it doesn't get any food gunk stuck in it, and don't let it sit soaking in dirty dishwater for any length of time. Clean as you go, is the famous kitchen motto.

11. Whisk: A good sturdy large balloon whisk is one of the best ways to get a workout. It really isn't as hard as people imagine to manually whisk up egg whites or cream. I use it to make mayonnaise, meringues and many other delicious treats. I used to do a ton of whisking when cooking industrially and it messed up my arm, but if you are just doing it for your own personal cooking it isn't gonna harm you. It is also quite easy to whisk using both your left and right hand. So throw out your electric whisk and your weights and start whisking!

12. Pickle Press: I am not sure what this item is called. I got it at a second hand shop, I haven't seen any modern versions of this yet. It is really handy for making pickles and relishes as it is used to push down the cabbage into the jar when making saurkraut, I have also used it to press out the air when making chutney. It is important when preserving food using the lactic acid technique to make sure there are no air-pockets and this tool is very handy for this purpose.

13. Fish Slice: Any chef will tell you this is a must have in your kitchen. I call it a fish slice, although you could call it a spatula as well. This works amazingly for scraping out a pan, cutting something in a pan, pulling out a tender fish from a pan and all sorts of other helpful things.

14. Japanese Mandolin: This item is not strictly necessary although it is a great help for making mass amounts of sliced vegetables. It slices nice and thin and makes great chips from carrot or whatever. This model is the only one you really need. There are many types of mandolins on the market, but this original Japanese model is quite sufficient. I don't recommend you bother with any of the fancier, more expensive German etc brands. Stick with the tried and true. The only thing you need to beware of here is that it is quite easy to slip and slice off your fingers. The blade is VERY sharp so be careful, use the finger guard. This is very helpful for making saurkraut, kimchi etc.

Another item I like is the burr stick. If you are buying one, get one that will detach from the main body so it's easy to clean. Braun is a good brand. Even second hand ones work better than most other brands and last much longer. Of course there are many other tools in my kitchen, but this covers the basics.

Granny's Helpful Tips

- The water in which vegetables has been cooked and leftover vegetables should be used for making soups. (Vegetable vitamins and minerals are often water soluble, don't throw out the water).
- A quick way to cut raisins and other sticky foods is to use wet scissors. Dip the scissors in water to keep the fruit from sticking.
- To remove nut meats whole, pour boiling water over the nuts and let stand overnight before cracking.
- Grease measuring cup slightly before measuring molasses.
- To stop grease from popping from the frying pan, sift about ¼ t flour into it.
- If soup is too salty, drop into it a slice of raw potato and boil for 5-6 mins. The potato will extract some of the salt. Amount of potato to use will depend on how salty the soup is.
- To sour sweet milk, add one teaspoon vinegar to 1c milk, or 2 teaspoons lemon juice to 1c milk.
- To sweeten sour milk, add a pinch of baking soda.
- To whip top milk add 1/4 teaspoon lemon juice to 1c top milk and whip just before serving.
- When scalding milk to keep it from sticking, first rinse the pan in cold water.
- Add a pinch of salt to cream to help it whip more quickly.
- Put peaches into a bowl of milk to prevent darkening after peeling.
- To peel tomatoes easily insert fork into stem end of tomato-hold over lighted gas burner turning constantly, when skin bursts remove from fire and remove skin.
- To peel oranges or grapefruit entirely from the membranous of white pulp underneath skin, place them in hot water for five minutes.
- If a vegetable or cereal burns plunge pot containing burned mass into cold water. Allow it to remain for a few minutes before pouring contents into another pan. This will get rid of the burned taste.
- When boiling eggs, use room temperature eggs and salt water to prevent them from cracking.
- Cheese grates more readily if it is chilled.
- The layers of a cake will come out without sticking if you place the pans on a damp cloth when you take them from the oven.
- Make a solution of 1 qt water and 1 Tablespoons salt to put, pears or apples into after removing peel. This will prevent discoloration.
- To clean a burnt or greasy pan, put on inch of water in the pan, and add one teaspoon or more soda. Then heat the water to the boiling point.
- Use a slice of raw potato to remove vegetable stains from the fingers.
- Rub your hands with celery to remove onion odors.

#1 Foraging Tool My Bike

"Eating Real Foods has been a return to sanity for me. I am a forager, a gardener, a cyclist, and an intuitive cook and eater. I run on instinct." -Contributed by Butterpoweredbike of HungerandThirstForLife

If you were to ask me what my number one foraging tool is, I wouldn't tell you it was my pocket knife, or my shovel, or my leather gloves. The hands-down no-contest best foraging tool in my arsenal is my bike. It gives me speed, and options, and range. It makes my legs a mile long.

As an example, there are several good patches of asparagus in the fields behind my house. If I go to collect them on foot, it takes me over 45 minutes. But if I head out on my bike, I can collect from all of the little patches, and be back home in 15 minutes. I can use that extra half hour to forage for more food, or, you know, have a life.

If I'm exploring a new area or trail, even cranking at a low speed, I can cover 4 times the distance that I could on foot. This allows me to get off the beaten path, and gives me greater access in foraging. It allows me to be an explorer.

One of the greatest advantages being a cyclist gives me as a forager is that I'm very much in tune with the seasons. Because I'm out pedaling most every day of the year, I'm acutely aware of the ways in which the weather is changing, which bugs are emerging, and which plants are popping out of the ground, which are flowering, which are fading. I can also see which urban areas are being managed (sprayed and mowed, etc, which are always a bad sign for food). This is a very important asset for people who forage in the city, because extra care must be taken to avoid contamination from herbicides, fertilizers, and pollution.

Another big plus that I have as cycling forager is that I get to scout for certain plants out of season, when they are more visible. For example, right now in late fall, all of the asparagus plants are a bushy splash of yellow in a sea of brown. This makes it very easy to spot previously unknown patches. In the spring, I could see the yellow flowers of golden currant bushes everywhere, which gave me clues as to where to look for ripe fruit in late summer, when the same areas were a mass of green.

Now, it's true that when I'm loaded up with my foraging equipment, I tend to look a bit like a circus on wheels. Just the other day, on a major hunt, I was loaded up with my fruit picker, both panniers, and a large back pack. It made for an awkward ride, especially after I had managed to pick 40-50 pounds of fruit. I had the impression

I looked rather like a witch on a broomstick with that fruit picker hanging off the back of my bike (which really made me wish that I owned a cape). There was another ride one day in late summer where I had all of my bags, plus a few 6' long evening primrose plants tucked into my rack, plus my cat in a backpack on my back, plus my pockets loaded with wild plums, munching them as a snack as I rode along. *Stand clear, people, the freak show is rolling into town!*

But here's the fun thing that I've discovered after covering a lot of mile with my bike - there is food everywhere - in nooks, and crannies, and pockets, and parks - in yards, and fields, and growing out of cracks in sidewalks. I've lived in a suburban setting for quite a while. I knew that I could rely upon spring asparagus, and that there were apple trees scattered around. But I really had no clue as to just how much other food was in the same setting. There are leafy greens, flowers, pollens, roots, shoots, nuts, seeds, and more fruit than I had ever imagined. It's like a wonderland of food, and has shown me what it really means to eat seasonally and locally.

Remember a few weeks ago when I posted about finding pears? Well, I discovered those on a sidewalk on a bike ride to the grocery store. There they were, out for everyone to see. I wonder how many times I, too, saw those pears and dismissed them.

Ok, so you're worried about how you'll look? Don't sweat it. Release images of Lance and the Schleck brothers, or any notion that you have to be ultra fit or a racer to be out on your bike. Tap in to the memories you have of riding your bike as a kid, when two wheels meant freedom and joy. Bike riding is fun, and as a forager, you can really use it to your advantage.

And don't worry about people bothering you while you are harvesting food (always, always forage respectfully and in keeping with your local laws). For the most part, people won't bug you because they think you're bonkers. No, really, they'll give you the *should I call for a straight jacket* look. I just give them an extra loud and chirpy hello, which usually sends them scurrying away in fear. Isn't it odd that we live in a culture where you are considered crazy if you pick your own food, but you are perfectly sane if in midwinter you buy strawberries flown in from another continent for your smoothies?

The other day, my friend Christy asked how I ever get anywhere on my bike, when I'm constantly stopping to dig. And that's just the thing. There are no longer separate cycling and foraging trips, they have happily melded to become one and the same. It's all a part of exploring and experiencing my home environment, part fun, part utility, part freedom, all done in the spirit of exploration. It has given me a greater sense of connection to my place and my time, and helped me to understand my place in it all. Yep, that big, life-changing revelation really did come to me while riding my bike around and picking weeds.

Tips on Homemade Yogurt

Yogurt is a great way to make your own probiotic supplement. The most important concern with yogurt is to maintain a constant incubation temperature of about 110ºF (43ºC) for 24 hours. This is the temperature and length of incubation time that those friendly bacteria love and helps them to become the most active. There are several ways to do this depending on what you prefer.

Simply use as much milk as you want yogurt. I generally like to make a couple large jars as I use yogurt for many things-primarily a morning fruit smoothie to keep the bacterial garden in my intestines growing in a healthy manner.

Generally, I measure the milk into the jar intended for incubating and then pour this into a pan, and heat. When using industrial milk be sure to bring the milk to a boil before cooling it down to around 120ºF. Once, when making yogurt with industrial pasteurized milk, I only heated it to around 140ºF. I have never tasted such disgusting yogurt as what resulted. Clearly some undesirable bacteria were already in the milk and hadn't been destroyed before I added the yogurt culture.

If you are using fresh raw milk you may prefer to not allow the temperature go too far above 120ºF. Traditionally, raw milk is heated to around 180ºF when making yogurt. Enzymes start to die off at a temperature of 108ºF. If you only bring the milk to 120ºF, you may want to use a little more yogurt culture or allow the yogurt to incubate longer. Experiment, and find out what works best for you.

Yogurt made from fresh raw milk that is not first scalded and allowed to cool will be quite soft, not firm as the yogurt we are accustomed to. In order to get a creamy texture of yogurt the milk should be heated gently to 180ºF and allowed to cool. This will provide a clean slate for the yogurt cultures to take over and colonize

One method for checking the temperature that my mother taught me was to put your finger in it and see if you can hold it for ten seconds. The results should be – counting 1, 2, 3,…9,10, ouch!

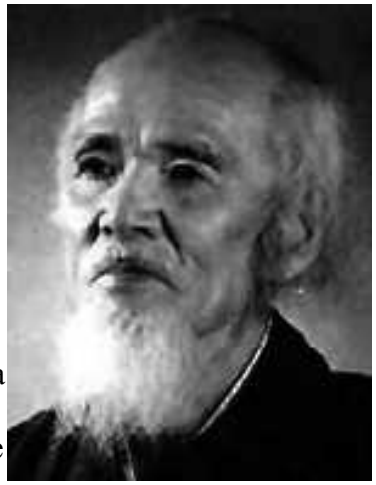
Unfortunately, some of us might have bad circulation and cold fingers. In fact, I was constantly killing the bacteria in the yogurt using this method and had to resort to a thermometer for a while until I recognized the correct temperature with my finger again.

Once the milk is heated you only need to add about a tablespoon of yogurt per 4 cups (or one litre/quart) of milk. The best way to do this is to temper the yogurt with a little warm milk before adding it into the jar.

Be sure to prepare the jars by keeping them full of hot water before adding the milk and yogurt to them.

If you have a warm spot in your home all you need to do is to wrap up the yogurt in a towel and keep it overnight in that spot.

Natural Diet by Masanobu Fukuoka



The *One Straw Revolution* is Masanobu Fukuoka's manifesto about natural food and farming. It's a collection of short essays translated from Japanese. Masanobu was trained as a scientist, but rejected modern agribusiness and centuries of agriculture lore. He perfected the "do-nothing" technique of farming. Masanobu Fukuoka died in 2008 still stunning the world with his highly effective no-work farming techniques.

This little book is filled with amazing insights into modern life. These excerpts were taken from sections on food and natural diet. Masanobu Fukuoka puts into clear and concise language a practical way to return to a state of health for our world and ourselves. I highly recommend getting your own copy as this book is so full of profound understandings of nature that are best absorbed in small doses:

"A Natural Diet Lies Right At Ones Feet". -p133

Modern people have lost their clear instinct and consequently have become unable to gather the seven herbs of spring. They go out seeking a variety of flavors. Their diet becomes disordered, the gap between likes and dislikes widens, and their instinct becomes more and more bewildered. At this point people begin to apply strong seasonings to their food and to use elaborate cooking techniques, further deepening the confusion. Food and the human spirit become estranged. -p136

One might suppose that Western dietetics, with its elaborate theories and calculations, could leave no doubts about proper diet. The fact is, it creates far more problems than it resolves.

One problem is that in Western nutritional science there is no effort to adjust the diet to the natural cycle. The diet that results serves to isolate human beings from nature. A fear of nature and a general sense of insecurity are often the unfortunate results.-p141

In this world there exist four main classifications of diet:

- *A lax diet conforming to habitual desires and taste preferences. People following this diet sway back and forth erratically in response to whims and fancies. This diet could be called self-indulgent, empty eating.*
- *The standard nutritional diet of most people, proceeding from biological conclusions. Nutritious foods are eaten for the purpose of maintaining the life of the body. It could be called materialist, scientific eating.*
- *The diet based on spiritual principles and idealistic philosophy. Limiting foods, aiming toward compression, most "natural" diets fall into this category. This could be called the diet of principle.*
- *The natural diet, following the will of heaven. Discarding all human knowledge, this diet could be called the diet of non-discrimination.*

People first draw away from the empty diet which is the source of countless diseases. Next, becoming disenchanted with the scientific diet, which merely attempts to maintain biological life, many proceed to a diet of principle. Finally, transcending this, one arrives at the non-discriminating diet of the natural person. -p142

The Secret of Planting a Medicinal Garden Encoded Specifically For Your DNA

This special and sacred planting technique is given to us by a Forest Shaman from the remote wilderness of Siberia. Anastasia provides many methods and insights into how we can all find our way back to the wilds. Please visit this site for more information on schooling, gardening and much much more...

Anastasia Said:

"Every seed you plant contains within itself an enormous amount of information about the Universe. Nothing made by human hands can compare with this information either in size or accuracy. Through the help of these data the seed knows the exact time, down to the millisecond, when it is to come alive, grow — what juices it is to take from the Earth, how to make use of the rays of the celestial bodies — the Sun, Moon and stars, what it is to grow into, what fruit to bring forth.

"Before planting, put into your mouth one or more little seeds, hold them in your mouth, under the tongue, for at least nine minutes.

"Then place the seed between the palms of your hands and hold it there for about thirty seconds. During this time it is important that you be standing barefoot on the spot of earth where you will later be planting it.

"Open your hands, and carefully raise the seed which you are holding to your mouth. Then blow on it lightly, warming it with your breath, and the wee little seed will know everything that is within you.

"Then you need to hold it with your hands open another thirty seconds, presenting the seed to the celestial bodies. And the seed will determine the moment of its awakening. The planets will all help it! And will give the sprouts the light they need to produce fruit especially for you.

"After that you may plant the seed in the ground. In no case should you water it right off, so as not to wash away the saliva which is now covering it, along with other information about you that the seed will take in. It can be watered three days after planting.

"The planting must be done on days appropriate to each vegetable (people already know this, from the lunar calendar). In the absence of watering, a premature planting is not as harmful as an overdue planting.

"It is not a good idea to pull up all the weeds growing in the vicinity of the sprouts. At least one of each kind should be left in place. The weeds can be cut back…"

According to Anastasia, the seed is thus able to take in information about the person who plants it, and then during the cultivation of its fruit it will pick up from the Universe and the Earth the optimum blend of energies needed for a given Man. (READ MORE)

Open Source Ubuntu FREE Computer Operating System

When I first heard of open-source I couldn't believe my ears, the whole concept thrills me to bits. It is very timely, and similar to the myth of Prometheus when he stole fire from the gods, and brought it down for mankind in a fennel stalk. This time the tool of assistance for humanity is something that has been co-created through cooperation and free will. When I first heard about it I was still using my mom's old notebook made in the 1980s. It was a real dinosaur, but at least it was still working and (kind of) portable. Finally it gave out.

I did a bit better this time round. My mom gave me her old computer again. I was really in luck, because she had only had it a couple months. She got it in Thailand, all the software was pirated and it soon crashed. It was a perfect candidate for installing the free operating system Ubuntu on and suddenly I was back in business with the flashiest computer I have owned since 1993.

When I started using Ubuntu in 2008 it wasn't as user-friendly as I had expected. The latest release has solved all kinds of problems and has made it very easy to use for even someone like me who is just your average computer user. I installed it with no troubles and added all kinds of free software. In fact I find it easier to use than Microsoft because it has a very similar layout to the old apple computers and is very user-friendly. With all these updates and improvements I am sure just about anyone can use Ubuntu now. Ubuntu communities have sprung up in every city where you can share, learn and help each other in how best to use this incredibly handy and FREE tool. The other great thing about Ubuntu is you don't have to worry about viruses.

The other thing I really love about open source is that they are interactive systems, they need your feedback and love to adjust to the needs of the people using it. If you have a bug or a problem or if you need something else, you can let someone know, or you can trust that it is probably already being worked on and will most likely be fixed in the next update. It is a model of what we should be basing our society on. The biggest problems we are seeing in all of our industries, schools, institutions on every level seems to be because we are so penalized for making mistakes --everything flows one way so there isn't room for flow and adjustment to changing circumstances.

In this way the focus is taken off of the end product and is put on the continuing process and on cooperation and supporting each other. Open source and Ubuntu as one aspect of this movement is absolutely revolutionary. It is spreading like wildfire. I still have a lot to learn about it and I am fortunate to be living in Vancouver, BC because there is a real community around helping each other using Ubuntu.

Sustainable Menstruation

The Keeper is sustainable and affordable for the modern menstruating woman.

I've been trying to remember the exact details of where I first heard about The Keeper, I have a distinct memory of being in a women's bathroom in the huge central library of our college campus and seeing information recommending The Keeper scratched into the door. I had just read about it in a womens magazine and had thought it sounded like a really useful product, so I took this bathroom recommendation seriously.

I was a student at the time and could barely afford to buy tampons each month (tampons and pads are absurdly expensive as well as being environmentally damaging and not very good for your body), it was 1994 and at that time I think the price for The Keeper was around $20 so I bought a couple to try out.

It was perfect timing as I was going overseas on a study abroad program and I ended up absolutely flat broke. If I hadn't had The Keeper at that time I don't know what I would have done every month — locked myself in the bathroom for three days I guess.

A couple years later, when I had a bit of money I bought a few more for my sisters and a couple of my friends. All I heard back was complaints of how it hurt and was too big or they couldn't get it out, I started to feel embarrassed that it worked so well for me and stopped talking about it. I later discovered that they had mostly had problems with the little bit at the end for gripping and removing the cup. Either they had cut it off completely, making it very difficult to remove, or they hadn't cut off any of it and the end was too long and hurting them by sticking out too far.

I have found The Keeper is very useful especially when travelling in third world countries when you have to use a squat pot. Discarding a used tampon or pad in those conditions was always a pain, and environmentally unfriendly. The Keeper also provides a great receptacle for collecting your menstrual juices. Menstrual blood is a great fertilizer for indoor potted plants, and it is great to know that your fluids are going back into the cycle of life, providing nutrients for your plants. This is a much more connected way to interact with your environment as opposed to knowing that your used tampons or pads are only creating unnecessary trash and pollution.

The Keeper's price hasn't gone up much over the last 14 years, it is only $35 plus $2 for shipping. I have just recently replaced my first Keeper. I used it for about 15 years, it cost me about $25. It's probably saved me more than $1,000. I have had no problems with it.

This brilliant company also now produce The Moon Cup, which is made out of silicon for people who are allergic to latex (The Keeper is rubber), it is the same price.

This is, as they say on their site a revolutionary product which is sustainable as well as good to our bodies and pocket-books. A simple step to help the earth.